

Annotated Agenda
MAFAC Meeting – Silver Spring, Maryland
November 1-3, 2016

1. Title of Discussion: **Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management**

2. Presenter: Heather Sagar, Senior Policy Advisory, NOAA Fisheries

Ed Houde, PhD., Lenfest Task Force Member and retired professor, University of Maryland's Chesapeake Biological Laboratory

3. Objective/Purpose (Informational)

MAFAC has received presentations in the past regarding [ecosystem-based fisheries management](#) and the goal to maintain ecosystems in a healthy, productive, and resilient condition so they can provide the services humans want and need. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an update regarding the new NOAA Fisheries EBFM policy, progress on the draft road map to implement the policy, and complementary efforts by the Lenfest Ocean Program to develop a blueprint on how to advance Fishery Ecosystem Plans.

EBFM is an underdeveloped management tool that could be useful in the face of changing oceans, and in this way, connects with the overall resiliency work of MAFAC.

4. Background/Synopsis:

Resilient, productive ocean fisheries are critical to our economy and way of life. Managing these fisheries over the long-term means taking into account more than just one species at a time. It requires a holistic, science-based approach that looks at the entire ecosystem. This approach has been called Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management (EBFM). Rather than stock by stock, EBFM helps managers look at many factors simultaneously—multiple fisheries, predator-prey interactions, climate change, global markets—and address priorities strategically, in a way that conventional management cannot.

NOAA Fisheries has developed an agency-wide [EBFM policy](#), which outlines a set of principles to guide our actions and decisions over the long-term. It directs continued progress toward development and implementation of EBFM approaches. It also ensures our commitment to incorporate EBFM into the agency's resource management decisions.

NOAA also recently released an [EBFM draft "road map"](#) to guide implementation of the EBFM policy over the next five years. The road map outlines actions we can take now to further the policy's 6 guiding principles:

- Implement ecosystem-level planning
- Advance understanding of ecosystem processes
- Assess risks and vulnerabilities
- Explore trade-offs
- Incorporate ecosystem considerations into management advice
- Maintain ecosystem resilience and social well-being

Public comment was received on the draft road map, and this input is helping to shape the final road map.

In 2014, the **Lenfest Fishery Ecosystem Task Force** was convened by the University of Washington to provide guidance to managers on implementing EBFM. It was accompanied by an advisory panel consisting of past and present fishery management council members, scientists from the NOAA, and other management experts who provided guidance throughout the deliberations.

A key reason for the lack of EBFM implementation to date has been the lack of a structured process. This was recognized by the Lenfest Fishery Ecosystem Task Force, as well as NOAA scientists working on EBFM efforts. Thus, building effective Fishery Ecosystem Plans became a primary focus of the Task Force, and this focus was considered to be most helpful or complementary to the Agency's EBFM work.

The Task Force will present its blueprint for "next-generation FEPs," a five-step process for developing them, and a set of case studies that evaluate the feasibility of the process. A report of this work will be formally released on November 15th. The report will recommend using Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) to develop that process because they can facilitate EBFM by helping managers to:

- Establish goals, priorities, and measures of performance for the whole fishery system.
- Analyze system-level alternatives to directly address trade-offs.
- Focus not only on ecosystem sustainability, but also on social, economic, and cultural goals.

5. Action to be taken by MAFAC: No action

DRAFT