

## **MAFAC Meeting**

### **NWX-DOC CONFERENCING**

**Moderator: Heidi Lovett  
November 9, 2015  
3:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Good afternoon, and thank you all for standing by. I'd like to inform participants that your lines will be on a listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today's call. Today's call is also being recorded. If anyone has any objection, you may disconnect. Thank you speakers. You may begin.

Heidi Lovett: Thank you. This is Heidi and I'm just going to do a role call to start things off. And I will note that the meeting is going to be transcribed on paper, not audio. And so, it would be helpful if you announce who you are by name, your first name before you speak and that way that will be recorded properly in the written form.

So, I'm going to go down the list, (Ted)?

(Ted Ames): Here.

Heidi Lovett: (Terri)?

(Terri): Here.

Heidi Lovett: (Bob)?

(Bob): Here.

Heidi Lovett: (Bob Beal)? Yes? Was it (Bob Beal) or (Bob Rheault)?

(Bob Rheault): (Bob Rheault).

Heidi Lovett: Thank you. Sorry. I should say full names. (Julie Morris)?

(Julie Morris): Here.

Heidi Lovett: (Heather Brandon)? (Dick Brame)? (Columbus Brown)? (John Corbin)?  
(David Donaldson)? (Phil Dyskow)? (Michelle Longo Eder)? (Randy Fisher)?  
(Liz Hamilton)?

(Liz Hamilton): Here.

Heidi Lovett: (Micah McCarty)? (Julie Morris)?

(Julie Morris): Here.

Heidi Lovett: (Mike Okoniewski)?

(Mike Okoniewski): Here.

Heidi Lovett: (Bob Rheault), I got you. (Henry Sesepasara)? (Peter Shelly)? (Pam  
Yochem)?

(Pam Yochem): Here.

Heidi Lovett: And (Julie)? I will let you know that we'll do introductions here in this office.

(Jennifer Lukens): This is (Jennifer Lukens), I'm the Director of the Office of Policy and...

Woman: Hi (Jennifer).

(Jennifer Lukens): Hi.

Man: Heidi? I had a technical question. Can I mute by going star six? Or, does that not work?

Heidi Lovett: You can probably go on mute. Operator?

Coordinator: This is the Operator. You can either use your own mute button, or you can press star six to mute and unmute.

Man: Thank you.

Coordinator: You're welcome.

Heidi Lovett: Thank you. We also have in the office here...

(Helen Chabot): This is (Helen Chabot) from the Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation.

Heidi Lovett: And on the line we have one other Habitat person.

(Sean Corson): Hi. This is (Sean Corson) with OHC as well.

Heidi Lovett: And for all members we have a few people from the Habitat Office because obviously you are discussing the Habitat strategy. And they're here to answer any questions if you have any. So (Julie) whenever you're ready to start?

(Julie): Great. And have we determined when we will have a Q&A session with the participants? Is that up to me?

Heidi Lovett: That's up to you when you would like to accept public comment, if there is any.

(Julie): Okay. So, thanks everybody for calling in today and thank you for looking at a document that we just posted last Thursday and the deadline for submitting it is tomorrow or Friday, help me? What's the deadline for submitting comments Heidi and (Jennifer)?

(Jennifer): Tomorrow November 10, was when they requested comments be due to them.

(Julie): Okay. So, (Terri), (Ted), and (Liz) and Heidi all participated in developing the draft comments that we distributed for the review prior to this meeting. There is a cover letter and then a set of comments. The comments are organized by general comments on the entire Habitat enterprise ticket plans. And then general comments on goal 1, goal 2, and goal 3, and then some more specific comments on goal 3, which has to do specifically with our resiliency interest in MAFAC.

So, I think I'd like to go through the documents of draft comments if everybody can find those and be looking at them. And take any comments you have on these. And I think we have some emailed suggested language from (Bob Rheault)? And he wasn't clear about where to drop them in. He thought perhaps goal 1, so when we get to goal 1 (Bob) you can bring that up. Okay?

So, any general, overall comments about the comments distributed prior to the meeting? Okay hearing none, then we'll move onto the first section of the

comments, general comments on the Habitat enterprise strategic plans. There are three bullet points there, any suggested changes or questions about those? Okay. It sounds like somebody is grinding porcelain bowls together.

Woman: You're not on mute?

Woman: No.

Man: Am I on mute?

(Julie Morris): I can hear you.

Man: Well I guess I'm not on mute. Star six does not work people.

(Julie Morris): Okay well if there's no general comments, if there are no comments on the first three bullets, any comments on goal 1, and (Bob) do you want to talk about your suggested addition here?

(Mike Okoniewski.): Hey (Julie)?

(Julie Morris): Yeah.

(Mike Okoniewski.): (Mike O.), just one question I guess and I think I understand, but it says where partnerships are bullet one, where partnerships are already established? I guess that's specific enough, but I guess it might be helpful to put an, i.e. type of example in there also.

(Julie Morris): Do you have an example to suggest?

