

**MAFAC Commerce Subcommittee Meeting
DRAFT Work Plan - 2018-2019**

(v. 2018.08.28)

GOAL

Build consumer confidence and support for U.S. seafood. Develop recommendations for NOAA as appropriate, to further this goal.¹

Background

Every few months, one group or another launches charges against the seafood industry about false information, poor labeling, and misconceptions in general on seafood safety. The public is rightfully confused.

MAFAC has unique opportunity to advise NOAA Fisheries on how to set the record straight. Other groups like Seafood Watch, National Fisheries Institute (NFI), or Sea to Table have their particular position or perspective. However, MAFAC has Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), educators, fishermen, aquaculture specialists, processors, retailers, restaurateurs -- we are a great umbrella group. Theoretically, MAFAC members check their special interests at the door to come together to work as a common group. MAFAC can help NOAA Fisheries elevate conversations about U.S. seafood to better inform the public.

The U.S. has developed the gold standard when it comes to fisheries management. This message should be in the forefront of consumers, retailers, partners and the media. Other initial goals of this effort are to determine:

- How do we help promote U.S. caught fish in the marketplace?
- How do we ensure accurate information gets to consumers to counter misinformation in the media?
- How do we promote and encourage *FishWatch* information as the common narrative or the trusted source that multiple entities can use and rely?

Initial Action for Subcommittee

- Determine which topic (or couple of topics) listed below would benefit from a panel presentation at the November 2018 meeting. Presentation would be to the full MAFAC, and panelists can be invited to participate at a Commerce Subcommittee meeting to continue the discussion and share their viewpoints on how to promote confidence and support for U.S. seafood (this includes farmed and wild caught). MAFAC meetings are public so this would be an opportunity to hear from the public as well.
 - Identify MAFAC members to assist staff in organizing the panel.
 - Identify and invite industry members to participate.

¹ Note: In taking on this task, remember that MAFAC's role is advisory. NOAA resources to implement any recommendations are limited, so suggestions of public private partnerships or other funding sources are helpful. Each group should also identify measurable outcomes of recommendations.

- Determine the best format for a productive discussion.

Task Groups

1. Promoting U.S. Fisheries Campaign: The goal of this working group is to identify recommendations that could be incorporated into NOAA Fisheries “Seafood Campaign” to elevate NOAA Fisheries as the country’s authority on fisheries. *FishWatch* has the tag line “U.S. Seafood Facts: The Nation’s Database on Sustainable Seafood,” but the public may not recognize NOAA as the authoritative place for this information. In addition, this group will identify ways to improve and expand partnerships with large industry groups and to promote the credibility of U.S. seafood as sustainably managed and the “gold standard” internationally.

MAFAC Members: *Megan Davis (lead), Mike Okoniewski, Roger Berkowitz, Sebastian Belle*

NOAA Fisheries Advisor: *Laurel Bryant, Karen Abrams, Heidi Lovett*

Timeline: *over a period of 3 months for Action (a) and over a period of 6 months for Actions (b and c)*

Actions:

- a. *NOAA’s Weather Service and their line “NOAA weather-ready nation by providing better information for better decisions to save lives and livelihoods” is a good example that is a highly visible and a known place to go for accurate weather information.*
 - i. *Investigate how NOAA Weather built their campaign*
 - ii. *What lessons learned can be shared?*
 - iii. *Do they target different user groups differently?*
- b. *Identify potential groups for partnerships that can further amplify NOAA’s messages.*
 - i. *Connect with Food Marketing Institute (FMI) (retailers), National Restaurant Association (NRA), grocery chains, James Beard Chefs, industry members, and others for input on how to promote confidence and support for NOAA as the leading expert in US seafood.*
 - ii. *Recommend key content and outreach initiatives by collaborating with MREP and large restaurant groups around training for servers, retailers, and managers.*
- c. *Connect with potential university partners with food, nutrition, or fisheries programs such as Harvard and Cornell to partner and help develop and compile statistics and facts along with recommendations on:*
 - i. *Nutritional comparisons of seafood with other protein groups. (Seafood is the most environmentally least impactful protein on the planet and we need to produce more of it.)*
 - ii. *Health, job, and environmental benefits of buying seafood produced in the U.S.*

Metric for success *(how to track we are moving the needle): NOAA plans to continue*

to utilize a number of measurements, including web analytics and visits, how many third parties use the content, amplify it, and/or sign up to use the FishWatch branding on their web site and materials.

