

2016 Fisheries Management Plan
Steering Committee / Subcommittees

Operational Charter

October 2015

1. Introduction

Comprehensive resource management planning was initiated in the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) in 1968 and has been continually refined and expanded over time. During the previous planning process the Department used a formal public participation process to develop management goals and objectives for each species or group of species. This process included convening a Public Working Group to represent public desires for the management of groups of species, and to develop much of the content contained with the plans.

In 2014-15, MDIFW undertook a review of its planning process, and determined that some adjustments would make the plans more responsive to public desires and more adaptable to emerging scientific information. In particular, recent advancements in the field of human dimensions science provide new opportunities to engage with the public more broadly during the development of management plans.

Over the next 12 months, MDIFW will collaborate with Maine citizens to develop a new Fisheries Management Plan. This Plan will outline the statewide Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for the Department's Fisheries Management Program, including content on individual fish species as well as larger issues such as angler access, management of invasive species, and the hatchery program. Rather than relying on members of a Public Working Group as the sole source of information on public perspectives towards angling and fisheries management, MDIFW has contracted with Responsive Management (Harrisburg, Virginia) to conduct a formal scientific survey of anglers, and to host regional public meetings and focus groups. A steering committee will provide guidance and advice to MDIFW during the development of the Plan. In addition, MDIFW may convene subcommittees to work on certain aspects of the Plan under the guidance of the steering committee.

2. Statement of Purpose: Maine's Fisheries Management Plan

Maine's Fisheries Management Plan will guide the MDIFW's efforts to manage fisheries resources across the state. The plan will embody the shared vision of MDIFW and the public. The plan will

- Describe Maine's inland fisheries resources, including habitat and current fishing opportunities
- Describe the structure and coordination of the MDIFW Fisheries and Hatchery Division
- Articulate clear goals, objectives, and strategies for statewide fisheries management programs and issues, including the hatchery system, fish health, aquatic invasive species, youth and family fishing, fishing and boating access, and fishing derbies and tournaments

- Identify statewide goals, objectives, and strategies for each of Maine’s primary coldwater fish species, warmwater fish species, and baitfish
- Identify challenges to meeting goals and objectives
- Outline a process to revise and update the Plan as new scientific and public survey information becomes available

3. Guiding Principles

As it develops the 2015 plan, MDIFW, the steering committee, and subcommittees will ensure that the Plan

- is built on a foundation of sound scientific principles and is feasible,
- recognizes that the public has a genuine stake in the plan – fisheries resources belong to the public and is held in the public trust,
- is developed in an open, transparent, and inclusive process that encourages and facilitates the involvement of the public

4. Operational Guidance for the Steering Committee (5.1) and Subcommittees (5.2)

Meetings: MDIFW recognizes that travel expenses can be significant. It will keep the number of meetings to the minimum required to develop the plan. Committee members will be notified of meetings at least 14 days in advance, unless there is mutual agreement to meet with shorter notice.

Mutual Respect and Trust: the strength of the steering committee and the subcommittees is the diverse knowledge and experience of their members. Committee members will base their work upon collective contributions and expect others to abide by the following:

- encourage participation by all members,
- avoid hidden agendas and to be open about potential conflicts of interests,
- ensure all committee members are respected and treated fairly, respect all contributions and ideas, and direct critiques at the idea not the person,
- avoid speaking while others are speaking, avoid side-bar conversations, wait until there is an appropriate time to provide your comment,
- keep to the topic,
- avoid creating distractions, and

- place cell phones on silent mode, and if receiving a call, minimize disruption to the group.

Decision-making: Decisions by the steering committee or subcommittees are advisory and represent recommendations to MDIFW. The steering committee and subcommittees provide advice, input, and guidance to MDIFW during the development of the plan. MDIFW and committee members will strive to be open-minded and creative. As differences arise, committee members will listen to other views and rationale. Committee members will make decisions based on the general “modified consensus” of those present (i.e., if a committee member disagrees with the rest of the group, he or she can nevertheless “live with” the decision and will not oppose the decision or stand in the way of moving it forward.)

