

# New England Fishery Management Council Holistic Strategic Plan – Final Report

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*Presentation to NEFMC – April 15, 2026*

# Agenda

- 1 Project Overview
- 2 Mission & Vision
- 3 Goals and Objectives
- 4 Approach to Implementation of Plan
- 5 Questions & Discussion



# Project Team

## The Parnin Group

The Parnin Group provides business and management consulting services to leaders in the Government, Non-Profit and Private Sectors, helping them to address their complex problems. We are committed to helping organizations achieve sustainable results by improving their organizational health, the performance of programs and their people, and the adoption and implementation of digital services.

**THE PARNIN  
GROUP**

## Lynker

Lynker delivers innovative solutions to support global environmental security and economic prosperity as a trusted partner to governments, communities, and industry. Lynker is a premier science, engineering, and technology company supporting some of the nation's most important missions.

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# Timeline for Development of Strategic Plan

**Discovery Phase: May - June**  
Understanding challenges through conversations, surveys, and documents

**Analysis Phase: July - Dec**  
Connecting challenges to causes and identifying approaches for change

**Strategic Planning Workshop: January**  
Co-designing goals, priorities, success metrics

**Recommendations & Final Strategic Plan: Feb - April**  
Developing approaches and activities for resilient and responsive fisheries management initiatives

# Mission Statement

The New England Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils established by federal legislation in 1976, is charged with conserving and managing fishery resources from three to 200 miles off the coasts of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks, and to protect, restore, and promote the long-term health and stability of the fisheries.



# Vision Statement

## Council Vision Statement:

“We are a global leader in fisheries management and directly engage a broad array of stakeholders to provide a trusted, predictable, and well understood process that leads to successful and sustainable fisheries by applying flexible and efficient tools to address emerging and dynamic conditions.”

## Fisheries Vision Statement:

“We have enduring and abundant fishery resources that support:

- a) An adaptive, profitable, and globally competitive fishing industry;
- b) thriving recreational opportunities; and
- c) robust fishing communities.”



# Charting a Resilient Future: Setting Goals

**Goal 1** - Build flexibility and adaptability into Fishery Management Plans and streamline the process of developing management measures.

**Goal 2** - Grow and strengthen partnerships between science, management, and fishing communities.

**Goal 3** - Improve accessibility, quality, and use of data to inform decisions.

**Goal 4** – Optimize capacity to reflect fishery resources and improve fishing efficiency and safety.



# Goal 1: Build flexibility and adaptability

## Objectives:

- Optimize Council member, staff, and partner time for the development of actions.
- Refine information streams to reduce duplication, minimize preparation time, and streamline products, including the use of artificial intelligence and automation.
- Support the implementation of actions across all plans by the start of the fishing year.
- Increase the ability to adjust management measures in a timely manner.

Strategy 1: Revise the annual priority setting process	Strategy 2: Reduce redundancy in information sharing throughout action development	Strategy 3: Set specifications through streamlined processes, decoupled from other management measures	Strategy 4: Focus analyses and documentation on identified action objectives
<b>Actions:</b> Identify objectives to inform priority activities.	Actions: Enhance joint meeting opportunities among Plan Development Teams (PDT), Advisory Panels (AP), and the Committees (CTE).	Actions: Ensure timely development, review, and implementation of annual catch limits.	Actions: Optimize the range of alternatives considered for action.
Build consensus to prioritize top management needs.	Encourage participation in stock assessment and SSC meetings.	Consider revising specifications through in-season adjustment or streamlined analyses.	Prepare meeting documents in accordance with required analyses (e.g., NEPA or other statutory requirements).
Recommend priority activities within realistic capacity parameters, including all partners.	Focus meeting presentations and materials to target audiences and bundle routine items.	Allow flexible timelines for the development of management improvement actions.	Use AI/automation tools where applicable to generate summaries for user accessibility.

# Goal 2: Grow and strengthen partnerships

## Objectives:

- Increase participation from all user groups throughout the Council system and processes.
- Enhance the ability to communicate information in a professional and decision-relevant manner.
- Facilitate opportunities to improve science and management decisions by connecting all user groups.
- Ensure representative involvement in the development of science and management products.

Strategy 1: Develop communication tools and practices that support clear, consistent, and accessible information sharing	Strategy 2: Increase opportunities for stakeholder input to the scientific process and outputs	Strategy 3: Align science priority topics with management and fishing industry objectives
<b>Actions:</b>	Actions:	Actions:
Host and facilitate joint and multi-user meetings to address complex topics.	Formalize a community engagement strategy to provide input to stock assessments, survey methods, data treatments, fishery indices, etc.	Consider input from science partners when determining Council priorities.
Develop protocols for the use of technology and social media to enhance outreach.	Develop coupled engagement and retention strategies to reactivate and retain stakeholders in Council activities.	Refine the approach to updating Council Research Priorities, focusing on immediate, near-term, and long-term needs.
	Foster routine interactions between stock assessment scientists and fishermen at all stages of the assessment process.	Consider dedicated, collaborative time blocks for interorganizational discussion of FMPs, stocks, species, and regional requirements.