(Mike Okoniewski.): Not off of the top of my head. But those that are more involved in Habitat than I might have a suggestion. I guess the question is just how far reaching or what are we looking at for partnerships? I mean I can see where there are all kinds of partnerships. So I guess this is any and all basically?

(Julie Morris): Broadly defined.

(Mike Okoniewski.): Okay. I'll let it go at that. Thank you.

(Columbus Brown): This is (Columbus). I just joined in. And I'm sorry. It took forever for me to be joined in to the call.

Heidi Lovett: Welcome (Columbus). We're just getting started.

(Columbus Brown): Okay. Very good.

(Julie Bonney): So (Julie) wants, this is (Julie Bonney). I'm just going to flag something because I don't really know where to put it and how to address it. But I had a lot of heartburn on one of the objectives. It says basically conserve deep-sea habitat by implementing conservation measures to reduce deep-sea coral and sponge (unintelligible) in Alaska and in the West Coast Region and cumulatively protect 50,000 square miles, so, across national ecosystems.

And so, you know, in some of these issues it's, you know, you're trying to build objectives and benchmarks but they're dealing with habitat restorations. For example, the 80,000 metric tons of soil that comes through watersheds or increasing (unintelligible), and all of those kinds of things. But, (by catch) is a different metric in my mind in the fact that, for example, in Alaska we closed, I want to say 96 percent of all area in the Aleutian Islands and only left certain areas open for bottom trawling.

Then we just went through this, it's a council initiative looking at deep-sea canyons, and they brought a lot of research to the table that basically showed that there wasn't really any deep-sea coral in the Bering Sea Canyons. And so, if you keep wanting to close areas, you know, there is no area left to close so to speak.

And so, I don't know how you make this more, separate out (bike heads) versus some of these other metrics, because like I said in a lot of ways when you're talking about fishery (by catch) the councils are making strides. And at some point you've met the mandate versus just saying that you're going to continue to reduce (bike heads). So I don't know how you implant that comment in what is being proposed by (unintelligible)?

(Julie Morris): Okay. So, (Julie Bonney)? Help us all get to which goal statement, you said objective lines, but under which goal statement?

(Julie Bonney): Well it's under trust resources. It's a table on Page eight is where I am getting this.

Heidi Lovett: Wait. (Helen Chabot) here would like to point out some information that may be helpful for you and your comments.

(Julie Bonney): Okay.

(Sean Corson): Thanks. I just wanted to point out... I truly apologize. In Table eight the language there is actually a little bit misstated. There's a typo there that calls out a lot in the West Coast Region that wasn't intended to be in there. The language for that objective, is goal 1 objective 4. And in the text part of the

document, the full text part of it on Page 11, you'll see that West Coast Region and Alaska, they are not called out there.

That's the language that we had intended, so I apologize for the confusion on that. I will say that the North-Pacific council submitted comments on the plan, and they also called us out echoing similar concerns that you just sent into about that, the bycatch. And so we've been having conversations with them over the last week or so to try and revive the language to, you know, address those concerns, so we're working on that right now.

I will also say that 50,000 square miles number was intended to be nationally reflective of the 38,000 square miles of protection that's already under consideration by the Mid-Atlantic council and some similar measures under consideration by the New England council. So, they're intended to be East Coast focused and we realized that there's cause for some confusion, so we're working on some alternative language.

(Julie Bonney): Okay because I mean obviously we've already closed 50,000 square miles in the North-Pacific, so based on this objective you've already met the mandate.

Woman: Okay. So I don't know whether MAFAC needs to follow up on that, or just leave it alone since there's others going to be commenting on it?

Heidi Lovett: What do you recommend (Julie)?

(Julie Morris): Personally, I like more comments that are kind of addressing the same issue, so maybe (Helen) and (Jennifer) could figure out how to kind of capsule what she just said, and maybe put, I don't know if that would be in the three bullets at the top, or specific to that particular category?

(Pam Yochem): This is (Pam Yochem). I was just looking at the comments. At the top of Page two, where there are general comments on goal 1, there's a paragraph that says objectives 3 and 4, strive for better protection of coral both shallow and deep sea. Do you think (Julie Bonney) that would be the appropriate?

It says in there the strategies under objective 3 are more realistic than the overall objectives, and perhaps also then objective 4 is that was the one that you thought was giving you the most heartburn. Would that be an appropriate? Insert a sentence or two, or?

(Julie Bonney): I do think that would be the place to put it.

(Julie Morris): And it seems like the thing you want to focus on (Julie Bonney) is that deep-sea corals are already being addressed through bycatch measures under fishery management plans.

(Julie Bonney): Exactly. And...

(Julie Morris): Okay. So is there any objection from the group, the MAFAC members listening in to adding that to this bullet point that is at the top of page two of our comments? Any objections? Do you need to see the specific language before it's finalized? Or, have we gotten enough? We're going to try to characterize the bycatch overlap concern that (Julie's) just voiced. Is that okay with everybody?

