



CCC Outcomes and Recommendations

October 2021



3. NMFS Update

Assistant Administrator Janet Coit outlined the priorities of the Biden-Harris administration and noted the following areas where Councils would have a significant role:

- Climate Change Resilience
 - Community effects and management approaches
- Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - Responsible and appropriate scaling up of offshore wind
- Emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Increasing NMFS/Council workforce diversity, community access to infrastructure
- Food supply and supporting aquaculture and infrastructure marketing and Aquaculture
 - Secure food supply, marketing, infrastructure, IUU
- Climate change and science support

3. NMFS Update



CCC Recommendations

- Support meaningful engagement with BOEM on offshore wind development
 - Support monitoring and baseline information
 - Provide a better understanding of the potential interactions with fisheries

4. Funding and Budget Update

Dr. Paul Doremus briefed the CCC on the status of the FY22 NOAA budget and the National Academy of Public Administration report on NMFS Budget structure and allocation review.

- The President's budget includes priorities for:
 - Blue Economy, Science, Climate Change Offshore Wind Energy, and Social and Environmental Justice Responsible and appropriate scaling up of offshore wind
- President's Budget and House Mark increase discretionary accounts and have programmatic increases in:
 - Habitat Conservation and Restoration
 - Enforcement
 - Fisheries Science and Management
 - Protected Resources Science and Management
- House mark has +\$1.5M for Regional Councils & Fisheries Commission over FY21 enacted
- Councils should get ~50% of FY22 funds this fall; full funding by March 2022

4. Funding and Budget Update

The NAPA report included recommendations to NMFS on Strategic Planning, Program Management, Functional Planning, Facilities, Communications, and Account Structure, including the following that potentially affect Councils:

- Annual workshops with RFMCs, state fishery commissions, external stakeholder to provide input on the NOAA Fisheries' budget process
- Requiring strategic plans from each RFMC
- Annual surveys to RFMC on accomplishments and impacts of NMFS budget allocations
- Providing rationale for NMFS budgetary decisions
- Providing analysis on impacts of projects that go unfunded
- Asking Congress to consolidate Budget PPAs and reduce the amount of specific congressional direction on appropriated dollars
 - Flexibility to manage programs within overall appropriations

4. Funding and Budget Update



CCC Comments

- The WPFMC was concerned that the house mark did not reflect the President's budget increase for Territorial Science, which would be important to restore functionality in the capacity building program and to support Environmental Justice programs.

5. NOAA Fisheries Science Update



Dr. Cisco Werner provided an update on Status of Surveys and Next Generation Data Acquisition Plan(NG-DAP)

- Surveys in 2021 are more extensive than in 2020, but they are still not back to pre-pandemic levels
- The NG-DAP is driven by climate change, new ocean uses, and blue economy drivers
 - The last plan was completed in 1998 and is outdated
 - Development of the plan will include requests for information and public workshops and should be completed by 2023
 - Implementation of the plan is expected to take another 5 years after that

Finally, in response to questions and concerns expressed by some Councils, Cisco indicated that NOAA Fisheries had plans to increase their stock assessment capabilities.

6. CEQ NEPA Regulation Update

Mr. Sam Rauch reported on the status and outlook for revising the 2020 CEQ NEPA regulations

- Potential revisions considered in a two phase approach.
 - Phase 1 is intended to remove items added in 2020
 - Phase 2 will contemplate other changes including some not in the 2020 rule
- The Phase 1 Proposed rule:
 - Removes the requirement to base the purpose and need on the goals of applicants
 - Removes limitations on agency-specific NEPA procedures
 - Restores the definition of effects (direct, indirect, cumulative)
 - Removes limitations on effect analyses.
- Until the Phase 1 rule is finalized
 - NMFS interim guidance should be applicable
 - NMFS expects extensions on time and page limits
 - The proposed workshop with the CCC NEPA subcommittee to consider rule revisions and development of functional equivalency doctrine is on hold, likely until Phase 2 rulemaking is complete.

7.NS-1 Technical Memos



Dr. Rick Methot reviewed progress on the working group developing Technical Memorandums to provide guidance on NS-1 provisions. Ms. Marian MacPherson reviewed plans for completing the work of the data limited ACLs subgroup.

- The carry-over and phase-in report was published in July 2021
- The reference points subgroup is nearing completion of a draft report on estimation of F_{MSY} , B_{MSY} , and proxies
- The data limited report is nearing completion and will incorporate comments submitted by the Councils

The CCC noted the difficulties of estimating reference points and discussed how the guidance will accommodate EBFM mandates. The CCC also noted that expected changes in the ocean environment related to climate change will add to the challenge of reliably estimating reference points. The CCC requested NMFS share the comments received on the data limited ACLs draft report.

