

EAST COAST CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO PLANNING INITIATIVE

Update for Council Coordination Committee
May 23, 2023



New England
Fishery Management Council

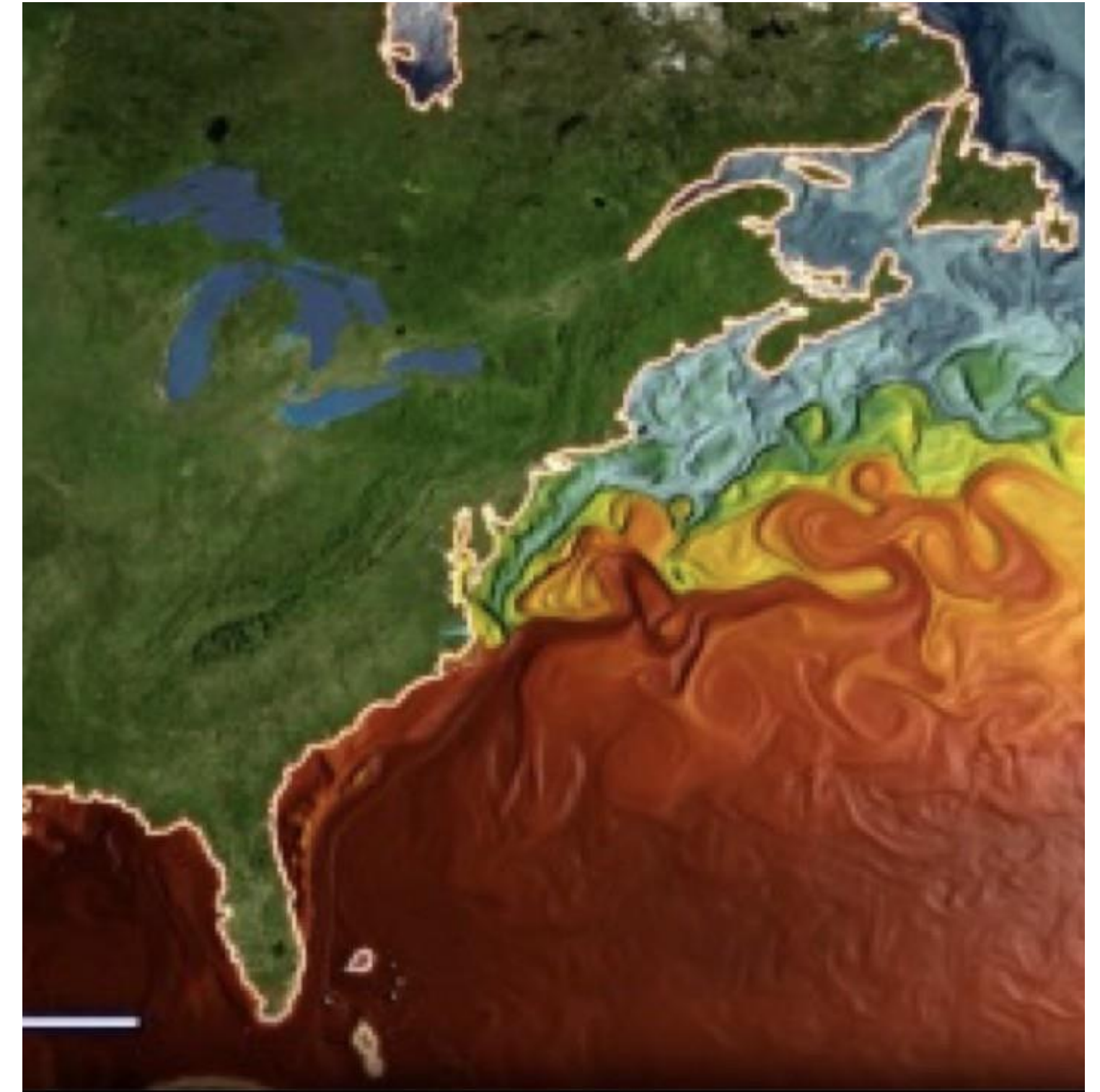


MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



Reminder of Initiative Objectives

1. Explore how **East Coast fishery governance and management issues** will be affected by climate driven change in fisheries, particularly changing stock availability and distributions.
1. **Advance a set of tools and processes** that provide flexible and robust fishery management strategies, which continue to promote fishery conservation and resilient fishing communities, and address uncertainty in an era of climate change.



