Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce
REPORT
January 16-17, 2020: 8:30am-5pm
Willow/Birch Room, Hilton Hotel, 500 West Third Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

At this first meeting, the Taskforce discussed and cultivated a vision for its work. Discussion focused on identifying a core set of collectively agreed upon goals and objectives, determining the actions needed to meet each objective, setting the ground rules for the Taskforce’s work, and identifying the next steps for work.

Committee Members in attendance:
Kate Haapala (Co-chair, NPFMC)  Robert Murphy (APU)  Richard B. Slats (Chevak)
Sarah Wise (Co-chair, AFSC)  Julie Raymond-Yakoubian (Kawerak)  Simeon Swetzof Jr. (St. Paul, ph)
Alida Trainor (ADFG)  Bridget Mansfield (NMFS)
Rachel Donkersloot (Coastal Cultures Research)  Toby Anungazuk Jr. (Golovin)

Members absent:
Darcy L. Peter (Beaver)

Others in attendance:
Stephanie Madsen (ASPA)  Diana Evans (Council staff)
Megan Petersen (Ocean Conservancy)  Sara Cleaver (Council staff)
Becca Gisclair (Ocean Conservancy)  Raychelle Daniel (Pew)
Mellisa Johnson (Bering Sea Elders Group)

Introductions
The meeting began with Taskforce member introductions, which were followed by a presentation from Diana Evans on the Council process. Taskforce members were provided an opportunity to ask Ms. Evans clarifying questions about the role of the Council, its advisory bodies and committees, and the decision-making process. Ms. Evans gave a second presentation on the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), noting the FEP’s purpose as a living policy document guiding the Council’s actions to strengthen fisheries and management of the Bering Sea ecosystem, as well as its role as a collaborative framework among managers, scientists, and stakeholders to build trust and transparency. Taskforce members appreciated both presentations.

Several Taskforce members provided updates or examples of ongoing research related to Local Knowledge (LK), Traditional Knowledge (TK), and subsistence. These presentations emphasized the importance of understanding the human dimensions of climate change in the Bering Sea region, best practices for ensuring ethical collaborations with Indigenous communities, and the diverse values such as sharing or respect that encompass TK and subsistence.

At the start of the second day, the Taskforce received a brief presentation from Dr. Diana Stram on the work of the Climate Change Taskforce to-date, noting their initial meeting was delayed. Taskforce members vocalized their support for finding synergies between the two Taskforces and discussed potentially developing a conceptual diagram to highlight these interlinkages in the future. It was also
discussed that both Taskforces could benefit from a co-meeting to identify possible partnerships and how they might improve the Council’s decision-making process.

Definitions for LK, TK, and Subsistence

The Taskforce was committed to understanding what each other meant when discussing the terms ‘LK,’ ‘TK,’ and/or ‘subsistence’, given the diversity of uses of these terms in the sociological and anthropological literature, as well as broader academic and non-academic communities. The Taskforce agreed that a clear, shared understanding of terminology was a crucial foundation for future work as well as providing effective guidance to the Council. The Taskforce requested that the agreed upon definitions for LK and TK from the FEP (2018, pg. 16) be included within this report as well as the final workplan to establish a baseline understanding and provide valuable reference points for the Taskforce, the Council, and stakeholders:

For the purposes of this Taskforce, Local Knowledge broadly includes observations and experiences of local people in a region, and people with significant experience of a particular location, species, or fishery. LK is often acquired over the course of a few generations or less, and it is the product of knowledge formation and dissemination based on personal, shared and inherited experience (Martin et al. 2007). Bearers of LK are often relatively small groups of people, living in or connected to, a common geographic location who actively engage with the environment through local harvest of wild resources. These people may or may not be Indigenous to the area or base their understandings on knowledge that evolves over many generations (PFRCC 2011). For example, LK holders might be those who are tied to the Bering Sea as commercial fishers who spend considerable time in the region, and are possibly intergenerational participants in the fishery, yet reside part of the year in Lower 48 ports such as Seattle or Astoria. In the current Council process LK is commonly utilized in the form of public testimony from skippers, coastal community residents, etc., and stakeholder interactions with Plan Teams.

