



# NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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## Action Memo

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Dan Hull, Chairman  
David Witherell, Executive Director

**Executive Director's Report** *(including CCC update, Northern Edge 2017 report (T), and outreach and community engagement discussion)*

### **Captain White's Last Meeting**

Captain Stephan White is undergoing a change of command, and while his new position will remain in Juneau, this will be his last meeting as a Council member representing the United States Coast Guard. Captain White has had an exemplary career to date in the USCG, and has received many medals, commendations, and other awards for his efforts. A full career biography is **attached**. In addition to shoreside assignments, Captain White has served on several USCG cutters, including serving as Commanding Officer of the USCGC ALEX HALEY in Kodiak, Alaska, and in other leadership positions aboard cutters based in Kodiak, Petersburg, Ketchikan, and Kittery, Maine. As a Council member, Captain White has contributed to Council discussions on a variety of issues and has participated on the Council's Enforcement Committee (he is currently the chairman of that committee). Best wishes in your future endeavors Captain White!

### **Council Coordinating Committee**

Chairman Hull, Mr. Tweit, Diana Evans and I participated at the interim CCC meeting, which was held in Washington DC on February 27-28. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Hull. Discussions were based around issues listed on the agenda (**attached**). Of note, NMFS is finalizing a proposed rule that addresses recusal issues including partial shares attribution and the close causal link language with respect to benefits from council actions. We also heard about the use of a free mobile application that hosts saltwater recreational fishing regulations in state and federal waters from Maine through Texas, and there is interest in expanding the reach of the mobile application to all coasts of the United States (see Fish Rules **attachments**). NOAA Administrator Admiral Tim Gallaudet stopped by to introduce himself and provide an overview of NOAA's focus areas for marine fisheries (including increasing seafood production through optimizing yield from wild harvest and increasing aquaculture, improving trade and market access, and getting the best return on investment in science and technology).

I have been busy working with staff to coordinate and prepare to host the annual CCC meeting, which will be held on May 22-24 in Sitka, Alaska. I am working on a draft agenda and will distribute it when it gets finalized. The organizing theme is "Collaborative Partnerships." At this point, I foresee the agenda including the following items: Budgets and Council grant planning, NMFS policies on aquaculture, bycatch reduction, electronic monitoring, and recusal determinations; policy directives, allocation reviews, research priorities, best scientific information available, EBFM regional implementation plans, EFPs, regulatory reform, recreational fisheries, and the NEFMC program review. There is a record number of people planning to attend this CCC meeting, so we have secured additional hotel rooms for the non-NMFS Council members and staff at the new

Aspen Hotel, which is just up the hill from the Westmark, across the street from the Fire Station.

### **Best Scientific Information Available**

At the February CCC meeting, NMFS provided a presentation and a draft white paper that describes a framework for determining that stock status determinations and harvest specifications are based on the best scientific information available (BSIA). The presentation and white paper are **attached**.

NMFS has requested Council comments, with the goal of completing development of the paper by the end of the fiscal year. Comments received by early May will allow NMFS to address them before the CCC meeting in May, with final comments due by July 1. To meet this schedule, I have requested that the SSC review this paper at this meeting and provide draft comments and recommendations to the Council on this issue.

### **Legislative Update**

#### **H.R. 200**

In February, the Council and its Legislative Committee reviewed H.R. 200 (Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act) as amended and provided guidance for preparation of a comment letter if so requested by a US Congressman, or congressional staff. On March 8, Chairman Hull and I received an email from Congressman Don Young's fishery staff Martha Newell specifically requesting NPFMC comments on amended H.R. 200 and H.R. 2079 (The Young Fishermen's Development Act). Our response letter is **attached**.

#### **S. 1520**

On February 28, 2018 the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017 for full consideration (revised bill **attached**). Our previous comments on the earlier version of the bill are posted here:

[https://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/CM/2017/101817/10Oct\\_SullivanLegislativeLtr.pdf](https://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/CM/2017/101817/10Oct_SullivanLegislativeLtr.pdf) In my review of the revised S. 1520 I have noted the following changes, all of which appear to me to be positive from the North Pacific perspective.

Sec 103 Study of LAPPs for mixed use fisheries and moratorium. A 2-year moratorium on Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs) for mixed-use fisheries (commercial, charter, recreational) now only applies to GOMFMC, SAFMC, and MAFMC. Oddly enough, the amended bill now specifically says that the National Academies study on LAPPs for mixed-use fisheries shall *not* include the areas covered by NPFMC (we don't have any mixed-use fisheries that meet the section 303A requirements for LAPPs anyway!).

Sec 104. Rebuilding. The amended bill took out the 10-year requirement for rebuilding, so that the time period for rebuilding will be as short as *practicable*, based on the time to rebuild without fishing mortality plus 1 mean generation time, and taking into account other factors. This new language is responsive to the NPFMC's earlier comments on the bill.

