



New England Fishery Management Council

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Eric Reid, *Chair* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

## MEETING SUMMARY

### Habitat Plan Development Team

July 27, 2022

12:45 – 2:45 p.m.

#### *Agenda*

The PDT provided feedback on a final report describing the results of an Exempted Fishing Permit-based research project.

#### *Meeting attendance*

PDT members included Michelle Bachman (Chair), Peter Auster, Sharon Benjamin, Jessica Coakley, Jenny Couture, Geret DePiper, Julia Livermore, David Stevenson, and Alison Verkade. Other attendees included Farrell Davis, Luisa Garcia, Jay Hermsen, Natalie Jennings, Scott Lang, Louis Legace, Ryan Munnely, Douglas Potts, Eric Reid, Allen Rencurrel, Ron Smolowitz, Kelly Whitmore, and an additional phone only listener.

#### *Discussion*

Ms. Bachman updated members on the status of the Habitat Area of Particular Concern framework submission and asked if any members had other business items. None were noted.

The PDT spent most of the meeting developing a memorandum to the Habitat Committee responding to the Council's February 1, 2022 motion on the final report for EFP #19066:

That the Habitat Committee supported by the Plan Development Team review the results of Coonamessett Farm Foundation's clam dredge mapping study, conducted in a subset of the Rose and Crown area under an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP), once a report has been provided to the Council. The purpose of this review is to ascertain the utility of this study for management of fishing gear impacts within the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area. This assessment could be used to support NOAA Fisheries consideration of an extension for this EFP, or approval of similar EFPs.

By way of background, in May 2020, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) granted Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF) an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to work in the Rose and Crown section of the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (GSC HMA). The permit was initially granted for one year and was renewed in August

## FINAL

2021 for an additional six months through February 4, 2022. The goals, objectives, and research questions are summarized in the PDT meeting summary from February 15, 2022. In December 2020, CFF submitted an initial progress report to the Council, and the PDT provided feedback on this work in January 2021. In February 2022, CFF submitted a second progress report to the Council. The final report discussed during this meeting was submitted to the Council on June 15, 2022.

Coonamessett Farm Foundation staff members attended the meeting, and Natalie Jennings and other report authors (Luisa Garcia, Farrell Davis, and Ryan Munnelly) responded to questions prior to the call, in writing, and during the call.

The PDT discussed an initial draft of the memorandum, including four sections: (1) an introduction, including project research objectives for the study area and Council research objectives for the HMA overall, (2) a list of what can be concluded from the study, (3) a list of what cannot be concluded, relative to objectives, given the data available, and (4) a discussion of how the results might be applied to management or future scientific work. The PDT's discussion of these sections will be reflected in the final version of the memorandum.

### *Follow up items*

- Staff will draft a short meeting summary (this document) and revise the memorandum to the Habitat Committee. These will be provided to PDT members for review on Friday, July 29, and circulated to the Committee sometime during the week of August 8, in advance of their meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff will also continue working on the Habitat Area of Particular Concern Framework submission and will check in with PDT members for contributions as needed.
- The PDT chair will follow up soon with requests for future meeting times, including to discuss the Atlantic salmon aquaculture authorization framework.

No other business was discussed, and the meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.