LK is often recently acquired (over a few generations or less) as compared to TK which is deeply embedded in cultures who have dwelled in a landscape since time immemorial (Berkes 1999:8, Ingold 2000:43). TK refers more specifically to knowledge held by Indigenous people, and is:

A living body of knowledge which pertains to explaining and understanding the universe and living and acting within it. It is acquired and utilized by Indigenous communities and individuals in and through long-term sociocultural, spiritual and environmental engagement. [Traditional knowledge] is an integral part of the broader knowledge system of Indigenous communities, is transmitted intergenerationally, is practically and widely applicable, and integrates personal experience with oral traditions. It provides perspectives applicable to an array of human and nonhuman phenomena. It is deeply rooted in history, time, and place, while also being rich, adaptable, and dynamic, all of which keep it relevant and useful in contemporary life. This knowledge is part of, and used in, everyday life, and is inextricably intertwined with peoples’ identity, cosmology, values, and way of life. Tradition – and [traditional knowledge] – does not preclude change, nor does it equal only ‘the past’; in fact, it inherently entails change. (Raymond-Yakoubian et al., 2017).

LK and TK are relevant for all fisheries sectors and all aspects of fisheries management, including commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries issues, in the Bering Sea Ecosystem. For example, LK and TK holders might be members of remote rural communities that depend on fishing and harvesting activities (e.g., marine mammals, seabirds, ground fish, salmon, and shellfish) for their food security as part of the subsistence way of life and may also participate in commercial fishing.

With respect to impacts to subsistence, the Taskforce discussed the multiple definitions for subsistence and subsistence uses as they exist in federal or state policy,¹ and community definitions, as they have important implications for how communities access and utilize particular resources. In addition, Taskforce

¹ Such as the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act of 1980, for example.
members agreed that recognizing the importance and value of subsistence extends beyond the economic value of resources, and is deeply rooted in place with social, cultural, and spiritual importance for those individuals and communities engaging these practices.

Taskforce Objectives and Priorities for Work

The Taskforce came to an agreement on a core set of objectives and prioritized the next steps for the work it would complete over the next 2-3 years. The co-chairs gave a presentation on the objectives specified in the draft workplan including:

1) Create a clear set of directions for the Council regarding the solicitation and consideration of LK and TK in Council decision-making processes.

2) Create clear direction(s) for the Council regarding how impacts to subsistence are understood and incorporated into analyses as well as how to mitigate potential impacts to subsistence resources or users of those resources.

Guided by the draft workplan, the Taskforce established two overarching goals for its work and six goal-specific objectives. Taskforce discussion emphasized that the next steps, or associated actions, for each objective may evolve or become more solidified over time as their work progresses. In addition, the Taskforce expects the goals and objectives to inform one another as their work continues. Thus, the Taskforce would like to revisit, and potentially amend or add to, the objectives and associated actions for work at future meetings.

**Goal 1:** To create processes and protocols through which the Council can identify, analyze, and consistently incorporate TK and LK, and the social science of TK and LK, into Council decision-making processes to support the use of best available scientific information in Ecosystem-based Fishery Management (EBFM).

**Objective 1:** Over the next 2-3 years the Taskforce will identify and define sources of LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, to support the use of best scientific information available in Council decision-making.

*Rationale:* Objective 1 reflects the Taskforce’s opportunity to support the Council in being more responsive to National Standard 2 and 8 by incorporating LK and TK in its analyses. Doing so will provide a more complete picture of the human dimensions of the Bering Sea region to support EBFM, and better understand the effects of climate change on the Bering Sea ecosystem. It is important to note that Objectives 1-3 make an important distinction between LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK. The Taskforce agreed on this distinction because LK and TK exist regardless of whether social science has been conducted to understand, analyze, or synthesize them.

