

National SSC Workshop October 4-6, 2011
Kingsmill Conference Center, Williamsburg, VA
Social Science Breakout Group II - Catch Shares Focus Session

The focus of this session's discussion is how to encourage greater engagement and recognition of communities/community objectives in the fishery management policy process, and link them to application of catch share design tools for this particular outcome. Social Scientists on the SSC have a unique perspective, and this is an opportunity to provide advice and counsel to their Fishery Management Council on this topic.

In January 2011 NOAA Fisheries convened a workshop on fishing communities and the use of catch shares, and the findings and recommendations from the soon-to-be released proceedings are offered as a reference point for our discussion. This session is an efficient means to compare information from the workshop to sustainable fishing communities' needs around the country, and have social scientists from all eight Council areas identify policy guidance gaps and impediments, and recommend to Council and NMFS leadership the steps to close these gaps.

Social Science Session II Trigger Questions

SS Set 2: Catch shares focus session

- i. How can SSCs encourage greater engagement and recognition of communities/community objectives in the fishery management policy process?
- ii. What are the best options for consideration of catch shares as a means to address sustainable community objectives?
- iii. What are the impediments or barriers for consideration of catch shares as a means to address sustainable community objectives?
- iv. What are the data monitoring and performance tracking requirements for implementation of catch share solutions to community objectives?

A matrix of the possible roles of the SSC, APs, Councils/staff, and NOAA/NMFS in carrying out these actions could be an informative outcome.

Workshop Background:

The National Marine Fisheries Service Policy Office organized a small workshop to explore issues and experiences associated with commercial fishing communities and catch shares. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the role and function of fishing communities in current and future catch share programs, including Fishing Communities (FCs) and Regional Fishing Associations (RFAs) established under Limited Access Privilege Programs as defined in Section 303A of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The 25 workshop participants included members and staff of the Regional Fishery Management Councils, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff, NOAA General Counsel, and fishermen, community and fishery-based association experts with experience in organizing and managing fishermen. On the third day of the workshop, Regional Council Directors and Council

member leadership who attended the Magnuson-Stevens Act Council Coordination Committee meeting of January 9-10th joined the workshop for part or all of the day.

During the workshop, the participants discussed nine core topics covering a range of social, economic, technical, and environmental issues. These discussions led to a set of themes and several requests for further guidance from NOAA. The outcomes of the workshop provide a valuable starting point for thinking about ways to support communities as they adjust to current and future catch share programs to ensure sustainable fisheries.

Major Topics Discussed

The following nine topics were addressed during breakout sessions as follows:

1. MSA: Communities in Fisheries Management;
2. MSA 303A Limited Access Privilege Programs & Communities;
3. Non-303A Community Pathways for Councils- CFAs, Sectors;
4. Sustainability Plans and RFA Plans;
5. Monitoring and Evaluating Community Objectives/Outcomes;
6. Communities Getting and Holding Quota: (Initial Allocation, Transferability, Accumulation Limits, Permit Banks, Fisheries Loan Fund, Catch Accounting);
7. Facilitating Community Organization efforts;
8. Current FMP Goals and Objectives Affecting Communities; Threats and Opportunities; Future Vision Relative to Communities;
9. Transferring Knowledge – Future Communication and Engagement Strategies with Communities

Summary

The purpose of the workshop was to add clarity to the potential role and function of fishing communities in current and future catch share programs. Workshop participants discussed nine core topics covering a range of social, technical, environmental, and economic issues. Over the course of the workshop, several ideas emerged and in some cases the group came up with recommendations and/or requests for guidance from NOAA leadership:

1. The MSA includes a legal definition of “fishing community” and “regional fishing association.” However, Councils need to delimit regionally-specific eligibility criteria that account for the social, political, economic, geographic, and temporal distinctness/diversity of FCs in their region and define how these criteria relate to overarching management objectives so that groups may design FCs and/or RFAs that align with Council goals;
2. The function, advantage, and appropriate/intended use of FCs and RFAs need to be expressed more clearly to stakeholders and potential members;
3. Existing entities (e.g., commercial fishermen’s cooperatives) could provide the architecture for future FCs and RFAs; however, it is unclear how/if these entities are

better than non-Section 303A entities that currently exist given that fact that FCs and RFAs require more accountability;

4. Sustainability plans should be comprehensive (e.g., objective statements, performance standards, strategic goals, justification for collective quota holding, confidentiality requirements, administrative responsibilities, and accounting/accountability clauses), but they should also strive to reduce reporting of superfluous information;
5. To successfully develop FCs and RFAs, communities need financial and technical assistance from NOAA and the Councils and in some cases third-party expertise;
6. NOAA should develop an online clearinghouse of information to house and disseminate data, knowledge and case study building blocks about catch share programs to support decision-makers, community leaders, and the industry;
7. There are a suite of regulatory “levers” that can be integrated into catch share programs to achieve economic, social, and ecological outcomes (e.g. limited consolidation, community quota, etc.). Recognizing the flexibility of the model, it is important that explicit community goals and objectives be set by a Council to inform the design of the catch share program;
8. To facilitate effective and efficient community organization efforts, an interagency and/or public-private cross-sector approach that includes governmental, non-governmental, and non-profit collaboration is needed. NOAA and the Councils can be proactive in this process by providing understandable information about catch share programs, financial and technical assistance to off-set start-up costs, and a commitment to long-term communication, monitoring and follow-up with communities;
9. To develop FMP goals that address community needs, community-related issues need to be brought to and sought out by the Councils more directly by way of formal advisory committees or expanded consultation mechanisms in communities;
10. Information about the benefits and impacts of catch share programs needs to be made more accessible to the public. The information needs to be synthesized and disseminated by a consortium of governmental, non-governmental, and non-profit entities that have experience and long-term relationships working with local communities.