

## Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD)

A CCC-sponsored function

The Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) Steering Committee for Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD)<sup>1</sup> was created by the CCC in 2019, and the inaugural CMOD workshop occurred in November 2022. The Steering Committee met by webconference on March 30, 2023, to review the final report and feedback from the first meeting, and provide recommendations for the CCC.

### CMOD Synthesis for CCC

#### **NEFMC successfully hosted the first CMOD training on Nov 15-16, 2022, in person, in Denver, CO.**

- Topic: New approaches to Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) and Ecosystem Approaches to Fishery Management (EAFM), with a skills focus on effective development of successful motions.
- Contract facilitators Kim Gordon and Katie Latanich Consulting prepared a summary report.
- Feedback from the meeting indicates that it was valuable, and met CCC goals for the CMOD program. There are also some useful suggestions for the future.
- The 2022 CMOD came in slightly underbudget, although it is likely that costs will increase for future meetings.

#### **The Steering Committee recommends that the CCC continue to support future CMOD trainings.**

- Continued NMFS funding support is critical. A new cost estimate should be prepared for the next meeting. Under the current funding model, NMFS pays for half the meeting cost, and the Councils share the remaining costs. All Councils and NMFS pay travel for their own attendees (4 per Council, 10 for NMFS).
- The Steering Committee recommends holding CMOD meetings every two years, alternating with the national SCS meetings. This would target the next CMOD meeting for 2025. A new host Council will be needed.
- If the CCC agrees that the program should continue, the Committee will meet before the October 2023 CCC meeting to provide recommendations for future topics and how to improve for the next meeting.

### Review of CMOD 2022 EBFM meeting

Kim Gordon (Resource Logic) and Katie Latanich (Katie Latanich Consulting), the facilitators for the 2022 inaugural CMOD meeting on “New approaches to Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) and Ecosystem Approaches to Fishery Management (EAFM)”, provided a briefing on their final report from the meeting. The report highlights key takeaways, a quick overview of the presentations, and includes a standalone section with recommendations on the skills focus, developing successful motions. The Committee approved the report, and recommends that Council staff prepare a fact sheet or flyer with the suggestions for developing effective motions, to be shared broadly with Council members.

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<sup>1</sup> NPFMC – Bill Tweit (chair), Diana Evans, David Witherell; NEFMC – Tom Nies; MAFMC – Mary Sabo; SAFMC – John Carmichael; CFMC – Miguel Rolon; GMFMC – Emily Muehlstein; PFMC – Bob Dooley; WPFMC – Kitty Simmonds; NMFS – Stephanie Hunt.

Kim and Katie also summarized responses to a feedback form from CMOD participants. In general, participants seemed to find the meeting valuable, highlighting the opportunity to share regional approaches, learn what others are doing, and interact with colleagues from other regions. There were also specific comments and suggestions relating to the meeting structure, level of EBFM material and discussion, the general size and balance of the group, and Denver as a meeting location. Committee members noted that the responses generally agreed with feedback they had received individually, and that the underlying goal of building relationships among Council members and staff across regions was a success. None of the comments indicated a need for radical change to how the CMOD program operates, although if a future meeting is sanctioned, there are useful suggestions for ways to improve.

The Committee also discussed whether the size of the meeting was appropriate, as that had been an issue of concern for the CCC during the initial development. In the end, there were 44 attendees due to some attrition for illness (the original plan was 4 persons per Council plus 10 NMFS staff plus speakers). From the perspective of the facilitators, this size worked out well; it was helpful that participants did not have to use mics to be heard in the room. The space could have accommodated up to approximately ten more persons without changing the workshop feel. Most Councils noted that they were able without difficulty to find a small group of Council members interested in attending, although one Council had trouble finding willing attendees and another had more interest than available spaces.

The Committee also discussed how information from the meeting was shared back with each Council at large. Pathways varied from short briefings during a meeting, to a tasklist of interesting ideas for the Council or Committee to pursue, to informal information sharing among members. The Committee is interested to facilitate Councils building on the ideas that were discussed at the meeting. During the CMOD meeting itself, there was some discussion among participants about whether an outcome of the CMOD meeting should be to suggest a collective direction for the CCC on EBFM work; the Steering Committee reiterated that as per the [Terms of Reference](#), no policy decisions or recommendations can be made by attendees at these trainings. If the program continues, however, the Committee is interested to align the selection of topics for CMOD with issues in which the CCC and Councils are actively interested, as a way to extend the reach of the educational opportunity that CMOD offers. Individual CMOD participants will also explore opportunities to participate in the NMFS fall EBFM seminar series about their collaborative EBFM work.

Tom Nies provided feedback on the funding model and the contracting process. As described in the [original CMOD proposal](#), the agency early on provided half of the estimated cost for organizing the CMOD meeting (\$65,000), and the remaining portion was provided equally by the individual Councils. All Councils and NMFS paid travel for their own attendees. The meeting came in slightly underbudget, primarily due to the fact that NEFMC anticipated paying for external speakers but in fact all the presentations came from participants. Tom noted that organizing eight contracts among the different Councils was awkward, but as Councils cannot share money with each other, there does not appear to be a better model.

Both Tom and the facilitators cautioned that **the CCC and NMFS should anticipate costs increasing for a future CMOD meeting**. Hotel meeting space and travel are more expensive, and if the meeting location changes to somewhere more desirable that would also affect the cost. Additionally, to achieve a similar result, the facilitator budget should also be increased, as the actual time needed to prepare for the meeting exceeded the hours in the contract. This may also have been affected by the breadth of the EBFM topic, and the background work needed to frame a set of productive discussion areas. The facilitators used a two-part scoping process by first reaching out to identify key regional issues, and as a follow up, holding preparatory conversations with attendees and presenters.

## Next steps

**The Steering Committee recommends that the CCC continue the CMOD program.** Feedback from the meeting indicated that it was useful and successful for participants, and it achieved the [purposes](#) for which it was established: information sharing, training, and networking across Councils and with NMFS; and collective exploration of common issues and topics in a policy-neutral environment.

While the meeting remained within budget, **it is likely costs will increase in future**, both due to inflation in hotel and travel costs as well as a more realistic assessment of the preparation time needed from facilitators to ensure that the meeting is meaningful and relevant. **Continuing support from NMFS is critical for the CMOD program.** Under the existing funding model, NMFS paid in advance for half of the estimated cost of the 2022 CMOD meeting. If this model is continued, a new cost estimate should be prepared by the host Council for each upcoming meeting.

**If NMFS and the CCC agree to continue the CMOD program, the Steering Committee recommends that the next CMOD meeting be targeted for early 2025.** This would allow the CCC to alternate between years when national SSC meetings are planned (with SCS8 targeted for 2024), and those for holding CMOD meetings. A host Council for the next CMOD meeting would need to be identified.

**The Committee would then convene prior to the October CCC meeting for further planning.** The Committee would discuss recommendations for topics and skill trainings for a future CMOD, taking into consideration the current interests of the CCC, input from attendees at the first CMOD meeting, and potentially accessing previous Fisheries Forum topics that might again be relevant. The Committee will also consider in more depth the specific adjustments to the CMOD meeting that were suggested in participant or facilitator feedback, and provide recommendations for how to improve for the next meeting. If the CCC can decide on a host Council and topic at the October 2023 meeting, this would provide ~18 months of planning for the next CMOD meeting.