Hearing no objections, we'll move on then. Other comments, general comments to go on?

(Bob Rheault): So (Bob Rheault) here.

(Julie Morris): Yes.

(Bob Rheault): Can you hear me?

Heidi Lovett: Yes.

(Bob Rheault): Excellent. So, I've been struggling with the eel grass preservation for quite some time and shell fish permitting for aquaculture, and we've got quite a body of scientific literature that affords the concepts that there are ecosystem services associated with shell fish aquaculture that are similar in many regards.

And I've been pushing for habitat equivalency so that we don't have to mitigate if we are growing shellfish and eel grass comes and invades our lease site, or if we're doing shell fish aquaculture in an area where eel grass is down to very, very small densities.

But, we're seeing cases in some states where one rise ohm per square meter is enough to defeat a permit. And I just don't believe that the habitat value of one rise ohm per square meter is worth protecting when what you might be replacing it with has actually got a demonstrated habitat value of some significance.

So, I'm just struggling for some language that might work here. And I thought that if we could add the words promote activities that have been demonstrated to enhance the ecosystem services and habitat values such as shellfish culture, and the construction of artificial oyster reef, that this might sit well under goal number one, or perhaps under goal 3 where it's increase resilient.

(Julie Morris): Does anybody object or would like to discuss this suggestion from (Bob)?  
(Ted)?

(Ted Ames): This is (Ted). I have some concern partly because this has been a problem in muscle culture in Maine and the aqua-culturists have addressed the problem by introducing new methods for washing their product before it ships to market. And it has been quite successful. I think the goal of protecting eelgrass beds should be compatible with aquaculture.

You know, the extreme example that (Bob) mentioned I would tend to agree with him. But there is a happy medium there that needs to be addressed by local conditions.

(Bob Rheault): And I think that the proposed statement that I've suggested is not incompatible with the desire to protect, you know? Certain virgin eelgrass beds have tremendous habitat value. I'm not suggesting we rip them out and replace them with shellfish aquaculture, but I've got to say (John) in the Mid-Atlantic that said there was an eelgrass bed there eight years ago. You can't have an oyster farm. And if there's one rise ohm per square meter you're out of luck. So, it occurs to me that certainly that seems to be folly.

(Liz Hamilton): (Julie)? This is (Liz).

(Julie Morris): Yes (Liz)?

(Liz Hamilton): I know there are states where the state biologists are concerned, most concerned with restoring eel grass function, and the functionality that goes with that. And so, maybe an amendment to (Bob's) amendment might be to take off the example of an industry. And (Bob) what did you say something about alternative ecosystem functions?

And leave off the for example part of it because I don't know that we want to call out the ethical industry there, especially because we already know there's some tension in some of the states over where that balance is. But I understand that there are ecosystem services that are provided, so would that fit what you need without calling, you know, just end the sentence after the ecosystem services.

(Bob Rheault): Well my goal is to actually draw attention to that tension that you've highlighted and point out that there are habitat values and other ecosystem services associated with shellfish aquaculture that should be taken into account as mitigating factors when you're trying to confirm an analysis.

And while, you know, we love the ecosystem services associated with eelgrass, there are similar, in many cases documented superior aquaculture, I'm sorry, ecosystem services associated with shellfish aquaculture. So I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. And I think that there is a positive value that should be recognized by those in the Habitat Office. And I'm suggesting that this language might help.

(Mike Okoniewski): (Julie)? This is (Mike Okoniewski).

(Julie Morris): Yes (Mike)?

(Mike Okoniewski): I just like to say that I totally support what (Bob) said. And I sense a level of frustration in him that I experience myself watching us apply for permits. It may not be the same thing but nonetheless I think he's making some good, valid points and at least weighing the differential or the increased value of just, you know, oyster, whatever culture it is to see if there is an offset.

I mean it seems like if there's only one species of eel grass in a square meter and oysters have ten times the habitat potential, you at least want to weigh that in the balance. I think he's making an excellent point so thank you.

(Julie Morris): Thanks (Mike). Now, (Helen) and (Sean) it's my sense that the strategic plan does promote building oyster bars and reefs, especially in the Northern Gulf of Mexico? Am I correct with that?

(Helen Chabot): (Sean)? Do you want to take that one?

(Sean Corson): Yeah. Sure. This is (Sean Corson). So there are certainly oyster projects that are going on in the Gulf of Mexico all from the Chesapeake Bay. You know, to be honest with you though I think this is something of a different issue. And, you know, so trying to be sort of as impartial as I can I think probably if this is the cause of concern at the body, it's probably worth putting a comment in to address that.

This is really more related to permitting and aquaculture, and a valuation of the habitat tradeoff associated with, you know, permit proposals and less to do about large-scale restoration projects that are going on associated with oyster reefs.

(Julie Morris): Okay. So let's see we have proposed language from (Bob), (Mike) supports it, (Liz) suggested shortening it. I'm trying to get to a consensus here of those on the phone. Are we okay with the language that (Bob) proposed?