**Associated Actions for Objective 1:**

- The Taskforce will reach a consensus on definitions of terms (e.g., ‘subsistence’ and ‘protocol) to guide its later discussions and work. [Deliverable: Glossary of terms].
- Explore and synthesize a list of existing protocols and projects related to the solicitation and consideration of LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, especially those protocols or projects within relevant regions (e.g., Alaska or the Arctic) and related to resource management. [Deliverable: Data synthesis document to be broadly available; this could be a living document of existing products, such as an annotated bibliography].
The Taskforce should make its synthesis of LK and TK protocols and projects publicly available in a user-friendly format; the Taskforce still has remaining questions, including: Who will maintain or curate this list? Where will it be stored? For how long will it be updated (i.e., for 2-3 years or more)?

- If no sources of LK or TK, or the social science of LK and TK, are known on an issue with relevance to the Council, the Taskforce will note this as a potential data gap with the possibility that individuals, communities, or organizations may be able to assist in filling that gap. The Taskforce could also develop potential research questions and methods that could be used to fill that gap.

- Explore potential synergies with existing projects (e.g., State of Alaska’s Salmon and People) and the other FEP Taskforces. [Deliverable: Living document of existing projects and partnerships].

- Create a brief document summarizing the benefits of incorporating LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, into Council decision-making processes, particularly as it relates to EBFM. [Deliverable: Briefing statement].

Objective 2: The Taskforce will provide guidance and analytical protocols to the Council on how to evaluate and analyze LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK.

Rationale: Taskforce members recognized the importance of providing the Council and staff direction on how to analyze LK and TK for the purpose of incorporating them into Council documents and decision-making as appropriate. Taskforce discussion on Objective 2 emphasized the importance of utilizing social science and Indigenous methodologies and best practices. These protocols will include a set of best practices for considering and evaluating LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK. These protocols will provide guidance on both discrete actions and the Council process more broadly.

Associated Actions for Objective 2:

- Review and consider existing analytical templates for staff, as appropriate, to understand how the Taskforce’s work can build upon, or potentially improve, existing processes. [Deliverable: Analytical summary].

- Develop a protocol, or guiding document, outlining best practices for evaluating and analyzing LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK. [Deliverable: Protocol].

Objective 3: The Taskforce will provide guidance on how LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, could be incorporated into Council decision-making processes.

Rationale: Objective 3 reflects Taskforce discussion and consensus on finding “onramps,” or points of entry (e.g., social impact assessments or public testimony), for LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, into the Council’s decision-making process. One question related to Objective 3 was: Where can LK and TK be utilized in existing Council processes? Objective 3 aims to facilitate the Council’s decision-making as it relates to EBFM by finding the appropriate and most useful onramps for LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK.

Associated Actions for Objective 3:

- Identify potential “onramps,” or points of entry, within the Council process (e.g., public testimony or analyses) for the Taskforce’s work. [Deliverable: Analytical summary].
Review staff analytical templates, as well as the Council’s overarching decision-making process, and synthesize the work conducted by the Council’s committees or Plan Teams, especially the Social Science Planning Team, the FEP Team, the Climate Change Taskforce, and the Community Engagement Committee (CEC), to identify potential onramps for LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, in the Council’s ongoing work.

- Create protocols to gain permission and consent for the use of LK and TK in the Council’s decision-making process. [Deliverable: Protocol].
- Establish protocols for the recognition of knowledge sources, such as a citation guide, when LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, is solicited, analyzed, and included within analyses. [Deliverable: Protocol].

**Goal 2: To create clear direction(s) for the Council regarding how impacts to subsistence are defined and incorporated into analyses as well as mitigation strategies for potential impacts to subsistence resources or uses of those resources.**

**Objective 4: Over the next 2-3 years the Taskforce will identify the relevant and appropriate sources of subsistence data and information to use in Council decision-making processes.**

**Rationale:** To achieve Goal 2, the Taskforce agreed that identifying sources of subsistence information is a crucial step, and recognized that reports produced by the Subsistence Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), among others (e.g. work done by the Aleut Community of St, Paul’s ECO office), are valuable resources in this respect. However, as described above, the Taskforce also agreed that subsistence, within the context of the Council, should be considered beyond species harvest numbers and beyond the economic value of particular resources. Identifying sources for subsistence information and gaining permission for the use of such sources as appropriate (e.g., for spatial data from Tribes), is expected to be an ongoing process for the Taskforce.

