



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 24, 2015

TO: Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel, Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup, and Interested Persons

FROM: Kit Dahl, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: March Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet March 8-12, 2015, at the Hilton, Vancouver, Washington. The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) will meet Saturday and Sunday, March 7-8 in the Discovery Room. The Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) will not be meeting at the March Council meeting.

There are four agenda topics under the Ecosystem heading: E.1, the State of the California Current Ecosystem Report, E.2, Fishery Ecosystem Plan initiatives, E.3, a briefing on the National Marine Fisheries Service's climate science strategy, and E.4, selection of a final preferred alternative (FPA) for the Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment on unmanaged forage fish protection.

Based on a January 14 webinar the EAS drafted a report for E.2, ecosystem initiatives, which is in your briefing materials. Likewise, the EWG drafted a report for E.3, the unmanaged forage fish protection FPA based on a February 11 webinar. Both committees are planning to draft supplemental reports for the ecosystem-related agenda items.

The Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) Team, comprised of staff from the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers, produces the State of the California Current Ecosystem Report annually and delivers it at the March Council meeting. The report informs the Council on ecological conditions through various indicators for physical, biological, and social processes. The IEA Team met with the Ecosystem-Based Management Subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee in December 2015 to review the current suite of indicators and obtain advice on their ongoing development. Input from both committees on the utility and future development of the indicators and report format would be useful.

Agenda Item E.2 will be an opportunity for the Council to identify which of the initiatives listed in Appendix A to the FEP to take on next and identify and prioritize new initiatives. The EAS has weighed on this topic in a committee report and plans to further elaborate their recommendations in a supplemental report. The EWG also plans to submit a supplemental report. There is some overlap between agenda topics E.1 and E.2, because further elaboration of indicators and their more explicit use in fishery management could be considered an initiative in its own right.

NMFS has produced a draft Climate Science Strategy (Agenda Item E.3.a, Attachment 1) and is seeking comment with a deadline of March 31. Dr. Jason Link from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will present an overview of the draft Strategy under this agenda item.

The Council will take final action on Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment for Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative 1 at this meeting. The EWG has already drafted a report with recommendations for minor changes to the comprehensive amendment relative to jacksmelt. Agenda Item E.4, Attachment 1 is the environmental assessment of the comprehensive amendment containing the rationale for and a detailed analysis of the proposed action.

I have also included the briefing materials for several administrative topics, should the EAS which to draft comments when it meets in Vancouver. These are legislative matters (E.1), NMFS Strategic Plan update (E.2), and future agenda and workload planning (E.6).

Paper copies of referenced briefing materials are enclosed. In addition, you may also obtain electronic copies of all the meeting materials on our website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/briefing-books/>. We also post supplemental briefing materials on our website, as they become available after distribution of the advanced briefing book.

Staff responsibility for the FEP has been shifted from Mike Burner to me. Mike will finish off by taking the unmanaged forage fish protection initiative over the finish line and I will take over from here on out. I look forward to working with you all to further the objectives of the FEP.

Fun fact: Vancouver, Washington was incorporated as a city 29 years before its larger namesake to the north, Vancouver, British Columbia, and is the oldest city in Washington State.

KRD:rdd

Enclosures:

1. EAS Agenda
2. Agenda Item A.4 – Council Agenda
3. Agenda Item E.1 – California Current Ecosystem Report Including Integrated Ecosystem Assessment
4. Agenda Item E.2 – Review of Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiatives
5. Agenda Item E.3 – NMFS Climate Science Strategy Update
6. Agenda Item E.4 – Unmanaged Forage Fish Protection Final Action
7. Agenda Items I.1, I.2, and I.5 – Council Administrative Matters
8. Informational Reports
9. Hotel related information
10. Council Roster