

ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES  
INITIATIVE UPDATE

The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) appreciates the advancement of the *Developing Future Scenarios for Climate Change in the California Current Ecosystem* exercise conducted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and The Nature Conservancy, and the presentation we received from facilitator Jonathan Star on this agenda item. We reviewed the *Scenarios for West Coast Fisheries in 2040* and the *Climate Change Scenarios for West Coast Fishing: Proposal for Implications Workshops*, and consider that this project has undergone significant advances since the March meeting. We remain in strong support of this exercise due to its ability to prepare the Council for the uncertainty associated with climate change to both the oceans and the community that relies on productive and harvestable fish stocks.

*Comment 1 on Scenarios Document: Add a preface to introduce the intent and approach to inform readers of the intent of the document.*

In the discussion of the scenarios document, we felt that the addition of a preface describing the intent of the exercise--e.g., to expose participants to a range of possible futures and look for adaptive approaches common among those futures--could be added to the document to make it clear that the nature of the exercise is not to identify which scenario is most likely. Instead, the importance of scenario planning is to engage stakeholders and ultimately guide Council action to address challenges and opportunities that are common among multiple scenarios, or important to a single scenario to avoid severe impact to fish stocks and the fleet. This is important, as initially, we had concerns that some scenarios potentially could be interpreted as more likely than others, which could misinform stakeholders about future ocean and fish stock conditions and reduce the efficacy of the exercise. We also felt that a clearer statement of the purpose of the exercise could reduce the likelihood of workshop participants falling down a rabbit hole discussing which scenario is most likely rather than how each scenario would each impact them.

*Comment 2 on Scenarios Document: Visual aids will help participants understand the different scenarios to increase the impact of the document.*

We further suggest that visual aids, similar to the stoplight diagrams in the Annual State of the California Current Ecosystem Report or other visual representations of the scenarios, could help to effectively convey information in the next phase of the project. We highlight that some people are more likely to assimilate information through visual representations and thus would be able to better respond to the scenarios. Further, the comprehensive nature of the document led to it being fairly long, which could limit participation, or informed participation, by stakeholders whose opinions are very valuable. The addition of clear visual displays could help mitigate the length of the document for some participants.

We have concerns that the impressive and comprehensive document that has been prepared may be too long for attracting and engaging some stakeholders. Additional communication products, such as a concise summary, may facilitate increased participation.

*Comment 1 on Workshop Phase Plan: Virtual formats present unique challenges that could reduce engagement and stifle creativity. To address this, a modified approach adapted to virtual and/or in-person small groups may be needed to maximize the benefits of the workshops.*

In considering the next phase of the project, we struggled with the most effective way to proceed considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on in-person workshops. We are concerned that the virtual format as currently proposed will inadvertently prevent the participation of a subset of stakeholders that should be engaged in the scenario planning exercise. We also feel that holding off until COVID is ‘over’ would delay the project indefinitely, which is not desirable. We suggest the Council consider allowing either an iterative approach, a hybrid approach, or an increase in the number of workshops to allow the inclusion of the groups that would have been engaged prior to the pandemic. We suggest these as:

**Iterative:** Carry out virtual meetings as planned but add in-person workshops later in the year or spring (based on COVID regulations) to increase participation. This has the added benefit of allowing comparison between results from virtual and face-to-face formats.

**Hybrid:** In addition to virtual meetings, or instead, hold in-person small group meetings now that meet current COVID guidelines and that can allow more fluid exchange of ideas.

**Increase the number of workshops:** In general, we felt that large virtual meetings would be the least likely to be successful, although breakout groups could assuage some of this, but one advantage of the virtual format is that more and smaller group meetings could be carried out. Such meetings (of 5 or 6 people) are the easiest for fluid conversations about the different scenarios. Based on this approach, the total number of meetings could be increased to better cover the diversity of stakeholders across the regions managed by the Council.

In summary, we feel that re-envisioning the approach to community engagement may lead to a greater effect in the next stage of this project based on restrictions associated with COVID. As an incentive to participants, providing compensation even for attending virtual meetings should also be kept in mind.

*Comment 2 on Workshop Phase Plan: There are multiple groups whose involvement in this project is key to its success and continued effort to involve them is critical.*

- We would like to emphasize the need to make sure that the organizers include the Tribes as participants in this exercise in ways that are culturally appropriate.
- We encourage efforts to reach out to groups who are not typically involved in the Council process.

Dedicated efforts to make sure this occurs are necessary to have the results of the Scenario Planning exercise reflect the needs of the communities who will be impacted by climate change.

We thank and applaud the Council, The Nature Conservancy, and Jonathan Star for using a forward-thinking approach to help prepare the Council Family for the unknowns of Climate Change.

PFMC  
09/14/20