



E Staff Tasking

October 2022 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: David Witherell, Diana Evans

Action Required:

1. Review Committees and Plan Teams
2. Provide direction on tasking priorities and scheduling

BACKGROUND

Committees and Plan Teams

Membership

Attached is the updated Council committee list reflecting changes since June 2022. In June, the Council announced its intent and a call for nominations to form a Salmon Bycatch Committee. As reflected in the ED report, the Council has also received two candidates for the GOA Groundfish Plan Team. The Council may make these appointments during this meeting.

Also in June 2022, the Council called for nominations for 2023 Advisory Panel and SSC members. Nominations will continue to be accepted through November 15, 2022, through the Council's [eAgenda nominations portal](#). The Council indicated in June that it intends to discuss including a Tribal representative seat on the Advisory Panel; if that is still the case, the Council should specify language at this meeting so that interested persons may apply before the deadline.

The Council usually calls for nominations to the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC) at this meeting, with appointments for 2023-2024. All members are appointed to a two-year term, with no term limits, so all members are eligible for reappointment this year.

Meeting status

The following Committee and Plan Team meetings are currently anticipated:

- **Joint Groundfish Plan Teams** – week of November 14-18, 2022, Seattle, WA/hybrid
- **Joint Protocol Committee** – October 13, 2022, Anchorage AK
- **Charter Halibut Management Committee** – October 21, 2022, virtual; December 7, 2022, Anchorage, AK
- **BS FEP Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce (LKTKS)** – November 1-2, 2022, virtual
- **Trawl Electronic Monitoring Committee** – November 2022 (T)
- **Salmon Bycatch Committee** – November 2022 (T)
- **BSAI Crab Plan Team** – January 17-20, 2022 (T)

The SSC is also hosting an SSC workshop on February 7-8, 2022, as part of the Council meeting in Seattle, WA.

Tasking and Scheduling

Posted on the eAgenda are updated versions of tasking documents for background material: the 3-meeting outlook, Council staff responsibilities, and the groundfish workplan. The observer projects status is included under agenda D5.

PSEIS Supplemental Information Report timing

In April, in response to the Ecosystem Committee's recommendation, the Council asked staff to report back on timing for developing a new Supplemental Information Report (SIR) to assess whether the evaluation of the groundfish fisheries as described in the Programmatic Groundfish Supplement Environmental Impact Statement (PSEIS) of 2004, continue to represent the impacts of those fisheries on the environment. The Council completed a SIR in 2015 to address the same question, and concluded at that time that the PSEIS continued to provide an accurate understanding of the impacts of the fisheries. Staff will begin to collect information to develop a new SIR, and intend to bring a document back to the Council in 2023.

Draft December 2022 agenda

Staff have not yet prepared a draft December agenda, but the three-meeting outlook provides the agenda items as currently planned. Consistent with previous discussions in the Council process ideas paper, staff is intending to limit SSC agenda items in December largely to groundfish specifications, to address workload concerns. The SSC will devote the majority of its time to review of the BSAI and GOA Groundfish assessments and harvest specifications, and will also review the snow crab rebuilding analysis initial review, which is time sensitive.

The Council will also receive the groundfish specifications and snow crab rebuilding reports, and has additionally scheduled several hours for a salmon agenda item, responding to the motion from June 2022. The Council will hear the findings from the State of Alaska Bycatch Taskforce, recommendations from the Council's Salmon Bycatch Committee, and a staff discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch.

Future Council meeting locations – Sitka again in June 2023

We have changed the location for the June 2023 Council meeting, and will be returning to hold the meeting again in Sitka, AK. We were originally scheduled to meet in Juneau, but the event space there is undergoing renovation; similarly, the Kodiak convention center will also still be under construction. We will have full broadcasting of the AP, SSC, and Council, and opportunities for remote testimony as at all recent Council meetings, if you are not able to attend in person.

In February 2023 and February 2024, the Council will be meeting in Seattle, WA. As described in the staff paper under agenda item B1, we can continue to discuss whether to retain the February meeting, and if so, how to accommodate a Pacific Northwest meeting in the Council schedule, for meeting dates in 2025. We will meet at the Renaissance Hotel, which will allow us to redeem contract obligations that were rolled over during COVID.

Council tasking priorities

As you can see from the 3-meeting outlook, there are currently many items in the batter's box, and we have not yet moved up many issues to populate the three-meeting outlook. **Staff is specifically looking for Council input on tasking priorities moving forward.** As you have heard in the B2 report, NMFS is prioritizing staff work on projects while they work to permanently backfill vacant positions, which is affecting their ability to participate in all of the Council's ongoing analyses and also the timeline for implementing some actions that have already passed through Council final action. For new analyses, Council and NMFS staff purposely work closely together to ensure that the management and enforcement aspects of potential management action are fully understood by the Council during its deliberation. Without this input from NMFS staff, the Council is likely to see more inefficiency in the process, either as analyses that have to come back before the Council after final action if a management or enforcement

issue is unresolved; or because the delay in rulemaking for Council recommendations means that staff end up having to refresh analyses with new data. Council input on how best to use staff time productively will help to guide how tasked projects should proceed.

Additionally, there are several program and allocation reviews currently in the batter's box (some of which were to have been completed in 2022 and which were delayed), as well as some potential actions that are uncertain. For example, the development of revised allocations for a Catch Share Plan is dependent on whether Congress passes legislation allowing for the RQE funding; and current litigation on the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP amendment might bring that action back before the Council.

Public Comment

Several written public comments have been submitted to the Council and are available on the eAgenda.

The Council also received a letter from NMFS under B2 informing the Council that NMFS had received a request from the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers to undertake emergency rulemaking, and providing an opportunity for the Council to review and provide input with this request if desired. Should the Council choose to provide input, we have posted the NMFS policy guidelines on the use of emergency rules to the Council eAgenda.