



B1 Executive Director's Report

April 2022

Action Memo

Welcome Back!

After 2 years of meeting virtually, it is great to see everyone in person again!

The Council decided that this should be a hybrid meeting, with both in-person and remote participation by members, presentations by staff, and testimony from the public. This requires a whole new suite of meeting procedures and new use of information technology for meeting platforms. There will no doubt be glitches and delays, and possible revisions to the process during the meeting, so we ask everyone to be patient.

Briefly these changes from prior meetings include:

- There are Covid precautions for in-person attendees. All attendees are encouraged to be vaccinated and wear a mask during the meeting, and to attend remotely and take a test that day if feeling sick. Testing is available. There will be social distancing of members around the table and in the public seating area. A handout on Covid meeting protocols is **attached under agenda item A.**
- Council members in the meeting room will be using press-to-talk microphones, like those used by the SSC and AP.
- The use of Zoom (rather than Adobe Connect) for remote participants and public. There will be no video of the Council/SSC/AP meetings, other than presentations and motions. It will be up to every individual to keep themselves muted until it is their turn to speak.
- Public comment will be taken for each agenda item, both in-person and remotely, with signup online using the eAgenda, and with testifiers indicating how they will testify. We will attempt to take testimony in order, barring technical difficulties.
- Council lunches will not be catered. A list of nearby places to get lunch or lunch delivery will be available from staff.

New Council Members

On March 24, **Mr. Jon Kurland** was named as the new Regional Administrator in Alaska for NOAA Fisheries. Jon is a 31-year veteran of the agency, having served in two regional offices and headquarters, including three senior leadership roles in the Alaska Region: Assistant Regional Administrator for Habitat Conservation, Acting Deputy Regional Administrator, and, since 2012, as Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources. Jon succeeds Dr. Jim Balsiger, who retired late last year after having been in the position for 21 years. A news release on Mr. Kurland's appointment is here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/noaa-fisheries-names-jon-kurland-new-regional-administrator-alaska>

On March 14, **Ms. Sara Boario** started as the new Regional Director for US Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Region. Ms. Boario most recently served as the Assistant Regional Director for External Affairs in Alaska, where she has distinguished herself as not only a Service leader on cross-cutting efforts with Tribes and local governments, but also as a prominent voice on diversity issues. A news release on Ms. Boario's appointment is here: https://www.fws.gov/story/2022-03/services-new-alaska-regional-director-announced?fbclid=IwAR3ZWIE2b7t_sZd1VyZ-lxuWM_Wsqw8Y5FPR0pMXJqvHuXKmUcZjrjBkmiA

Welcome aboard Jon and Sara! We look forward to working with you.

Mr. Mezirow Honored by the IGFA

On March 24, the International Game Fish Association bestowed the prestigious Tommy Gifford Award to Andy Mezirow and five other recipients in recognition of their extraordinary contributions to the advancement of sport fishing through innovation, outstanding catches or noteworthy examples of leadership in their trade. More information on the award can be found here: <https://igfa.org/2021/12/03/2022-tommy-gifford-awards-ceremony/>

Congratulations Andy!



Dr. Stram Selected as Fulbright Specialist

Dr. Diana Stram has been selected as a Fulbright specialist to work for the Ministry of Fisheries in Madagascar for their project: Blue Economy and Fisheries Policies Development. A press release is **attached**. In this role, Diana will work in the Ministry offices with their fisheries policy team. The main focus will be addressing policy guidance and developing ideas to apply new directives on adhering to the fisheries sustainability provisions, directly addressing their progress on moving towards the Blue Economy. As such, Diana will be providing the Ministry with specific examples of sustainability concepts using the framework employed by the North Pacific Council.

The objective will be to meet ecosystem-based fishery management goals for the Ministry's consideration in refining their current programs and management. In doing so, Diana will be holding seminars, developing educational briefing materials, and conducting in-person meetings with diverse managers and stakeholders to apply the North Pacific Council framework to Madagascar. Specific areas of interest to the Council are discussions of climate resilient fisheries policies and broad stakeholder participation in fisheries management. Participation in this project will highlight the ongoing management of our Council and showcase the goals and objectives of our management system globally as well as provide additional informational and educational materials for the Council website and briefing materials afterwards.

Throughout this 33-day Fulbright post which begins April 22, Diana will be working remotely to monitor her ongoing tasks. She will return in time for the June 2022 Council meeting.

Cultural Awareness Training

Council members participated in a virtual, two-day cultural awareness training, “Alaska Native Governance & Protocols” hosted by First Alaskans Institute on March 16 and 17, 2022. The training covered Alaska Native cultural worldviews, governance structures, and other laws affecting everyday life for Alaska Native Tribes and their members. Council members found the training to be highly engaging and informative, providing Council members with a better understanding of Alaska Native perspectives, the diversity of these perspectives, and some of the challenges Alaska Native Tribes and their members may face when engaging the Council’s decision-making process.

