

Coastal Fishing Communities Project

Update on Efforts Related to Staff Recommendation #9

November 4, 2020

Recommendation: Explore a model of “fishing community sustainability plans” (CSPs) and possible development of a state fisheries-based module to add to existing CSPs.

Overview¹: CSPs are planning documents that require a coastal community to assess needs and provide concrete recommendations for improving its industry, its waterfront, and the sustainability of its ports. CSPs are cited in the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) as a potential method to avoid negative impacts to small fishing communities from the catch share program by enabling communities to be eligible to purchase catch shares and participate in limited access fisheries when approved by regional fishery management councils. More broadly, CSPs enable communities to plan strategically and be more proactive in developing fishing community resilience for a sustainable future. Incorporating a state fisheries module could potentially be part of a future where ports are empowered to define how to support their own fishing community resilience and structure fisheries access according to their unique needs, and potentially become eligible to participate in state restricted access fisheries as communities.

Progress by Focal Area

Relevant External Actions and Models

- *Current CSPs in California:* As of June 2020, [Noyo Harbor](#), [Monterey](#), and [Morro Bay](#) have developed and adopted CSPs. In addition, a research group at Humboldt State University (HSU) worked with fishing community leaders in [Eureka](#) and [Shelter Cove](#) to develop CSPs for those communities; while these CSPs have not been approved by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), they are being utilized actively in their ports to implement top priorities and [provide a roadmap for CSP planning](#).
- *Other community plans:* The California Natural Resources Agency’s [Safeguarding California Plan 2018](#) includes several next steps relevant to state-managed fisheries, including providing grants for community-based vulnerability assessments, specifically for marine fisheries and related socioeconomic groups. While not the same as a CSP, vulnerability assessments can help guide communities in choosing priorities for state CSPs.
- *Fishing community profiles:* PFMC is developing updated [profiles](#) of West Coast fishing communities which include economic, demographic, and fishery information. The profiles could be used as tools to define community needs and priorities for community sustainability planning.

¹ This overview has been updated since the completion of *2019 Staff Synthesis Report on California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings, 2016-2018* to clarify the provisions for CSPs in federal fisheries under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the potential new provisions for CSPs in state-managed fisheries.

- *Out of state:* Marine fisheries in Maine fall under the Department of Marine Resources (DMR). DMR has [several grant programs](#) to support its coastal communities, including the Shore and Harbor Planning Grants Program and the Coastal Communities Grants Program. Maine's programs could be a model for making funding available for communities to conduct assessment and planning activities.
- *Federal tools:* The [U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#), a federal inter-agency initiative and part of the federal Climate Action Plan, provides tools and expertise for decision-makers to assess risk and build climate resilience. The toolkit includes a [Fisheries and Coastal Communities](#) page, which provides an overview of potential climate impacts to coastal fishing communities in the US, links to case studies of fishing communities adapting, and an example strategy for communities responding to change. These tools can help local communities define needs and strategies for sustainability planning.

Education and Outreach

- *Comments:* Directed conversations between the Commission and stakeholders resulted in comments on the 2019 staff synthesis report with specific requests to develop CSPs. Specifically, a letter from the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries suggested developing a statewide CSP as part of a Commission fishing communities policy.

Potential Next Steps

Reach out to the organizations responsible for CSPs underway or already established in California. Presumably, experienced communities can provide valuable information on how communities begin to develop plans, identify any other interested communities of which they are aware, and provide insight regarding what, if any, updates to CSPs may be warranted specific to state-managed fisheries.

Linkages to Other Staff Recommendations

Like the permit banking options discussed in SR 6, this recommendation would require community-organized structures, and therefore requires community or local government initiatives. This recommendation would require the Commission to collaborate with local governments, relevant to SR 5.