

COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER 17, 2022 MRC

6. COASTAL FISHING COMMUNITIES POLICY

Today's Item	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action <input type="checkbox"/>
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Receive FGC staff update on progress developing a draft policy on coastal fishing communities for potential FGC adoption, and discuss next steps.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|---|
| • MRC update and recommendation to begin policy development | Mar 16, 2021; MRC, Webinar/Teleconference |
| • FGC approved MRC recommendation | Apr 14, 2021; Webinar/Teleconference |
| • MRC update | Jul 21, 2021; MRC, Webinar/Teleconference |
| • MRC update on the policy and discussion: presented policy goals and key concepts document | Nov 9, 2021; MRC, Webinar/Teleconference |
| • Update on policy drafting workshop outcomes | Mar 24, 2022; MRC, Sacramento |
| • MRC update | Jul 14, 2022; MRC, Santa Rosa |
| • Today's update on draft policy outline | Nov 17, 2022; MRC, San Diego |

Background

The Coastal Fishing Communities Project is an FGC initiative to more directly recognize coastal fishing community needs and the impact that different options for achieving conservation and use goals in fisheries management decisions may have on those communities. As part of this initiative, FGC staff is in the process of developing a policy for coastal fishing communities for future FGC consideration. The initial draft policy was shared at a public workshop in Feb 2022 (materials available at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=199387&inline>).

FGC staff appreciates the feedback received during and following the public workshop. In spring 2022, staff began to incorporate feedback received into a revised draft policy with the intention of sharing that revised draft in a second workshop at the beginning of summer. However, after integrating much of the feedback, the draft increased in length and specificity, causing concern that the policy had lost focus and would not be adaptable to different strategies to achieve its overall goal. Many of the details, however, would be appropriate for consideration within an implementation work plan that can be adapted over time as needs change. See Exhibit 2 for details on the process and considerations for streamlining a draft policy.

At today's meeting FGC staff will share an outline for a revised draft policy (Exhibit 3) for discussion. Staff seeks MRC feedback on the proposed outline, process, and whether to continue in this new direction.

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Following today's meeting, staff anticipates incorporating any feedback and reviewing the full revised draft policy with stakeholders and partners at a workshop on Dec 1, 2022.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Provide feedback on the proposed draft policy outline, policy development process, and whether to continue in this new direction.

Exhibits

1. [Background document: Staff summary from Item 8, Mar 24, 2022 MRC meeting](#)
2. [FGC staff update on policy development process, dated Nov 9, 2022](#)
3. [Outline, revised draft coastal fishing communities policy, dated Nov 9, 2022](#)

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)

COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR MARCH 24, 2022 MRC*For Background Purposes Only***8. COASTAL FISHING COMMUNITIES POLICY****Today's Item**Information Action

Receive FGC staff presentation of outcomes from the public Coastal Fishing Communities Policy Drafting Workshop, and discuss next steps in refining a potential draft policy for FGC consideration.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|--|
| • MRC update and recommendation to begin policy development | Mar 16, 2021; MRC, Webinar/Teleconference |
| • FGC approved MRC recommendation for policy development | Apr 14, 2021; Webinar/Teleconference |
| • MRC update | Jul 21, 2021; MRC, Webinar/Teleconference |
| • MRC update on the policy and discussion: presented policy goals and key concepts document | Nov 9, 2021; MRC, Webinar/Teleconference |
| • Today's update on policy drafting workshop outcomes | Mar 24, 2022; MRC, Webinar/Teleconference |

Background

The Coastal Fishing Communities Project is an FGC initiative to more directly recognize coastal fishing community goals, and the impact that different options for pursuing conservation and utilization goals in fisheries management decisions may have on those communities.

Implementation of Staff Recommendation 1 – Policy

In 2018, as part of the development of the Coastal Fishing Communities Project, Commission released a report titled *Staff Synthesis Report on California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings, 2016-2018*. The report included 10 staff recommendations. Staff recommendation 1 is for FGC to “develop and adopt a policy and definition for coastal fishing communities,” FGC directed staff to peruse this recommendation.

In 2019, MRC adopted a working definition for *coastal fishing communities*, which was developed collaboratively among stakeholders and staff and serves as a foundation for developing a new policy for potential FGC adoption. In Mar 2021, MRC recommended FGC move forward with policy development and direct staff to engage stakeholders and initiate drafting a policy for coastal fishing communities; FGC approved the recommendation in Apr 2021.

At the Nov 2021 MRC meeting, staff shared outcomes from six regional roundtable meetings held in Aug and Sep 2021 with regional fishing community leaders and harbor representatives. Staff presented stakeholder-informed draft potential goals and key elements for consideration in an FGC policy on coastal fishing communities (within Exhibit 1). MRC gave input on the draft

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goals and directed staff to use the draft goals to shape the process for developing a potential coastal fishing communities policy during future policy drafting workshops.

