

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.