Man: Could you read it back for us please?

Heidi Lovett: Promote activities that have been demonstrated to enhance ecosystem services and Habitat values such as shellfish culture and the construction of artificial oyster reefs.

(Columbus Brown): This is (Columbus).

(Julie Morris): Yes.

(Columbus Brown): You might add to that artificial reefs for fish.

(Bob Rheault): Yeah I had it in there but I tried to shorten it.

(Julie Morris): Artificial oyster reefs and...

(Columbus Brown): Artificial fish and oyster reefs.

(Julie Morris): Right. Okay. Any objections to adding this to the general comments for goal 1? (Ted)? (Liz)? You okay?

(Pam Yochem): This is (Pam Yochem). I'm fine with this modified language.

(Julie Morris): Thank you (Pam). Any other comments before we move onto general comments on goal 2?

(Columbus Brown): Yeah. This is (Columbus). I think under the first bullet they should add other federal agencies or federal land managers because on the Gulf there's more land owned by the Department of Interior than anybody along the Coast. And then you have to deal with DoD military land, and I think that it's important to recognize that as separate from state and local government.

(Julie Morris): Okay, so in addition to state and local government, other federal entities is that what you said?

(Columbus Brown): Yeah other federal land managers would be good.

(Julie Morris): Any objection to that? Okay. Thank you. Any other comments for the section on general comments for goal 1?

(Columbus Brown): I had one other one, and that they should add to this section the fish and wildlife coordination act.

(Julie Morris): The same goal that we're talking about?

(Columbus Brown): Yeah.

(Julie Morris): Can you explain that?

(Columbus Brown): Okay, the fish and wildlife coordination act has been around a long time, and it is one of the acts that authorizes both NOAA fish and wildlife service and state fish and wildlife agencies to comment on development activities for core bridge premiere permits, a wide variety of other permit actions, and...

(Julie Morris): (Columbus)? Is this an example of a collaboration?

(Columbus Brown): Yeah.

(Julie Morris): Okay.

(Columbus Brown): Well yeah it's a collaboration and it's yeah, yeah I guess you would put in collaboration.

(Julie Morris): And so you want it to be added, you're suggesting we add it as an example of a government collaboration?

(Columbus Brown): Yes.

(Julie Morris): Any discussion or concerns about that from anybody else? Okay any other comments or suggestions for changes to our general comments on goal 1? Then, let's look at the general comments on goal 2, any suggested additions or changes to that, restore NOAA entrusted resources impacted by oil and other hazardous substance release? And, is it okay to go onto the general comments for goal 3?

(Terri): This is (Terri). I just saw a typo there. I think that we have NRDA is, but I think each of those natural resource damage assessments should be capped.

(Julie Morris): That's good. Thank you.

(Terri): That's my typo.

(Julie Morris): Good. Thank you. Anything else, general comments on goal 2? Okay, general comments on goal 3, and keep in mind we have specific comments on goal 3 as well coming up soon.

(Columbus Brown): Oh, wait a minute; I had one more at the end of goal 2, or goal 3.

(Julie Morris): Goal 3 or goal 2, we're on goal 2 right now.

(Columbus Brown): I'm sorry, goal 3.

(Julie Morris): Okay, moving onto goal 3. (Columbus)?

(Columbus Brown): Yes. It's on goal 3. I'm sorry.

(Julie Morris): What would you like to say?

(Columbus Brown): I think we failed to mention Sea Grant and collaboration with them.

(Julie Morris): Is this the same comment that, the same one that we were talking about on goal 1, or where do you want to put something?

(Columbus Brown): That'd be under goal 3.

(Terri): This is (Terri). I have a question. Are you talking about them consulting with Sea Grant?

(Columbus Brown): Yeah. Well, you know, Sea Grant's doing a lot of stuff, and I mean I think if NOAA fisheries were piggybacking on what Sea Grant's doing, they'd get a hell of a lot more bang for the buck.

(Julie Morris): Okay. I just don't know where exactly? Do you want to add another bullet about general comments on goal 3, (Columbus)? Is that what you want to do? Or, does it fit in somewhere, the structure that's already there?

(Columbus Brown): Ah...

(Julie Morris): Do you want to add other federal agencies including Sea Grant in the introductory sentence?

(Columbus Brown): Well, see they're not another federal agency. You know, there needs to be probably more collaboration within NOAA on some of these actions.

(Julie Morris): Well (Columbus) while you figure out where you'd like to put a comment on Sea Grant, I'll ask if there's any other comments on the general comments on goal 3.

(Columbus Brown): Okay.

(Julie Morris): Anybody? Are you happy with what we have here? Usually (Pam) pipes up and says I'm happy with what we have here at this point.

(Pam Yochem): This is (Pam). I'm happy with what we have here, but I'm going along with your hearing none.

