

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) REPORT ON RESULTS OF GMT RETREAT

The GMT attended a retreat in La Jolla, California, on January 14-16. The retreat agenda consisted of a facilitated workshop on personality types and working in a team environment, as well as discussions on the 2005-06 management process, how to improve team meeting efficiency, and how to enhance interactions with the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP).

Retreat Goals

Dr. Don McIsaac provided the GMT with goals for the retreat: 1) improved team efficiency; and 2) development of a solid plan on how to complete the 2005-06 specifications process. Dr. McIsaac praised the Team for doing a good job, but also reminded us that there is room for improvement. In discussing items that would benefit from Team efficiency, Dr. McIsaac stated that the Team was good about getting statements done on time for the Council's agenda, however, Team meetings could benefit by prioritizing the Team's agenda items. He also stated that GMT statements need to be provided to the GAP in time for them to draft GAP statements and that GMT statements need to be of high enough quality to stand up in court, which may require off-site preparatory work. Chairman Don Hansen also stressed the need for individual Team members to leave their state positions "at the door" when participating in Team discussions.

With regard to the 2005-06 specifications process, Dr. McIsaac stated that we need to do better than last year—the 2003 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had some problems and many deadlines were not met. Team members need to keep in mind that business continues after Council takes final vote and the GMT needs to be actively involved until the EIS leaves the Council office. The completion of the EIS and the fishing regulations is the core function of the Council and GMT.

Facilitated Workshop on Personality Types

Frank Whyte, Training Services on Demand, Inc., facilitated a workshop on understanding personality types and working together in a team environment. The intent of the workshop was to understand personality types and use that information to improve communication, decrease conflict, manage change, and increase team effectiveness. Participants in the workshop took a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test to find out individual personality types. These types were then aggregated to find the predominant personality types within the GMT. In addition to discussing personality types, the GMT worked through different scenarios of personality types interacting in a team—discussing strengths, challenges, and adaptation techniques to use to overcome those challenges. The GMT thought that this facilitated workshop was a good opportunity to learn about ourselves and our working environment.

2005-06 Specifications Process

The GMT reviewed the proposed changes from Council staff to Council Operating Procedure 3. GMT members expressed concern about the shifting of duties from Council staff to the GMT including drafting the EIS documents, regulations, and other documents (e.g., EA/RIR). The GMT feels this section should be revised to change the reference from 'regulations' to

‘regulatory options’, and clarify that the GMT is only to assist in drafting sections for NEPA documents (EISs, EAs, etc.) that directly apply to state-specific and/or GMT-specific expertise, data, analyses and/or proposals. NMFS is responsible for drafting fishery regulations.

Council staff stressed the need for the GMT to prioritize the EIS, and the need to get most of the writing done sooner, rather than later. There are deadlines which need to be met to get the EIS finalized in time for regulations to take effect in January 2005. To that end, the GMT reviewed the proposed schedule for the 2005-06 process and did not have any significant changes, although there was some concern expressed over the additional workload and proposed GMT meetings. We then reviewed the list of tasks for completing the EIS and identified subcommittees for assignments, with deadlines for drafts, refined drafts, and final products. It was decided that subcommittees would work together to ensure that individual state products are consistent. Council staff and GMT members stressed the need to police ourselves to ensure that deadlines are met in a timely fashion.

Improved Team Meeting Efficiency

The GMT identified different ways to improve the efficiency of Team meetings. These include:

- Refer larger policy issues to the Council for guidance; Team focus on policy implementation options once guidance has been received
- Identify leads (facilitators for discussions and rapporteurs for note-taking) in advance
- Identify subcommittees to discuss issues which are “lighter” in nature and those which are considered regional (i.e., issues that do not have coastwide impact)
- Continue to assign statements to be drafted ahead of time; drafts can be circulated via e-mail and should be brought electronically to the meeting
- Reconfigure the GMT meeting room—have an “open square” style and provide workstations around the perimeter of the room for Team members to use
- Self-policing to keep sidebar conversations to a minimum; facilitator needs to keep meeting focused and may ask Team members to continue side conversations outside the meeting room
- Presentation tools—Include visual as well as verbal tools; have printouts of tables and documents as much as possible; use projector, flip charts, whiteboards
- Work product tools—Have laptop and printer (and copier, if available) in GMT meeting room
- Ensure that strawman options are included in the briefing books ahead of time; need to utilize the EIS as a decision document
- Need to prioritize Team agenda items and keep a “check-off” list on whiteboard—items will be checked off when discussion is complete

- GMT members need to give the GMT and GAP a “heads-up” on inseason issues as soon as possible
- Inseason discussions need to be structured, both with the GAP and within GMT; set deadlines on when discussion needs to be finalized

Improved Interaction with the GAP

The GMT identified ways to improve communication with the GAP. These include:

- Chairs of GMT and GAP will coordinate agendas ahead of time on a conference call with Council staff
- Check-in routinely (1-3 times/day) with GAP Chair to provide updates
- Review meeting processes ahead of time (~10 minutes of 1st meeting day), including identifying all meeting materials to be used for discussion
- State GMT members should have meetings or conference calls with state GAP members ahead of Council meetings when possible and/or include them on e-mail distributions of state data and/or positions on issues
- Council staff identify “hot topics” for upcoming meetings; this list to be distributed to GAP and “westcoastgroundfish” e-mail list prior to Council meetings
- Council staff send or identify briefing book documents that support “hot topics” list to GAP