

Minutes of the Area-Based Management Subcommittee
November 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022

Council Coordination Committee Meeting

May 2022

Minutes
CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee

November 1, 2021

The CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee met virtually from 10:00 am -11:30 pm (AK time) on November 1 to discuss the CCC reaction and next steps to complete the draft report.

Members Present: Eric Reid (Chair) David Witherell (NPFMC), Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC), Miguel Rolon (CFMC), Kerry Griffin (PFMC), and Mark Fitchett (WPFMC) and Roger Pugliese (SAFMC), and John Froeschke (GMFMC). Additionally, NOAA Fisheries employees Heather Sagar, Tim Haverland, and Michelle Lennox also participated in the meeting at our invitation.

Heather and Michelle provided an update on the national efforts. The CEQ Policy subcommittee will meet this Thursday to begin to discuss what conservation means, which may use criteria or describe types of areas, rather than use a definition of conservation. The Subcommittee on Engagement will determine groups of people to meet with for input. Heather noted that NOAA has already conducted outreach through presentations to councils, roundtables, and webinars, and additional listening sessions are scheduled. Heather explained a NOAA wide announcement was just published soliciting comments on the 30x30 initiative through December 28 including two webinars (Nov 8 and 16). She encouraged Councils to comment and highlighted that the announcement has eight specific questions. One Council explained that they do not have a meeting during the comment period so it would be difficult to submit a letter by the comment deadline. Heather said she could discuss this issue with NOAA and see if comments could be accepted later. The Measurement subcommittee met at the end of October regarding what data to use in the Atlas database. DOI, DOA, and NOAA are the working group leads on taking the inventory of publicly available data they have in house and are looking at ways the data can be aligned. The working group is expanding to include DOT and DOD members. The mockup for the database was originally scheduled to be ready on October 30, but has been delayed. Michelle explained that the structure of the Atlas will be the initial focus of the group.

Eric provided an update of the CCC meeting. His take was that the CCC is happy with the progress of the Subcommittee, and our working definition of conservation areas. He noted that there was a motion requesting GIS assistance for the Subcommittee, but Sam Rauch responded that HQ could not supply a GIS assistant, so the CCC requested that regional office GIS experts should be assigned to help with this project. All councils have some GIS ability, through staff expertise, contracting, or assistance from the Regional Offices. However, staff noted that there are various ways to calculate overlapping areas and the group should be as consistent as possible. Staff will share ideas in the near term, but it will be necessary to pull in additional staff at some point to nail down consistent methods for calculating conservation areas and maps for the final report. Tim Haverland from NMFS added that the measurements working group he is on is also discussing the challenges with consistent EEZ values, defining the denominator. He will update this group if decisions are made on that front. The NEFMC and MAFMC have areas that overlap into each other's EEZ, so they are considering combining these areas for purposes of the Subcommittee report.

The Committee again revisited the question of whether or not to include state waters in the evaluation, and agreed that it should not be for several reasons, including: 1) State waters are outside of Council jurisdiction, 2) State water regulations are complex with numerous small areas scattered throughout, and 3) We don't have expertise on State waters, and would need to greatly expand our Subcommittee membership to address. Therefore, EEZ and conservation area calculations should remove state waters.

Review and Discussion of GIS and OECM evaluation:

GIS is clearly an important tool for the Subcommittee to measure the EEZ and the conservation areas, and to provide mapping products to illustrate the location and type of conservation area. The Subcommittee agreed to pull together the contact information for GIS people who will be developing the maps and doing the calculations of conservation areas in each region. At some point next year, the Subcommittee envisions that these people will want to meet up to discuss ways to ensure that our area calculations and mapping are consistent across all of the regions, as HQ didn't want to assign a single person at NMFS to do it for all regions.

