



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## B1 Executive Director's Report

June 2022

### Action Memo

#### Welcome to Sitka

The Council last met in Sitka in 2019, and it's great to be back! I have a few announcements to start off the meeting:

- There are Covid precautions for in-person attendees, consistent with CDC guidelines. The CDC Covid-19 community level for the Sitka Borough is currently at High. As such, we strongly recommend attendees wear a mask during the meeting, and ask that participants attend remotely and take a COVID test if feeling sick. Testing is available. A handout on Covid meeting protocols is attached under agenda item A.
- All Council lunches will be catered.
- We need to break early (by 4 pm) on Friday and Saturday afternoon, so the room can be rearranged for the Sitka music festival.

#### Cora Campbell's Last Meeting

This will be Ms. Cora Campbell's last meeting as a Council member – at least for now -- as she did not put in for re-appointment. Cora started her participation in the Council process as an Advisory Panel member from January 2004 through February 2006. She later served as a Council member in the role of Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner from August 2010 through October 2014. And most recently, an appointed Council member from August 2019 to August 2022.

We all have appreciated Ms. Campbell's laser-focused, no-nonsense approach and her ability to peel away the layers of the onion and get right to the core of the decision at hand. She certainly never asked a softball question to staff when they were in the hot seat!

We wish to thank Ms. Campbell for her many years of service to the North Pacific Council and her efforts to improve fisheries in the North Pacific. Cora, we wish you the best in your future endeavors, and hope you stay involved in the Council process.

#### NOAA Fisheries VIP Delegation

We are fortunate to have leadership from NOAA Fisheries headquarters joining us at the June Council meeting. Our visitors include:

- Ms. Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries
- Dr. Sean McNally, Advisor to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
- Ms. Kate Naughten, NOAA Fisheries Director of Communications
- Dr. Zach Penney, NOAA Policy Advisor on NOAA Fisheries and Tribal Issues

We welcome you all to Alaska and taking the time to visit with the North Pacific Council!

## NOAA Fisheries Regional Action Plans for Public Comment

NOAA Fisheries has invited public comment on seven draft 2022-24 Climate Regional Action Plans (RAPs) released in April. The draft RAPs are designed to provide decision-makers with tools and actionable information to prepare for and respond to climate-related changes in marine and coastal ecosystems. NOAA is specifically interested in input on the draft RAPs, including comments on the clarity of the goals and activities, ways to strengthen the plans, and what additional goals and activities need to be addressed. Submitted comments will be considered in development of the final RAPs. Note that there are 3 RAPs for the Alaska Region:

- [Gulf of Alaska - Regional Action Plan](#)
- [Eastern Bering Sea - Regional Action Plan](#)
- [Beaufort and Chuckchi Seas - Regional Action Plan](#)

A draft letter is **attached**, and the Council may wish to provide further direction on the letter following public comment. Information on the draft RAPs and the call for public input is available [here on the NOAA Fisheries website](#). The public comment period has been extended to July 29, 2022.

## NOAA Fisheries Invites Public Comment on New Draft Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy

On May 4, 2022, NOAA Fisheries released its [Draft Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy](#) and invited public comments to be submitted [online](#) through August 19. In 2021, President Biden signed Executive Orders 13985 and 14008 to promote equity and environmental justice (EEJ) within the federal government and its external-facing efforts. In response, the FY22-26 Department of Commerce's Strategic Plan revised its mission, "to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity for all communities," and published its Equity Action Plan. NOAA Fisheries responded by convening an EEJ Working Group to improve information sharing, coordinate internal expertise, and to inform implementation of EEJ.

The NOAA Fisheries EEJ Working Group developed this Draft EEJ Strategy to provide guidance for incorporating and prioritizing EEJ in ongoing and future activities in support of NOAA Fisheries' mission. NOAA Fisheries' three overarching EEJ goals are to: 1) prioritize identification, equitable treatment and meaningful involvement of underserved communities; 2) provide equitable delivery of services; and 3) prioritize EEJ in the agency's mission and work. The Draft EEJ Strategy (page 8) states that "To achieve these goals, each national program (e.g., Office of Protected Resources, Office of Habitat Conservation, etc.) and geographic region (e.g., Southeast, Pacific Islands, etc.) will create an EEJ step-down implementation plan (possibly as part of their NOAA Fisheries Geographic Strategic Plans for FY 2023-2028) that is specific and responsive to the needs of underserved communities and allows for the input of underserved communities. Each program, science center, and regional office will set EEJ as Priority Areas or milestones in annual strategic planning starting in FY 2023."