# Goal 3: Improve accessibility, quality, and use of data

## Objectives:

- Improve user understanding of data streams (i.e., collection methods, analysis tools, interpretation of results).
- Enhance opportunities to provide input about data needs to external partners.
- Balance consideration of quantitative and qualitative data to support management recommendations, including socioeconomic information.
- Apply the Council’s Risk Policy in specification-setting.
- Enhance application of emergent data to inform management recommendations.
- Conduct routine review of reports and analytical documents to ensure summary sections capture key concepts, clear actions/outcomes, and readability for all

Strategy 1: Provide and encourage opportunities for all to teach/learn about data sources, treatments, analyses, interpretations, and applications	Strategy 2: Expand collaborative pathways for the application of fishery-dependent data	Strategy 3: Implement a Risk Policy that considers biological, environmental, and socioeconomic factors	Strategy 4: Streamline approaches to incorporate emergent information in a timely manner
<b>Actions:</b>	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:
Design/develop new training resources to interpret data/science and promote participation.	Strengthen partnerships between fishermen and agencies to broaden data collection.  Facilitate training for fishermen on data quality standards and reporting expectations.	Apply the policy iteratively using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.  Identify data gaps that may be filled through qualitative approaches.	Develop triggers and/or thresholds in harvest control rules for automatic adjustments.  Define criteria and information sources to prompt near real-time management reactions.
	Develop structured programs for fishermen to provide data for stock assessments.		Allow capacity for adjustments through the priority setting process.

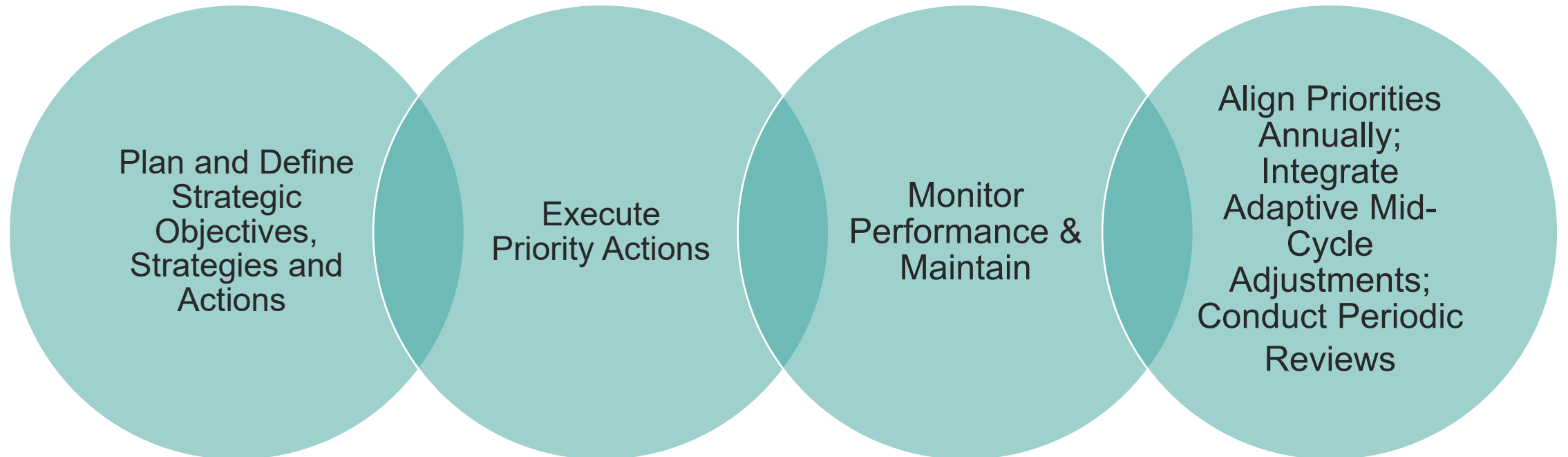
# Goal 4: Optimize capacity to reflect fishery resources and improve fishing efficiency and safety

## Objectives:

- Determine the appropriate level of investment for stocks, management plans, fishery components, and community factors.
- Define “optimal capacity” and establish metrics for harvesting capacity and/or system capacity (e.g., processing, infrastructure, labor, regulatory structures).
- Build consensus for identified objectives related to fleet size and vessel characteristics, community dependence, diversity, and accessibility of permits.

Strategy 1: Identify a justified investment level for all stocks across FMPs to reflect objectives and human resource capacity	Strategy 2: Consider capacity issues in a piecemeal approach with manageable steps	Strategy 3: Dedicate resources to directly address fishery capacity issues and questions
<b>Actions:</b>	Actions:	Actions:
Complete the Risk/Value Matrix in collaboration with regional partners and stakeholders.	Leverage ongoing Inflation Reduction Act initiatives (e.g., permit portfolios, governance, groundfish transition).	Establish a regional working group and organize listening sessions for target audiences.
Consider the use of Ecosystem Component Species designations for current and future management needs.	Utilize results from the vessel baseline restriction evaluation.	Commit to a process to advance goals with detailed milestones and decision points.

# Implementation and Accountability



# Final Takeaways



**From Reactive to Proactive** → The Council must shift from a "reactive" to a "proactive" mindset. This plan provides the triggers and strategic maps to make the transition possible.



**Institutional Resilience** → Capacity is NEFMC's biggest risk. The HSP is about work optimization.



**Trust through Transparency** → Stakeholder trust is rebuilt when transparency becomes a practice.



**The Strategic Plan is a "Living Tool"** → This is not a shelf-document. The Council will have a real-time dashboard to adjust strategies as ocean conditions change.

# Key Questions for HSP Review

- Do the draft strategies adequately support the Council's identified goals?
- Is anything significant missing from or unclear in the draft strategies?
- What elements of the draft HSP are particularly strong, and what areas need additional attention before consideration for approval in September?



# Contact Information

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