

Coastal Fishing Communities Project

Update on Efforts Related to Staff Recommendation #8

November 4, 2020

Recommendation: Survey communities, commercial and recreational fishers, and processors about their priorities for Commission focus.

Overview: This strategy could help refine understanding about the issues facing coastal fishing communities and their priorities. Some stakeholders have criticized this recommendation as being too similar to this Coastal Fishing Communities Project.

Progress by Focal Area

Collaborations and Partner Efforts

- *California Ocean Science Trust (OST):* OST facilitated a [July 2019 guided learning workshop](#) on climate change and coastal fishing communities to help inform the Commission's Coastal Fishing Communities Project. The steering committee for the workshop included staff from the Commission, Department, and California Ocean Protection Council (OPC), who also attended and participated in the workshop. The workshop report summarizes concerns and potential management strategies to assist with coastal fishing community resilience under climate change. Emphasis was placed on the need to collaborate with local port stakeholders—which would include commercial and recreational anglers and processors—and identified potential future steps, to include exploring adaptable fishing structures.

Relevant External Actions and Models

- *California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA):* CNRA's [2018 safeguarding California report](#) contains several next steps relevant to state-managed fisheries, including outreach to marine resource users.
- *Federal initiatives:* In January 2020 the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) held a workshop as a part of its [Climate and Communities](#) initiative. Developed in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy, the workshop detailed a set of climate scenarios and potential fishery impacts;. the potential fishery impacts will be discussed at an upcoming series of regional workshops with West Coast commercial fisheries community members.
- *Private/academic sector:* Humboldt State University (HSU) researchers, Ecotrust, and Strategic Earth Consulting are currently [conducting a study](#) to assess port community well-being and socioeconomic conditions. The study will include outreach and surveying to collect qualitative data from fishing community leaders.

Education and Outreach

- *Experimental fishing permits*: One of the top priorities of community members identified in the 2016-2018 survey effort was a desire to pursue emerging fisheries and permit flexibility. The proposed experimental fishing permit (EFP) program currently under development provides an avenue to address those concerns. A [stakeholder workshop](#) was held in January 2020 and co-lead by Commission and Department staff and The Nature Conservancy to solicit thoughts from stakeholders concerning EFP program design and priorities. The EFP program is an example of what can result from being made aware of priority concerns for community members.
- *Apprenticeships*: Another top priority during the 2016-2018 surveying effort was addressing the “aging of the fleet” and the difficulty of entry for young participants. California Sea Grant has established a [commercial fishing apprenticeship program](#) consisting of workshops and on-the-job training designed to address the concern; the most recent workshop was in January 2020. This program is another example of what could be modeled to address priority concerns.

Potential Next Steps

Due to changes in fish businesses and markets associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, members of fishing communities and fisheries may have new perspectives to share relative to the surveying conducted by Commission staff from 2016 to 2018. Outreach to key stakeholders could be used to determine the best strategy for broader outreach to fishing communities and to gather ideas for survey questions if a survey is determined to be an effective and desired tool to use.

Linkages to Other Staff Recommendations

The most recent work surveying fishing communities was during the 2016-2018 meetings. Some of the primary concerns and priorities highlighted by fishermen during those meetings have been accounted for and addressed through other recommendations, notably concerns about the limitations of restricted access (SR 2), the ability to respond to emerging fisheries (EFP, SR 3), and adaptable permitting structures (SR 6). This recommendation is also tied to SR 10, as surveying communities would assist in building a better understanding of their needs in response to climate change.