



B1 Executive Director's Report

December 2023

Action Memo

Plan Team Nominations

The Alaska Fisheries Science Center has nominated **Dr. Lukas DeFilippo** for the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team. Dr. DeFilippo is a Research Fish Biologist in the Auke Bay Laboratories, where he is currently working on understanding prohibited species catch dynamics in the Bering Sea groundfish fishery, as well as describing the impact of climate variability on western Alaska Chinook and chum salmon population dynamics. Previously, he worked on redesigning the eastern Bering Sea bottom trawl surveys and developing model-based survey data products for use in stock assessment. A nomination letter and resume are attached.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has nominated **Mr. Ethan Nichols** for the BSAI Crab Plan Team, to replace departing member Miranda Westphal. Ethan is currently the BSAI Management Biologist in Dutch Harbor within the Commercial Fisheries Division, after having served as the Assistant Area Management Biologist since mid-2016. A nomination letter and resume are attached.

The SSC will review the nominations and provide a recommendation to the Council.

SSC and AP appointments

The Council will review nominations for SSC and AP during Executive Session and the Chair will announce these appointments at the end of the meeting. Nomination letters for AP seats are posted here: <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2999>. Nominations for the AP Tribal Representative seat are available here: <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/3013>.

All current members of the SSC have requested reappointment. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has also requested the appointment of **Dr. Fabio Caltabellotta** as the alternate WDFW member of the SSC, to cover the meetings when the primary WDFW representative Dr. Kathryn Meyer is unable to participate. Dr. Caltabellotta is currently a Research Scientist 2 with WDFW Marine Fish Science Unit. He served as WDFW alternate SSC member on the Pacific Council SSC from 2020-2022. His resume is attached. The Council will review his qualifications during its Executive Session.

CCC Update

The Council Coordination Committee (CCC) met in Arlington, Virginia on October 11-13. Ms. Drobica, Mr. Tweit, and I represented the NPFMC at the meeting. Major topics of the meeting included the draft climate governance procedural directive, Inflation Reduction Act funding, National Marine Sanctuaries, and NEPA, as well as updates on fisheries science, budget, legislation, and progress of the different CCC workgroups. More information, including the summary report from the meeting, can be found at <https://www.fisherycouncils.org/ccc-meetings>.

MAFAC Nominations

[NOAA Fisheries seeks nominations to fill vacancies on the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee \(MAFAC\)](#), an advisory group that researches, evaluates, and provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary and NOAA on agency policies, activities, science, conservation, and regulatory programs critical to the mission and goals of NOAA Fisheries. Committee members are highly qualified, diverse individuals with experience in commercial, recreational, aquaculture, and non-commercial fisheries and businesses; seafood industry, including processing, marketing, restaurants, and related industries; marine, ecosystems, or protected resources management and conservation; and human dimensions or social sciences associated with living marine resources and working waterfronts.

A letter of interest and resume are due by **December 15, 2023**; full details on the opportunity, including instructions for submitting nominations, can be found [here](#). NOAA Fisheries strives to ensure MAFAC members represent a diversity of individuals and interests. We encourage nominations from all those interested across the country.

GOA Pacific Cod Sector Allocation Review

Pursuant to the Council's agreement in [April](#) regarding a more streamlined approach to allocation reviews, Michael Fey (PSMFC) has prepared a dashboard with relevant data tables on the GOA Pacific cod allocation, and a written report which consists of the formal allocation review. This review is provided every 10 years, and is used to evaluate whether or not changes may be needed to the allocation. Mr. Fey will provide a brief presentation on this allocation review. The written allocation review is [attached](#).

IRA Funding Workplan

NOAA Fisheries has provided additional details and guidance on the \$20 million Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds that are available to the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils. This will be a two-step process.