9. Legislative Outlook



Representatives Huffman, Case, and Young briefed the CCC on their respective MSA reauthorization legislation (H.R. 4690 and H.R. 59) and responded to questions from the CCC. Dave Whaley provided a summary of other legislation, including H.R. 3764, which is very broad, and likely to have parts incorporated into other legislation.

The CCC approved the Legislative Workgroup's proposed consensus statements on:

- Climate Change and Regional Action Plans for Climate Science
- Bycatch
- Council Jurisdiction
- Essential Fish Habitat
- Transparency
- Ethics/Standards of Behavior
- Secretarial Plans

The CCC also approved a letter responding to Reps. Huffman and Case request for comments on H.R. 4690, the "Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act of 2021"

10. Recent Executive Orders

Mr. Sam Rauch provided the Biden Administration's priorities for the America the Beautiful initiative (E.O. 14008), specifically the aspirations to allocate 30% of land and waters for the purpose of conservation ('30 x 30').

Mr. Eric Reid, the CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee chair, provided a presentation on the progress of the Subcommittee. A working draft definition of conservation area was proposed. Subcommittee members have pulled together a database for their Council region; very preliminary results indicate that over 663 conservation areas have been established in the EEZ, and over 54% of the U.S. EEZ is closed to all bottom tending fishing gears. Mr. Reid outlined the next steps for the Subcommittee and noted the need for GIS assistance from the Agency.

The CCC passed a motion requesting a GIS specialist be assigned to help the Subcommittee, or failing that, requests the Agency direct the Regions to assist their respective Councils with GIS needs for this project.

10. Recent Executive Orders

Ms. Danielle Blacklock provided an update on Aquaculture Opportunity Areas pursuant to EO 13921. For Round 1, regions examined were Southern California and Gulf of Mexico. The Atlas should be published in the next few weeks, with options of different areas to be considered in an NEPA PEIS. Ms. Blacklock noted that they will work to dovetail the 45 day (or longer) comment period on the PEIS with council meeting timelines.

Round 2 has been initiated, and NMFS will announce the third region for AOA assessment soon. In determining the areas, the agency looks to see if there is support from people in the region, but not just based on the number of comments received. Ms. Blacklock noted that the agency simply doesn't have the resources to identify two regions each year, but may examine two areas within each region.

12. Environmental Justice in Fisheries Management

Mr. Sam Rauch and Ms. Kelly Denit discussed efforts to integrate equity and environmental justice in fisheries management, and identified actions to advance equity and environmental justice in fisheries management.

Mr. Dave Witherell presented information on NPFMC efforts to engage underserved communities within their region.

Ms. Kitty Simonds presented information on WPFMC environmental justice programs.

12. Environmental Justice in Fisheries Management

- The CCC concluded that the issues associated with environmental justice and outreach to underserved communities were too complicated and broad to adequately address during a CCC meeting agenda item alone, and therefore advocated for a Council/NMFS workshop prior to the May 2022 CCC meeting to evaluate, respond to, and inform equity and environmental justice efforts.
- The CCC requests NMFS provide the Councils funds to expand support for underserved communities to implement the Administration's priority to address environmental justice in fisheries management.

13. National Fish Habitat Partnership



Dr. Chris Moore presented an overview of the National Fish Habitat Partnership program.

- The National Fish Habitat Partnership protects, restores, and enhances fish habitat in freshwater, estuarine and coastal areas nationwide, leveraging federal, state, tribal, and private funding resources to support individual projects.
 - NFHP is comprised of 20 individual Fish Habitat Partnerships, which focus on improving fish habitat and aquatic communities at regional and local levels and is supported by many federal, state, and local agencies as well as regional and national conservation organizations.
- Chris noted that in October 2020, the America's Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act) was signed into law at the White House.
- The ACE Act passed the House and Senate with bipartisan support and unanimous consent.
 - The bill reauthorized the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and codified the National Fish Habitat Partnership. Chris indicated that additional information on the partnership could be found on the NFHP website.

14. CCC Committees



- The CCC directed the Habitat Work Group to continue to provide support to the Area Based Management Subcommittee and to await further guidance at the May CCC meeting.
- The CCC directed the Communications Group to develop a calendar that provides meeting dates for all Regional Council Meetings to facilitate planning of CCC meetings and associated functions.
- CMOD training will be reschedule for 2022.
- The NEPA Work Group may not be active until Phase 2 of the CEQ review of NEPA regulations begins.

16. Wrap up and Other Business

- Mr. Chuck Tracy (retiring PFMC Executive Director) was presented with a plaque of appreciation for his distinguished service to the CCC and for his dedication to the conservation and management of Pacific fisheries.
- The MAFMC will host the next CCC meeting in Annapolis, MD, May 17-19, 2022