Recap of Steps in this Multi-Year Initiative



June 2022 workshop: developed scenarios for East Coast Fisheries in 2042

Ocean Pioneers:

A 'wild west' of new ocean users, risk-taking fishery operators taking advantage of confusing, unpredictable but ultimately positive conditions.

Checks & Balance:

Where strong science combines with collaborative management to help mitigate and adapt to climate-driven changes in the ocean.

Unpredictable changes & conditions, low ability to assess

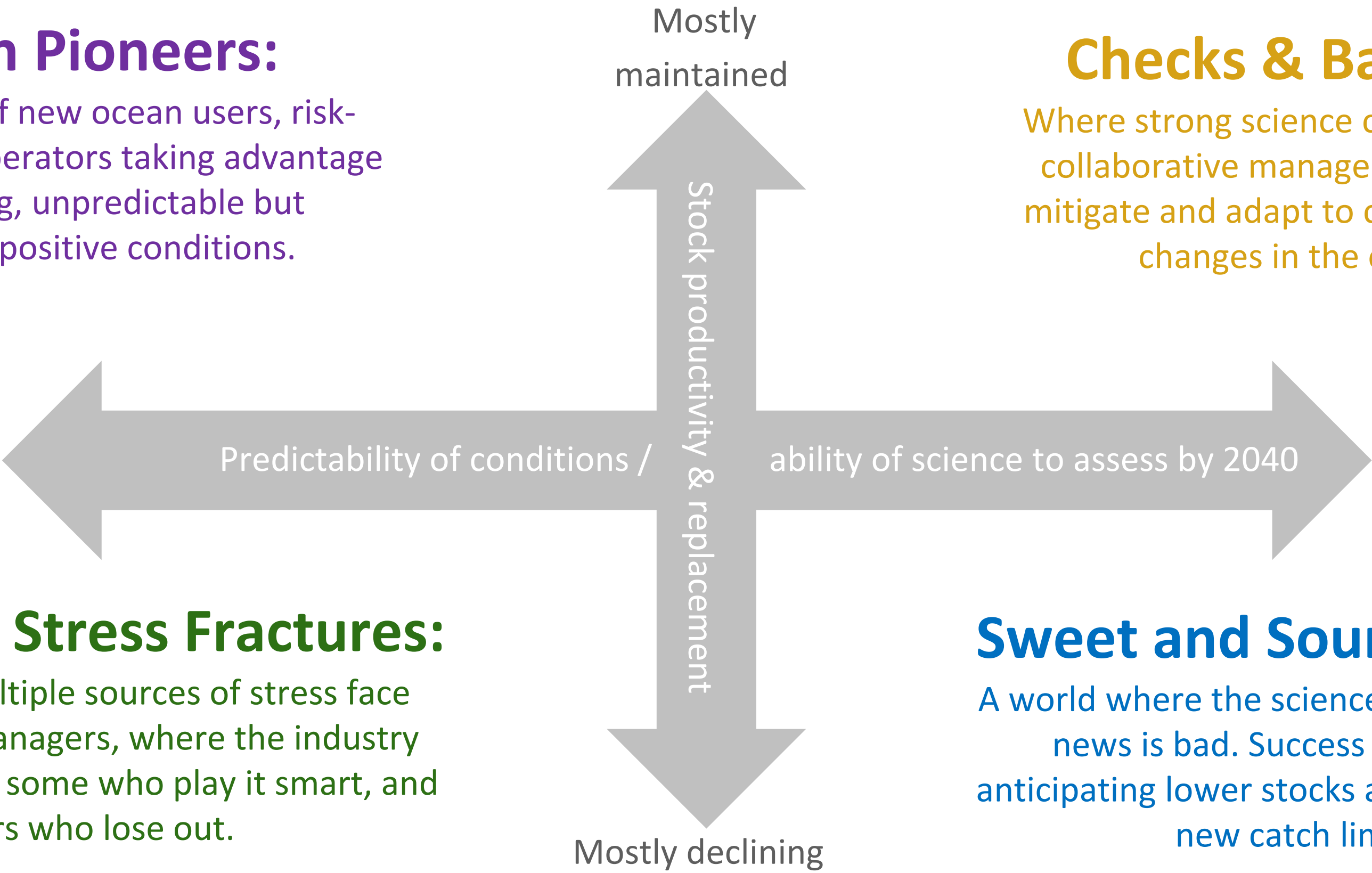
Predictable changes & conditions, high ability to assess

