

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP REPORT ON THE CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE UPDATE

The Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) attended the webinar meeting of the Climate Scenarios Investigation Workgroup (CSI) on October 23, 2018, where the CSI shared its draft guidance on the Climate and Communities Initiative. The EWG met again via webinar on October 25, 2018, to prepare to report back to the Council on the CSI's report, and to begin discussing the Fishery Ecosystem Plan update. In this report, we respond only to the CSI's report.

We appreciate the time and effort the CSI spent developing more detailed guidance on a scenario planning process for the Council's consideration at its November 2018 meeting. The EWG is comfortable with the timeline and process that the CSI has laid out for the November 2018 through March 2019 period. We are less certain of our ability to meet the timeline the CSI has suggested for the period after March 2019, but should be able to be more clear on that question by the time of that meeting.

At its September 2018 meeting, the Council directed the EWG to meet with the Management/Technical Teams over the winter to assess existing management measures in each fishery management plan that could be used to help our fisheries respond to climate variability and change. If the Council endorses the CSI's advice, we anticipate also working with the Management/Technical teams to share ideas on the scenario planning process and to solicit feedback on their priorities. We have some concerns about asking the teams to discuss scenario planning on top of their regular fishery management plan (FMP)-focused tasks. The teams often take up ecosystem issues amidst their core FMP tasks, so we are working with the teams to schedule meetings to try to make efficient use of their time.

Since the Council family is new to the scenario planning process, we ask that Council staff invite one or more speakers with expertise in the process to provide a presentation or training on the topic. The EWG is interested in an in-person meeting over the winter, which might be a useful time for the EWG to learn more about how that process operates, and to discuss how to modify the scenario planning process so that it is compatible with the fishery management council process.

Finally, at its September meeting, the Council asked that the EWG address this initiative for March 2019 by: working with the Council's management/technical teams to assess existing fishery management measures that could support fisheries management under climate variability and change; and awaiting Council direction from November 2018 before further fleshing out the concept of scenario planning. Also for March 2019, the Council asked us to begin the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) update by: 1) analyzing the FEP's existing objectives, and the progress that has been made on implementing those objectives; 2) discussing how the objectives could be improved to be more specific and measurable, and to better guide integration of ecosystem objectives across fishery management plans; and, 3) developing an outline for how the FEP would be modified to reflect updated science and results of initiatives both now and in the future.