



# 2023 Council Communications Group Meeting Proposal

*Draft for Council Coordination Committee Review, October 2022*

The Council Communications Group is proposing to plan an in-person meeting in 2023. The group has met twice in person – in February 2016 and May 2018. Both meetings provided a valuable forum to discuss common issues and develop public affairs strategies on issues of importance to the CCC. These meetings also provide participants an opportunity to learn about new communication approaches and tools being deployed in other regions. Given the time lapse since the last meeting and the significant changes that have occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Communications Group believes that an in-person meeting in 2023 would be appropriate. This meeting would likely occur over three days. Exact dates and location are still TBD, pending CCC approval.

## DRAFT Meeting Topics

The following list reflects the Communications Group's initial discussion of potential meeting topics. These topics may be revised or rearranged as the agenda is developed. The Communications Group seeks input from the CCC on the appropriateness of this list and whether any additional or alternative topics or issues should be addressed. If the CCC supports proceeding with meeting planning, a detailed agenda will be circulated to the Executive Directors for final approval.

### 1. Communication Tools, Approaches, and Policies

- Overview of current practices by Council (collected via pre-meeting survey)
  - Email, webinar, and website platforms, file sharing, social media, newsletters, analytics, etc.
- Public comment policies and platforms
  - Regional examples and lessons learned from the Councils that have developed formal public comment policies - Gulf Council, North Pacific Council, others TBD
  - Discussion: How and when is the public allowed to comment during meetings? How have Councils adapted comment procedures for hybrid meetings?
  - Council demos: North Pacific and/or Pacific (e-Agenda portal), MAFMC (Knack), Gulf Council, South Atlantic
- Social Media
  - Social media policies – Which Councils have them? How were they developed?
  - What are the benefits, drawbacks, and challenges of using social media?
  - For the Councils active on social media, which platforms have been most effective?
- Council websites
  - Lessons learned from recent and ongoing website redevelopment projects (South Atlantic, Pacific, North Pacific, and New England)
  - Website analytics – How are Councils using them? Which metrics are most helpful?
- Best Practices for Meetings
  - How are our practices evolving as we transition back to hybrid or in-person meetings? Are there any lessons learned or new technologies adopted during the pandemic that we will continue to use?
  - Have any Councils established or revised their policies regarding when virtual, hybrid, and in-person meetings may be held?
  - What platforms are the Councils using to share briefing materials with members and the public?

- 2. Engaging the Public During Development of Management Actions/Communicating Complex Information**
  - What strategies and communication products (fact sheets, videos, etc.) are Councils using to engage the public and solicit well-informed comments on Council actions? How can we better help the public understand the differences between complex management alternatives?
    - Regional examples: MAFMC Harvest Control Rule Framework or SFSBSB Allocation Amendment, Gulf Council Allocation Amendments, others TBD
  - Best practices for developing messages that are both accessible and technically accurate
- 3. Advisory Panels**
  - Some Councils are having difficulties getting AP members to serve. How do we encourage participation and make time spent on AP feel worthwhile for members?
- 4. Communications/Media Training**
  - Have any Councils established policies or guidelines for Council, SSC, or AP members regarding speaking to the media about Council matters? Are any Councils providing communications/media training?
- 5. RFMC Website Deep-Dive ([www.fisherycouncils.org](http://www.fisherycouncils.org))**
  - Discuss roles, responsibilities, and workflow
  - How can we improve and expand the website to better inform and engage site users? Are any new pages needed? Possible additions could include a page to highlight CCC work group accomplishments and work products, a page to highlight the ABM report and findings, or a “Council Process” page
  - Action: Provide recommendations for improvements/additions to RFMC website.
- 6. Communicating Council Successes and Challenges**
  - How can we leverage our collective platform to better highlight Council efforts and successes related to topics such as climate change, forage, bycatch, habitat (including corals), and protected resources?
  - Similarly, should we be doing more to highlight CCC positions on issues such as wind, marine monuments, and MSA reauthorization? What methods and channels would be most appropriate?
  - Action: Provide recommendations on if and how to amplify Council/CCC accomplishments and positions in a coordinated and cohesive manner.
- 7. Intersection of Communication/Outreach and Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Initiatives**
  - Discuss “Outreach and Engagement” recommendations from the EEJ Workgroup [report](#)
  - What changes might be needed on a regional or national level to reduce communication barriers? For example, some Councils are going back to more traditional communication approaches (mailings, pamphlets, brochures) to reach underserved communities.
- 8. Improving Two-Way Communication with Management Partners**
  - How can we work more effectively with our NMFS partners to achieve our communication and outreach objectives?
    - Are there opportunities to share/leverage resources such as software, online journal subscriptions, listservs, etc. (note: only some Councils are interested in this)
    - Examples of successful coordination at the regional level: Northeast Stock Assessment Communications Group, other example(s) TBD.
  - How are Councils collaborating or coordinating our communications with other non-NMFS management partners, including the interstate commissions, state fisheries departments, Sea Grant, and U.W. Fish and Wildlife Service?