

Skate Advisory Panel and Committee Meetings

September 16, 2021
AP: 9:00 AM start
Cte: 1:00 PM start
Webinars



New England
Fishery Management Council

Technical Support: helpdesk@nefmc.org or (978) 465-0492 x111

Introductions

Skate Committee	
Rick Bellavance, RI	Scott Olszewski, RIDEM
Libby Etrie, MA (Acting Chair)	John Pappalardo, MA
Dan Farnham, MAFMC rep.	Dan Salerno, NH
Dr. Jay Hermsen, NMFS	Kelly Whitmore, MADMF

Skate Advisory Panel	
James Dopkin, NJ	William McCann, MA
Sonja Fordham, DC	Randall Morgan, MA
Andrea Incollingo, RI	Daniel Nordstrom, MA
Dr. Jeff Kneebone, MA	Ted Platz, RI
Scott MacAllister, MA	John Whiteside, MA (Chair)
Gregory Mataronas, RI	

Skate Staff		
Jenny Couture	Dr. Rachel Feeney, PDT Chair	Lou Goodreau



Agenda

Introductions, approval of agenda, and timeline and other updates

Skate Advisory Panel Report (committee meeting only)

Skate 2022-2023 Specifications

- Receive a progress update
- Recommend final preferred alternative

Amendment 5 to the Northeast Skate Complex FMP

- Receive a progress update
- Recommend alternatives

2022 Council Management Priorities

- Recommend priorities

Other business

Any changes? other business?



Skate timeline: near-term

Month	Day	Meetings/Deadlines/Milestones
Sept	16	AP and Committee meetings (specs, A5, 2022 priorities)
	17	Documents due for Council mtg
	28-30	Council meeting, skates on Wednesday (specs final action, A5)
October	4	PDT meeting (A5)
	TBD	Preliminary submission of specifications
November	TBD	AP and Committee meetings (A5, 2022 priorities)
	TBD	PDT meeting (A5)
	26	Documents due for Council mtg
December	7-9	Council meeting (A5, 2022 priorities)

We
are
here

Questions?



Skate AP Report (Committee meeting only)

Purpose

Review and consider AP input

Relevant documents

6e – Sept 16 AP mtg summary - draft

Skate FY 2022-2023 Specifications

Purpose

Review PDT background work,
Recommend preferred alternative

Relevant documents

- 2a - Draft alternatives
- 2b - Draft supplemental information report
- 2c - Skate PDT memo to SSC, July 14, 2021
- 2d - Skate matrix for ABC setting
- 2e – SSC memo re skate ABC, Sept 10, 2021

Acceptable Biological Catch

Scope:

- Action focused on setting the ABC/ACL flowchart.

ABC control rule:

- The long-term median catch of each species (landings plus discards) is adjusted by its ratio of short-term over long-term trawl survey biomass (kg/tow). Results are then summed for a complex-wide ABC.
- If following control rule exactly, would use:
 - Spring survey data for 2019-2021 for little skate.
 - Fall survey data for 2018-2020 for other species.
 - Fishery catch data for 2018-2020.



ABC development - issues

However:

- Missed some stations in 2018; no survey data for 2020; NEFSC indicated that only survey data through 2019 are to be used.
- PDT developed a modification (again); not the first-time adjustments are needed to account for missed stations, but the degree of missing data is more severe.

Recall, control rule was modified for FY2020-2021 specifications:

- Southern stations missed in fall 2017, so no rosette or clearnose indices. Two-year average used for those species (2016, 2018).
- Missed stations in fall 2017 and 2018 impacted barndoor, thorny, smooth, winter. Three-year average used (2016-2018), adjusted to account for the missing strata.



ABC development – consensus method

PDT proposed modification, accepted by Scientific and Statistical Committee:

- For survey indices,
 - Continue using three-year average where possible.
 - Little skate = 2017-2019 spring survey data, like for FY 2020-2021.
 - Barndoor, thorny, smooth, and winter skate = data updated to fall 2017-2019.
 - Use two-year average if lack of data.
 - Rosette and clearnose skate = 2018-2019 fall data, no fall 2017 data.
- For catch/biomass time series,
 - Continue using data through 2016. Adding 3 years of data unlikely to shift 50+ year time series.
- Methods likely reevaluated during 2023 assessment.