**Associated Actions for Objective 4:**

- Identify pathways to facilitate strong partnerships among Council staff and subsistence users. [Deliverable: Guidance document].
- Clarify the characteristics of subsistence, noting the many and context specific ways it can be defined among various user groups. [Deliverable: Briefing document].
- Develop guidelines or protocols for Council staff for soliciting/identifying, analyzing, and using subsistence data and information in analyses. [Deliverable: Guidance document].
- Develop a working repository of existing Alaska subsistence documents, projects, and resources from the State and the broader academic community. [Deliverable: Briefing document].

**Objective 5: The Taskforce will provide guidance on how subsistence data and information can be incorporated into Council decision-making processes.**

**Rationale:** Taskforce members came to an agreement on Objective 5 recognizing the importance of providing guidance to staff and the Council with respect to analyzing various forms of subsistence data.

**Associated Actions for Objective 5:**

- Develop a roadmap for the Council detailing how impacts to subsistence resources and users could be considered. [Deliverable: Guidance document].
Objective 6: Identify existing measures and potential opportunities to mitigate impacts to subsistence resources and subsistence resources users.

Rationale: Objective 6 reflects Taskforce discussion on whether there are existing best practices or measures related to mitigating impacts to subsistence in resource management that could be reviewed and synthesized for the Council. The Taskforce discussed how evaluating existing onramps in the Council process would be useful to achieve this objective.

Associated Actions for Objective 6:

- Encourage direct reporting on subsistence or co-management issues from NMFS and/or the Subsistence Section with ADFG, or Alaska Native Organizations. [Deliverable: Regular cross agency meeting].

Taskforce Meeting Structure and Ground Rules

The Taskforce co-chairs worked to facilitate a transparent and inclusive meeting in Anchorage by providing succinct presentations at the start of each new discussion section (i.e., ‘Taskforce Objectives’). This provided a pathway for the co-chairs to identify the purpose of the section and facilitate group discussion to allow for new ideas and consensus to emerge organically. The co-chairs updated notes for the group in real-time with a projector to build consensus around key points of conversation, and for clarity and collective ownership over the content.

At this first meeting, the Taskforce outlined a pathway forward for future meetings to conduct their work. The Taskforce will meet three times per year over the next two years, leaving open the possibility for additional meetings if work still needs to be achieved in the third year. One meeting will occur in-person, one meeting will occur via teleconference, and the format of the third meeting is yet to be decided. Due to the importance of subsistence for several Taskforce members, and the needing to prioritize various hunting and fishing seasons, the Taskforce identified January, April, and October (2020-2021) as tentative months for these three yearly meetings to occur. The Taskforce agreed to meet via teleconference in April 2020 to address immediate next steps and continue their work.

The Taskforce established the following ground rules for their meetings:

- Taskforce co-chairs will solicit Taskforce members’ availability and notice for the meeting.
- Stakeholders requested, and the Taskforce expressed their support, to maximize accessibility for extensive community engagement with Taskforce meetings by holding a meeting in a remote village where funding allows.
- The Taskforce agreed that a brief summary of the public testimony received at each meeting will be provided in the Taskforce report.
- The Taskforce agreed that members of the public, those present in-person and participating via teleconference, should be invited to participate in Taskforce discussions when feasible and appropriate. This will be determined on a meeting-by-meeting basis, but it is meant to create an inclusive environment, and this practice acknowledges that the nature of the Taskforce’s work could be greatly benefitted by additional expertise in the room. This could be particularly relevant if the Taskforce meets in a rural community.
- The co-chairs will provide the opportunity for the Taskforce to review and give feedback on draft minutes and reports prior to their posting.