Sec 106 EFPs. The amended bill stripped out the 12-month duration limit and onerous analytical requirements. In its place, it added a requirement that councils will review EFPs after 12 months to determine whether any unintended negative impacts had occurred that would warrant discontinuation of the permit. I think that this new language will have minimal impact on EFPs in the North Pacific, as the Council normally receives a report on EFPs when they get completed.

### **Congressional Activities**

The most recent Congressional Activities report from the CCC's legislative liaison Dave Whaley is **attached**.

### **Proposed Process to Address Research Priorities**

In June 2017, the Council requested that Chair(s) of the SSC meet with the Council Chair and Executive Director to explore ways to refine our approach to developing and reviewing research priorities. The Council noted the difficulty in annually reviewing research priorities on the fly at a single meeting, particularly as the list of priorities has gotten so lengthy. In February 2018, the Council also picked up on the recommendation to identify a priority order for the 55 Urgent research priorities.

On March 6, 2018 a teleconference meeting was held to address the Council's research priority process. The meeting included Chairman Hull, Mr. Tweit, SSC Co-Chairs Anne Hollowed and Gordon Kruse, Mr. Merrill, as well as Council staff (David Witherell, Diana Evans, and Jim Armstrong). The proposed process for 2018 is **attached**.

### **Outreach**

#### **Rural Community Outreach**

In February, the Council decided to review existing outreach protocols and consider additional steps for rural outreach, and to develop an approach for a community engagement plan and develop a structured process to integrate traditional knowledge in the Council process. Staff has prepared a discussion paper to provide background for the Council to address these issues.

Because general outreach strategies are likely to affect how the Bering Sea FEP Team considers their outreach strategy, this discussion paper focuses on the Council's general outreach strategies and presents additional steps that could be considered. The Council's motion specific to the Bering Sea FEP is not addressed in this discussion paper. Rather, the Bering Sea FEP Team will address their outreach plans in the draft FEP scheduled for Council review in October 2018. Any decisions made as a result of this paper, however, are likely to affect the Bering Sea FEP team's outreach discussion.

#### **IFQ Outreach Meeting - Tuesday, June 5 in Kodiak, AK**

In February, Mr. Laukitis mentioned the possibility of holding a public outreach session in Kodiak on IFQ issues. The following plan and announcement was drafted for Council approval at this meeting.

The Council will hold a public outreach session on Tuesday evening, June 5, concurrent with its June 2018 meeting in Kodiak, AK. The session will provide an open forum for stakeholders to give insight on the present state of the halibut and sablefish IFQ Program and provide direction for future actions that might be considered by the Council and its IFQ Committee. The Council is particularly seeking input on issues related to entry level opportunities and rural participation in the fishery.

The listening session will be held in a round-table format chaired by Council member Buck Laukitis. NPFMC and Alaska Fisheries Science Center staff will provide an overview of findings in the 20-Year Program Review that relate to the session's topic, as well as a summary of recent IFQ Committee proposals and Council recommendations for discussion papers that could guide future amendment packages. Following that introduction, the chair will facilitate a discussion with topics guided by the input of people attending the meeting. NPFMC staff will prepare a meeting summary that captures participants' insights on the program and proposals for modifications that could help the Council continue to address management objectives. That report will be presented to the Council during the same week, and the Council may choose to task the IFQ Committee with developing the public's feedback into proposals for action.

### **Joint Protocol Committee**

I recently received an email from Glenn Height (Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director) noting that the Board of Fisheries had considered the need to have a Joint Protocol Committee meeting to discuss Salmon FMP and management, Pacific cod proposals, and other issues as appropriate. The Council had briefly discussed holding a Joint Protocol Committee meeting to discuss the Salmon FMP, but put off any planning for that until we knew more about the schedule for analysis and decision-making on the salmon issue. We may have a better handle on that after we get through agenda item C-1.

In addition to salmon issues, the Joint Protocol Committee may also wish to discuss Pacific cod management. The upcoming Board of Fisheries cycle includes a call for proposals for Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska finfish, which includes State managed Pacific cod fisheries. Meanwhile, the Council is considering changes to the Bering Sea trawl cod fishery and participation, as well as hearing concerns about community protections for shoreside processors in the Aleutian Islands established under Amendment 113. A Joint Protocol Committee Meeting might be useful for members to understand the proposed actions, the individual and cumulative impacts of each, and potentially develop a shared vision for the fisheries and participants that are impacted by each body's decisions.

The suggested meeting date was October 19, following the Board's work session scheduled for October 17-18 in Anchorage. Mr. Height noted another possibility is to meet on December 12, following the Council's December meeting, but that this date was less preferable for the Board. For reference, membership of the Joint Protocol Committee includes 3 Council members (Mr. Hull, Mr. Laukitis, Mr. Mezirow) and 3 Board members (Mr. Jenson, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Ruffner).