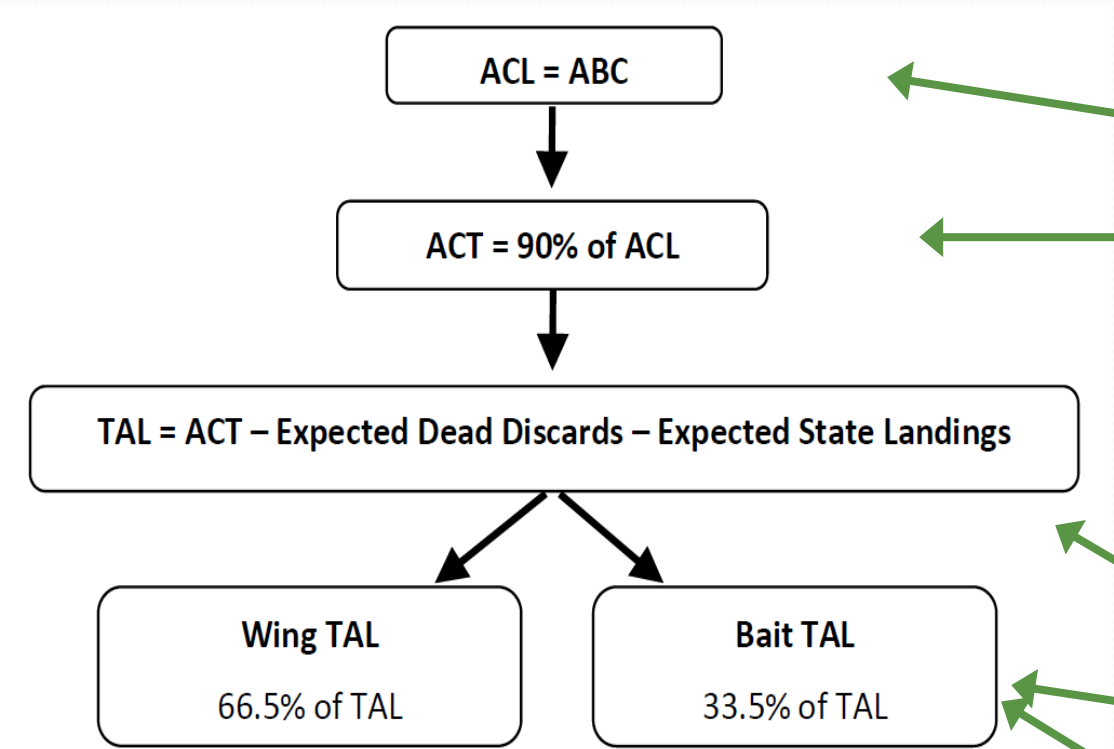


ABC development – consensus method

			Alternative 1 (FY 2020-21)	Control Rule (ideal)	Alternative 2 (DRAFT)
Survey indices	Spring	Little	2017-19	2019-21	2017-19
	Fall	Rosette & clearnose	2016 & 18 (no 2017 data)	2018-20	2018-19
		Barndoor, thorny, smooth, winter	2016-18		2017-19
Catch/biomass time series			Time series to 2016	Not always updated	Times series to 2016
2022-2023 ABC			32,715 mt		37,236 mt
State & discard deductions*			2016-18	2018-20	2017-19

*For ACL flow chart.

ABC/ACL flow chart



	Alt. 1 (mt)	Alt. 2 (mt)
ABC = ACL	32,715	37,236
ACT	29,444	33,513
Dead Discards	10,942	11,856
State Landings	638	515
Federal TAL	17,864	21,142
Wing TAL	11,879	14,059
Bait TAL	5,984	7,082



Stock status

Stock status:

- Overfishing? Not occurring for any skate species; risk of overfishing is low.
- For all seven skate species, the 2017-2019 average survey index increased over 2016-2018. Most species near or above biomass target; thorny skate persistently below biomass threshold.
- Overfished? Only thorny skate: under rebuilding plan; possession prohibited. 25-year rebuilding deadline is in 2028. As of 2019 survey data, thorny skate was at 4% of $B_{MSYproxy}$
- Little and winter skate continue to dominate survey biomass.
- Skates likely to shift distribution with warming conditions; thorny skate contracting and moving northward (Gulf of Maine) and into deeper waters.



