



D6 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

June 2019 Council Meeting

Action Memo

- Staff: Diana Evans
- Other Presenters: Kerim Aydin (SSC only)
Steve MacLean for Ecosystem Committee report
- Action Required: 1. Review FEP Team report, approve FEP Team Terms of Reference
2. Review draft Action Module Workplans, and appoint Taskforces for each Action Module

BACKGROUND

In December 2019, the Council adopted the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). The Bering Sea FEP establishes a framework for the Council's continued progress towards ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) of the Bering Sea fisheries, and relies and builds on the Council's existing processes, advisory groups, and management practice. The core FEP document (finalized in January 2019 to accommodate comments from the Council and SSC during the December 2018 meeting) document identifies management goals and objectives for the FEP and for monitoring of the Bering Sea ecosystem, and describes how the FEP framework will support research projects (Action Modules) to address Council priorities. The FEP offers a framework for strengthening trust, transparency, and a sense of shared investment among managers, scientists, and stakeholders. In adopting the BS FEP, the Council endorsed the expression of EBFM in the North Pacific as characterized in the document, as well as the ecosystem goals and Bering Sea strategic objectives that are included in the draft, and the articulation of how the BS FEP framework concept is supposed to work. The BS FEP does not have the force of law; it is a Council policy document, which the Council can modify, adapt, and update at any time.

The FEP was prepared by the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team, which is an interagency group of Council, NMFS, and other Federal, State and IPHC staff, with contributions from other Council and NMFS staff, and with extensive input from the Council's Ecosystem Committee. With the adoption of the FEP, the BS FEP Team has transitioned from its development role to an ongoing BS FEP Team role. The Team held their first meeting in this capacity on May 6-7, 2019, at the AFSC in Seattle. The Team report is attached to this agenda item. The FEP included an outline of the functions of the ongoing BS FEP Team; the Team has converted this to a proposed Terms of Reference, for the Council's approval at this meeting.

One of the tasks of the FEP Team is to manage the Council's action modules related to the BS FEP. In December 2018, the Council approved five Action Modules, and initiated work on two of them. Council and NMFS staff have drafted workplans for the two initiated Action Modules, which have been reviewed and approved by the FEP Team and which are attached under this agenda item. As agreed in December 2018, these workplans are presented here for Council review, and for the Council to appoint Taskforces for each Action Module which will complete the workproducts envisioned under each module. The FEP Team report includes general recommendations for the type of expertise that is needed for each Taskforce. Staff suggests that the Council may initiate a call for nominations at this meeting for the two Taskforces, using the criteria identified by the Team, from which the Council Chair could appoint the Taskforces over the summer. In this way, the Taskforces would be able to schedule their first meetings sometime in the late summer/ early fall.