

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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North Pacific Fishery Management Council Ecosystem Committee February 2, 2016 Minutes

Committee members present: Bill Tweit (Chairman), Jim Ayers, Steve Ignell, Stephanie Madsen, Rose Fosdick, Jeanne Hansen, Dave Fluharty (via phone), Steve MacLean (Council staff)

Others present: Jim Armstrong (Council staff), Matt Robinson (Council SeaGrant Fellow), Diana Evans (Council staff), David Witherell (Council staff), Steve Marx, Lauren Smoker, Jon Warrenchuk, Mariel Combs, Anne Vanderhoven, Shannon Carroll, Brande Gerke

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Ecosystem Committee met on February 2, 2016 from 1 – 4:30 PM at the Benson Hotel in Portland, OR. The main purpose of the meeting was to review the Groundfish Policy and Workplan, preliminary considerations for development of a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan team, and an update on the development of the 5-year review of Essential Fish Habitat descriptions in the Council's FMPs.

Jim Armstrong, Council staff, presented three alternatives for presenting and tracking the Council's progress toward meeting management objectives that were developed during the programmatic review of the Council's groundfish FMPs. Alternatives include the status quo, which is the way that objectives and progress toward meeting them are currently presented to the Council, and two alternatives that are designed to more efficiently present that information for review and tracking. The committee discussed the important pieces of information that should be presented to allow review of the Council's progress to meeting management objectives, the utility of the workplan review as a communication tool to allow the public to track the Council's process toward meeting management objectives, and ways to link Council objectives and progress with external partners. The committee approved the following statement to the Council:

The Ecosystem Committee continues to support the use of the Groundfish Workplan as a tool to communicate to the public about activities the Council is undertaking to move toward achieving their management objectives. The Committee recommends Alternative 2 as a presentation format, and recommends including a timeline for specific actions to provide information about current and upcoming actions.

Diana Evans (Council staff) presented a brief update on the progress made on the composition of a Bering Sea FEP team, terms of reference for the FEP team, and outreach and public involvement plans for the FEP, and Action Module 1 (gap analysis), as directed by the Council in December 2015. The committee discussed, and approved of the plan to structure the Core FEP team following the Plan Team model. It was emphasized by the committee that clear and consistent two-way communication between the FEP team and public is vital to allow input throughout the process while maintaining the efficiencies of a Plan Team structure to develop the Core FEP. The committee noted that the Council's Outreach Committee

may provide some guidance to structure that communication plan. The committee also approved of the plan for Action Module Workgroups to be composed of individuals with specific topical expertise without requirements for agency affiliation. The committee also briefly discussed the plans for developing Action Module 1 (gap analysis) and noted that the FEP and upcoming action modules are likely to help the Council meet other objectives that have been identified by the Council (e.g., EBFM, climate change strategy and vulnerability).

The committee also received a brief update from Jeanne Hanson (NMFS AKR, HCD) on what will be delivered to the committee and Council in April as part of the 5-year review of EFH descriptions in the Council's FMPs.

Public comment was presented by Steve Marx (Pew Charitable Trusts) and Shannon Carroll (Alaska Marine Conservation Council).