Update

On Feb 23, 2022 FGC hosted a public policy-drafting workshop. Materials included background materials (Exhibit 1) to orient prospective new participants, and in-meeting materials (Exhibit 2) outlining the policy development process, previous stakeholder input, and an initial draft policy (see Exhibit 2). Workshop materials are posted on the FGC meetings page and on the [Coastal Fishing Communities Project web page](https://fgc.ca.gov/Committees/Marine/Coastal-Fishing-Communities-Project) (at <https://fgc.ca.gov/Committees/Marine/Coastal-Fishing-Communities-Project>), which will serve as a single source for project materials previously shared with MRC.

Approximately 45 members of the public participated in the workshop, representing a range of fishing community interests. Commissioner Sklar attended to provide welcoming remarks and observe. The initial draft policy developed by staff served as a starting point for workshop discussions. A summary of the workshop is provided as Exhibit 4.

Today, staff will share the outcomes of the workshop, including key feedback from stakeholders (Exhibit 5), and initial work integrating feedback into a revised draft policy. Staff has identified a second public workshop as a potential next step. Staff seeks MRC input on incorporating stakeholders' feedback and exploring issues raised during the workshop for consideration in the next iteration of the draft policy.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation**

Receive public input on the current draft, and consider and discuss issues raised during the public workshop. Provide direction on next steps for refining the draft policy for additional stakeholder input and MRC discussion in Jul 2022.

Exhibits

1. Workshop background materials combined, dated Feb 7, 2022
2. Workshop in-meeting materials, including staff initial draft policy, dated Feb 23, 2022
3. Staff presentation provided at workshop, dated Feb 23, 2022
4. Summary of public workshop held Feb 23, 2022
5. Table summarizing stakeholder comments received during workshop (to be posted separately)

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)

California Fish and Game Commission
Staff Update on Coastal Fishing Communities Policy Development
November 9, 2022

This document has been prepared by California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) staff as an update on the effort to develop a coastal fishing communities policy, in support of Agenda Item 7(C) of the Commission Marine Resources Committee's November 17, 2022 meeting.

Background

The Coastal Fishing Communities Project is a Commission initiative to more directly recognize coastal fishing community goals and the impact that different options for achieving conservation and use goals in fisheries management decisions may have on those communities. As part of this initiative, the Commission may consider adopting a policy for coastal fishing communities.

An initial draft policy was developed and shared at a virtual public workshop in February 2022 (materials available at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=199387&inline>). Commission staff appreciated the feedback received during and following the public workshop. In spring 2022, staff began incorporating the feedback into a revised draft with the intention of sharing the next iteration in a second workshop at the beginning of summer.

Feedback on Initial Draft and Process Shift

Key concerns regarding the initial drafts of the policy included that:

- it lacked a clear overarching policy statement;
- it needed more emphasis on the challenges coastal fishing communities are facing, especially climate change and fisheries emergencies;
- it was too conservative and reflective of actions that were already occurring;
- there was confusion as to how the policy would enact change in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department);
- there was too much reliance on the Department to carry out new actions identified within the policy and not enough emphasis on the role of other partners to achieve goals;
- some components felt repetitive; and
- the flow needed improvement.

After integrating much of the feedback received, staff concluded that the revised draft was lengthy and overly-specific; while the draft better reflected specific input from fishing community stakeholders, the level of detail would be more appropriate for an implementation plan that could be tailored over time as needs changed. This caused concern that the policy had lost focus and would not be adaptable over time as specific needs change or as different strategies emerge that might better achieve the overarching policy goal. Based on the concerns, Commission staff regrouped, postponed a second workshop, and changed course with the next draft.

Staff initiated internal discussions with the Department and other partners to re-envision the detailed policy and to develop a higher-level policy for considering coastal fishing communities' needs, while keeping in mind stakeholders' initial input on a potential policy and feedback on the first draft. As part of the re-drafting, staff separated out aspects of the initial draft policy and some feedback into the beginnings of a potential draft implementation plan. Several iterations of a draft policy were internally developed in concert with the Department and other partners with the ultimate goal of drafting a policy expressing foundational concepts and outcomes that reflect broader public values and will underlie specific actions to be taken on the public's behalf.

Revisions to Draft Policy

There are several major changes in the revised draft policy.

1. Restructured to make the intent of the policy clearer and to improve readability:
 - Removed recognition statements. Instead, used an introduction section to better articulate why a Commission policy for coastal fishing communities is needed.
 - Added a "policy statement" section to highlight the overarching purpose of the policy.
 - The goals the Commission approved in Nov 2021 are integrated throughout new "policy strategies."
2. Used broader and less prescriptive language than the February 2022 draft to enable greater adaptability in specific actions for achieving the overall policy goal.
3. Reduced the number of directives and, rather, put a larger emphasis on harnessing the strengths of partners, stakeholders, and other agencies to accomplish the policy goal.