(Julie Morris): Okay (Columbus) hearing none, great. Alright, then; we're going to move into the specific comments on goal 3. So, we're starting with objective 1, which has to do with targeted conservation approaches to building resiliency. And we have some opening comments and then comments on each of three strategies. Does anybody want to suggest any changes or discuss anything that's drafted here?

(Julie Bonney): Yeah, this is (Julie Bonney).

(Julie Morris): Mm-hm.

(Julie Bonney): So, I'm looking at the specific comments under goal 3.

(Julie Morris): Yep.

(Julie Bonney): And, I'm on strategy two...

(Julie Morris): Okay.

(Julie Bonney): ...the second bullet.

(Julie Morris): Okay.

(Julie Bonney): The regional fishery management council needs to review allocation on a schedule or adopt fishery management plans that incorporate frame working that allow in-season quota transfers. Personally, I think that's too specific. And I know there's a lot of discussion within the CCC and some of the councils to look at, and what's in the rec community as well in terms of what do you do about allocation, you know, across sectors.

And then, whether it's in a catch/share program or whatever. And at least in the North Pacific there has been a lot of discussion about it. We need to review allocations. We're not going to do anything but reviewing allocations.

That's what our meetings will be. So, I don't know how we, basically it's considering how to think about. We built allocations based on history, and we haven't really dealt with allocations based on present condition, right with composition at the Coast or whatever.

And so, basically it's coming up with a mechanism to look at allocations based on how stocks and conditions change versus just saying the councils will look at allocation and then are going to develop a framework.

So I guess my vision is you'd go to some kind of sensitivity approach, a management strategy evaluation; decide what stocks are vulnerable in terms

of distribution change, abundance changes and then decide how you address allocations for those species.

So I just don't know how we make this a little more process oriented versus just review allocations oriented. And I don't have a good suggestion on how to fix the language.

Heidi Lovett: Maybe...

(Julie Morris): Go ahead. Is this (Liz)?

Heidi Lovett: No, this is Heidi. I'm going to interject a comment. I would suggest that that whole topic might be a good topic for the Ad Hoc Working Group to work on, related to coastal resiliency. But I'm not sure if it's applicable to the Habitat strategy. It's probably more applicable to other efforts that our agency undertakes, obviously. But it may not fit in this particular case. So it's just something to consider.

(Mike Okoniewski): This is (Mike Okoniewski).

(Julie Morris): Yes, (Mike).

(Mike Okoniewski): We've had the similar conversations to what (Julie) was talking in the Pacific Council as well. And I think that Heidi make a good point.

Woman: My sense is that we don't really - we could just substitute for review allocation. We could substitute review harvest and management on the schedule.

I mean what we're really getting at is everything, not just allocation, as we get information about changing - climate change effects on fishery stocks, right. It seems like reviewing allocation is too narrow of a suggestion. It seems like we should be reviewing the whole harvest management strategy.

(Liz Hamilton): (Julie), this is (Liz). I think that makes more sense and it broadens it out to cover the sorts of things we're trying to - I mean that was one of my issues with this document is that I was trying to get my brain around, are we talking about economic resiliency, or are we talking about habitat resiliency?

And when you bring climate change into it and use that as the lens, then what you mentioned, fits better and I think it also fits with what (Ted) was trying to get at during our discussion.

(Mike Okoniewski): This is...

(Julie Morris): Go ahead.

(Mike Okoniewski): This is (Mike O.) again. I agree about the point of talking about management systems in general. I think there's one thing that maybe it will come up later. I thought it came up in the conversation when we did the face-to-face, is the flexibility of the framework - the management framework is important I think, in general.

But also if you're going to have climate change, having impact as to what species you may be allowed to harvest or what not. Having inflexible systems is hard to get around when you're attempting to get a better outcome.

So I think the degree of flexibility is - now maybe it goes somewhere else in this whole document, but I think it's hugely important to the success of any

fishery, especially if there's going to be rapid change coming. So - if that makes sense.

(Julie Morris): Okay, it does. It makes - it does. So are people agreeable to switching from review allocation to review management systems and then adding a little bit about how important management flexibility is to this bullet point? Any objection to that?

(Liz Hamilton): May I - I just want to add one thing. This is (Liz) again, that (Julie Bonney) brought up about framework and process are real important. So I don't know if we can capture some of that as well.

(Julie Morris): It currently says in corporate frameworking, and you want to emphasize flexibility with process. Is that what you - is that your point (Liz)?

(Liz Hamilton): Well yes. I mean and it sounds like the CCC is already talking about this, so it has, do you incorporate this flexibility into management with the Council?

(Julie Morris): Okay, so I have notes that we are going to emphasize flexibility in process and management. We're going to substitute management systems for the allocation comment. Is that - are people comfortable with that?

Man: Yes.

Woman: Yes.

Man: Yes.

(Julie Morris): Anybody uncomfortable with that? Okay, then let's move on to any comments on Strategy 3 under Objective 1.

Man: (Julie), I have a stupid wordsmithing comment. I don't believe adaption is a word on Strategy 2 heading or Strategy 3. I think it's adaptation.