The CCC tasked the subcommittee to evaluate the areas based on the IUCN OECM criteria, and the Subcommittee discussed how to approach this. Heather noted that the United States is not a party to the Convention for Biological Diversity, under which the IUCN operates, and that the IUCN criteria for OECM may be much too restrictive for use as a measure for conservation under the America the Beautiful report. Dave suggested that he take a cut at preparing a table of questions to walk through the IUCN criteria from a practical and council perspective. While many of our areas may not meet the OECM criteria, this in itself can be valuable information in that conservation benefits can be undervalued by the IUCN, and we can point this out in our discussion. Similar questions about the America the Beautiful principles could be explored as well as a possible way to identify areas that meet the necessary criteria.

Committee members also discussed conservation values of areas that may not meet certain criteria. Mark noted the importance of monitoring to understand the effects of area management, and that biodiversity has numerous meanings and discounts species richness and productivity. John pointed out that the objectives of establishing an area may not translate directly into the conservation value of the area (e.g., Cape Canaveral). Roger noted the importance of highlighting actions that would not be included in the area-base evaluation, and the group agreed that these should be put in regional sections, and also in the report introduction that notes the MSA provides conservation for 100% of the EEZ and there are other measures and tools besides area-based management that provides conservation of biodiversity and habitats. It was also suggested that our report discusses restrictive MPAs, the simplification of protection they provide, and the appropriateness of MPAs to local fishing communities. Mark shared 'The MPA Guide' paper prepared by 20 influential authors that provides an inaccurate and oversimplified cartoon illustration of protection provided under different types of area conservation measures. Our report should also discuss the relative benefits of static closures in the face of climate change; MSA provides the necessary flexibility to adapt as fish move and habitats change.

Review of Tasks for Next Meeting: Deirdre will be collecting contact information for GIS assistants from each region or Council. Subcommittee members should email her with this information. Deirdre will send out draft methods NEFMC and MAFMC have been using to calculate overlapping areas – these should eventually be finalized so each region is using a consistent method. Dave will start the OECM evaluation methodology, for review and editing by all committee members. Mark will start thinking about a list of key papers that address the benefits and costs of MPAs and area management; eventually drafting a few summary paragraphs to include in the report.

Minutes **CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee**

November 30, 2021

The CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee met virtually from 10:00 am -12:00 pm (AK time) on November 30 to discuss next steps to evaluate areas.

Members Present: Eric Reid (Chair) David Witherell (NPFMC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC), Miguel Rolon (CFMC), Kerry Griffin (PFMC), Mark Fitchett (WPFMC), Roger Pugliese (SAFMC), and John Froeschke (GMFMC). Additionally, NOAA Fisheries employees Heather Sagar and Tim Haverland also participated in the meeting at our invitation.

Heather provided an update on the national efforts. The ATB calls for annual reports on progress to implement its objectives. Heather noted that they are working on one for the end of the year, and she will share it when its done. While the full Atlas subcommittee hasn't met, a small group did, and they are shooting for initial public database to be ready in the late spring of 2022. At this point, NOAA data sets have been identified to inform the Atlas (e.g., the habitat restoration database), but no data has been submitted, assembled, or evaluated yet. The Engagement subcommittee has merged with the policy working group and is considering putting out a FR notice (government wide, not just NOAA specific) requesting comments on the definition of conservation. Heather suggested that a CCC comment letter with our suggestions might be an appropriate response. Heather also noted that two new subcommittees were formed: a Wildlife Corridors and Connectivity subcommittee that may evaluate land and sea connections such as for anadromous fish, and an Urban and Disadvantaged Communities subcommittee that will focus on increasing access to recreational opportunities for these communities, including recreational fishing. It was noted that the committee should not overlook the value of jobs provided by the fishing industry in harbors located in disadvantaged communities. Heather has been briefing HQ on the work of this CCC subcommittee. All information on ATB and Atlas development is available at <http://www.noaa.gov/America-the-beautiful>

The Committee discussed possible council responses to the recent NOAA Federal Register request for comments on the initiative. Heather noted that all the comments will be evaluated for an action-based analysis that will result in a list of things NOAA could do. Examples of suggested actions might include 'Update the NS 8 guidelines' or "We don't need any more conservation areas." While the topics listed in the FR notice didn't seem to be action-focused, it would be helpful if comment letters provided action-oriented responses. Heather noted that in the past, comments from managing partners were given full consideration, so she urged the councils to provide comments and indicated that she would take into account comments from Councils past the FR deadline in the action-based analysis (say, by March 6). Committee members indicated whether or not their council was likely to provide comments, and concerns or suggestions that may be raised in the comment letters. All agreed to share the draft/final letters with the committee. Heather also mentioned some international 30x30 efforts that are ongoing. Related to tuna, the issue of adjacency came up and some concerns were raised about how this will play out with international waters.

