

Annotated Agenda
MAFAC Meeting – Boston, MA
March 20-22, 2017

1. Title of Discussion: **Mitigation Issues and Policy**

2. Presenters: Susan-Marie Stedman
 NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation

3. Objective/Purpose (Informational and Action)

The purpose is to provide information and background about a new Mitigation Policy being the scope of issues of interest to stakeholders. MAFAC will be engaged throughout the development of the policy.

4. Background/Synopsis

Mitigation (avoidance, minimization, and compensation for adverse effects to species and habitats) is an important component of many NOAA programs. It is also evolving quickly, particularly in the private investment arena. NOAA Fisheries staff are facing new situations in mitigation and grappling with the best way to handle them. Some regional and habitat-specific guidance documents exist, but nothing that applies nationally and to all programs.

NOAA is developing a Mitigation Policy to address mitigation issues that are encountered throughout the U.S. as well as mitigation issues that are unique or of particular importance in coastal areas. The NOAA Mitigation Policy will serve as an umbrella policy under which we may choose to develop regional or program-specific guidance at a later time.

We are currently scoping issues for the mitigation policy by talking with NOAA staff and stakeholders and asking them what they think are the most important issues related to mitigation in coastal areas. Examples of issues raised include:

- Using a landscape/seascape approach
- Mitigation sequencing/hierarchy
- Out of kind compensation
- Off-site compensation
- Role of preservation
- Invasive species
- High value/hard to replace resources

We are planning on having a draft policy ready for public review by the end of calendar 2017.

5. Action to be taken by MAFAC members

This is an opportunity to get MAFAC input on the scope of issues of interest to stakeholders.