If MDIFW decides not to accept a recommendation from the steering committee, it will provide an explanation for its decision.

Concurrence: Committee members agree to participate as specified in this charter.

Travel Expenses: Committee members are responsible for their travel expenses.

Acknowledgement: The 2016 Plan will acknowledge and recognize the contributions of participating committee members and their organizations.

5. Process Structure

5.1. Steering Committee

The steering committee will guide the development of the plan.

MDIFW assembled a steering committee from the ranks of conservation partners. Membership was by invitation. The committee may recommend additional members, but their participation must be approved by MDIFW. The committee is limited to no more than fifteen members, not including MDIFW staff that participate in the meetings.

MDIFW recognizes that members have obligations to their agency or organization. MDIFW will strive to minimize members’ time commitment; however, it is expected that those who agree to participate will endeavor to attend meetings. The committee may meet either in person or by conference call.

The steering committee

- serves as the sounding board for MDIFW on both overall process and initial plan components and drafts,
- reviews and provides input on draft goals, objectives, and strategies that are developed by MDIFW and the subcommittees,
- provides feedback to MDIFW on time-sensitive issues involving the development of the plan, and

- ensures that the process follows the charter’s statement of purpose (2.) and guiding principles (3.).

Members present during committee meetings or conference calls are encouraged to participate fully. Not all members may be able to attend and participate in all discussions. As decisions are made or conclusions reached, those not present agree to move forward as a team and not to retrace discussions or decisions.

Steering committee members will share tasks and responsibilities by

- volunteering for tasks, especially those for which they have special expertise or interests,
- providing information that can fill data gaps and advance ideas, and
- keeping current with the plan development, even if unable to attend all discussions.

5.2. Subcommittees

MDIFW, under the guidance of the steering committee, may elect to establish subcommittees to work on specific fisheries management issues. These subcommittees function under the guidance of MDIFW and the steering committee.

An MDIFW biologist will chair each subcommittee. Subcommittee chairs report to the steering committee. Chairs will ensure that steering committee members receive information about the activities of their subcommittee, such as minutes and copies of pertinent correspondence.

Subcommittee chairs are responsible for coordinating their meetings and conference calls.

The responsibilities of each species subcommittee may vary and will be determined by MDIFW and the steering committee. Possible tasks include but are not limited to:

- Identify management issues that should be addressed in the plan
- Provide input and feedback on draft public survey questions
- Solicit additional input and expertise on management issues as required
- Using expertise within the subcommittee, outside expertise as required, and the public survey information, develop draft goals and objectives for specific fisheries management issues or fish species
- Refine goals and objectives based on feedback from the steering committee
- Develop draft strategies to achieve the goals and objectives
- Refine strategies based on feedback from the steering committee
- Review and revise plan content related to the target issue, species, or group of species.

6. Evaluation

Previous sections of the charter guide the committees, and therefore, provide a basis to gauge success. The steering committee will evaluate periodically the progress of plan development and adherence to the

requirements of the charter. The steering committee will conduct the evaluation by a method that it deems appropriate. The steering committee will use the following attributes to evaluate success:

Participation: MDIFW staff and steering committee members are engaged in the plan update; they volunteer to assist with tasks, especially those for which they have special expertise or interest; they are proactive in providing information that fills data gaps and advances ideas; and they keep current with the planning process, even if they are unable to participate in all discussions.

Schedules: MDIFW staff and steering committee members develop new materials, provide existing resources, gather information, or complete other necessary tasks as requested and scheduled.

MDIFW provides regular updates to the steering committee and provides opportunities for broad participation by other organizations and citizens.

Subcommittees: Subcommittee chairs conduct meetings and accomplishes assigned tasks as scheduled, report to the committee, and ensures that the steering committee is fully informed of its activities.