Review and Discussion of Evaluation Criteria:

At the last meeting, Heather noted that the United States is not a party to the Convention for Biological Diversity, under which the IUCN operates, and that the IUCN criteria for OECM may be much too restrictive for use as a measure for conservation under the America the Beautiful report. In response, Deirdre developed a draft procedural template with criteria to evaluate our fishery areas as

conservation areas consistent with our working definition of conservation areas. Heather and Committee members all opined that this will be a very useful tool for us to justify what would be considered a conservation area.

Committee members discussed this draft, identified concerns, and offered several suggestions. Kerry noted that the description of step 1 should be revised to link to the draft definition rather than conservation. There was also some discussion of whether or not to include the ABM principles in the evaluation criteria, since all areas in our preliminary report met 3 or more of these principles. Through discussion, it was decided that the ATB principles could be addressed in the report text up front, rather than in each area evaluation. Several members noted that steps 6 and 7 may not be actual criteria, as all areas have enforcement; however biological monitoring of areas is never sufficient and limited by research funding. Monitoring has several different meanings – maybe step 6 should just focus on enforcement. The committee agreed that we should discuss enforcement in the report, and that areas established under MSA are nimble and better at responding to climate change than areas established under the Antiquities Act, Sanctuary Act, and others. Step 7 (climate change resilience) is important and applies to all areas, as they are flexible and can be changed by regulation (although it was noted that once a fishing area is established it tends to be there forever). It may be more appropriate for steps 6 and 7 to be highlighted about individual areas, but not criteria for qualifying as a conservation area.

Several members discussed working in the idea of effectiveness somehow. This is an important subject – maybe not as criteria – but should be part of the conversation. Some areas may technically meet the criteria, but are not effective conservation areas, while other areas may have been closed for a different purpose that is not as relevant to conservation, but in reality, are providing valuable conservation benefits. Overall, it was noted that more work is needed to determine how to fit the criteria into the overall report.

Tim noted that the OECM criteria used in Canada includes a “permanence” criteria, intended to last for at least 25 years. Heather noted that she has been discussing this issue with CEQ, as permanence doesn’t really exist in the ocean, noting the examples of the New England National Monuments (even the boundaries of Bears Ears Monument on land changed). We should discuss the idea of permanence in our report but decided not to include it as a step in the criteria. Heather added that permanence is less important than the objective of the conservation area – why was it closed?

Jessica asked if the Atlas working group or the MPA Center have developed criteria like this to evaluate whether areas qualify as conservation areas or protected areas. Heather responded that the Atlas group has not gotten that far yet and she was not aware of a similar tool used by the MPA Office.

In addition to the draft criteria the group reviewed a potential template for a conservation area worksheet. The group discussed that the draft worksheet would be a very transparent way to evaluate each conservation area, but it would also be very time consuming. The group discussed potentially completing 2-3 example worksheets per region as an exercise to show how the criteria works. Maybe one example area that is clearly a conservation area, one that is on the line, and one that would likely be disqualified. There may or may not be time to complete these example worksheets before the final report is completed in Spring 2022.

The committee also discussed the working definition of conservation with respect to whether or not to make it more generic or specific to fisheries. The group discussed that for our purposes it is useful to have a fishery specific definition, but as this process moves forward it would also be helpful to have a more generic definition that would apply to all conservation areas. The group decided to adjust the

working definition to be more generic, but keep fishery specific terms in parentheses or in a footnote in the report.