Compound Stress Fractures:

A world with multiple sources of stress face operators and managers, where the industry fractures between some who play it smart, and others who lose out.

Sweet and Sour Seafood:

A world where the science is good, but the news is bad. Success comes from anticipating lower stocks and preparing for new catch limits.



Application Phase: Fall 2022-Spring 2023

Use scenarios as a platform to discuss future fishery governance and management issues:

- How well would our current systems work if these new scenario conditions were to occur?
- What would need to change to better prepare us for these scenario possibilities?
- What are the tools and processes that need to be advanced now to ensure that fisheries are governed and managed effectively in an era of climate change?

Managers' Small
Group Meetings:
Generate Ideas

September/October 2022

Council & Commission
Meetings: Review &
Generate Ideas

November/December 2022

Summit Meeting:
Review & Prioritize
Possible Actions

February 15-16, 2023

Expanded NRCC
Meeting: Prioritize
Potential Actions

May 9, 2023

Three Key Themes identified by Councils/Commissions

Ocean Pioneers

Checks & Balance

Unpredictable changes & conditions, low ability to assess

2. Managing Under Uncertainty

1. Cross-Jurisdictional Governance

3. Data sources and partnerships

Predictable changes & conditions, high ability to assess

Compound Stress Fractures

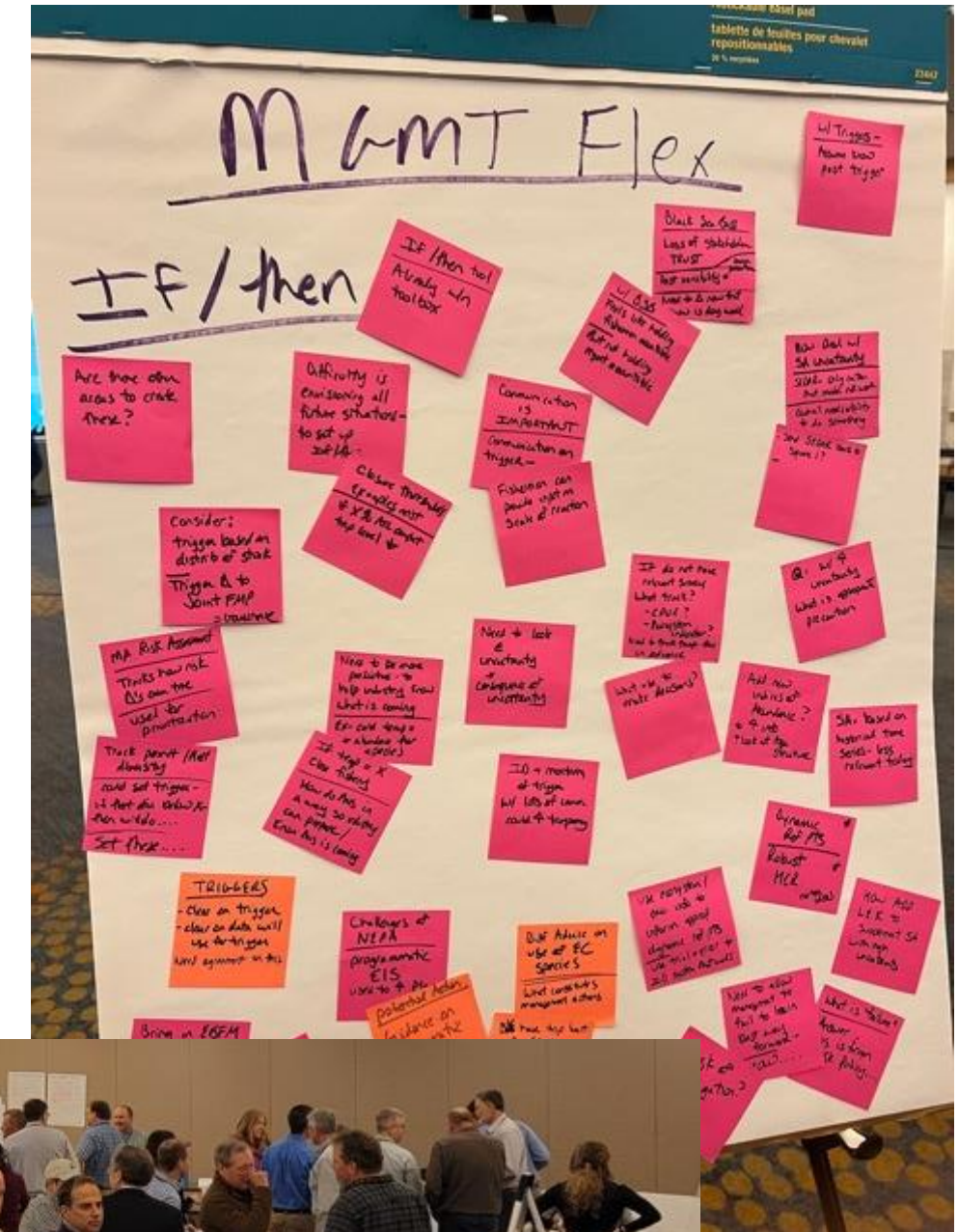
Sweet & Sour

February 2023 Summit Meeting Overview

Capstone meeting of East Coast Scenario Planning Process, held February 15-16, 2023 in Arlington, VA

Attended by over 50 fishery managers representing 3 East Coast Councils, ASMFC, and NOAA Fisheries

Summit goal: develop set of potential governance & management actions resulting from scenario-based exploration of the future



Summit Products