(Julie Morris): Yes, thank you.

Woman: Typo. Thanks for catching that.

(Julie Morris): Anything else on Strategy 3 for Goal 1? Okay...

(Terri): It's also there, incorrectly.

(Julie Morris): What did you say (Terri)?

(Terri): It's also spelled incorrectly there too. Adaptation is also, in Strategy 2 in the header.

(Julie Morris): Thank you. Okay. All right, are we ready to talk about Objective 3 - Implement Climate...

((Crosstalk))

(Julie Morris): I'm sorry, Objective 2, it's on a couple of introductory bullets and comment on Strategy 1, 2, 3 and 4. Any suggested changes or things you want to discuss for that section?

(Terri): I see another typo.

(Julie Morris): Okay, where?

(Terri): This is (Terri). It's in the first bullet under the objectives. And it should be it, I believe - it seems rather than, is.

(Julie Morris): Is? Anything else have to do with habitat focus areas? Okay, so can we move on to Objective 3 under Goal 3?

(Ted Ames): Objective - Objective 2 under Goal 3 I have some minor concerns in the Gulf of Maine where we're located. This is (Ted Ames).

The productivity of smaller post fishing communities is entirely dependent on the first 15 or 20 miles from shore. And it that's considered offshore fisheries, it would be a surprise to us all.

The bottom line is, the dilemma that's in the northern half of the Gulf of Maine is that the near-shore fisheries have collapsed for fin fish species and is not tightly tied to the offshore fisheries.

So the last phrase, smaller fishing communities are particularly dependent on healthy coastal and (unintelligible) habitat to maintain the productivity of the near-shore fishery.

And it's true that those near-shore habitats determine the productivity of the offshore. But that's not clear there. And I think it should - offshore should either be removed or it should - we should make some kind of a connection to the productivity of the inshore.

We have a dozen species -- commercial species -- that are part of an offshore fishery that are entirely dependent on their productivity in the inshore waters or near-shore waters that if - the bullet doesn't quite address those concerns.

(Julie Morris): Okay, so I'm having trouble seeing exactly where you are comment on (Ted). Is this Objective 2? Which strategy is it?

(Ted Ames): If you were to change that to, to maintain the productivity of near-shore and offshore stock, it would be clearer.

Heidi Lovett: (Ted), excuse me. I believe (Ted) -- this is Heidi -- believe (Ted) is reading the second bullet under general comments for Goal 3 which is on Page 2.

So as I understand it (Ted), you are asking that how it reads now - smaller fishing communities are particularly dependent on healthy coastal and near-shore habitats, to maintain the productivity of - you want to have it read, nearshore and offshore stock. That's what your suggestion is?

(Ted Ames): Yes.

Heidi Lovett: Okay, thank you.

(Julie Morris): Thank you Heidi. Thank you (Ted). Any objections to that? We're substituting stock for fisheries. Is that what we're doing?

(Ted Ames): Basically, yes.

Heidi Lovett: And we're taking out the word, their - the possessive, their.

(Julie Morris): Okay, thank you. Any objection to that? Does everybody understand it? Okay, then back to Objective 2, Specific Comments. It didn't seem like we had any suggested changes there.

And then Objective 4 - I'm sorry, Objective 3 under Goal 3, any comments on that?

All right, and then any comments on the cross-cutting strategies or - Goal 4, first, Staff Development or cross-cutting strategies?

Let's see, (Sue) can you please allow the participants access to ask any questions that they might have at this point?

(Bob Rheault): (Julie), I have a question. (Bob Rheault) here.

(Julie Morris): Yes, (Bob).

(Bob Rheault): Are we going to address the table of goals and objectives and strategies at all?

(Julie Morris): We don't currently have comments specifically on the tables in the Strategic Habitat Plan on Pages 6 and 7. Is that what you're asking?

(Bob Rheault): Okay. I would - yews, I was looking at Page 8.

(Julie Morris): Yes, Page 8, right.

(Bob Rheault): Specifically again pertaining to my (unintelligible) submerged aquatic vegetation manage for no net losses SAV, I would like to suggest that we want to manage for no net loss of habitat value, and that would be a much better target.

(Julie Morris): Okay.

(Bob Rheault): O6 under Trust Resources; the last one.

(Julie Morris): I see it. So what does anybody else - any other comments about that? This is similar to a discussion we had earlier about Oyster Reef, right?

(Bob Rheault): Exactly. It's the same topic; different location. But managing for no net loss of eelgrass is quite different than managing for no net loss of habitat value when it comes to writing a permit. I think we can have our cake it too, is the point that I'm trying to make.

(Julie Morris): Right. I'm trying to find out if anybody else on the call has concerns about commenting on that?

Woman: I'm get confused where we're at. We're under Trust Resource Objectives?

(Julie Morris): If you go back to the link for the actual plan and you go to Page 8, there's a table on Page 8 and the top part of it deals with Trust Resources, and the bottom of it deals with (unintelligible). So it's a table of goals, objectives, and strategies. And (Bob) would like us to comment regarding...