Lastly, the committee discussed the issue of GIS. At the CCC meeting, the CCC requested GIS help of HQ, but were told there are no available resources to assist the committee. In response, the CCC requested that the NMFS regions aid the efforts of the subcommittee. The CCC ED is planning to send a reminder of this request to Sam in the coming week. The EDs discussed the possibility of hiring a contractor to assist the subcommittee if NMFS won't help with pulling all the regional GIS data together into a standard format and display. Jessica noted that the LynkerGroup has done GIS contract work for other council projects. Deirdre collected the GIS contacts for each region for future meetings to discuss how to get GIS done for our report. For now the Councils will use the resources they have and if we find we are unable to get the work done that is needed the Subcommittee will alert EDs.

Review of Tasks for Next Meeting:

- Deirdre will revise the evaluation criteria and sheets based on committee input and distribute for use in the evaluations.
- All committee members need to get their revised regional tables into the draft report. Note that the tables should all be consistent with the types of categories that have been established, so even those that have already been incorporated into the report may need revision.
- David will put out a doodle poll for the next few meeting dates, potentially one in January and March.

Minutes **CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee**

January 10, 2022

The CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee met virtually from 10:00 am -11:30 pm (AK time) on January 10 to discuss the conservation area evaluation tables.

Members Present: Eric Reid (Chair) David Witherell (NPFMC), Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Kerry Griffin (PFMC), Roger Pugliese (SAFMC), and John Froeschke (GMFMC). Liajay Rivera participated for Miguel Rolon (CFMC), and Mark Fitchett (WPFMC) had a meeting conflict and was unable to attend. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries employees Heather Sagar, Michelle Lennox, and Tim Haverland also participated in the meeting at our invitation.

Discussion of Area Evaluation Tables:

The Committee discussed the draft evaluation tables and recommend several minor modifications prior to finalizing for use in the report. Rather than focusing on exemptions that allow some fishing in a given area, the tables should better describe how the area promotes conservation and conserves ecosystems. It was noted that fisheries are managed using an ecosystem approach, which yields biodiversity benefits and we should emphasize this in the tables and text. Also, it was suggested that we use the word conservation rather than protection in most cases. Biodiversity was a primary category as well as a sub-category so that will be addressed. Unless there are major impacts of non-fishing activities in an area, there is no need to mention this in the evaluation tables, as the data inventory will include this information and show with Atlas overlays and other data tools. It is possible to add a general paragraph to the final report about “other impacts” to summarize what they are, and how they may impact overall conservation benefits, rather than identify specific projects within each area. Other changes to the evaluation tables include

- Each named area from the regional tables should receive a full evaluation.
- Each area name may also include the number of individual sites or subareas, to be noted in the evaluation tables.
- The ID should correspond to the named area in the regional tables, perhaps using the convention of Council region and number on the list (e.g., NP1 equates to the first area on the North Pacific list). We may need to add these ID numbers to our regional tables as well.

Other input included that it can be challenging to verify how an area meets all 8 ATB principles (i.e. Tribal Sovereignty, or the buy-in metric in the worksheet). The subcommittee agreed that we didn't need to meet or address all of the ATB principles, but it is helpful to include any related information where reasonable.

Update on National Efforts:

Heather provided an update on the national efforts. The White House press release included a notification of a marine and coastal area federal advisory committee (FAC) that will provide advice to NOAA on area-based conservation. This will be a joint FAC with NOAA Fisheries and National Ocean Service (NOS). Heather thinks the FAC will be comprised of about 20 people with broad representation including users of marine areas (fishing, wind, oil and gas, etc.), Environmental NGOs, MPA scientists, and social scientists. This is a NOAA FAC with a 2-year duration, but can be renewed over and over (like the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, MAFAC). Rather than having numerous subcommittees to work through topics, Heather envisions just two subgroups to work through tasks of the FAC. Timing is uncertain – a call for nominations may come out in the next month or so; therefore, the first meeting

would likely not be before Fall 2022. She explained that this FAC will take on more topics than America the Beautiful but is likely to address that first. Heather encouraged sub-Committee members to consider applying.

