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New England Fishery Management Council EAFM Stakeholder Workshop #9 Fairhaven, MA

Date: November 2, 2005
Location: Hampton Inn
Attendees: (15) – Ronald Enoksen, New Bedford MA; Enid Liput, North Dartmouth MA; Madeline Hall-Arber, Cambridge MA; Michael Picciandra, Westport MA; Peter Anthony, New Bedford MA; John Reardon, Fairhaven MA; Kevin Stokesbury, Dartmouth MA; Harriet Didriksen, Fairhaven MA; Jim Kendall, New Bedford MA; Vin Malkoski, Marion MA; Barbara Bragdon, Dennisport MA; Ray Starvish, Jr., Taunton MA; Pat Kavanagh, Falmouth MA; Bradley Harris, Dartmouth MA; Robert Morris, Bristol RI
Facilitators: Chad Demarest (NEFMC), Kathy Mills (Cornell University)
Start time: 5:30 scheduled, 5:40 actual
End time: 8:30 scheduled, 9:00 actual
Questionnaires: 7 completed on-site, 0 received in mail

I. Purpose and format

The purpose of this workshop was to engage participants in a discussion, and to solicit a wide range of opinions, on topics critical to integrating ecosystem approaches into the Council's stewardship of marine resources and our fisheries.

Due to the number of participants the workshop was run in one group. Kathy began by discussing Objectives, Indicators and Tools, followed by Chad discussing Ecosystem Boundaries and Collaborative Management.

II. Break-out Session: Objectives, Indicators and Tools

Implementing an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management requires drawing upon stakeholder input to define objectives for both local fisheries and ecosystems. Identifying indicators to track the status of these fisheries and ecosystems, and determining methods or tools for reaching these objectives, follow closely after. Participants were asked to consider changes in fisheries management that may result if ecosystem approaches are utilized, and to identify objectives related to the fishery management process and its outcomes for both fisheries and the ecosystem. From this information, we hoped to gain a sense of the issues and priorities stakeholders want to see addressed through an ecosystem approach, and the results they hope such an approach will achieve. Participants were also asked to identify indicators (including biological, ecological, social, and economic features) that can be used to track how well fisheries and the ecosystem are doing based on metrics relevant to our stakeholders. Finally, participants shared their perceptions of the usefulness and acceptability of common current management tools and offered suggestions for other tools that could be adapted under an ecosystem approach.

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A. Objectives

Objectives stated by participants in this session fell into several major categories: management structure and process, fisheries, ecological considerations, community considerations, and science. [Note that categories were developed after the discussion and were not used to guide the session.] There was strong support among participants for allowing open access to fisheries and for taking the burden of implementing management measures off of fishermen. There was also recognition of several water quality concerns. In addition, attendees expressed a need for fisheries participants or managers to have a meaningful way to influence decisions made in other sectors, particularly land use, that affect fisheries and the marine ecosystem.

Management structure and process

- Focus on, understand, and increase input on non-fishing activities that affect marine ecosystem
- More involvement of fisheries in actions and decisions regarding other activities
- Greater, broader role for industry in management
- Make management future-focused instead of past-focused
 - Manage to meet objectives
- Less litigation—have those who bring cases pay if they lose
- Less political influence
 - Appropriate stakeholders and regions involved
- Adjust management regulations to actual cost of fishery
- Transparent management
- Build trust
- Share common wealth
- Increase reliance on fishermen's observations
- Involve stakeholders from the bottom up
 - Build up ideas
 - Bring ideas to termination
 - Involvement in changes
- Put fishing people first—people broadly, but not fishermen, have been put first in past
- Resource owned by society, so burden should be shared by society

Fisheries

- Recognize burden on fishermen of certain conservation goals
- Diverse healthy communities
- Diverse fleets
- Keep by-catch
 - Redistribute over-catch to people in need
- Preserve jobs
- Open access—every citizen should be able to go fishing
- Owner-captain fleets

DRAFT

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- Treat industry as stewards
- Focus on good seafood

Ecological considerations

- Consider nitrates, water quality, wastewater
- Consider implications of chlorine in treatment centers that lead to dissolved oxygen depletion (genotoxins)
- Consider predator-prey dynamics
- Ensure survival of eggs (early life history)
- Look at cumulative impacts (e.g., of watershed impacts and land use)
- Strive for natural state
- Understand/recognize that we can't have everything at highest level at same time
- Ban chemicals
- Follow nature [natural dynamics], not management
- Consider natural ranges of where things can exist
 - Don't try to create a "protected area" where not appropriate

Community considerations

- Restore healthy coastal communities

Science

- Have government pay to get data from fishermen
- Better understanding of ocean (better data)

B. Indicators

The participants proposed indicators related to ecological and socio-economic characteristics of fisheries and the ecosystem, as well as indicators focused on management and science. [Note that categories for the indicators were developed after the group discussion.] Participants expressed a need for expanded science to allow development of many of these indicators.