Fishery Performance

Doc #2b

- ACL never been exceeded. 69% of ACL caught in FY 2020, down from FY 2017 (81%).
- TALs not exceeded since FY 2017. 71% of TAL landed in FY 2020, down from FY 2017 (99%). Landings relatively constant despite TAL changes.
- Fishery revenue \$5-9M since 2010, varying with wing landings more than bait.
- Bait fishery is more directed, wing more incidental.
- Since 2004, <20 bait only vessels/year, 21-80 bait and wing vessels/year (increasing), 700-260 wing only vessels/year (decreasing).
- Of 400 total ports active since 2010, 8 primary and 21 secondary, ME to NC; fishery centered in Chatham, New Bedford, Pt. Judith.
- Total & dead discards decreasing since 2013, mostly from scallop dredge & otter trawls.
- In scallop dredge gear, almost exclusively little and winter skate, more mixed speciation in otter trawl gear, sink gillnet and longlines. Minimal thorny skate.



Impacts Analysis

Valued Ecosystem Component	Expected Impact
Target Species	Low positive. ABC based on updated data, determined to be sustainable. $ACT \ll ABC$, low risk of overfishing.
Non-target Species	Low positive. Only minor changes to fishing effort. Catch controlled by other FMPs.
Protected Resources	Low negative to negligible. Interaction risk remains but minor fishing effort changes.
Physical Environment and EFH	Low negative. Interaction of mobile bottom tending gear with habitat.
Human Communities	Low positive. Realize additional yield from TAL increase, AM triggers less likely.

NEPA document: Supplemental Information Report (SIR)

- No major changes in data sources and status of resources and fishery.
- Impacts are within the range of what was considered in the last Environmental Assessment (2020-2021 specs, Framework 8).



Recommending preferred alternative

SSC rationale for ABC Alternative 2:

- Index-based control rule continues to be appropriate.
- OFL still cannot be determined without analytical assessments.
- Supports PDT approach as best scientific information: using three years of survey data where possible and data through 2016 for the catch/biomass time series.
- Recent landings have been within the TALs; overfishing unlikely.
- Surveys show stable to increasing trends across the complex.

SSC cautions:

- While thorny skate is stable to positive, biomass remains far below historic levels.
- Many issues should be addressed through the next assessment (e.g., ecosystem change, data gaps, unique life history traits within complex).

Questions for today:

- Should the Council accept the SSC-recommended ABC (37,236 mt) for FY 2022-2023, an increase over the current ABC of 32,715 mt (Document #2a)? Why or why not?

Questions?



Amendment 5

Purpose

Develop alternatives (intermediate limits, monitoring, etc.)

Relevant documents

3a – Discussion Document

3b – Affected Environment

Recap of June Council mtg

FMP objectives:

- Accepted revised Objectives #2 (rebuilding overfished stocks) and #5 (setting research priorities).

Intermediate possession limits:

- Added alternative for wing and bait in all seasons, at 75% and 90% of TALs, Step 1 reduction to 75% of current limits.
- Added option to only implement in last season.
- Clarified that RA would have discretion to not implement, like current discretion for incidental limit.

Federal skate permit:

- Added alternative that would require retaining permit all year.

New control dates for wing and bait:

- Recommended rescinding the current control dates in the wing and bait fisheries.



Types of measures being considered

Developing alternatives	An intermediate trigger to slow the wing and/or bait fishery.
	Restrict switching between state and federal fishing for the wing and/or bait fishery.
	Make the Federal skate permit a year-round permit for the wing and/or bait fishery.
PDT tasking	Monitoring requirements for the wing and/or bait fishery beyond NEFOP/SBRM requirements.
No alternatives or tasking since secondary scoping	Creating different TALs for the wing fishery segments (e.g., directed and non-directed TALs).
	Gear modifications that could reduce bycatch for the wing and/or bait fishery (e.g., 12" mesh gillnet size).
	Additional reporting requirements for the wing and/or bait fishery (e.g., VMS declarations, daily catch reports).
No longer being considered	Limited access for the wing and/or bait fishery, with or without tiers for different qualification criteria for permit categories.