- Scenario Planning Core Team drafted 2 documents for expanded NRCC (Northeast Region Coordinating Council + South Atlantic representation) to consider at their **May 9 meeting**

Summit Report	Draft “Potential Action Menu”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Summary of summit proceedings, discussion themes, and outcomes● Describes list of key “potential actions” identified by summit participants, and results of a prioritization exercise● Appendices with additional discussion detail and all ideas raised by participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Expands on and clarifies potential actions raised at summit● Identifies possible next steps for these potential actions beyond what could be addressed at summit● Intended to serve as menu of options to help participating groups consider priorities

NRCC Meeting: May 9

- **From full list of potential actions in action menu, NRCC categorized:**
 - Near-term priorities
 - Medium-term priorities
 - Long-term priorities or non-priority but retained to revisit in the future
- **Reflects NRCC perspective;** meant to serve as non-binding guidance to inform priorities discussions for each management organization
 - Some potential actions will be taken on by individual groups while others will require collaboration or joint action
 - Each organization can refer to “menu” of potential actions when determining their priorities

NRCC also identified **General Process Recommendations**

1. Form a leadership-level “East Coast Climate Coordination Group”

- Meet annually to track progress on addressing scenario planning outcomes
- Promote prioritization of the potential actions by management bodies, estimate resources needed, support coordinated implementation

2. Form a “East Coast Climate Innovation Group”

- Staff level group to identify changes/developments, areas worthy of consideration, possible actions for consideration by Climate Coordination Group

