

SUMMARY MINUTES
**Ad Hoc Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Environmental
Impact Statement Oversight Committee**

Pacific Fishery Management Council
West Conference Room
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220-1384
(503) 820-2280
October 7-8, 2002

A. Call to Order

Mr. Jim Glock called the Ad Hoc Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement Oversight Committee meeting to order at 1 p.m. The agenda was approved.

Members in Attendance

Mr. Brian Culver (for Mr. Phil Anderson), Groundfish Management Team member (WDFW), Olympia, WA
Mr. Tom Ghio, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Moss Landing, CA
Mr. Peter Huhtala, Pacific Marine Conservation Council, Astoria, OR
Dr. Hans Radtke, Council member, Yachats, OR
Mr. Burnie Bohn ODFW, Portland, OR
Ms. Marija Vojkovich (for Mr. LB Boydston) Council member (CDFG), Sacramento, CA

Members Absent

Mr. Ralph Brown, Council member, Brookings, OR
Mr. Paul Heikkila, Habitat Committee, Coquille, OR

Others in Attendance

Mr. Chuck Tracy, Council staff, Portland, OR
Mr. Jim Glock, NMFS, Portland, OR

B. Review of Process to Date

Mr. Glock discussed the meeting goals. These were to review the matrix of example draft alternatives already developed, elaborate on the alternatives therein, and change the structure of alternatives as needed. The alternatives developed during the meeting would be brought before the Council at its November meeting to be adopted for subsequent analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Mr. Glock provided a brief overview of the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act (or NEPA, requiring EISs) and the NEPA process. Past EISs prepared for the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) have been fairly cursory, so there is a need to more comprehensively analyze the many incremental changes in policy and management measures that have occurred. This can form the basis for strategic planning in the Programmatic EIS (PEIS). He also indicated the PEIS would allow tiering of future analyses and promote regulatory streamlining.

Discussion continued on the nature of a PEIS and what level of specificity is appropriate. Mr. Glock indicated that each alternative in the PEIS represents an entire program framework, or a distinct FMP.

C. PEIS Timeline

Mr. Glock presented a revised timeline for the PEIS (Exhibit G.7, Attachment 2) process that included adoption of the alternatives for analysis at the November 2002 Council meeting, an initial draft PEIS presented to the Council at the March 2003 meeting, final Council action on draft PEIS at the June 2003 Council meeting, submission to Environmental Protection Agency in late July followed by a 90-day comment period, with final Council recommendations to NMFS at the March 2004 Council meeting, and publishing the final EIS in April 2004.

D. Geographic Information System (GIS) Technology Presentation

Mr. Glock gave a PowerPoint presentation of some GIS technology that allows combining layers of information to identify such things as species richness (diversity), threatened habitats (useful in identification of essential fish habitat [EFH] or habitat areas of particular concern, etc.) The products can be integrated with the Ecotrust analysis of community impacts, observer data, etc.

Ms. Vojkovich asked if implementing the new GIS technology as an analytical tool could require development of a new alternative(s). Mr. Glock responded that it was a possibility, and if so it would have to occur in April.

E. Revise and Complete Alternatives Matrix and Descriptions

These minutes attempt to capture the discussion and points raised during development of the matrix, but do not describe the modified elements. Readers may wish to refer to the matrix of alternatives (Exhibit G.7, Attachment 1) while reading this.

There was general discussion of the toolbox which occurs in each component of each alternative and the utility of having only one toolbox for each alternative since many of the tools are used throughout the various components.

Dr. Radtke indicated that social and economic effects of the alternatives be considered separately. The committee recommended that the term socioeconomic effects be replaced with social and economic effects and that analyses be identified as such.

Alternative 1 - Status Quo

The committee discussed area closures and their ability to affect recovery of overfished stocks while achieving economic objectives of the FMP. It was suggested that allocation formulae were needed to streamline the process, and capacity reduction would alter fishery characteristics. Various options for area closures were discussed including:

- Block closures (latitude-longitude)
- Derby-type fisheries where a sector would close when the first optimum yield (OY) was reached (landed or total catch)
- Individual catch limits where vessels would cease fishing when a bycatch limit was reached
- Individual fishing quotas

Alternative 2 - Strategic Plan

The committee discussed the role of the Ad Hoc Groundfish Strategic Plan Oversight Committee (SPOC) and the possibility of reconvening the SPOC to rework the alternative. Mr. Glock expressed concern that turnover in SPOC membership may result in different interpretation of the strategic plan objectives. It was thought that the two-year review of the strategic plan scheduled for the November 2002 Council meeting may provide some insight into how to proceed.

Mr. Bohn recommended that Alternative 2 should reflect the current strategic plan interpretation.

Mr. Huhtala indicated he was not comfortable with characterizing a 10% observer coverage objective as the strategic plan objective, rather that 10% approximates possible coverage under current program limitations.

The committee agreed to a numerical standard for Alternative 2 that included, "...stratified random monitoring to observe at least 10% of commercial groundfish vessels or coverage adequate to assess total groundfish mortality."

Alternative 5 - Minimal Fishing

The committee discussed the constituency that might support the objectives in this alternative and concluded that most of the groups interested and represented in the Council process at this time would not support the objectives. The committee also questioned the consistency of the objectives with provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (maximum sustainable yield, economic benefit, etc.). The term *no consideration to socioeconomic effects* in the rebuild overfishing component was rephrased to *low priority to social and economic effects*.

G. Next Steps

Mr. Glock outlined the next steps in PEIS development. The alternatives developed during the meeting will be presented to the Council at the November meeting. They are expected to adopt them, possibly with some modifications for analysis.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m. on October 8, 2002.

PFMC
10/23/02