- 2. Media & Mass Communications:** The goal of this working group is to identify ways to change the traditional and social media perception and reporting on U.S. Seafood. How can we add more storytelling on fishing or aquaculture practices? Positive stories on sustainability are needed since a large segment of the population still views any wild harvest as a negative occurrence. NOAA's campaign proposes to produce new content in 2019-2020, and to continue to pursue seafood and culinary media, including Cooking Lite, Bon Appetite, and similar outlets. MAFAC could help identify some content and narrative about U.S. seafood and provide leads on stories on people working in fishing, vessels, aquaculture, harvesting, etc. Positive storytelling around sustainable fishing and aquaculture will help counter negative stories, such as those on "seafood fraud" which only confuse consumers. This content is an opportunity to promote seafood and correct misperceptions.

MAFAC Members: *Matt Upton, Peter Moore, Roger Berkowitz, and Rasela Feliciano*

NOAA Fisheries Advisor: *John Ewald and Heather Sagar*

Timeline: *TBD consider breaking the timeline into phases each a few months long 1) collect content 2) review and edit as necessary 3) work into existing NMFS outlets*

Actions:

- a. Develop and recommend content for NOAA's communications platforms to include more information on seafood, fishing, vessels, aquaculture, how the activity is sustainable, etc.*
- b. Review and recommend how this information could be used for existing media outlets, traditional and new sources like social media (i.e. Instagram).*
- c. Enlarge the context of discussion to include topics such as successful rebuilding plans, conservative harvest strategy, avoidance of sensitive habitat areas, and other programs designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of U.S. fishery and fish stocks. Recommend how to get these messages across in easy to understand language or graphics.*
- d. Identify myths and data needed to dispel them. (Laurel noted, much of this is online, but pushing them as refreshed and focused items under a "FishWatch Friday" component or something similar, will provide the opportunity to push these issues again.)*
- e. Consider pitching stories to food bloggers, seafood or fisheries writers, identify photographers (<http://www.coreyfishes.com/>), etc.*
- f. Identify myths and data needed to dispel them. For example: myth vs. data.*
- g. Consider reaching out to COMPASS to sponsor a "pitch pit" on seafood topics or other trainings to improve messaging.*
- h. Consider making recommendations regarding how to use limited resources.*
- i. Identify potential groups for partnerships that can further amplify NOAA messages.*
- j. Create a contest for photo or video content to be submitted by stakeholders*

Metric for success (how to track we are moving the needle): Create a goal (number) for fisheries/aquaculture posts from NOAA that involve food, evaluate content created for social reach, set goals for increasing the number of followers.

- 3. FishWatch and Logo Use:** The goal of this working group is to expand the reach of *FishWatch* to be the reliable source for seafood information for consumers and others. In promoting *FishWatch* we can improve consumer perception/awareness of U.S. seafood as a responsible choice. Increased visits to go to the webpage should build consumer confidence and help endorse good practices. The *FishWatch* logo was approved for use on external web pages. Staff are investigating how groups can use the *FishWatch* logo. NOTE: There is a fine line - NOAA cannot endorse any particular company.

MAFAC Members: Stefanie Moreland (lead), Roger Berkowitz, Jim Parsons, Terri Beideman (?)

NOAA Fisheries Advisors: Laurel Bryant, Karen Abrams, and Heidi Lovett

Timeline: TBD

Actions:

- a. Determine who should be the target audience for *FishWatch* (retailers, culinary, aquariums, etc.) [..OR...Determine if information needs should be tailored differently for different target audiences.]
- b. Determine what companies can do to promote *FishWatch* (review pilot Port Agent effort).
- c. Recommend new ideas and or concepts for *FishWatch*.
- d. Determine how *FishWatch* can touch more consumers and retailers.
 - i. Research keyword searches that lead you to *FishWatch*. What words will drive people to *FishWatch* over other pages? Utilize resources that can help determine the best words or combination of words so that *FishWatch* gets on the top page of a Google search. (Note: Could be a metric)
- e. Evaluate the criteria to understand where the logo can be used most effectively.
 - i. Consider adding the website to the logo.
 - ii. Consider outreach/campaign materials for third party use (Quotes, graphics, fact sheets, etc.).
 - iii. Could it be used on trucks or by businesses that sell sustainably managed seafood (all kinds), etc.?
- f. Identify potential groups for partnerships that can further amplify NOAA messages.

Metric for success (how to track we are moving the needle): TBD