Through this call for public comment, NOAA Fisheries is seeking assistance in several areas to help identify:

- Who the agency's underserved communities are
- How the agency can reduce barriers to underserved communities
- How the agency can better incorporate equity and environmental justice into our daily activities
- How we can improve equity in our programs and policies now, with our current resources, and in the future
- Help evaluating whether the draft recommendations for action are on target

## Plan Team Nominations

We have received several nominations to fill vacancies on the Groundfish Plan Teams. Nomination letters and resume packages are attached. The SSC will review the qualifications for each and provide a recommendation to the Council at this meeting. The following persons have been nominated

Ms. Kristan Blackhart (NMFS) for the GOA Groundfish Plan Team  
Ms. Caitlin Allen Akselrud (NMFS) for the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team  
Ms. Jane Sullivan (NMFS) for the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team  
Ms. Beth Matta (NMFS) for the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team  
Dr. Michael Smith (NMFS) for the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team  
Dr. Andrew Seitz BSAI Groundfish Plan Team

## Reflections on the Council Process

The Council requested an update on priority issues stemming from the staff paper on “Reflections on the Council Process” from February (see: <https://tinyurl.com/councilreflection>). A progress report on the five ideas that the Council prioritized is attached; some ideas are potentially ready for Council action at this meeting (AP/SSC nominations, B reports), while others are still being explored and we will report back in October (harvest specifications timing, meeting schedule). I envision that the Council will receive this report as part of the B-1 presentations, hear public testimony under both B-1 and E-1, and potentially take some action during Staff Tasking.

## MREP

Ms. Lauren O'Brien from the Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) is attending the Council meeting this week. She is interested in speaking with attendees about launching a MREP workshop in the North Pacific. There has been growing interest among some in Alaska to develop an MREP workshop series in the region, and funds are available to develop the program. MREP aims to hold the initial training sessions in the region beginning in 2023. The following is a summary from Ms. O'Brien:

“The Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) is a 2-part workshop series which offers fishermen education in the basic elements of fishery science and effective participation in the fishery management process. It was launched 2 decades ago by a group of fishermen in New England, and it has been very effective in developing new leaders in the fishing industry across six Council regions spanning the U.S. Eastern seaboard and continental U.S. West coast. MREP staff have recently been asked if a similar program could be developed as an offering to fishermen in the U.S. North Pacific region, and have secured funding to do so. The success of MREP in other regions is, in large part, because it is "by fishermen for fishermen," guided by a regional Steering Committee of industry stakeholders, in close collaboration with the council and NMFS. To this end, MREP Senior Program Manager Lauren O'Brien will be at the June NPFMC meeting to meet with industry, as well as Council and NMFS staff, and other stakeholders, to discuss building an MREP in the North Pacific council region. If you are interested in discussing MREP further with Lauren, please contact her at (207) 228-1684 or [lobrien@gmri.org](mailto:lobrien@gmri.org). Learn more at <https://mrep.gmri.org/>.”

## **BBRKC Request for Information (RFI)**

In April, the Council's [motion](#) on Bristol Bay red king crab (BBRKC) requested that “each sector with crab mortality” confer and bring information about voluntary measures that could reduce crab mortality in non-directed fisheries and reduce discard mortality in crab fisheries, and could be implemented as soon as 2023. In addition, sectors were also requested to describe research that could inform development of more flexible and effective spatial management measures, gear modifications to reduce impacts on BBRKC, or to evaluate unobserved crab mortality in the trawl sector.

Given the formality of the request, the Council has noticed a Request for Information (RFI) in the Federal Register. Responses to this request are voluntary and will be received in a written format prior to the October 2022 Council meeting where the Council will review responses and also receive an expanded staff discussion paper on various topics related to management and research that could affect the BBRKC stock (see also [April motion](#)). Responses may be submitted via the Council's eAgenda portal. The page for submission – *Bristol Bay Red King Crab – Request for Information (RFI)* – can be accessed at <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2941>. The deadline for submission is Friday, September 23, 2022.

Responses may be voluntarily submitted by any fishery participant that is described by the Council's motion. Responses need not be aggregated at the “sector level”. Individuals, companies, or organizations who would like to address the Council on this topic may do so as part of the Council's typical agenda process. In other words, submission of a written comment in response to this RFI is not required. Any individual, company, or organization that wishes to give oral testimony may sign up on the in-meeting agenda as customary, and written comments may be submitted to the Council's October meeting agenda by any member of the public until the customary deadline, which is the Friday before the meeting begins (September 30, 2022). The Council is aware that written comments submitted to the RFI and comments on the October Council agenda may be duplicative in some cases. Responding to the RFI does not preclude written or oral testimony at the Council meeting in any way.

