



Meeting of the Social Science Planning Committee

April 1, 2016
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Council Office
Honolulu, HI 96813

Meeting Report

In Attendance:

In person: Craig Severance (Chair) and Justin Hospital (members); Christopher Hawkins (Council Staff)

Via conference line: Judy Amesbury, Paul Callaghan, Dawn Kotowitz, Christopher Lepczyk, and David Loomis (members)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Craig Severance welcomed everyone and reminded the group that the Committee operates by consensus

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. Status of June 2014 Meeting Recommendations

Hawkins provided the Committee with a status update regarding the recommendations that arose from the last meeting:

1. Regarding Guam fishing conflicts, the Committee noted that better biophysical data is needed to help understand the impacts, if any, of Micronesian fishing practices on fish stocks and fishery resources and recommends that a) such improvements be undertaken by the appropriate data collection entities, b) supports the FDCRC's recommendation for improving spearfishing data collection (especially since creel survey data are not collected for night fishing), and c) recommends that the PIFSC continue to provide the Council funding from the Territory Science Initiative.

The Council has since proposed to MRIP a project that would result in a noncommercial spearfish registry and data collection program via fishing clubs and their social networks. The decision to fund should come soon. The Council's draft report on the Guam fishing conflict recommends the territory examine whether fishery abundance data trends indicate any cause for concern from Micronesian fishing pressure.

2. Regarding the specification of the MHI bottomfish ACL, the Committee reviewed and discussed the current state of the fishery and saw no significant changes in any social, economic or management uncertainty factors in or associated with the fishery. Further, the Committee noted that compliance with reporting requirements in the fishery has improved from the last SEEM working group. Therefore, the Committee sees no basis for recommending any percentage reduction from ABC for social, economic or management uncertainty reasons.

The Council did not vote to reduce from ABC for any SEEM reasons.

3. Regarding the revised annual reports, the Committee endorses the proposed human dimensions elements and makes the following suggestions:
 - a. Add "relative importance of fishery to overall jurisdictional economy."
 - b. Rectify the list of elements on Table 1 provided to the Committee with the elements listed on the draft Annual Report Table of Contents provided to the Committee so as to add missing items, including "imports and exports" (as an economic variable).
 - c. Disposition of catch means or should include the concept of "fish flow" so that the extended sociocultural value of fish and fish parts is explicitly considered.
 - d. Add "cultural events as effort triggers."
 - e. Develop and insert language in the annual reports to explain that the annual report human dimensions elements represent basic indicators and do not represent all of the human dimensions concepts of interest and value to the Council.

These recommendations will become part of the final revised annual/SAFE report contents.

4. Regarding the social and economic implications of changing the minimum size of yellowfin 'ahi in Hawaii, the Committee reiterates this as an important local issue to understand more fully.

The Council hired contractors on Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii Island to survey fish vendors about the importance and availability of small ahi in the formal marketplace on those islands. A report is in production.

5. Regarding a June 2014 Committee recommendation to develop a research project that integrates two or more of the four research priority thematic areas (Stocks, Protected Species, Ecosystems, and Human Communities), the Committee notes that the 2015 PIFSC project undertaken by Dr. Leila Madge to examine the human dimensions of protected species interactions in Hawaii may be considered as such a project.

6. Regarding a June 2014 Committee recommendation to develop a pilot project to develop an integrated characterization of a fishery, the Committee notes that the new annual report structure intends to provide for integrated characterizations of Council managed fisheries.
7. Regarding a June 2014 Committee recommendation that computer cloud services be engaged to archive reports, grey literature and data sources so they are available to human dimensions researchers and others, the Committee notes and supports the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee's (FDCRC) efforts to obtain grant funding to develop cloud database capacity.

4. WPFMC Human Dimensions Major Activities Update

a. 2015 WPFMC Human Dimensions Accomplishments

Hawkins reported on several 2015 Council human dimensions activities:

In collaboration with the Committee, the Council was able to incorporate a number of Demographic, Community Importance, and Economic indicators/variables into its expanded annual/SAFE reports. This represents an important step in improving the quality, quantity, and timeliness of social and economic information for use in impact assessment, fishing community profiles, and integrated ecosystem assessments.