Public Engagement and Involvement

The Taskforce discussed the importance of cultivating an inclusive process for stakeholders, seeing stakeholder engagement as an integral part of the Taskforce’s work. The Taskforce also discussed the importance of being inclusive of all potentially relevant stakeholders, and when developing protocols for the solicitation of LK and TK, making note of diverse constituent bodies (e.g., Bering Sea
fishermen, subsistence resource users, Tribal governments, village boroughs, and more). Specifically, the conversation centered on how the Taskforce envisions public engagement as well as the verification of data, outputs, and methods to use in the Council process.

To guide its discussion, the Taskforce reviewed the Community Engagement Committee’s (CEC) list of potential recommendations for the Council prepared at the December 2019 meeting. Several Taskforce members noted the importance of the CEC’s work to-date and encouraged the TF to consider the CEC recommendations closely. In addition, Taskforce members vocalized their support for the CEC to continue its work as a committee. Captured below are Taskforce discussion points of public engagement, and a plan for the Taskforce:

- At various points throughout its discussions, the Taskforce noted the importance of Tribal Consultations as a component of public engagement, and the Taskforce recognized the potential for the consultation itself to be a mechanism for soliciting LK or TK.
  - Taskforce discussions recognized the importance of NMFS being proactive in future Council actions, reaching out to Tribes early. Taskforce discussions also asked whether it is possible for the Council or staff to be involved with establishing a timeline for Tribal Consultations in future Council actions.
- The Taskforce noted the importance of seeking out presentations and co-presentations of materials by LK and TK holders, including extending an invitation to Tribes and others to speak at Taskforce meetings.
- The Taskforce encouraged co-production of knowledge approach.
- The Taskforce agreed with the CEC’s potential recommendation to allow public testimony to be given via phone and/or web.
- A summary of all public testimony will be included within each Taskforce report.
- The Taskforce discussed possibilities for reaching stakeholders. Suggestions included:
  - Distribute a flyer for each Taskforce meeting – send to regional hubs, Tribal associations and governments, Taskforce members could share on personal social media to increase awareness of the meeting.
  - Launch an email listserv. Following the best practices for communication established by other Alaska community oriented organizations, this listserv might include regional Tribal coordinators, CDQ group liaisons, fishermen organizations, and more who can be notified in advance of Taskforce, committee, or Council meetings and facilitate the transmission of information among Tribes, villages, and other communities.
- The Taskforce noted the importance of establishing two-way communication between LK and TK holders and the Taskforce and the Council with respect to the verification of data, outputs, and methods to use in the Council’s decision-making process. The Taskforce discussed developing the methodologies for this two-way communication and a potential set of best practices under Objective 2 for the Taskforce and agreed to return to this conversation at a future meeting.

Taskforce Work Products

The Taskforce had productive discussions on how to move their work forward, noting the importance of creating tangible and achievable next steps. This section details a set of work products to be completed by the Taskforce for its next meeting in April 2020 (via teleconference), as well as a suite of larger projects to be completed over the next 2-3 years as feasible.

Work Products to be Completed by April 2020:

- **Staff will update the Taskforce’s workplan.** Edits will include the Taskforce’s objectives, associated actions for work under each objective, the Taskforce’s ground rules, work products, and more.
- **Create a glossary of terms to be included in the Taskforce’s workplan.** As described above, the Taskforce had extensive discussion on the importance of definitions of key terms (i.e.,
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While some terms, like LK and TK are previously defined in Council documents such as the Bering Sea FEP, the Taskforce agreed that creating a glossary with clear terms and definitions would bring clarity to future conversations. The Taskforce agreed that this glossary was for their own reference and not intended to guide of inform other work by the Council or its committees. (Objective 1).

- **Begin work on identifying existing or ongoing research projects for LK and TK, particularly those occurring in Alaska, Canada, and in the broader Arctic region.** Once this repository is completed, the Taskforce envisions this to be a public tool made available to staff, the Council, researchers, and the broader public. (Objective 1).

