

Prospectus: Bering Sea Canyons Habitat Informal Workshop

Workshop Purpose

An informal workshop is needed to develop research priorities for potential habitat studies of the Bering Sea Canyons. Workshop results would inform the North Pacific Research Board's 2009 Request for Proposals to be released in October 2008.

Background

Last fall, NPRB placed draft language in its 2008 RFP regarding habitat mapping:

NPRB is seeking cooperative proposals that will undertake comprehensive surveys of habitat types in the Bering Sea canyons. Applicants should consult NPRB project #615 for information on the recent Marine Habitat Mapping Technology Workshop for Alaska.

The NMFS Alaska Region wrote to NPRB on December 5, 2007 noting that the canyons were of considerable interest to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and potentially could be designated as habitat areas of particular concern. NMFS noted that multi-beam data were collected in 2006 and 2007 by the R/V Healy, but had yet to be processed and published. NMFS suggested holding a workshop to identify relevant questions, guide future research priorities, and ensure the scope of research matches the funding available.

Approach

An informal 2-day workshop will be held to develop a short background paper and succinct research priorities for the 2009 RFP. Research will be intended to help inform the North Pacific Fishery Management Council when considering Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) in one or more of the Bering Sea canyons. The Council's SSC will review HAPC criteria in February 2009 and the Council may call for HAPC proposals in summer 2009. Proposals will be due in October 2009. The Council could initiate analysis as early as October 2009, which could be provided to the Council in mid-2010 for possible action in fall 2010, though this is the most accelerated schedule the Council would consider. A research priority in the 2009 RFP could support field studies in summer 2009 and yield information germane to HAPC designation.

Venue and Date

September 11-12, 2008 in Traynor Conference Room, Building 4, AFSC, Seattle, WA.

Potential Participants

Dave Witherell (NPFMC), John Olson (NOAA), Jon Kurland (NOAA), Doug Woodby (ADFG), Jennifer Reynolds (UAF), NGO (Michelle Ridgway), NGO (Krenz – Oceana), Clarence Pautzke (NPRB), John Gauvin (industry), Stephanie Madsen (industry); Pribilof representative; Dorothy Childers (AMCC); (others as appropriate up to about 20).

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DRAFT AGENDA

**Bering Sea Canyons Workshop
Thursday, September 11, 2008
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
Traynor Conference Room
Seattle, Washington**

1. Opening Remarks (Clarence Pautzke, NPRB) (10:00-10:15 am)
 - a. Introductions.
 - b. Workshop purpose and anticipated deliverables.

2. Current Knowledge of Bering Sea Canyons (10:15-11:15 am)
 - a. Review scientific information for Bering Sea canyons and skate nursery area. (Chris Rooper, NOAA)
 - b. Review multi-beam data gathered by Healy in 2006 and 2007. (Jennifer Reynolds, UAF)

- (Lunch: Noon to 1:15 pm)

3. Commercial Fishing Review (John Olson, NOAA) (11:15 – noon; 1:15-2:15 pm)
 - a. Review of fish stocks in canyons, including surrounding shelf area.
 - b. Commercial fishing patterns: species, areas, and depths.
 - c. Projected changes over next 10 years. (Industry panel)

4. Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (Dave Witherell, NPFMC) (2:15 – 3:00 pm)
 - a. Primer on Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements: EFH and other requirements.
 - b. North Pacific Fishery Management Council process for considering HAPCs.
 - c. Information needs for the Council.

5. Mapping Technologies (Jennifer Reynolds, UAF) (3 – 4 pm)
 - a. Review of habitat mapping workshop findings.
 - b. Suitable technologies for mapping canyons and providing information relevant to HAPCs.
 - c. Future research planned in the canyons. (Chris Rooper, NOAA)

6. Stakeholder Input (Facilitator: Clarence Pautzke) (4 – 5 pm)

General public comments on research priorities specifically regarding scope and priority areas for mapping in canyons

7. Wrap-Up and Adjourn by 5:15 pm