4.1 - Intermediate Possession Limit

RA discretion

June Council motion:

“That for all the intermediate possession limit alternatives, the Regional Administrator would have the discretion to not implement the intermediate possession limit, based on current landing rates and the timing relative to the end of the season, like the current discretion for implementing the incidental limit.”

Current discretion for incidental limits primarily for wing Season 2:

In wing Season 1 (before Aug. 17) and the bait seasons, the RA must implement the incidental limit if a certain percentage of TAL is reached but has the discretion to later remove the limit (see text).

Questions for today:

- Is the AP/Committee clear that the “discretion to not implement” is only for wing Season 1 after Aug. 17 and in Season 2? Is the intent really to mirror all the current ways the incidental limit “shall” and “may” be implemented and later lifted? Rather, is the intent for the RA to have discretion in all cases?
- Currently, the RA has discretion to not implement a wing incidental possession limit after Aug. 17, within 15 days of the end of wing Season 1. The PDT recommends having a 30-day window for an intermediate limit. Is this OK?



4.1 - Intermediate Possession Limit

Preliminary analysis

First, looked at if an intermediate possession limit (IPL) may have been triggered in FY 2015-2020, using in-season quota monitoring data:

Fishery	75% trigger	80% trigger	85% trigger
Wing	10 of 12 seasons	7 of 12 seasons	-
Bait	9 of 18 seasons	-	8 of 18 seasons

Need other data source to evaluate:

- 1. How many trips would be affected by an IPL trigger for both wing and bait fisheries (Method 1) and*
- 2. Loss of landings and revenue when IPLs and incidental limits are triggered (Method 2).*

Focused on FY 2018.



4.1 - Intermediate Possession Limit

Preliminary analysis

How many trips in FY18 affected by IPL trigger? Used Method 1: quota monitoring data for trigger date and CFDETS AA data for # of trips with landings > IPL.

- **75% trigger alternatives:**
 - *Wing*: triggered in last month of Season 1 and halfway through FY (re annual wing TAL). 2-5% of trips affected by trigger, depending on if 50 or 75% possession limit.
 - *Bait*: triggered towards end of Seasons 1 and 2 but not in Season 3 (only 77% of bait TAL achieved that year). # of trips affected by IPL trigger not calculated.
- **80% wing trigger and 85% bait trigger alternatives (similar results):**
 - *Wing*: 80% trigger occurs ~1 week later in Season 1 and ~1 month later in the FY (re annual wing TAL) than 75% trigger. 2-4% of trips affected.
 - *Bait*: 85% trigger occurs ~1-2 weeks later in Seasons 1 and 2 than 75% trigger and likely not implemented by end of FY based on annual bait TAL.



4.1 - Intermediate Possession Limit

Preliminary analysis – cont. (Table 17)

Would an incidental limit also have been triggered in FY18? What are the loss of landings/revenue? Use Method 2: CFDETS AA trip-level data only.

- Looked at wing 75% IPL trigger with 50% and 75% PL and 85% incidental trigger.
- Incidental PL triggered ~ 1 month after IPL & results in a > loss of landings/rev relative to IPL trigger.
- Compared to Method 1 using QM data for trigger dates, AA data show IPL triggers ~3 weeks earlier in Season 1.