- **Communicate with the CEC and Climate Change Taskforce on potential synergies for their work and the possibility of a co-meeting.** Recognizing the CEC is scheduled to have its final meeting in April 2020, the Taskforce identified points of overlap in their work and asked for an update on the work completed by the CEC thus far. In addition, the Taskforce identified points of overlap and synergy with the Climate Change Taskforce and would like to scope out the possibility for a co-meeting with this Taskforce, including via teleconference, in the future. This would provide a space for the sharing of ideas and information as well as input from the public. (Objective 1).

- **Begin identifying potential “onramps,” or points of entry, within the Council process (e.g., public testimony or analyses) for the Taskforce’s work.** (Objective 3).
  - The Taskforce will review staff analytical templates, review the Council’s decision-making process, and synthesize the work conducted by the Council’s committees or Plan Teams, especially the Social Science Plan Team, the FEP Team, the Climate Change Taskforce, and the CEC, to identify potential onramps for LK and TK in the Council’s process.

**Work Products to be Completed Over the Next 2-3 Years:**

A potential list of work products agreed upon by the Taskforce is captured below. These products are expected to be achievable over the next 2-3 years, however, the Taskforce also recognized it is possible that some products may be amended or added as appropriate.

- **Produce a protocol outlining the best practices for soliciting LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, which recognizes and gives guidance on different types of knowledge holders (e.g., Tribal elders or Bering Sea fishermen), the necessary methodologies and expertise for analyzing forms of LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK, and identifying potential onramps in the Council’s existing process for the use of these protocols.**
  - The Taskforce discussed developing similar protocols for understanding impacts to subsistence resources and users but will revisit ideas for subsistence protocols at its second meeting; the Taskforce also expects there may be some transferable elements from the LK and TK protocols.

- **Develop and distribute outreach and engagement materials, including meeting announcements and a flyer or one-page document to be distributed in villages providing guidance on how to contribute LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK.** The Taskforce discussed the importance of a meeting flyer as it could act as an invitation to communities to participate in the Council process. When developing these materials, the Taskforce will consider easy print and no-print options for communities that may not have a printer or where particular cartridges are unavailable or costly.

- **Create and distribute a flyer targeting research labs and organizations (e.g., North Pacific Research Board) that provides an update on the work completed by the Taskforce and its integration to the Council’s decision-making process.**

- **Create a listserv containing Tribal coordinators from the region, CDQ group liaisons, and more.** This listserv will contain individuals or organizations that can communicate to communities. Staff
will utilize the knowledge and practices of organizations like Kawarek who currently deploy similar outreach practices. This listserv will be available to all staff for use at various committee and Council meetings.

- Towards the end of the Taskforce’s work, the Taskforce could create a short video that describes how stakeholders—such as individuals, communities, or organizations particularly with relevant LK and TK, and the social science of LK and TK—can participate in the Council’s process. Some Taskforce members have experience with producing similar media, suggesting various tools or platforms that would allow the Taskforce and Council to create narrative and content. The Taskforce recognizes this work product could be limited by expertise and available funding.

- Prepare a final, encompassing report and presentation for the Council. While the Taskforce anticipates providing reports and presentations to the Council and some of its committees (e.g., FEP Team or Ecosystem Committee) at discrete points in time, the Taskforce will provide a final report that provides a detailed, retrospective look at the work completed and possible recommendations for future work or progress related to LK, TK, and subsistence.

**Summary of Public Testimony**

The Taskforce received public testimony from Raychelle Daniel. Ms. Daniel thanked the Taskforce for their work thus far and asked the Taskforce to consider having at least one future meeting in a Bering Sea community. Ms. Daniel also asked the Taskforce to consider how Bering Sea community members might be involved in the Taskforce, including in Taskforce products, noting the importance and relevance of their potential recommendations for Taskforce work. Related, Ms. Daniel requested that, if there was an opportunity for additional community members or LK and TK experts to sit on the Taskforce, that it be considered by the Taskforce and the Council.
References