Heather also reported on the ATB progress, noting that the annual report did not mention the Councils. The subcommittee on engagement and policy, which will highlight efforts around the country and will be defining conservation, has not met recently and there are currently no meetings scheduled. The subcommittee on wildlife corridors hasn't met. The subcommittee on access to urban and community parks is looking at sustainable tourism and outdoor access.

Michelle provided an update on the Measurements Subcommittee, which met on December 7. The group is growing in size, but they are forming smaller workgroups (aka workstreams) to complete their tasks. Workgroups include Data Inventory, Working Lands, Marine Waters, and Public Comment Workstreams.

The Committee discussed possible council responses to the recent Department of Interior (DOI) Federal Register request for comments on the initiative, specifically the Atlas. Heather noted that there are 3 listening sessions that will be hosted by DOI. She didn't know if there would be a background presentation prior to comments as NOAA Fisheries hasn't been involved. Written comments are being accepted through March 7, and Heather indicated that it was unlikely that the comment period would be extended. She noted that this was a good opportunity (and potentially the only one) for the councils to weigh in on the definition of 'conservation' through the FR questions regarding conservation as a continuum and stewardship actions. Several Councils indicated that they would be preparing individual comments, and subcommittee members suggested that a noncontroversial CCC letter be considered. Jessica was going to discuss this possibility with Chris Moore.

Review of Tasks for Next Meeting:

- The next meeting is scheduled for March 16 at 2pm eastern time.
- Deirdre will revise the evaluation tables based on committee input and distribute for use by committee members for their final evaluations.
- Changes will be made to the final report, to reflect these tables in the text. Send reminder to review draft report in Mid-Feb.
- All committee members need to complete their evaluation forms prior to the next meeting.

Minutes
CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee

March 16, 2022

The CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee met virtually from 2:00 – 4:30 pm (EST) on March 16, 2022, to discuss the conservation area evaluation tables.

Members Present: Eric Reid (Chair), Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Kerry Griffin (PFMC), Roger Pugliese (SAFMC), Miguel Rolon (CFMC), Kerry Griffin (PFMC), and Mark Fitchett (WPFMC) and John Froeschke (GMFMC). David Witherell (NPFMC) had a conflict and was unable to attend; however, sent completed tables for the NP region in advance of the meeting. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries employees Heather Sagar, Michelle Lennox, and Tim Haverland also participated in the meeting at our invitation.

1. Updates from NMFS on national efforts (Heather Sagar)

Ms. Sagar explained that she has been including updates about the CCC work in written reports for F-Suite every 2-weeks and Mr. Rauch has requested monthly meetings on this topic to stay informed. She added that the draft definition of conservation area developed by this sub-committee has been shared with Mr. Rauch. NOAA is developing regional communication efforts on the 30x30 topic so we may start seeing more info in press releases and newsletters. NOAA is still sorting through all the comments that came in from the last RFI. She explained that NOAA specifically requested that groups send in one letter with attached signatures and that has helped reduce the volume of comments. About 370 individual comments came in – some with multiple signatures (i.e., 34,000 signatures from 8 form letters). NOAA has included all comments from previous public listening sessions as well about 100 comments from 9 listening sessions. Overall, they have heard lots of support for the initiative – split in terms of whether conservation areas should be fully protected vs areas with limited fishing.

Next, Ms. Michelle Lennox summarized comments that have come in on the DOI RFI that recently closed on March 7, 2022. Over 12,000 comments have been received; groups did not send one form letter in this case, so this includes form letter. Wide range of comments – have not had time to dig into details yet.

Mr. Reid asked for an update on whether CEQ was open to meeting with members of the CCC, as requested in oral and written comments from some of the Councils. Ms. Sagar explained that request has been made for late May after the CCC meeting and she would likely be the one to follow up. NOAA would host that meeting and the request has been accepted. Ms. Jessica Coakley asked if NOAA or CEQ would be sharing a draft definition of conservation area, but that is uncertain at this time.

2. Review progress to complete evaluation/documentation of areas

Each Council shared the status of regional conservation criteria tables. Several questions came up and the group discussed a few challenges together. The group worked through a few specific examples to confirm consistency of the definitions. Some regions have more work to complete, but overall good progress is being made. The group clarified that we are not including state water areas, and HAPCs should not be included unless there are associated restrictions on fishing.

