

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) reviewed the Year-at-a-Glance (YAG) ([Agenda Item D.5 Revised Attachment 1: September 2026 YAG](#)) summary and the proposed March Quick Reference agenda ([Agenda Item D.5 Attachment 3: March QR](#)). The EWG offers the following observations and recommendations for the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) consideration:

1. Add an agenda item to the March 2027 Council meeting for ecosystem workload prioritization, and include this item annually thereafter.
2. Add an agenda item to the September 2027 Council meeting for a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Initiative Review.
3. Add an agenda item to the March 2028 Council meeting to approve the revised FEP Initiative Appendix and consider initiating work on a new ecosystem initiative.
4. Schedule an advisory body briefing on Special Project 2 prior to the June 2027 Council meeting, allowing advisory bodies sufficient time for review and comment before the Council finalizes its work.

As noted in Supplemental EWG Report 1 under Agenda Item C.4, ecosystem matters are traditionally addressed through a prioritization discussion held during the March Council meeting. In reviewing the March 2027 Quick Reference (Agenda Item D.5 Attachment 3), the EWG was unable to identify where this prioritization discussion would occur. Therefore, the EWG recommends establishing dedicated agenda time under an Ecosystem heading each March—starting in 2027 and continuing annually—specifically for Council consideration of ecosystem workload prioritization.

Regarding the YAG, the EWG observes that no ecosystem items are currently listed for September 2027. The Council last reviewed FEP initiatives in March and September of 2022. Since then, significant work has been completed under the Special Projects, and many of those efforts are represented as activities within the original initiative list contained in the [FEP Appendix](#). To keep initiative selection aligned with current ecosystem priorities, the EWG recommends adding a placeholder agenda item in September 2027 for the Council to: “Consider Proposed Revisions to the Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiatives Appendix and Provide Guidance.” Under this recommended process, the Council could then take final action at its March 2028 meeting to: “Adopt Revised Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative Appendix and Provide Guidance on a New Initiative.” This two-meeting sequence mirrors the Council's approach during the 2022 initiative selection cycle, which included initial review, comment, and guidance at one meeting, followed by formal adoption and consideration of a new initiative at the subsequent meeting.

The Council and its advisory bodies are tentatively scheduled to next consider Special Project 2 at the June 2027 Council meeting. As noted in the [Supplemental EWG Report](#) for Agenda Item C.3, the EWG recommends that the Council schedule an opportunity for its appropriate advisory bodies to hear from staff and contractors on Special Project 2 work in winter 2026-2027. The Council last received an update from staff and contractors on Special Project 2 in June 2026, and is next

scheduled to review materials for this project in June 2027. Work on this project should not proceed for a full year without some check-ins with advisory bodies to help evaluate whether the work is meeting the goals of the project.

To ensure ample time for advisory body review of Special Project 2, the EWG also requests that the Special Project 2 contractors brief the EWG and other advisory bodies in May 2027. Given that the Council charged the EWG to provide technical and policy advice in support of the Council's three Special Projects, the EWG also asks Council staff to include an EWG meeting in May 2027 in the Council's internal scheduling to support this review and feedback process as EWG participation in the June meeting is outside of the regular ecosystem meeting schedule.

PFMC
09/20/26