The first step is for each Council to provide an application to NOAA Grants for an overall amount of \$3.5 million, which includes a broad description of the entire proposal and details of how an initial \$375K funding for each Council will be spent. [This overall grant proposal is due December 31](#). Essentially, our proposal for the initial funding is to cover salary and benefits for the temporary climate project manager position and fund the climate change taskforce workshop. The broad description of the proposal encompasses the conceptual approach provided to the Council at staff tasking in October. This first proposal is currently in preliminary review at NMFS headquarters.

The second step is to provide a project specific proposal that will be funded on a competitive basis for the \$17 million remaining funds. However, Regional Fishery Management Council leadership has tried to make it clear to NOAA Fisheries that Councils are not interested in competing against each other for funds as we are on the same team, and all have a need to develop climate resilient fisheries that will exceed funding amounts. Thus, the Councils have agreed to move forward with project specific proposals of \$2.125 million each (i.e., an equal amount for each Council). [The project specific proposal is due January 31](#).

Based on the guidance from NOAA Fisheries, input from the Council in October, and agreements among the Councils, staff have developed a draft grant proposal and a draft project specific proposal for this IRA funding. Deputy Director Diana Evans will provide a summary of the workplan (attached) that forms the basis of these IRA funding proposals, for your feedback and advice.

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 December meeting comment period was open for 21 days, from November 10 to December 1. No submitted comments were removed.

Recent Staff and Council member activities

- Mr. Kenny Down participated in the AOOS Board meeting on September 21.
- Ms. Nicole Schmidt attended several virtual trainings on the new eRA online grants system in October and November.
- Ms. Rachel Baker and Ms. Diana Evans participated in North Pacific MREP Steering Committee calls during October and November.
- Mr. Rudy Tsukada attended Council new member training in Washington DC.
- Dr. Kate Haapala provided salmon bycatch updates to the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council on October 12, and to the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council on October 24, 2024.
- Dr. Haapala participated at the NMFS ARKO Equity and Environmental Justice Town Hall on October 25.
- Ms. Nicole Kimball and Ms. Diana Evans participated in the Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee meeting on November 30, 2023.

Committee and Plan Team Meetings

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

- The **Social Science Planning Team** met on October 18 and November 3 to review research priorities related to economics and social science. Their report will be presented to the SSC in February, to be used in the development of a comprehensive Council research priorities that the Council will review in April.
- The **Charter Halibut Management Committee** met on October 20, and meets again on December 6 to review and recommend management measures for the 2023 charter fisheries in area 2C and 3A. The committee report will be provided under Agenda Item C-7.
- The Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan **Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF)** met on November 1-2 to discuss recommendations for a 2024 workshop. They will present their report under Agenda Item D-2.
- The **BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams** met November 13-17 to review stock assessments and recommend harvest specifications. Their report will be presented under Agenda Items C-3 and C-4.
- The Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (**PNCIAC**) met on Tuesday, November 28, to discuss proposed crab amendments (processor use caps and C shares), and the Crab Rationalization Program review.
- The **BSAI Crab Plan Team** met to discuss research priorities related to BSAI crab on December 1st. Their report will be presented to the SSC in February.

Meetings this Week

The **Finance Committee** will meet in Executive Session on Wednesday, December 6 at 10 am to review status of finances, and financial planning with respect to the IRA funding and the upcoming 5-year grant application.

The Council will meet in **Executive Session** on Wednesday, December 6 at 1 pm in the Council office to discuss AP/SSC and other appointments, receive a report on the biennial financial audit, and discuss other administrative matters.

Dr. Ian Stewart will present information on the IPHC **halibut stock assessment** on Tuesday evening at 5:30 pm in the Dillingham/Katmai Room at the Hilton.

The **Alaska Sea Grant Young Fishermen's Summit** is taking place December 5-7 in Anchorage. You may see participants attending the Council meeting on Thursday.

The Alaska Marine Conservation Council is hosting a forum with guest speakers discussing a variety of fisheries issues on Thursday, December 7, at the 49th State Brewery from 6-8:30 pm.