Some regions plan to share the draft tables with other staff for additional internal review. The groups discussed that collapsing areas by topic is more efficient. This is a large volume of work and the group decided to include these tables as a separate appendix to the main report. Overall, the nuances with some of these areas should be described in the overall regional summaries. In the end, the approaches taken in each region may not be identical, but the overall approach is generally consistent. The group discussed that for areas that are more uncertain, if you can defend it using the tables keep the area in the list, if it is more uncertain as a “conservation area”, but the measure provides conservation benefits include it in a table or list at the end of your regional summary. The group discussed changing the name of “other measures” to clarify that these are not just add-on ideas, they have real, and in many cases, even stronger conservation benefits than year-round closures. The multiple layers of these measures are what gets you there in terms of fishery and ecosystem conservation– not just closures. Need to elevate “other” section – major component of report – needs to be part of the story.

The group also had a conversation about the Antiquities Act and agreed to add language to the report to emphasize that it is less consistent with ABM principles than areas developed under MSA, based on the criteria tables developed in this process.

3. Discuss GIS protocols (color coding, etc.) and process to get regional maps

All regions plan to have regional maps, but they may not be completely consistent since some regions have lost GIS support. The group plans to develop maps with areas categorized by objective, using the same colors as the summary tables in the main report. Roger has developed maps already that do not use the same approach – may would with John to adjust.

4. Discuss Regional profiles and best practices for somewhat standardized contents

Most regions still need to work on this section. After tables are complete the idea is to have a summary page or two identifying the primary conservation strategies used in each region, highlighting the main conservation areas in place.

5. Overview of main document (Jessica Coakley)

Jessica explained the new structure of the overall report. The group confirmed the definition of conservation area in the main report, support addition of conservation and other text in parentheses. The group discussed that some of the text Dave recently sent about OECMs should be added into the main document. Again, the group agreed to beef up “additional types of conservation measures” section, maybe not to the level of adding detailed tables, but making a strong case about the conservation benefits of other measures. They are substantial and cumulative. Could refer reader to regional profile summaries in the Appendix if that is where we ultimately put that detail.

6. Summary and Review of tasks

Each region should review the main document and complete their regional appendix (1-2 page summary text, updated table, map, and list of other measures (optional)).

7. Identify future meeting dates – Mar 30 and April 20

Documents should be sent to CCC about May 4. Therefore, each region should have information complete by **April 8**. That leaves several weeks to format and finalize the main document. The group agreed to have two additional meetings to complete this work.

- Mar 30 – 3:00-4:30 EST – Agenda - final tables, regional profiles, maps, initial comments on main document
- April 20 – 2:00-4:00 EST Agenda - finalize main document, discuss slides for CCC Meeting (May 17-19)

Minutes
CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee

March 30, 2022

The CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee met virtually from 3:00 – 4:15 pm (EST) on March 30, 2022, to discuss the conservation area evaluation tables and the draft report.

Members Present: Eric Reid (Chair), Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Roger Pugliese (SAFMC), Miguel Rolon and Liajay Rivera (CFMC), Mark Fitchett (WPFMC) and David Witherell (MPFMC). John Froeschke (GMFMC) and Kerry Griffin (PFMC) had meeting conflicts and were unable to attend. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries employees Heather Sagar and Michelle Lennox also participated in the meeting at our invitation.

Updates from NMFS on national efforts

Ms. Heather Sagar noted that NOAA is planning on hosting two additional roundtable meetings (one in Puerto Rico and one in American Samoa) to address lack of outreach in those areas. She will send the information about these roundtables to the Subcommittee when the details are finalized. Mark noted that there are Covid related shutdowns in American Samoa, so NMFS could consider an alternate location in the Marianas (e.g., Guam or Saipan), given the recent Sanctuary nomination of the Marianas Trench. Heather replied that the Sanctuary staff already in American Samoa would be leading the discussions, but she was unsure if the meetings would be broadcast to allow additional input from the other Pacific Island areas. Heather further noted that CEQ has posted a summary of the tribal consultations and she will distribute the summary to Subcommittee members. She also reminded the group of the new NOAA Federal Advisory Committee that was mentioned in a December White House press release. She noted that there has not yet been an announcement or call for nominations, but she anticipates that ATB will be the first issue to be addressed by the FAC.

