

Ecosystem Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 10, 2013 8am-noon
Birch/Willow Room, Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK

Draft Agenda:

- Continue discussion of a vision statement for maintaining productive ecosystems and sustainable long-term fisheries
- Recommend draft language to the Council
- Discuss and evaluate near- and long-term implications for Council actions

Recap of minutes and Council action from September 2013 workshop / October Council meeting:

The Council endorsed consideration of two approaches, and asked for a discussion of the relative merits of either:

1. Developing a comprehensive ecosystem-based fishery management policy, using the existing documents as a basis, but perhaps refining or adding to the objectives or approach; or
2. Developing a new ecosystem-based vision statement, articulating the Council's overarching goals and principles for achieving them.

The Council agreed with the Committee's recommendation that a vision statement should include the following components:

- Broad focus – encompass all Council ecosystems (Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, Arctic)
- Protect fisheries from impacts from other sources (shipping, etc.)
- Science-based – management based on the best scientific information available, including local and traditional knowledge, as well as having scientists interacting with managers in the Council process
- Reflective of the need to bring people together to talk about tough issues, in order to find a path to mutually-agreed end goals (sustainable fisheries and healthy ecosystems)
- Bring in the human component (communities, social sciences, etc.)
- Acknowledge that EBFM includes tradeoffs that need to be addressed explicitly in decisionmaking
- Recognition of uncertainty, for example changing climate and associated ocean trends, and support for Council and other stakeholders to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances

The Committee articulated the following example of a vision statement in September:

Healthy, biodiverse, resilient ecosystems that (1) are managed using a broad, precautionary, transparent, and inclusive process that is based on sound science (including local and traditional knowledge), allows for an analysis of tradeoffs, accounts for changing conditions, and mitigates threats; and (2) provide opportunities for vibrant sustainable fisheries, the subsistence way of life, undisturbed habitat, and designations for national fisheries food security areas.