

Rural Community Outreach Committee Meeting Report

November 20, 2009

8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Teleconference: (907) 271-2896

Committee: Eric Olson (Chair), Paula Cullenberg, Ole Olsen, Pete Probasco, Jennifer Hooper, Tom Okleasik, Duncan Fields. **NPFMC staff:** Chris Oliver, Nicole Kimball.

Other Participants: Jason Anderson (Best Use Cooperative), Becca Robbins-Gisclair (Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association), Sally Bibb (NMFS AKR), Becky Carls (NMFS AKR), Paul MacGregor (At-sea Processors Association), Melanie Brown (NMFS AKR), Mike Sloan (Kawerak, Inc.), Dave Benson (NPFMC member), Richard Tuluk (Coastal Villages Region Fund), Mary McDowell (Pacific Seafood Processors Association), Gale Vick (Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition), Chuck McCallum (Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition), Neil Rodriquez (Coastal Villages Region Fund), Tim Smith (Nome Fishermen's Association).

I. Introductions

- Review of agenda -- additions?

Introductions were made and the committee reviewed the agenda. The agenda was approved with no additions.

II. Staff updates on previous recommendations

- Re-design of Council website, including a rural community component

Chris Oliver (NPFMC) reported that the Council website is in the process of being re-designed, and that a separate link for rural outreach will be included in order to make it easier for the public to navigate the website and find specific issues. When completed, the Council and the committee can review the first effort and provide input. The committee noted the difficulty in identifying which issues should be included under the rural outreach link. Staff responded that it will be an ongoing process to determine the issues most important to rural communities, and that the website can provide duplicative links if appropriate. In effect, 'chum salmon bycatch' documents may be appropriately linked under two headings (e.g., 'bycatch issues' and 'rural outreach'). The committee also noted that if possible, the Council should develop links and format documents such that they are smaller and easier to download, as many communities in rural Alaska have slow internet connections. The committee also recommended that the Council website better highlight links and documents that describe how the Council process works and how to participate.

- Development of regional meeting calendar

Sally Bibb (NMFS) provided an update on efforts to create a calendar of regional meetings for posting on the NMFS and Council websites. Prior to the meeting, staff sent the committee a draft Google calendar developed as an example, and the committee suggested other meetings to add. The committee also discussed the possibility of purchasing software in order to link each meeting posted on the calendar to its corresponding website for further details. The main concerns noted were: 1) agency resources are needed to keep such a calendar updated, and there was a question as to whether this is a high priority relative to other recommendations to improve outreach, and 2) if the calendar is not carefully monitored, the public could potentially receive incorrect information about a meeting if something changes.

Sally reported that NMFS does not have dedicated staff to maintain such a calendar at this time, but needs to understand whether this is a high priority from the committee's perspective. The committee generally

liked the idea of the calendar, not only for public and committee use, but also for the Council's use in planning Council, committee, and rural outreach meetings. The committee suggested starting with Google calendar as a pilot project (without interactive weblinks to meetings), and allowing outreach committee members to have access such that they could add or edit a meeting. NMFS could provide the calendar on the Alaska Region website, and the Council website could link to it. While the calendar would be regularly updated, a disclaimer could be provided such that the Council and NMFS are not responsible if meeting dates or locations change.

- Development of rural community contact list

Nicole Kimball (NPFMC) reported that the Council has been refining a large mailing list for communities, Alaska Native entities, and tribes. The excel spreadsheet was sent to committee members for review and comment on September 17. The committee requested that staff send it again for review, and requested that staff create two additional qualifiers as time allows, categorizing each entity by type and region. The committee suggested using the 12 ANCSA regions for the purpose of categorizing by region.

- Audio web-streaming the Council meetings

Nicole updated the committee on the progress of audio web-streaming the Council meetings. This technology was tested during the October 2009 Council meeting, and it will be in place for the December meeting and in the future. Prior to each Council meeting, a link will be available on the Council website which outlines a one-time connection process for the public, to last the duration of the Council meeting. Committee members that streamed the October meeting reported few problems once a connection was established. The committee noted that this is an important effort in getting real-time information to rural Alaska, and suggested posting the Advisory Panel and Science and Statistical Committee minutes, as well as presentation materials, on the weblink when available. This program also allows the public to record the meeting, or portions of the meeting, via the internet. Staff reported that a link has been posted on the Council website that explains both the audio broadcasts of the Council meetings and the audio files that are available through the Council office post-meeting: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/audio.pdf>.