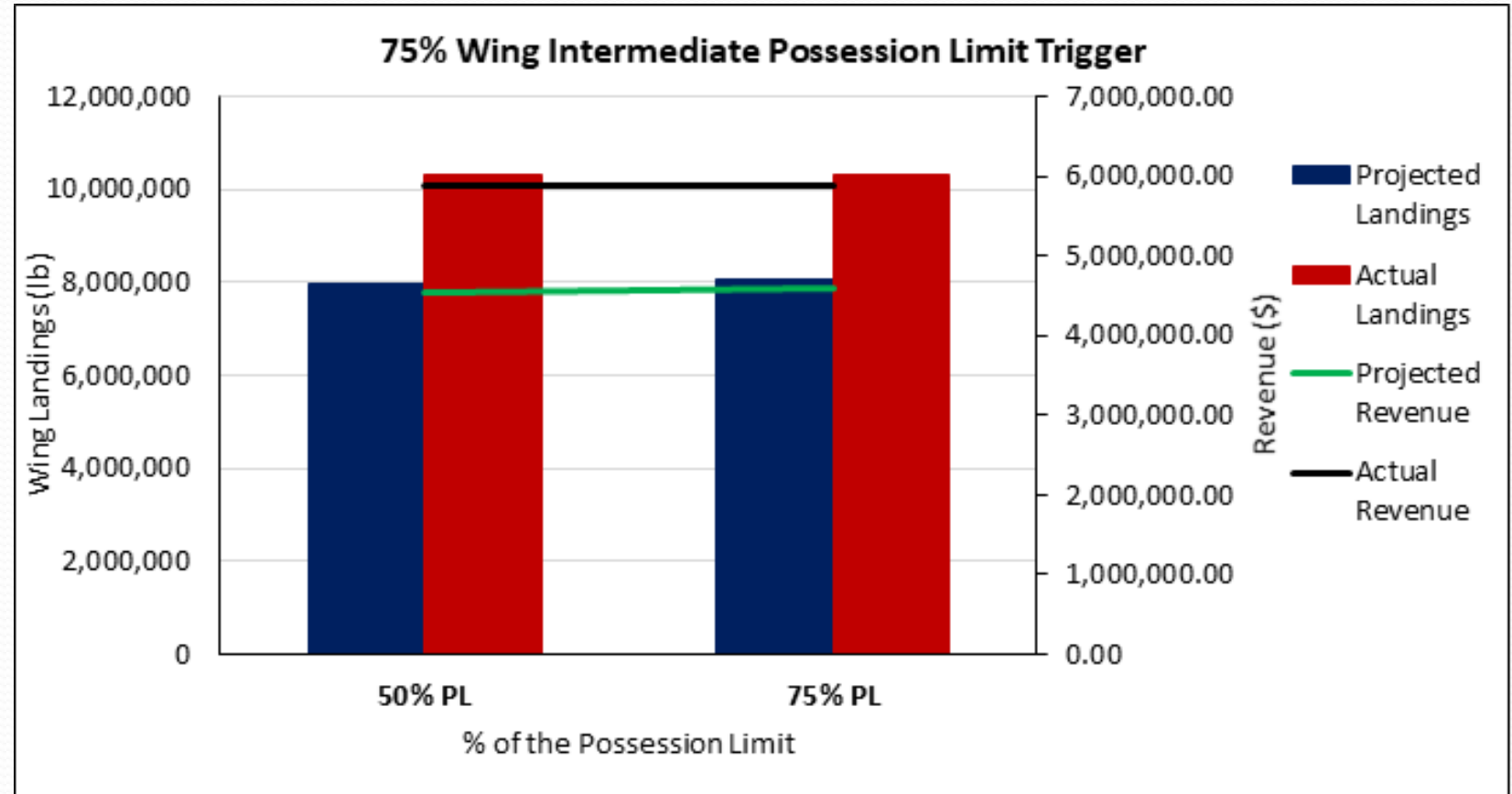
75% IPL trigger, 85% incidental	Wing Season	Possession Limit Triggers	Trigger Date
50% PL	1	Regular PL	
		Intermediate Trigger	7/16/2018
		Incidental Trigger	8/7/2018
	2	Regular PL	
		Intermediate Trigger	11/2/2021
		Incidental Trigger	12/27/2018
75% PL	1	Regular PL	
		Intermediate Trigger	7/16/2018
		Incidental Trigger	8/1/2018
	2	Regular PL	
		Intermediate Trigger	10/31/2018
		Incidental Trigger	12/14/2018



4.1 - Intermediate Possession Limit

Method 2 cont.

- ~22-23% of FY landings and revenue lost under 75% wing IPL, depending on if 50% or 75% PL
- Method 2 only done for a subset of draft wing alternatives, no preliminary results for bait



Questions for today:

- Is the AP/Committee comfortable with the range of alternatives in Action I? Should there be modifications? Should the analysis be done using a certain method and/or dataset? How and why?



4.2 - Federal fishing permit

Alternative 2:

“...an application for the federal skate permit must be submitted 45 days prior to the start of each fishing year and must be retained with the vessel for the entire year.”

Question for today:

- The Skate PDT had recommended that the federal skate permit be obtained within 45 days prior to the start of a fishing year. In researching other fisheries more closely, the PDT now recommends 30 days to be consistent with the groundfish and scallop permit application deadlines (see p. 31). Is this OK?