In 2015, Council staff worked to improve SEEM by refocusing SEEM Working Group efforts to implement the SEEM process as it was designed and described in the ACL amendment. This included refining the scoring exercise. However, major improvement will only come from focused research into common SEEM-relevant issues in our jurisdictions. This will involve fishermen and community interviews and should be a Council human communities, as well as PIFSC, priority.

Finally, towards the end of 2015, the Hawkins was able to finalize the draft Micronesian fishing conflict report, which provides some data regarding the perceptions and activities of local and newcomer fishermen on Guam. Hawkins will most likely formally present the report to the Guam government at the 166th Council meeting in June, in the Mariana Islands.

b. Activities Planned for 2016

Hawkins reported there are several major items on the Council's human dimensions agenda this year. The first is to finalize the social and economic data in the new annual/SAFE reports. Justin Hospital at PIFSC has taken the lead to develop these sections, primary using data from PIFSC's small boat characteristics reports and longline cost earnings reports. There are several data elements not contained in those reports, however, so staffs need to determine if the data exist and where and how to obtain them. In cases where required data do not exist, relevant staff will need to meet to determine how to proceed to develop data collection(s) for these.

Another priority for 2016 is to set the stage for improving future fishing community profiles. The current profiles are of limited use in policy development because they have been constructed quite generally, for example by using Census demographic data. Hospital reported that his team is working to create “profiles” that will be housed and queried electronically, via a Web portal design rather than the current administrative reports.

Finally, Hawkins reported that a goal for 2016 is to examine how to link up the Council’s Human Communities Research Priorities, SAFE Reports, and fishing community profiles. These should be interwoven, as they should feed into one another. For example, the new human dimensions elements in the SAFE Reports provide much information to develop a fishery-based profile of an island area and the Human Communities Research Priorities provide an avenue to articulate and address data gaps we will find in the SAFE Reports.

5. Draft WPRFMC Human Dimensions Annual Fishery Report Contents

Hospital presented the draft CNMI Human Dimensions section to the Committee. The Science Center has data from its small boat characteristics and cost earnings studies that can be used to populate much of the required content. His immediate concern was to have the Committee understand where the data were coming from, how they might be presented, and whether to have the human dimensions section of the annual reports be stand alone, fishery-by-fishery, or some hybrid. The Committee discussed the pros of having the information integrated through the report, but recognized that it may make more sense from a formatting standpoint to have the bulk of the information presented in its own section, as this would reduce repetition, make socioeconomic information easier to locate, and reduce the length of the overall reports.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Committee Discussion and Recommendations

1. Regarding the draft human dimensions of CNMI fisheries section provided by Justin Hospital for the new Annual Reports, the Committee reviewed the data tables and approved of the proposed contents and format for the purpose of presenting them to the Plan Team during its April 2016 meeting and expanding them to the other relevant fisheries covered by the reports.
2. Regarding human dimensions Annual Report data elements, the Committee understands that many of the data elements are informed by the PIFSC small boat characteristics studies that are repeated approximately every five years, and the PIFSC longline cost earning studies. Further, the Committee requests Council staff to develop a brief report identifying data sources for each required human dimensions element. This report should identify any data elements that are not covered by an existing data collection effort or program.

3. After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of a stand-alone human dimensions section in each Annual Report, or having the HD elements be incorporated fishery by fishery, the Committee would like to examine the first of the new reports at its October 2016 meeting to determine whether to suggest any changes to the Plan Team.

8. Other Business

- Hawkins reported that he has developed a draft Scope of Responsibility for the Committee and will send it out to members for comment.
- Judy Amesbury reported that she continues to monitor the Guam military buildup and will engage the Committee as appropriate/necessary.
- Hospital reported to the Committee fledgling effort to understand and perhaps attempt to quantify fish sales in Hawaii via social media applications, such as Facebook. He has developed a tool that can scrape some data from sites. The Science Center will be looking into this in more detail in coming months.

9. Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to an April and October meeting schedule, and the Chair and Council staff will solicit dates and times for the next meeting. Several agenda items for the next meeting were proposed:

- Guam military buildup
- Fishing community profiles – new information and data viewing procedures
- FEAT update
- Hot Topics (standing agenda item going forward)
- Final recommendation on human dimensions formatting in annual reports
- Discussion and recommendation regarding any human dimensions data gaps in annual reports