Ms. Michelle Lennox noted that the measurement subcommittee is reviewing the 18,000 written comments to DOI and the 24 hours of public testimony; therefore, there is essentially a pause on Atlas development to focus on synthesizing input from the public.

CCC Meeting Agenda

Mr. Eric Reid highlighted that there is 1 hour of time set aside for the CCC to review the draft report from the Subcommittee (tentatively Wednesday, May 18). There are a handful of trigger questions drafted already; he anticipates some good discussion at the CCC.

Review progress to complete evaluation/documentation of areas

Each Council shared the status of regional evaluation tables. All are making good progress, with evaluation tables completed and only fine tuning of the tables left to do. Some of the Council's benefitted from reviews by their technical staff. Almost all councils have prepared a written regional summary. Some regions won't have up to date or consistent maps, but GIS shapefiles are available for some regions and could be used for a later draft or manuscript.

The Subcommittee agreed that a cutoff date of March 31, 2022 will apply to our data sets, notwithstanding a potential conflict with NEFMC scallop areas that are in the process of being revised.

The report could note this, e.g., “All conservation areas in regulation as of March 31, 2022, unless otherwise noted, are included in this report.”

Overview of the Draft Report and Recent Additions

Ms. Jessica Coakley provided an overview of the new additions to the draft report, including an executive summary, information on US fisheries and management under MSA, discussion of the continuum of conservation measures, other processes, OECM criteria, and a crosswalk of MSA national standards with ATB principles.

The Subcommittee discussed some additional revisions that should be made to the report.

- Report text should be written to reflect this is a report from the Subcommittee to the CCC – the CCC can consider endorsing the findings of the subcommittee through a cover or transmittal memo to other agencies.
- The additional items listed in terms of reference for the report still need to be addressed, including a discussion of pros and cons of area-based management, and objectives and expected benefits of area-based management as a tool for conserving the wide diversity of ecosystems in different regions. Jessica will add new sections to the report, and we can draft some text for this in the coming weeks; much of the information is scattered throughout the document already, and text could be pulled from our council comment letters. We can further expand on this discussion when we get to the manuscript preparation phase.
- We should add ID numbers for each conservation area in the summary tables to match those included in the evaluation tables for each region. Whether or not to include one ID number for an individual site or a group of sites, was left up to each member.
- The term ‘protection’ was replaced with ‘conservation’ for all three categories of areas. All summary and evaluation tables should be revised accordingly with this language. In the evaluation of specific conservation areas, however, we should still use the word protection if that is the intent or effect of the regulation (i.e., some councils protect deep-sea coral from fishing impacts which is more than just conserving them). The text of the report will be revised appropriately.
- A new section on References will be added. We can cite papers and add references to the report text as appropriate. We can also add references or a list of important regional papers to each regional summary. This will become more important in the manuscript phase of our work.
- A Table of Contents will be added. The regional descriptions, maps, and summary tables will be Appendix 1. Both the report text and Appendix 1 will be posted as a single document (aka, the main document). The conservation area evaluation tables will be Appendix 2, and due to sheer number of pages, will be posted as a separate document and bookmarked by region.

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Tasking and Next Steps

Documents should be sent to CCC about May 4. Therefore, each region should have information complete by **April 8**. That leaves several weeks to format and finalize the main document.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **April 20** from 2:00-4:00 EST to finalize the draft report and discuss presentation slides for CCC Meeting (May 17-19)

Minutes **CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee**

April 20, 2022

The CCC Area-based Management Subcommittee met virtually from 2:00 – 3:20 pm (EST) on April 20, 2022, to discuss final revisions to the draft report.