## **National SSC meeting (SCS7)**

The Scientific Coordination Subcommittee will convene the 7th national meeting of the CCC's Scientific Coordination Subcommittee (SCS7) in person this summer. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will host this meeting August 15-17, 2022 in Sitka Alaska, and representatives of all the RFMC SSCs will attend. The meeting, “Adapting Fisheries Management to a Changing Ecosystem,” is focused upon various aspects of addressing Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM), including ecosystem indicators, multi-species modeling and addressing distributional shifts in managed stocks. The three primary themes of this meeting are: 1. How to incorporate ecosystem indicators into the stock assessment process? 2. Developing information to support management of interacting species in consideration of EBFM. 3. How to assess and develop fishing level recommendations for species exhibiting distributional changes?

Former SSC Chair Dr. Anne Hollowed will chair the meeting, and Council vice-Chair Bill Tweit will provide opening remarks. The meeting will be broadcast for those who are interested. A flyer is **attached**, and the draft agenda is posted at <https://www.fisherycouncils.org/scientific-coordination-subcommittee>.

## Council Coordination Committee meeting

The Council Coordination Committee (CCC) met May 17-19, 2022. The meeting was hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Council in Annapolis, Maryland. Bill Tweit and I attended in-person. Several important topics were discussed, including the NMFS science initiatives, Council and NMFS climate change initiatives, area-based management, and equity and environmental justice, along with several other topics. A report of the meeting has been published and available here: <http://www.fisherycouncils.org/s/Final-May-2022-CCC-Meeting-Report.pdf>

## Council Written Comment Policy

At every meeting, staff reports publicly to the Council on any comments removed from the commenting system, and the rationale for removal, so that we can monitor and revise the process as needed to address unanticipated events. The June meeting comment period was open for 15 days, from May 20 to noon on June 3. No submitted comments were removed.

## Social Media Outreach

Upon recommendation from the Community Engagement Committee and public comment, the Council has started using [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for meeting announcements and special event notices. The Council will evaluate the effectiveness after a 6-month trial period and make recommendations (on whether or not to continue allocating staff resources to social media). You can 'like' and 'share' to increase the pages' reach.

## Recent Staff and Council member activities

- Some staff participated in the Anchorage citywide clean-up on May 5.
- I attended the memorial service for Clem Tillion on Saturday, May 7 on behalf of the Council.
- Bill Tweit and I attended the CCC meeting in Annapolis MD on May 16-19.
- Diana Stram has returned from her 33-day placement as a Fulbright Specialist in Madagascar, helping the Ministry of Fisheries prepare for the blue economy.

## Committee Meetings

The following Committee and Plan Team meetings have occurred since the April meeting:

- The **BSAI Crab Plan Team** met May 16-20 to review AIGKC, snow crab models, and various other updates. You will receive the Plan Team report under Agenda Item C-3.
- The **Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee** (PNCIAC) met on May 25 to review the snow crab rebuilding discussion paper. The report is available on the [PNCIAC meeting eAgenda](#). PNCIAC Chair Steve Minor will present the Committee report under Agenda Item C-3.
- The **IFQ Committee** met on May 26 to review analyses for the IFQ omnibus, RQE funding, IFQ medical transfers, and Area 4 vessel use caps. You will receive the committee report under Agenda Item D-2.
- The **Trawl EM Committee** met on May 31 to review the Trawl EM analysis. You will receive the committee report under Agenda Item C-4.

- The **Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC)** met on June 1 to review the Observer Annual report and receive other updates. You will receive the committee report under Agenda Item C-5.
- The **Enforcement Committee** met on June 2 to review the Trawl EM analysis, the enforcement chapter of the Observer Annual report, and OLE Alaska Division's strategic priorities for 2023-2027. You will receive the committee report under Agenda Item C-4.

### **Other Activities this week**

The Alaska Climate Integrated Modeling (ACLIM) project team is hosting an evening workshop during the Council meeting, on Wednesday, June 8, from 5.30-7.30 pm. The team is interested in better understanding stakeholder priorities for identifying socioeconomic scenarios. A flyer is **attached**.

There will be a reception hosted by the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association at the Halibut Point Recreation Site on Thursday June 9<sup>th</sup> from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. We have arranged for shuttle buses to and from Harrigan Hall. A flyer with more information is **attached**.