

Federal-State-Council Meeting Summary

April 3, 2006, 1-4 pm
Department of Natural Resources Conference Room, Anchorage, AK

The following people attended the meeting. Underlined participants represented their agency.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Stephanie Madsen, Chair
Diana Evans, Fishery Analyst
Bill Wilson, Protected Resources Specialist

NOAA Fisheries

Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional
Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries
Jon Kurland, Assistant Regional Administrator
for Habitat Conservation
Joe McCabe, NOAA General Counsel
John Olson, Habitat Conservation

Alaska Ocean Policy Cabinet

Heather Brandon, Ocean Policy Coordinator

Department of Environmental Conservation

Kurt Fredriksson, Commissioner

Department of Natural Resources

Ed Fogels, Acting Deputy Commissioner
Randy Bates, Field Manager, Anchorage Field
Office

Department of Commerce, Communities, and Economic Development

Al Clough, Deputy Commissioner

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Leonard Corin, Fisheries and Ecological
Services Supervisor

Environmental Protection Agency

Marcia Combes, Director, Alaska Operations
Office

Minerals Management Service

Kate Wedemeyer, Fisheries Oceanographer,
Environmental Studies Section

Bureau of Land Management

Gary Reimer, Field Manager, Anchorage Field
Office

Alaskan Command

Jerome Montague, Native Affairs and Natural
Resources Advisor, Alaskan Command

US Geological Survey

Joy Geiselman, Deputy Chief, Biology/
Geography Office, Alaska Science Center

Meeting Summary

The group met to continue discussion of a proposal to create an Ecosystem Forum in Alaska, focusing on the Aleutian Islands marine ecosystem area. The purpose of the Forum would be to improve coordination and collaboration among Federal and State agencies.

Following the initial meeting in November 2005, a Steering Committee of six entity representatives met to draft a strawman Charter for the Ecosystem Forum. The Committee's report, and the strawman Charter, were presented to the Federal-State-Council group at this meeting. At the recommendation of the Steering Committee, the Charter has been broadened to create an Alaska Marine Ecosystem Forum. The initial focus of the Forum will remain on the Aleutian Islands marine ecosystem, however, if it proves to be successful, the Forum may extend its focus to other Alaska marine ecosystem areas. This is in line with the initial concept of using the Aleutian Islands ecosystem area as a pilot case.

The Committee made several other recommendations, including condensing considerations of the objectives and function of the Ecosystem Forum, as discussed at the November 2005 Federal-State-Council meeting, into six statements of purpose for the Forum. These are included in the draft Charter. Additionally, the Committee recommended that signatories to the Charter be limited to Federal and State entities with jurisdiction over activities within the marine ecosystem. The Forum may solicit participation by local and tribal governments, and other public or private entities, at its discretion.

The group discussed the Steering Committee's report, and modified the Committee's work to create the draft Charter. The draft Charter will continue to be revised by entity representatives by email.

The continuing issue of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's role in the Forum was discussed. The Council is not legally considered to be a Federal agency, although it recommends to the Secretary of Commerce the management actions that result in regulation of fishery activities in the Alaska federal waters. As a result, depending on the nature of the Forum's activities, the Council's participation in the Forum may trigger the need for Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) compliance. The Federal and State agencies present at the meeting strongly support the Council's substantive and ongoing involvement in the Forum. Recognizing the desire of the group, NOAA General Counsel, working with DOC General Counsel, is reviewing the draft Charter to determine if changes can be made that will both satisfy FACA requirements and allow the active participation of the Council in the Forum.

Once the Charter has been finalized, it will be circulated among agency representatives for signature. It is hoped that the first meeting of the Alaska Marine Ecosystem Forum may take place in September 2006.