(Bob Rheault): O6.

(Julie Morris): One of those, O6 that would...

Woman: Okay.

(Julie Morris): I don't know if he wanted to substitute no net loss of habitat value, or have it be an, or no net loss of submerged aquatic vegetation or, habitat value.

(Bob Rheault): Or, I'll accept or, if you just want some recognition, there's another way to skin this cat. It preserves the habitat while allowing us to also, you know, produce sustainable seafood.

(Julie Morris): Okay, any concerns about that.

(Mike Okoniewski): No, but this is (Mike O.). The one thing that really hits me hard, I guess, is it said, no net loss means virtually nothing. So I think (Bob)'s point is well taken. Hopefully it doesn't cause any consternation with anybody else. But the - when we say no net loss, that mean one blade of grass is out of place or something?

Woman: No (Mike), in Florida what no net loss means is that you destroy a bunch of stuff but you recreate - you intentionally recreate similar or the same habitat in order to balance that loss.

(Ted Ames): This is (Ted Ames). I agree, it's basically the way I read it too which is what (Bob) was advocating earlier. So it seems like using the net loss creates an opportunity for the thought of applications that (Bob) was talking about.

(Bob Rheault): If we're all intellectually, you know, being honest, we really don't care about the eelgrass except for the fact that it's providing these ecosystem services. And if we can retain the ecosystem services in another way, then I think that that should allow us to open our minds to other uses of the marine environment.

I'm not suggesting that we abandon habitat as something that's valuable. I'm suggesting no net loss of eelgrass is a very challenging thing to work with. But no net loss of habitat is something that allows us to consider other uses.

((Crosstalk))

(Columbus Brown): This is (Columbus). The whole concept of no net loss is something that was developed relative to - let's say someone wants to make you do a permit or the Corps of Engineers plans to build a project in a particular area.

So the concept was that through - if they permit this and they destroy five acres of wetlands that supported this kind of fishery, wildlife or whatever, that it be replaced with (unintelligible) habitat in exchange for that.

So then they would run what they call the habitat treatability models to determine the value of what was being taken. And so you might lose five acres, but you might have to pick up 20 acres to achieve that function.

Woman: Right.

(Columbus Brown): So that what that's all about.

Woman: This is - I like (Julie)'s suggested modification of putting the, or. Leaving the vegetation but adding the, or. And it sounded like (Bob) was okay with that too.

So that it's clear that you wouldn't - if you lost eelgrass here, you wouldn't necessarily have to put eelgrass there. You could put something else there that had the same value or ecosystem function or habitat value.

Man: Works for me.

(Julie Morris): Anybody object to including this comment in our Comment Letter from ASEC? Okay, then I think we're ready for any questions or comments from the participants.

Coordinator: Participant lines are open.

(Julie Morris): Thank you. Welcome. Are any of the participants would like to make any comments or questions to us at this point? Okay, well then I think can close.

(Columbus Brown): Hey (Julie)?

(Julie Morris): Yes.

(Columbus Brown): You had me working on something?

(Julie Morris): I did.

(Columbus Brown): Yes. And what I - I think if you'd go back to the specific comments under goal number 3, you could probably in something to the effect, the plan should identify how Sea Grants - how grants - I'm sorry. The plan should identify how grants and educational materials by Sea Grant will be used to address methods for increasing the resilience for coastal communities.

(Julie Morris): Could you say that one more time so both Heidi and I can get the words.

(Columbus Brown): Okay, the plan should identify how grants and educational materials by Seat Grant will be used to address methods for increasing resilience for coastal communities.

(Julie Morris): Any comments from other committee members about that addition? Any opposition to adding that to our comments? Okay.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Could you...

(Terri): This is (Terri). Maybe could we add, not just Sea Grants but other similar organizations or other similar...

(Columbus Brown): Other (unintelligible) NOAA?

(Terri): Just the broadness as well, not leave it just Sea Grants. This is just an idea.

(Columbus Brown): Yes.

Heidi Lovett: This is Heidi. (Columbus), could you read it just one more time. I think I got most of it.

(Columbus Brown): Okay, the plan should identify how grants and educational materials by Sea Grant will be used to address methods for increasing resilience for coastal communities.

(Julie Morris): So we're going to add, is it, other federal agencies (Terri), or other educational entities?

(Terri): Well I think maybe potentially after the word Sea Grants, you say, and other similar, either organizations or institutions or bodies or some word.

(Julie Morris): Okay, great. Institutions - institutions works. Okay then I'm going to review the modifications that I think we've agreed on. And then we'll have - I'll ask for a motion to accept the draft documents with these modifications.

And some of them are sort of general, and others of them are specific. So starting at the top, general comments on the Habitat Enterprise Strategic Plan. In the first bullet we're going to try to add an example that illustrates the partnership.

Then moving on to the general comments on Goal 1, we're going to include other federal Land Managed (unintelligible), along with state and local government collaborations.