3. Near-term and long-term communication objectives

- Communicate summit report and other initiative outcomes
- Re-engage previous stakeholder participants
- Develop tools/resources to allow other groups to apply this framework

NRCC Near-Term High Priority: Cross-Jurisdictional Governance

Reevaluate Council committee structure, use, and decision making

- Conduct a leadership planning exercise to further explore options for committee-based decision-making, committee structure, and committee use, building on ideas discussed at the Summit

Re-evaluate and potentially revise Advisory Panel representation

- Individual management bodies conduct evaluation of AP representation and appointment process, including how AP members are recruited and identified, with consideration of underrepresented and underserved groups. Consider how representation needs (by geographic area, stakeholder group, or other factors) may be evolving with changing conditions.

Develop joint management agreements with aim of clarifying roles and increasing efficiency

- Review joint plans and agreements between the MAFMC and Commission (summer flounder/scup/black sea bass/bluefish) to identify areas for improved efficacy and efficiency

Improve coordination across NOAA offices and regions

- GARFO and SERO review respective management action procedures and processing to highlight opportunities each employs which may benefit or expedite implementation of actions approved by the Councils

NRCC Near-Term High Priority: Managing Under Uncertainty

Consider broader ecosystem-level contextual information within the management process to help meet management goals

- NMFS presents findings of newly released Tech Memo looking at example ecosystem risk assessments to Councils and Commission
- Consider where state-only fishery information could enhance ecosystem-level evaluations
- Identify opportunities to use quantitative and qualitative ecosystem information to identify and avoid risks
- Share lessons learned

Streamlining FMP documentation and rulemaking

- Review use of programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) in for Council actions and encourage their use where appropriate.
- Identify areas where NEPA documents can be streamlined
- Develop a process for FMP actions that qualify for a Categorical Exclusions or SIRs under NEPA, including MSA document templates
- Work with NOAA General Counsel to establish consistent guidance on use of CEs, SIRS, rulemaking, public comment
- Identify process steps Council and NFMS staff can take to use MSA documents to satisfy NEPA requirements
- Consider alternative rulemaking approaches or action development approaches

NRCC Near-Term High Priority: Data Sources and Partnerships

Expand study fleet, include recreational fisheries, ensure data are used

- Identify places where study fleet data can be utilized in Council and Commission actions. Develop a plan to track and communicate use of study fleet data.
- Include Recreational Study Fleet Pilot in GARFO's Recreational Saltwater Fishing draft policy implementation plan
- Use industry to collect more environmental data; incentivize industry to participate.

Use survey mitigation around offshore wind

- Implement the survey mitigation strategy
- Explore opportunities to utilize smaller platforms such as commercial vessels for conducting surveys
- Develop plan for integrating multiple survey data streams into the assessment process

Improve the use of existing data

- Hold meetings to discuss what existing data streams and historical datasets could be better utilized to inform decision making, assessments, and monitoring. Do this across regions and management bodies.
- Have similar meetings at the PDT/FMAT level for more immediate FMP needs.

Progress Already Being Made on Some Actions

Cross-Jurisdictional Governance

- Initial strategizing and discussions re: options for reevaluating Committee representation and use

Managing Under Increased Uncertainty

- NEFMC prepared a [report](#) on Council risk policies which was shared with other Council EDs and staff
- NOAA [Tech Memo](#) on ecosystem risk assessments

Data Sources and Partnerships

- GARFO and NEFSC received funding for a Recreational Study Fleet Pilot Project
- Implementation of NOAA Fisheries and BOEM Federal Survey Mitigation Strategy in the Northeast

Next Steps

- Revise action plan → frame as a “menu” of potential actions; add prioritization and adjust next steps items based on NRCC input
- Councils/Commission to review summit outcomes and menu of potential actions later in 2023
- Formation of new groups and completion of communication objectives

For additional information and documents, see initiative webpage:
<https://www.mafmc.org/climate-change-scenario-planning>