Ecological

- Eutrophication events
- Seagrass/epiphyte changes
- Red tide/HAB outbreaks
- Invasive species
- Competitive balance among species
- Lower trophic levels and non-commercial species
- By-catch

Socio-economic

- Diversity in ports
 - Types of species caught
 - Types of vessels

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- Condition of vessels
- % employment in industry per capita
- Number of small businesses
 - Shoreside businesses supported by industry
 - Infrastructure
- Jobs
- Landing value
- Net profit
- Number of people sharing economic benefits
- Quantity and impact of imports
- Amount of exports
- Processing value
- Age of fishermen
- Number of apprenticeship programs to bring people into fishing
- Loss of employment in fishing
 - Cost to coastal communities and states
- % waterfront used by fishermen
 - % change over time

Management and science

- Agreement between government science and fishermen’s science
- Level of confidence in science
- Level and quality of basic environmental data
- Extent of fishermen’s input into science and management

C. Tools

Participants recognized limited benefits of many currently-utilized management tools. They expressed concern that any management tool can be misused or used correctly but felt that current tools are not designed to protect people. Some participants felt that all currently-used tools can be adaptable to EAFM rather than single species management. The group suggested that media outreach be used to present fishermen’s ideas on EAFM. They also proposed that open access be treated as a management tool. Some supported unions, such as the previous New Bedford Fishermen’s Union, as a way of returning management to a local level and allowing fishermen to design their own approaches for achieving management goals.

Management tools	Useful for?	Acceptability?
Effort controls (DAS, trip limits, trap limits)	DAS—most misguided error, DAS are Fascist	Don’t privatize fisheries
Output controls (quotas, size limits)	Quotas—may be good from business perspective, but not necessarily from socio-econ perspective Quotas may be useful if equal among all boats	Don’t privatize fisheries; it’s a final moveS
Technical tools (gear/vessel		Some suggested that

DRAFT

regulations)		fishermen themselves should decide how to fish and when to use technical modifications. There was also strong dissent to this statement, with a large number of participants agreeing that fishermen can be their own worst enemy.
Protected areas (spawning/year-round closures)		

III. Break-out Session: Ecosystem Boundaries and Collaborative Management

One of the foundational concepts underlying Ecosystem Approaches to Management is that different geographically-defined areas have different biological production capacities, and that it may be advantageous to scale science and management to these areas. The first step, obviously, is to define the areas. The group was asked the question “what makes a particular area unique.” The answers in many cases may be predictable, such as “temperature,” “salinity,” “sediment,” etc., but the question was designed to get the participants thinking in terms of spatially-differentiated geographical areas. It was especially interesting to note when novel indicators were explored, and to what degree participants felt that actions of humans (fishing and non-fishing) should be factored into the equation.

Input was then solicited on the appropriate geographic scale for fisheries management, the link between ‘scientifically-defined ecosystems’ and potential ‘management areas,’ and any governance issues that may arise as a result of spatially-defined ecosystems.

Terrestrial and, to some extent, international literature on ecosystems approaches to management frequently target community-based (or co-management, collaborative management) principals as a primary driver for ecosystems approaches to management. The group was asked to comment on the perceived advantages of collaborative management, such as an increased sense of stewardship and the potential to see gains from personal conservation-based behaviors, and how these benefits may dovetail with what might be considered a highly geographically mobile fishing fleet in New England. Does the capacity for local management exist? Is there a way to maintain geographic flexibility while achieving the perceived benefits of community-based management? Are communities necessarily geographic, or can they take on other units?

A. Ecosystem Boundaries

Responses by participants are categorized (below) into one of three themes: delineation, governance, and scale. These themes emerged from discussions during the workshop and they were not presented to participants in this structured format.

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Participants recognized that different areas have different biological and ecological processes, and potential fishery yields differ across geographies (as well as season). However, the most vocal participants expressed great reservation toward the ability of scientists to accurately assess these differences, and the ability of managers to utilize these differences to benefit the fisheries. Participants felt that the spatially-delineated nature of ecosystem approaches introduced further complexity and uncertainty into an already complex and uncertain structure. For the most part, they did not see the need.

Delineation

- Temperature
- Sediment
- Bathymetry
- Recognize the existence of buffer zones
- Shifting boundary lines as conditions change
- Must incorporate anthropogenic effects
- Geological differences

Governance

- Must account for long-term changes
- There is insufficient data for local ecosystem assessment
- We have difficulties assessing the resources and fisheries now; don't introduce new complexities
- "The multiplications of complications"

Scale

- Local ecosystem scales are too micro-managed
- Need more viable science
 - Current data is incomplete

B. Collaborative Management

Participants, having already pointed out the problems with smaller geographic management units, expressed skepticism towards localized governance structures and the need for community involvement in fisheries. At the end of this portion of the discussion, however, a few participants stated that there may, in fact, be some benefits from governance structures that delegate some authorities to a less-central level than currently exists.

- The Council needs to re-assess it's:
 - Methods of reaching stakeholders
 - Mechanisms for receiving input
- The media is being manipulated by anti-fishing interests
- The Council needs to be more involved in portraying a positive message to the media
 - Media manipulation vs. media reach
- There may be a need of more local interaction

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IV. Summary statements

Both groups were reassembled in plenary and given an opportunity to provide any comments or feedback on any issues pertinent to ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. Here is what they felt was most important:

- Need to take a cooperative approach with stakeholders
- Need to look at/focus on the bigger picture
- Need to incorporate cumulative effects/impacts
- Have to look at the role of the media

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