- Outreach budget

Chris reported that he recently submitted the Council's 5-year budget application to NOAA. It is possible the Council could receive a small increase in 2010. The Council has allocated \$80k annually to the outreach committee and rural outreach efforts, which includes mailings, meetings, travel, etc. There is flexibility annually, in that if the Council spends less in one year, the excess can be rolled to the next year. The committee recognized this benefit, as project-specific outreach may need to be a significant component in some years, and less so in others. Most committee members noted that they would ideally like to see the outreach budget increase, with the potential for hiring an outreach coordinator position, understanding that the Council's first hiring priority is another analyst/economist. One member suggested hiring Council rural liaisons for several regional hubs throughout Alaska.

The committee discussed contracting with individuals in several rural communities to be regional outreach conduits or points of contact on Council issues, as opposed to hiring several full-time Council staff positions. This concept appeared to be more realistic given budget limitations, and would allow the Council to move funding around to support outreach in specific years or geographic areas as necessary.

- Update on NMFS tribal consultation meeting

Sally Bibb reported on a November 9 – 10 meeting NMFS hosted on improving the tribal consultation process required under Executive Order 13175. NMFS contracted with RurAL CAP to coordinate the meeting, based on criticism regarding the inadequacies of the current NMFS tribal consultation process.

RurAL CAP contacted the regional Alaska Native non-profit corporations in each of the 12 regions, and asked them to select a tribal member from the region to participate. NMFS funded accommodations in and travel to Anchorage.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to ask participants to identify deficiencies in the current process, outline the characteristics and components of an ideal process, and discuss successes and failures experienced in other agency processes. The committee developed a list of recommendations, and a report is being developed from this meeting. When the report is finalized, it will be provided to the Council, NMFS, and the Department of Commerce.

Sally also reported that this meeting was held just after President Obama held a Tribal Nations conference in Washington, DC. On November 5, the President issued a memo to the heads of executive departments and agencies on tribal consultation and the primary executive order that describes these requirements (E.O. 13175). The memo reaffirms the importance of the tribal consultation responsibilities of executive agencies, and directs each agency (e.g., Department of Commerce) to submit a plan on how to comply with the order. The plan must be developed in consultation with tribes and submitted to OMB within 90 days. While the direction from DOC to NOAA is crucial, NMFS Alaska Region will continue to develop its process, which is intended to be an ongoing relationship with tribes. It was recognized that it is difficult, but necessary, to integrate tribal consultation early in the process, such that tribes are consulted during the policy-making stage (i.e., the Council process). NMFS would like to continue to work with the Council's outreach committee, due to the overlap in several components of outreach and tribal consultation, such as education and two-way communication.

III. Consideration of chum salmon bycatch outreach plan

Nicole provided a brief overview of the previous outreach plan for the Chinook salmon bycatch issue, to facilitate discussion of a draft outreach plan for the proposed chum salmon bycatch action. A tentative schedule for the chum salmon bycatch analysis was also provided. Committee members generally agreed with the schedule, and focused their comments on when regional outreach meetings should occur within that timeframe. The committee asked that the schedule be provided to the public (posted) after it is approved by the Council.

Nicole outlined the three primary components of a potential chum outreach plan: direct mailings; regional outreach meetings; and documentation and presentation of results to the Council. The committee agreed with this general approach, and the discussion focused primarily on the regional outreach meetings. Staff posed several questions including: the timing at which regional outreach meeting should occur in the overall schedule; whether the regional meetings proposed are appropriate in terms of participants, timing, and location; and whether the committee can identify priority meetings, should budget limitations, staff availability, or meeting schedule overlap prevent outreach at one or more proposed meetings. Staff proposed working with eight entities, to ask whether they want to schedule chum salmon bycatch on the agendas of their regional meetings. If so, staff proposed having Council staff and one or two Council members attend each meeting, provide an overview of the proposed action, and respond to questions (see proposed chum salmon bycatch outreach plan for details). Working with established entities which have regular in-region meetings tends to reach more stakeholders than if the Council hosted its own outreach meeting in the community. The meetings proposed by staff to be included in the draft chum bycatch outreach plan are as follows. All of these meetings are open to the public. Note that due to the extended timeframe, the exact dates and locations for most of these meetings have not yet been scheduled.

Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Western Interior Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Association of Village Council Presidents ¹	(October 2010, Bethel)
Tanana Chiefs Conference annual meeting	(Mar 15 – 19, 2011; Fairbanks)
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assn annual meeting	(Feb 2011)

One committee member noted that the February/March timeframe is a relatively short travel window, and that spreading out meetings may be beneficial due to weather, overlapping meeting schedules, etc. Staff agreed, but noted that in order to coordinate with the above entities, staff must conform to their established meeting schedules, as long as they are also within the timeframe for developing the chum analysis. While the committee thought the selected meetings were appropriate, one member also suggested that staff partner with another local entity (e.g., regional non-profit, borough, etc.) in the community in order to broaden publicity for and participation at the meeting. The RAC meetings are rotated among member villages, so many of those meetings are not in regional hubs, but in smaller villages. One member also noted that notice for the Seward Peninsula RAC meeting should be inclusive of the Northwest Arctic communities, so that Arctic residents know they have the opportunity to attend and participate. In addition, the committee suggested offering to present to the Yukon River Panel, as was done for the Chinook salmon bycatch issue. The Panel's December 5 – 11, 2010 meeting is located in Alaska, and its March 20 – 26, 2011 meeting is in the Yukon Territory.

Timing of the outreach meetings were also a concern. Staff had proposed February/March 2011, in order to correspond with regularly scheduled regional meetings *and* the release of a preliminary analysis, but *prior to* the Council's final action (tentatively scheduled for June 2011). The committee recognized the desire to have some level of impact analysis provided at the outreach meetings, but was concerned with the majority of community outreach occurring late in the analytical process. While several direct mailings are planned prior to the Council's final review and selection of the suite of alternatives for analysis, the committee suggested conducting some other type of outreach prior to the Council's final revision of the alternatives, such that rural stakeholders could have direct feedback at that stage. The committee also discussed the possibility of conducting some regional meetings in fall 2010, which would be prior to a draft analysis.

In sum, the committee recommended a schedule that would start some regional outreach meetings in late 2010 (AVCP and potentially, Yukon River Panel), and the remainder in early 2011. In addition, in order to get feedback prior to the Council's tentatively scheduled final review of the alternatives (June 2010) the committee recommended that the Council attempt to schedule a teleconference, using an internet program that allows for staff presentations to be provided on the web real-time, that would create a forum for the public to provide input early in the process. Thus, this teleconference would have to be publicized and scheduled for early 2010. While a draft analysis would not yet be available, staff could present the analytical schedule, important Council meeting dates, chum bycatch trend data to-date, the current suite of alternatives, and information on how to participate in the Council process. It was recognized that the timing of this teleconference, and all outreach efforts, are directly dependent on the analytical schedule and schedule for Council action.

Additionally, the committee recommended that the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan include: 1) requesting booth space at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting in October 2010; 2) conducting radio interviews for rural community radio stations; and 3) providing information and/or a press release to newspapers in regional hubs. Staff noted that they would incorporate the committee's recommendations into the draft chum salmon bycatch outreach plan being developed for Council review at the December 2009 Council meeting.

¹The AVCP annual convention is in October. However, in 2009, the AVCP hosted a special mid-year convention in March.

IV. Development of written guidelines for a statewide/regional/project-specific outreach approach

This agenda item stemmed from a previous (August 2009) committee recommendation. The committee concluded that there was not sufficient time to develop written guidelines, and that it would be more effectively discussed at an in-person committee meeting. Committee members were encouraged to consider and draft potential guidelines to facilitate discussion at the next meeting.