### **Recent Staff/Council activities**

Diana Stram and Steve MacLean presented an update on Chinook and chum salmon bycatch at the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council (WIRAC) meeting in February. They presented information on the Council, opportunities for WIRAC and public input, and updated information about Chinook and chum salmon bycatch.

Chairman Dan Hull participated as the panel chair in the New England Fishery Management Council's Program Review on March 13-16. The NEFMC decided to undergo an independent review to: (1) assess past performance; (2) gather feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the Council process and operations; and (3) identify potential areas for improvements. The review was conducted by an independent six-member panel of fishery managers and scientists from other regions. More information on the program review can be found here: <https://www.nefmc.org/library/council-program-review>

In mid-March, Steve MacLean attended a meeting of the short-tailed albatross and seabird workgroup, which was established by the 2015 Biological Opinion on Short-tailed albatross takes in Alaska groundfish fisheries. The workgroup is tasked with reviewing seabird takes and making recommendations to the Council on actions to reduce the likelihood of seabird interactions. A report from the workgroup will be provided in a later B-report.

Diana Stram attended the North Pacific Research Board Science Panel meeting on March 27-30 in Seattle. The NPRB Board will review research proposals, along with the science panel recommendations on scientific merit of the proposals, at its April 30-May 3 meeting.

Mr. Mezirow and I attended the Recreational Fishing Summit in Arlington VA on March 28-29. This Summit built upon prior saltwater recreational fishing summits (held in 2010 and 2014), and this summit was specifically designed to identify complementary and collaborative actions that the angling and management communities can work on together. Issues discussed in detail included innovative management approaches,

socioeconomics, collaborative data collection and reporting, and expanding fishing opportunity through conservation. Keynote addresses were made by NOAA Fisheries Administrator Chris Oliver, NOAA Administrator Timothy Gallaudet, and Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. An agenda for the summit is **attached**.

### **Committee Meetings**

The Council's Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC) met in Seattle on Feb 21st. The Committee developed several proposals to modify the crab rationalization program. PNCIAC Chairman Lance Farr will make a presentation on the Committee's recommendations as part of the E-1 Staff Tasking agenda item.

The Enforcement Committee met on April 3 to review the analysis to address the issue of mixing guided and unguided halibut on fishing vessels, review of OLE Priorities, and review the committee's Terms of Reference.

### **Michelle Ridgway selected for Alaska Women's Hall of Fame**

As you know, Michelle Ridgway, a former member of our Advisory Panel member, was sadly killed in a car accident at the beginning of the year. She has posthumously received the award for Achievement in Marine Science and Education, Conservation, and Exploration, and will be inducted into the Alaska Women Hall of Fame. For those who are interested in attending, the ceremony will take place in Anchorage on May 1st, at 6 pm (details **attached**).

### **Events this week**

On Wednesday, from 6-8 pm, the Alaska Marine Conservation Council and the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association are hosting a reception at the 49<sup>th</sup> Street Brewery on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. All are welcome to attend. A flyer announcing the reception is **attached**.

On Friday at 3pm, we have an Executive Session to review several administrative items, including operating procedures for committees, the public comment policy, appointment of Social Science Planning Team members (Fey, Downs, Figus, and Bibb), and completing a performance review for the Executive Director. A resume for Ms. Bibb is **attached**.

### **Northern Edge Exercises**

In February 2017, the Council received a presentation from the Alaskan Command and the U.S. Navy explaining plans for the Northern Edge 2017 (NE17) joint training exercise in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The presentation was not only helpful to the Council, but also the many stakeholders in the fishing industry present at our February 2017 meeting and listening on our webcast.

During the presentation, a few concerns were raised by stakeholders regarding potential environmental impacts of the training exercise. To address these concerns, the Council requested a brief update regarding the NE17 after completion of the exercise. The Council also requested confirmation that the organizational plan and level of activity as presented during the February 2017 Council meeting was followed, and if not, how it may have differed.

Mr. John Mosher and Ms. Andrea Balla-Holden will provide an update on NE17 joint training exercise that was completed May 1-12, 2017, in the GOA. Mr. Mosher, a retired Navy Captain, is an environmental planner and Northwest Program Manager for the U.S. Pacific Fleet and is Project Manager for the Navy's GOA Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement project. Ms. Balla-Holden is Marine Resources Specialist for the U.S. Pacific Fleet and is lead marine biologist for the GOA Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement project. Mr. Mosher was marginally involved with the exercise over the past several years and has only recently become the program manager. Ms. Balla-Holden was involved throughout the exercise planning and outreach and was a presenter at the February 2017 Council meeting. The presentation is **attached**.