Next Steps

For today's MRC meeting, Commission staff has prepared an outline for a revised draft policy for discussion (see Exhibit 3, this agenda item) and MRC feedback on whether to continue in this new direction. Following the MRC meeting, staff will incorporate feedback into the revised draft policy and make it available to the public. A public workshop is scheduled for December 1, where staff will review and discuss the revised draft with stakeholders and partners. Additionally, Commission staff are capturing specific actions recommended by stakeholders for consideration in a draft implementation plan.

Commission staff appreciates the engagement and feedback received from stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, academics, and agencies over the past couple of years to help develop a draft policy that uplifts coastal fishing communities' needs in fisheries management decision-making and in areas of importance to those communities.

California Fish and Game Commission Coastal Fishing Communities Project

Outline of Revised Draft Coastal Fishing Communities Policy

November 8, 2022

This document has been prepared by California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) staff in support of Agenda Item 7(C) of the Commission Marine Resources Committee's November 17, 2022 meeting. Staff developed this outline of a revised draft coastal fishing communities policy after internal discussions with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and other partners to re-envision what was a much more detailed policy and to develop a higher-level policy for considering coastal fishing communities' needs, while keeping in mind stakeholders' initial input on a potential policy and feedback on the first draft policy.

I. Introduction

- Highlight the importance of coastal fishing communities in California. Coastal fishing communities have social, cultural and economic value and are interdependent with healthy marine species and ecosystems.
- Coastal fishing communities are dynamic systems composed of many parts, each influencing the others.
- Coastal fishing communities face many dynamic challenges that strain and disrupt coastal fishing communities socially and economically; such challenges include economic viability, lack of adequate port infrastructure, climate change, shifting stocks, "greying" of the fleet, harmful algal blooms, whale entanglement risk and uncertain season length, increased competition for shoreside uses and ocean space, and more.
- The goal of the coastal fishing community project and this policy is to help address and, just as importantly, avoid exacerbating the numerous challenges.

II. Definition

- For purposes of this policy, Coastal Fishing Community is defined as... [MRC's working definition]

III. Policy Setting

- Marine Life Management Act
- California Coastal Act, sections 30234, 32034.5 and 30703
- Commission Restricted Access Commercial Fisheries Policy
- Federal policies (i.e., Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act)
- Why a coastal fishing communities policy is still needed: There is a need for holistic management that accounts for fisheries as dynamic social-ecological systems. There are many interdependencies between communities and fisheries (as well as within and among fisheries) and implications for place-based communities need to be explicitly integrated into the management context.

IV. Policy Statement and Strategies

A. Policy Statement

It is the policy and practice of the California Fish and Game Commission to consider the perspectives of and implications for coastal fishing communities socially and economically when pursuing robust and long-lasting fisheries management and conservation. The Commission will pursue this policy through a holistic strategy that includes meaningful coastal fishing community engagement, ensuring coastal fishing community interests are considered during Commission decision-making, and supporting efforts to facilitate capacity-building and adaptation in coastal fishing communities. A number of strategies will be pursued to address the challenges coastal fishing communities face and ensure their perspectives and interests are appropriately integrated into fisheries management and Commission actions.

B. Understand issues and identify solutions through meaningful coastal fishing community engagement.

- Promote direct and consistent engagement with coastal fishing communities, such as through a dedicated annual process
- Facilitate collaboration with coastal fishing communities on problem-solving and identifying solutions
- Consider a mechanism for regular, ongoing engagement and follow-up/follow-through

C. Commission action: Ensure coastal fishing community interests are reflected in Commission decision-making

- Advance collaborative approaches identified with coastal fishing communities through decision-making and regulatory processes as appropriate
- Support management options and plans that contribute to the social and economic sustainability of coastal fishing communities, while maintaining the sustainability of fisheries
- Develop a system(s) to anticipate and respond quickly to emerging needs or disruptive changes
- Review and adjust policies and regulations through the lens of supporting coastal fishing communities' adaptation

D. Support capacity-building in coastal fishing communities via external efforts

- Facilitate coordination efforts between agencies and partners aimed at supporting coastal fishing communities
- Support organizational and operational capacities of coastal fishing communities
- Uplift coastal fishing community interests in the face of emerging issues or threats

- Help build and leverage partnerships to collect essential information
- Support efforts to foster a new generation of fishermen
- Support efforts, such as the collection of socioeconomic data, that can inform decision-making and be a resource to stakeholders