Yukon Salmon Summit

On February 28 – March 2nd, 2022, the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) held the Yukon Salmon Summit in Fairbanks, AK. The Summit focused on Indigenous Knowledge and Tribal governance to support ecosystem stewardship from the ocean to the headwaters. On March 2nd, agency staff and other partners were invited to participate in the Summit. Council member Mr. Bill Tweit attended in-person while Dr. Diana Stram and Dr. Kate Haapala (Council staff) attended the Summit virtually. A list of Tribal priorities and concerns shared from participants at the Summit is **attached**.

The third day of the Summit provided an opportunity for Tribal and community members from across the Yukon River to dialogue with agency staff about their priorities (e.g., increased involvement of Alaska Native Elders, hands-on learning in communities, capacity building, and more). As part of this dialogue, Tribal members shared their concerns over salmon run abundance, subsistence fishing closures, food security, and being able to maintain cultural practices and subsistence ways of life. The Council was able to share its current approach to salmon bycatch management and broader efforts for ecosystem-based fisheries management. Overall, the Summit provided an opportunity for the Council to build new relationships, answer questions related to existing salmon bycatch management programs, and better understand the current concerns of Tribes and communities across the Yukon River.

Reflections on the Council Process

The Executive Committee, with the AP and SSC leadership, met on March 14 to discuss the “Reflections on the Council Process” paper from February (see: <https://tinyurl.com/councilreflection>) and develop recommendations for consideration by the full Council. A summary of that meeting is **attached**. 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 to further evaluate changes during Staff Tasking.

Annual IFQ Report to the Fleet

AKFIN, in conjunction with NMFS, has provided an annual IFQ Report to the Fleet, **attached**. The report was last created in 2014, and in April 2021, the IFQ Committee and Council requested it be renewed. The new report format is a simplified data report.

Federal Survey Mitigation Implementation Strategy for Offshore Wind Energy Development

To support the Biden-Harris Administration's goals of advancing offshore wind energy production, NOAA Fisheries and BOEM developed a [Draft Federal Survey Mitigation Strategy](#) to address anticipated impacts of offshore wind energy development on NOAA Fisheries' scientific surveys. The joint strategy underscores the shared commitment to advance offshore wind energy production responsibly while protecting marine biodiversity and promoting cooperative ocean use.

NOAA Fisheries' surveys are essential for the sustainable management of our nation's fisheries, recovery of protected resources, conservation of habitats and ecosystems, and understanding the impacts of climate change. The implementation strategy identifies the essential components of mitigating the impacts of offshore wind energy development on the surveys, as well as actions to accomplish the goals and objectives of mitigation. While this initial strategy focuses on the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, it will serve as a model to address the impacts of offshore wind on NOAA Fisheries surveys nationwide. Read the full Draft Federal Survey Mitigation Implementation Strategy [here](#). To submit comments, visit [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and search for [docket BOEM-2022-0012](#). The deadline to submit comments is May 6, 2022.

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 April meeting comment period was open for 15 days, from March 18 to noon on April 1. No submitted comments were removed.

Recent Staff and Council member activities

- Bill Tweit attended Day 3 of the Yukon Salmon Summit hosted by the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the Tanana Chiefs Conference, held in Fairbanks February 28-March 2. Several staff listened to the discussion remotely.
- On March 3, Kate Haapala and Diana Stram attended the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council meeting.
- On March 15, 17, 22, and 24 Kate Haapala attended the Collaboration with Native Nations and Tribal Consultation Training hosted by the Udall Foundation.
- On March 23, Diana Stram participated at a YRDFFA board meeting on salmon bycatch.
- Sarah Marrinan and AP member Brian Ritchie attended the Recreational Fishing Summit on March 29-30 in Arlington, Virginia. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/event/2022-national-saltwater-recreational-fisheries-summit>

Committee Meetings

In addition to the Executive Committee meeting previously mentioned, the following Committee and Plan Team meetings have occurred since the February meeting:

- The **Scallop Plan Team** met on February 16 to develop the SAFE report. You will receive the Plan Team report under Agenda Item C-3.
- The **Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee** (PNCIAC) met on March 2 to review BOF proposals, opilio rebuilding, and review the Bristol Bay red king crab discussion paper. The report is *attached*.
- The **Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee** (PCFMAC) met on March 3 to receive an update on the partial coverage integrated analysis. You will receive a committee report in June.
- The **BSFEP Climate Change Taskforce** met on March 15-17, to continue development of their synthesis of current climate readiness. You will receive an update on the project under Agenda Item D-2.
- The **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (BSFEP) Team** met on March 18 and 21 for their annual meeting. You will receive the Plan Team report under Agenda Item D-2.
- The **Enforcement Committee** met on March 29 to review the IFQ Omnibus issue. You will receive the committee report under Agenda Item C-1.
- The **Ecosystem Committee** met on March 29 – 30 to review progress on the BSFEP and receive updates on habitat conservation and ecosystem research. You will receive the committee report under Agenda Item D-2.

Other Meetings this week

On Friday beginning at 3 pm, the Council will be in Executive Session to discuss administrative matters. The Executive/Finance Committee will meet immediately afterward to review the status of Council finances and complete a performance review with the Executive Director.