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East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Core Team

March 11, 2021 Meeting Summary

Attendees: Kiley Dancy (MAFMC), Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC), Roger Pugliese (SAFMC), Sean Lucey (NEFSC), Toni Kerns (ASMFC), Moira Kelly (NMFS GARFO), Brandon Muffley (MAFMC)

The core team reviewed a draft document with an overview of a proposed east coast climate change scenario planning process. The core team recommended some modifications to this document which will be provided to the Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC), including leadership from the SAFMC, for discussion and approval. A summary of the core team comments during this meeting is provided below.

Core Team Membership

- The core team recommends that the NRCC consider adding Wendy Morrison from NMFS headquarters to the core team, if available. Wendy served on the previous NRCC working group and has valuable experience with other NMFS scenario planning and climate change initiatives.
- The core team also recommends requesting involvement from a Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) staff member, if there is someone available with the relevant climate change and fisheries expertise for the South Atlantic region. The core team felt that the group could use another individual with extensive science and climate background. While there was not a specific individual recommended at this time, SAFMC staff will explore potential individuals with relevant expertise that could be requested if the NRCC and SEFSC agree to this participation.

Facilitation

- The core team was supportive of the proposed facilitation contract with Jonathan Star of Scenario Insight LLC and acknowledged throughout their meeting that much of the planning, including development of project objectives, timeline, and process, should be informed by future discussions with an experienced facilitator.
- The group discussed how the timing of bringing a facilitator on board may overlap with the beginning stages of this initiative. A scope of work for a contractor is in development currently, but it is still unknown exactly when a facilitator may start work on this project. This will influence the timing of the beginning stages of the project including scoping.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

- The core team agreed that identifying clear objectives early is important but noted that the advice of a facilitator on the most effective and efficient way to develop objectives will be important on this subject.
- The core team will draft strawman potential objectives for NRCC feedback, targeting the NRCC's late May meeting. Ideally, the facilitator would be able to provide advice on this subject as well prior to this May meeting, but the timing may be tight. Development of objectives can be an iterative process.

- The core team noted that it would be beneficial to leave objectives and focal questions as draft through the scoping process so that they can be refined if needed based on stakeholder input. This would improve buy-in and allow stakeholders to provide some early direction for this project.
- The NRCC should also review and discuss the preliminary list of possible expected outcomes currently in the draft document. These outcomes are something that the core team, facilitator, and NRCC should continue to develop as this process unfolds, but it will be important to clarify for stakeholders what deliverables they can expect out of this process.
- The draft outcomes in the document are relatively standard for a scenario planning process, but more specificity may be needed eventually to make them more relevant and specific to east coast management processes and enhance understanding by stakeholders.
- Eventually, clarification will be needed on how specific and far reaching the expected outcomes will be. The core team notes that the results will generally be more along the lines of broader organizational planning and strategizing, and recommendations related to governance issues. This process is not likely to result in highly specific fishery management plan level proposed changes. Scenario planning is more strategic and qualitative, not quantitative or species specific like a Management Strategy Evaluation.
- Region-specific applications and recommendations could be considered later in the process, but the core team would be wary of doing so in place of coast-wide recommendations and applications, given that this initiative should be aiming for improved coordination, cooperation, and multi-jurisdictional governance structures.

Timeline

- Overall, the group felt that the tentative timeline presented to the NRCC in November 2020 (see Nov. 4 memo from MAFMC staff¹) was overly ambitious and will likely need to be pushed back especially in the beginning stages. A facilitator has not yet started work on this process, and in addition, the group noted that scoping is likely to take longer than initially planned (see “Process and Scoping” below).
- The aim to have a scenario building workshop in late Fall 2021 may be reasonable but it depends on how quickly the scoping process gets started and how extensive the scoping phase is (e.g., use of surveys, multiple public meetings, etc.) as well as workshop preparation.
- NRCC feedback is needed on the feasibility of the draft timeline presented in the proposed process document as well as commitment from each body to provide adequate staff and resources.

Process and Scoping

- Because scenario planning will be new to most participants (i.e., managers and stakeholders) and may cause confusion, the core team recommends investing the time and effort into ensuring that participating organizations and their stakeholders are well-informed about scenario planning basics and the goals of this project. Making sure the

¹ Available at <https://www.mafmc.org/s/Scenario-planning-Nov-2020-for-NRCC.pdf>

scoping process is done well will help the NRCC get useful scoping input and help build stakeholder buy-in for this initiative.

- One way to contribute to up-front education would be some kind of kick off webinar and/or introductory video or presentation that could be presented to each management body, distributed to interested stakeholders, and posted online.
- Facilitator advice should be sought on the appropriate level of scoping and introductory materials. This might depend on the overall plan for how in-depth this process will be and the level of stakeholder engagement at each step. Scoping could involve regional workshops to get regional concerns first, followed by potential areas of overlap in concerns, but this should be further discussed with a facilitator.
- The core team noted that scoping feedback does have the potential to be overwhelming given the number and diversity of stakeholders involved along east coast. The need to get useful, focused input in a manageable way will have to be balanced with transparency in the process and reaching out to a broad stakeholder audience. More open-ended feedback would be more difficult to analyze, so the core team may need to consider asking fairly targeted questions.
- The proposed two-workshop model process provides a few major opportunities for potential stakeholder involvement: during scoping/development of information leading up to the first workshop, participating in the scenario building process (first workshop), and participating in the process to address applications of the scenarios (potential second workshop). Taking a broader initial approach to stakeholder engagement during scoping should be considered, while the workshops and latter stages of the process will likely need to be more focused and limited in terms of participation.

Other Comments

- The group discussed how to coordinate updates and discussions for individual management bodies. For example, the MAFMC and NEFMC will coordinate information for updates on this topic at their respective April meetings. The ASMFC intends to use similar information to discuss this topic at their spring meeting in May, prior to the NRCC meeting. However, the SAFMC met in March and will not meet again until June, so they would be unable to review and discuss this topic as a full body before the NRCC discusses this topic in May. Due to different timing of various meetings, the level of information or discussion for each group may be different throughout this process but coordination of timing and messaging to the extent possible would be helpful and the core team discussed preparing consistent slides and documents for future presentations.
- The core team noted that SAFMC representation on the NRCC for discussions related to this initiative is currently expected to consist of the SAFMC Executive Director. The core team noted that it may also be beneficial to include SAFMC Council leadership (e.g., the Council chair) in these discussions.