

East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning

Update for Council Coordination Committee

May 2023

Introduction

The East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning initiative is being conducted by East Coast fishery management organizations to explore governance and management issues related to climate change and fishery stock distributions. Scenario planning is a tool that managers can use to test decisions or develop strategy in a context of uncertain environmental, social, political, economic, or technical factors. It is a structured process for managers to explore and describe multiple plausible futures, termed “scenarios,” and consider how to best adapt and respond to them.

The CCC received an overview of this project at their May 2022 meeting and an update at their October 2022 meeting. This document describes recent activities for the initiative and next steps for addressing outcomes. Additional information is available at: <https://www.mafmc.org/climate-change-scenario-planning>.

Recent Activities

Council and Commission Meetings: November and December 2022

The New England, Mid Atlantic, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) held workshops during their respective November and December 2022 meetings. The purpose of each workshop was for Council members and Commissioners to have in-depth discussions on the [four scenarios developed for this initiative](#), and to provide ideas and recommendations to be considered as managers develop the final list of potential actions resulting from this process. Council and Commission members discussed the challenges and opportunities presented by each scenario, and reviewed ideas and input generated at the September/October [manager brainstorming sessions](#). A summary of input received during the Council and Commission meetings can be found in Appendix 2 of the [East Coast Scenario Planning Summit briefing document](#).

Applications Phase Summit Meeting: February 2023

The East Coast Scenario Planning Summit Meeting, held February 15-16, 2023 in Arlington, VA, was attended by over 50 East Coast fishery managers. Summit participants consisted of representatives from each of the three U.S. East Coast Fishery Management Councils, the Commission, and NOAA Fisheries.

The goal of the summit was to develop a set of potential governance and management actions resulting from a scenario-based exploration of the future. During the meeting, participants discussed ideas already generated throughout the process, added new ideas, evaluated them, and identified some practical next steps.



The Scenario Planning Core Team has developed a **report of the summit meeting**, available at: https://www.mafmc.org/s/ECSP-Summit-Report_April-2023.pdf .

All summit meeting materials, including the agenda, briefing document, supplemental documents, and list of participants, are available at: <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2023/scenario-planning-summit>.

NRCC Meeting: May 2023

The Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) reviewed the outputs of the summit at their May 9-10, 2023 meeting, including the summit report and a draft “action plan” developed by the Core Team, and discussed a path forward for addressing possible actions. The SAFMC, which is not a member of NRCC, participated in this discussion as well as prior NRCC meetings about the initiative. The NRCC prioritized some of these potential actions for near-term work, identified other potential actions as medium to long-term possibilities, and briefly discussed a small number of actions that are not currently priorities but could be revisited in the future. This NRCC review and prioritization was meant to serve as non-binding guidance to inform future priorities discussions of each individual management organization (see Next Steps below).

The NRCC plans to form a leadership-level “East Coast Climate Coordination Group” to serve a similar role as the expanded NRCC going forward. This group will include one representative from each of the following organizations: Commission, GARFO, MAFMC, NEFMC, NEFSC, SAFMC, SEFSC, and SERO. The Coordination Group will meet annually to track progress toward implementation of these potential actions, promote prioritization of actions (jointly or by individual management organizations), estimate resources needed, and support coordinated implementation. In addition, a staff-level East Coast Climate Innovation Group will be formed to help identify ideas that are worthy of consideration by the Coordination Group, and identify possible actions to undertake. The existing Core Team will likely form the basis of the Climate Innovation Group with some evolution of the role and composition of this team.

The NRCC also made recommendations for near-term and long-term communication of the summit outcomes and scenario planning process more generally.

Next Steps

The Core Team will revise (and potentially rename) the “action plan” based on the NRCC’s discussion. This revised plan will essentially serve as a menu of possible actions that each organization can refer to when considering individual or collective priorities, to determine whether and how to pursue these actions. The Councils and Commission will review this document and the scenario planning initiative outputs more generally at their meetings later in Summer/Fall 2023.