And then on the top of Page 2 where we talk about general comments on the Objectives 3 and 4 about corals, we're going to add something about how (unintelligible) of deep sea corals is already managed through Fishery management Plans. And that we may need to - may not need - that they're sort of a conflict there that needs to be - that we need to be sensitive to.

I'm not sure I got the language on that right, (Morris). (Julie Bonney), is that okay. Okay, not hearing anything from (Julie Bonney), and then we're also adding to that section, the language that (Bob) is proposing that talks about promoting activities that have been demonstrated to enhance ecosystem services. Including artificial oyster reefs and artificial fish reefs.

We're correcting some typos on how NERTA is spelled. We're substituting stock for fisheries on the general comments on Goal 3. We're adding a bullet under specific comments, Goal 3, Objective 1 that deals with the outreach and educational materials that will support resiliency by Sea Grant and other institutions.

We're substituting management systems for allocation - review of allocation, and emphasizing flexibility and process under Strategy 2 for Objective 1. And I think that's it. Did we miss anything?

Woman: there were a couple of typos?

(Julie Morris): Yes, the typos for sure.

Woman: Strategy 2, misspelled word. Strategy 3, and then the word, it.

(Julie Morris): Right.

Heidi Lovett: I have those.

(Julie Morris): Thank you Heidi. So can - would someone like to move that we approve the amended draft comments?

(Bob Rheault): So moved, (Bob Rheault).

(Julie Morris): Moved by (Bob). Seconded by...

(Julie Bonney): (Julie Bonney).

(Julie Morris): Thank you (Julie Bonney). Any further discussion? All that's in favor say, aye.

Woman: Aye.

Man: Aye.

Man: Aye.

(Julie Morris): All those opposed, like sign. Any abstentions? Okay, so we can show that all voters in favor.

We also had a draft cover letter. Were there any comments or suggestions about that? A draft transmittal memo? If there aren't any comments about the transmittal memo, do we need to vote on that (Jennifer) and Heidi?

Heidi Lovett: I don't believe so. Normally it's crafted, these transmittal memos are crafted based on that language that you're submitting in the attachment. So I think it captures it and its broad enough.

(Julie Morris): Okay, is there any other business for this MAFAC meeting?

Heidi Lovett: Yes.

(Julie Morris): Go ahead.

Heidi Lovett: This is Heidi. We'd like to have everybody put on their calendars our tentative date of April 25, 26, and 27 for your next in-person meeting. And we are investigating having that meeting in Portland, Oregon, which was...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Yay.

Man: Now you guys have to realize, that's my birthday.

Woman: Great, which day?

Man: Mine is the 25th and my wife's is on the 27th.

Heidi Lovett: Well maybe she'll have to join in Portland.

Woman: Yes.

Heidi Lovett: Secondly, we wanted to give you a heads up that the announcement of the new MAFAC members is fairly imminent, and may be noticed on your Web page by tomorrow. So check it out, keep your eyes open, and you'll hear who your new colleagues are going to be.

Woman: We'll likely send out a note to all MAFAC members letting them know of the announcement. But we're working through the rollout strategy here.

(Julie Morris): Great, thank you. Anything else?

Man: I like the idea of Portland.

Man: Here, here.

Woman: I still have to get it approved, but that is what we're shooting for.

Man: Okay, now the 25th is on a Monday, right.

Heidi Lovett: It is. So in this case, because we are shooting for a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday meeting, to allow NOAA leadership to return here to Silver Springs for a different meeting of a different SACA group that they attend, that's Thursday and Friday. So we've shifted it by a day.

Man: Okay.

Heidi Lovett: Purposefully.

Woman: That allows folks to get in and fish over the weekend or...

Man: The Columbia River spring salmon will be going strong then I think.

Woman: Well, I don't know if the Columbia will be open, but maybe by then the Willamette will be doing really well.

Man: April 12 I think (unintelligible) shut down.

Man: So that's after, okay. That's right.

Heidi Lovett: Okay. And I just have one request. (Columbus) since you had typed out or written out your comment, and I want to make sure we do capture it correctly, if you could email that to me, I'll make sure it's inserted properly.

(Columbus Brown): Okay.

Heidi Lovett: Thank you. And I have, obviously (Bob), already inserted in a draft - I have a redline version gong here.

(Bob Rheault): Okay, great.

(Julie Morris): Okay, well I want to thank (Helen) and (Sean) for joining us from the Habitat Team. And I want to thank (Terri) and (Ted) and Heidi and (Liz) who all contributed to the draft comments.

I want to thank all of you for being prepared for the meeting and making some great suggestions. And another task well done by MAFAC. Thank you everybody and look forward to the next time we talk.

Heidi Lovett: Great.

Woman: Thank you.

Man: Thank you.

Woman: Thank you.

Man: Thanks.

Woman: By everybody.

Woman: Bye-bye. Have a wonderful rest of your day.

Woman: Yes, I'm only half done. Bye.

Woman: Suppertime here. Bye-bye.

END