4.3 - At-Sea Monitoring

PDT tasking from May

PDT Task:

“Estimate the realized NEFOP observer coverage rates for two components of the skate fishery: trips with declaration code ‘MNK’ for the wing fishery and declaration code ‘DOF’ for the bait fishery.”

Wing (Non-Bait): ~7% MNK trips were observed via NEFOP (FY 2016-19 average)

Bait: ~12% DOF trips were observed via NEFOP (FY 2016-19 average)

Caveats: 6% observer records didn’t match with landings data; 9% landings records didn’t match with observer records.

Note: Observer coverage was estimated for all declaration codes, FY 2016-2019, and for the At-Sea Monitoring (ASM) program as well.



PDT tasking from May – NEFOP Coverage

Wing NEFOP Coverage (Subset of Declaration Codes)

Plan Code	FY	% of Dealer Landings	% of Revenue	% of Trips
DOF	2016	12%	9%	9%
DOF	2017	14%	13%	12%
DOF	2018	13%	12%	13%
DOF	2019	7%	7%	11%
MNK	2016	7%	6%	7%
MNK	2017	10%	10%	10%
MNK	2018	6%	6%	5%
MNK	2019	6%	6%	7%
NMS	2016	4%	4%	5%
NMS	2017	8%	8%	9%
NMS	2018	3%	3%	4%
NMS	2019	6%	5%	6%

Bait NEFOP Coverage (Subset of Declaration Codes)

Plan Code	FY	% of Dealer Landings	% of Revenue	% of Trips
DOF	2016	10%	10%	10%
DOF	2017	9%	10%	11%
DOF	2018	13%	14%	13%
DOF	2019	14%	14%	13%
MNK	2016	9%	10%	5%
MNK	2017	19%	18%	12%
MNK	2018	7%	6%	3%
MNK	2019	1%	1%	3%
NMS	2016	6%	6%	6%
NMS	2017	15%	15%	13%
NMS	2018	6%	6%	7%
NMS	2019	13%	13%	12%

Green = Committee tasking; Removed NEFOP limited gillnet trips



At-Sea Monitoring (ASM) Coverage

Wing ASM Coverage
(Subset of Declaration Codes)

Plan Code	FY	% of Dealer Landings	% of Revenue	% of Trips
MNK	2016	0%	1%	1%
MNK	2017	0%	0%	1%
MNK	2018	0%	0%	0%
MNK	2019	0%	0%	0%
NMS	2016	3%	3%	5%
NMS	2017	2%	2%	3%
NMS	2018	1%	1%	4%
NMS	2019	4%	3%	6%

Bait ASM Coverage
(Subset of Declaration Codes)

Plan Code	FY	% of Dealer Landings	% of Revenue	% of Trips
NMS	2016	5%	5%	5%
NMS	2017	3%	3%	3%
NMS	2018	6%	7%	7%
NMS	2019	8%	8%	8%

Questions for today:

- Should alternatives be developed in this section? Why? Why not?



Other alternatives?

Questions for today:

Of the types of measures that the Council scoped for in early 2021, there has been no Committee work to date on the following. Should the Committee develop any of these ideas? Why or why not?

- Creating different TALs for the wing fishery segments (e.g., directed and non-directed TALs).
- Restrict switching between state and federal fishing for the wing and/or bait fishery. [Note: the alternatives in Action 2 may accomplish this, though other ideas could be developed.]
- Gear modifications that could reduce bycatch for the wing and/or bait fishery (e.g., 12" mesh gillnet size).
- Additional reporting requirements for the wing and/or bait fishery (e.g., VMS declarations, daily catch reports).



2022 Council management priorities re skates

Purpose

Review PDT input and recommend priorities

Relevant documents

4d – Aug. 9 PDT meeting summary

Work priorities

2021 priorities – progress update

- FY2022-2023 specifications – Final action in September. To be completed in 2021.
- Amendment 5 – Supplemental scoping completed. Developing alternatives ongoing.

2022 PDT recommendations

- Amendment 5 – Finish alternatives. Complete action?
- 2022 Skate Annual Monitoring Report – PDT task. Complete by September 2021.

Questions for today:

- What should the skate work priorities be for 2022?

Questions?



Other Business