V. Discuss regional partnership approach

Staff provided a short introduction to this issue, as it stems from a previous (August 2009) committee recommendation. Committee members outlined several different components to this potential approach, including development of an educational workshop on the Council process and how to participate effectively. This workshop could be provided in several regions of Alaska. Paula Cullenberg (Alaska Sea Grant) noted that the Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program has been approached by three different groups for funding to develop a similar workshop, with various differences. Thus, the Council should consider whether this workshop should be developed directly by the Council or could be addressed by a community group. Others suggested that the Council could put together a basic powerpoint on the Council process, and then work with community representatives in the regions to distribute and hold their own workshops.

The committee also discussed how to define regions for this purpose. Some members voiced support for identifying a point of contact or liaison in each of the 12 geographic ANCSA regions. Concerns were expressed with this approach, although others noted that these are meant only as geographic boundaries, and would not mean that the ANCSA corporations themselves would be the points of contact.

The committee determined that more consideration is needed regarding defining the regional approach, including identification of the audience for an educational workshop (e.g., the public vs. training of specific regional representatives). One member noted that they would support using a portion of the Council outreach budget to fund individuals' travel to such a workshop or to serve as a regional point of contact for the process.

The committee agreed to defer this discussion until its next meeting, and staff suggested that committee members come prepared with an outline of what the regional partnership approach means and would look like. Paula also offered to contact the three groups that have approached Sea Grant with proposals for educational workshops on the Council process, and report to the committee regarding their specific proposals and intent.

VI. Timing & need for next meeting

The committee suggested meeting again (in person) on February 23, in Anchorage, as committee members could coordinate their travel with the Northern Bering Sea Research Area Community and Subsistence Workshop (February 24 – 25, Anchorage). The committee suggested the agenda may include: updates on the December 2009 and February 2010 Council meeting actions; an in-depth discussion of the regional partnership approach; development of guidelines for Council outreach in general; presentations from other agencies (e.g., NPRB, ADF&G, Federal Subsistence Board) that conduct rural outreach; an update on the development of a chum salmon bycatch outreach plan; and an update from NMFS on the DOC tribal consultation plan.

VII. Summary of recommendations

1. **Council website re-design.** When completed, the committee would like to review and provide feedback on the re-design. If possible, the Council should develop links and format documents such that they are smaller and easier to download, as many communities in rural Alaska have slow internet connections. The committee also recommended that the Council website better highlight links and documents that describe how the Council process works and how to participate.
2. **Regional meeting calendar.** The committee suggested starting with Google calendar as a pilot project (without interactive weblinks to meetings), and allowing outreach committee members to have access such that they could add or edit a meeting. NMFS could provide the calendar on the Alaska Region website, and the Council website could link to it.
3. **Development of rural community contact list.** The committee requested that staff send it again for review, and requested that staff create two additional qualifiers as time allows, categorizing each entity by type and region. The committee suggested using the 12 ANCSA regions for the purpose of categorizing by region.
4. **Chum salmon bycatch outreach plan.** The committee supported the overall approach for the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan as outlined by staff (see Section III). In addition to the eight regional outreach meetings proposed by staff, the committee suggested offering to present to the Yukon River Panel. The committee recommended a schedule that would start some regional outreach meetings in late 2010 (AVCP and potentially, Yukon River Panel), and the remainder in early 2011. In addition, in order to get feedback prior to the Council's tentatively scheduled final review of the alternatives (June 2010) the committee recommended that the Council attempt to schedule a teleconference, using an internet program that allows for staff presentations to be provided on the web real-time, that would create a forum for the public to provide input early in the process. Thus, this teleconference would have to be publicized and scheduled for early 2010. Additionally, the committee recommended that the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan include: 1) requesting booth space at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting in October 2010; 2) conducting radio interviews for rural community radio stations; and 3) providing information and/or a press release to newspapers in regional hubs.
5. **Timing and agenda for next meeting.** The committee suggested meeting again (in person) on February 23, in Anchorage. The agenda may include: updates on the December 2009 and February 2010 Council meeting actions; an in-depth discussion of the regional partnership approach; development of guidelines for Council outreach in general; presentations from other agencies (e.g., NPRB, ADF&G, Federal Subsistence Board) that conduct rural outreach; an update on the development of a chum salmon bycatch outreach plan; and an update from NMFS on the DOC tribal consultation plan.