Members Present: Eric Reid (Chair), Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Roger Pugliese (SAFMC), Graciela Moliner for Miguel Rolon (CFMC), Mark Fitchett (WPFMC), David Witherell (NPFMC), John Froeschke (GMFMC) and Kerry Griffin (PFMC). Deirdre Boelke (NEFMC) had a conflict and was unable to attend. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries employees Heather Sagar and Michelle Lennox also participated in the meeting at our invitation.

Updates from NMFS on national efforts

Ms. Michelle Lennox noted that the Atlas subcommittee is still reviewing the written comments from the FR request. A timeline has been set for the beta version of the Atlas, which will be publicly available by December 2022. Michelle highlighted the announcement of a \$1 billion ATB grant program, which will be administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The America the Beautiful Challenge is a public-private grant program for locally led ecosystem restoration projects that invest in watershed restoration, resilience, equitable access, workforce development, corridors and connectivity, and collaborative conservation, consistent with the [America the Beautiful Initiative](https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-initiative). See <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge>

Overview of the Draft Report and Recent Additions

Ms. Jessica Coakley walked through the near-final formatted report, including the addition of a table of contents and new text for the group to review and revise. Area evaluation tables are included in a separate file as Appendix B.

Jessica highlighted several parts of the report that need to be completed. All revisions must be done by COB on Monday April 25. These revisions include:

1. Finalizing the numbers in Tables 5-8. If we can't calculate overlap of areas, use the total, and include a footnote in the table. Without GIS calculations, we just will have what we have, and go with it.
2. Appendix A and B tables and text are complete for most regions. A few minor additions and issues were identified that needed to be added or revised.
3. Review of new text in the Pros and Cons and Summary sections. We need to get this fully edited and buttoned up for final formatting.

CCC Meeting Report

Mr. Eric Reid highlighted that there is 1 hour of time set aside for the CCC to review the draft report from the Subcommittee (tentatively scheduled for 11 am Wednesday, May 18). A presentation on our report will be given by Eric, which will follow a brief presentation by Sam on NOAA Fisheries efforts. The Subcommittee discussed the need to develop standard protocols for GIS and how to get the GIS area calculations and maps done. Given that there is no capacity for NOAA Fisheries to do this, and no or

limited capacity at most councils, the only approach is to request additional funds from NOAA Fisheries to provide for contracting assistance.

The Subcommittee discussed how best to approach the request of additional funds for GIS, noting the benefits provided to the U.S. government and NOAA Fisheries. It was noted that one benefit is that we would have maps of all fishery conservation areas in the EEZ in one place, and in one format. This would be extremely useful for NOAA Fisheries to bring forward to international discussions. Domestically, these GIS maps would help ensure the success of the America the Beautiful initiative, and cement NOAA Fisheries commitment to this effort. The funds for GIS contracting could be directed to a single council, or through one of the marine fisheries commissions that may even have GIS capability in house (e.g., PSMFC).

There was agreement that we should be ready to hold a meeting of GIS experts after the May CCC meeting to discuss the various technical aspects of building and sharing standardized shape files. John Froeschke volunteered to lead this group. Tim Haverland should be included as he is a GIS technical expert.

Journal Article

Subcommittee members agreed to the importance of publishing a peer-reviewed journal article and will move forward and prepare a manuscript over the summer. There was discussion about the importance of conservation areas as just one tool to manage fisheries and conserve ecosystems, and how the use and need for conservation areas differ across regions. David volunteered to prepare a proposal on the article, including title, authorship, publication venue, timeline, outline, etc. for review and discussion at our next meeting.

Tasking and Next Steps

All revisions to the Draft Final Report should be made by COB **Monday April 25**. Jessica volunteered to finalize the document immediately thereafter and take care of posting the pdf files for the CCC meeting.

The Subcommittee noted the need for a meeting closely following the CCC meeting to discuss the CCC meeting and direction provided, CEQ messaging, and the journal article plan and outline. Jessica volunteered to send out a doodle poll.

The Subcommittee ended the meeting by recognizing Jessica for her outstanding work on compiling report content for the group.