

New England Fishery Management Council Strategic Plan Initiative – Workshop Outcomes

Presentation to NEFMC - January 28, 2026

Workshop Overview & Purpose

- **Initiative:** Served as the catalyst for developing the region's first holistic strategic plan.
- **Objective:** To improve Council operations and enhance the long-term viability and sustainability of managed fisheries.
- **Foundation:** Participants examined the Discovery and Gap Analysis presented in December 2025 to inform this new plan of action.
- **Participants:** Included voting and non-voting Council members, key staff, and external facilitators.



Workshop Goals

The workshop focused on four goals:

- **Mission:** Ensure a shared understanding of the Council's current mission statement (as prescribed by the Magnuson-Stevens Act) and supplement it as appropriate.
- **10-Year Vision:** Develop a descriptive, aspirational future state for both the Council and the fisheries it manages.
- **Strategic Goals:** Create high-level goals that will focus the Council's improvement efforts over the next several years.
- **Success Measures:** Develop preliminary Key Performance Indicators to track progress toward identified goals and ensure accountability.

Collective Focus & Shared Desires

- **A Worthwhile Challenge:** While the process is challenging, there is a strong consensus and desire to co-develop solutions.
- **Proactive Management:** Participants collectively recognize the need to address rapidly changing ocean conditions and management resources.
- **Building Trust:** A primary focus is on effectively engaging stakeholders and rebuilding trust between science, management, and industry partners.
- **Forward-Thinking:** The group aims to transition from reactive management to a dynamic, forward-thinking framework.



Mission Statement Development

- Group confirmed the current Mission Statement.
- Group enhanced the current mission statement with bolded text from the Magnuson-Stevens Act to clarify the Council's core duties 303(a)(1)(A).

"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 Development

First Draft of a 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.”

First Draft of a Fisheries Vision Statement:

“We have enduring and abundant fishery resources that support:

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

Note: These may be combined as desired.

Draft Strategic Goals

Flexibility: Build flexibility and adaptability into Fishery Management Plans and simplify the process of developing management measures.

Capacity & Efficiency: Optimize capacity of fleets to reflect the size of the fishery resources and improve efficiency and safety of fishing fleets.

Partnerships: Grow and strengthen partnerships between science, management, and industry.

Data-Driven Decisions: Improve accessibility, quality, and use of data to better inform decisions

Timeline



Date	Milestone
February – March 2026	Work together to finalize the mission, vision, goals and begin to develop strategies and recommended actions . Develop a detailed implementation plan.
April 2026	Submit the final project report ; present a draft strategic plan and final report to the Council.
April – June 2026	Council review and approval of the strategic plan.
June – January 1, 2027	Implementation of the Strategic Plan (with some elements possibly starting earlier).

Contents of Final Project Report

Fishery Management Process: Overview of the current Council approaches and processes in management.

Key Inefficiencies: Summary of key challenges/drivers identified during Discovery Phase.

Recommended Improvements: List of potential improvements to fishery mgt process, ideas that may correct inefficiencies and identify key items that could support the goals and vision of a strategic plan.

Holistic Strategic Plan: Include a stand-alone plan that supports responsive and resilient fisheries management. Include potential actions identified by Council workshop participants.



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