

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
All Hands on Deck
Communications Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 10, 2022
1:30- PM Alaska Time

Minutes Approved 4/13/2023

I. Call to Order

ASMI Communications Chair Pat Shanahan welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm AKDT.

II. Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Chair Pat Shanahan, Vice Chair Cassandra Squibb, Hannah Heimbuch, Jessie Keplinger, Everette Anderson, Julianne Curry, Shannon Ford Ward, Nicole Kimball (virtual), Matt Carle (virtual), Jessica Hathaway. A quorum was established.

ASMI Program Directors & staff: Ashley Heimbigner, Tanna Peters, Kimberly Valverde, Bruce Schlacter

Program contractors: Christine Fanning, Kate Consenstein, Alina Fairbanks, Tessa Ward, Katie Goldberg, Susan Marks

Michael Jackson (Salmon Committee), Stephanie Mitchell (CAP- Sodexo), Rachel Kallander (K & A), Tomi Marsh (Ex-Officio/Vice Chair Board of Directors), Christa Hoover (Cooper River Marketing), Matt Alward (Salmon Committee), Brian Perkins (GSA), Hannah Wilson (Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation), Dave Gaudet (CSC SE), Nina Schlossman, Katy Rexford (Catch 49), Emily Pape (K&A), Stephanie Madsen (APA), Tracy Welch (UFA)

III. Reading of Anti-Trust Statement

IV. Approval of Agenda

Chair Shanahan asked if anyone had proposed changes to the meeting agenda. With no adjustments recommended, Heimbuch made a motion to approve the agenda. Curry seconded the motion. With no objections, the agenda was approved.

V. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chair Shanahan asked if anyone had proposed changes to make to the meeting minutes from the Communications Committee Meeting held on September 8, 2022. Curry made a motion to

approve the minutes. Heimbuch seconded the motion. With no objections, the meeting minutes were approved.

VI. **Committee Chair Comments**

Chair Shanahan welcomed new members to the committee. She reminded members that the focus of the meeting was to review the feedback provided by the species committees and to discuss and finalize the answers to the operational committee questions.

VII. **Review and Discussion of Species Committee Questions**

a. **Shellfish**

Crab fishery closures:

Chair Shanahan inquired about the sustainability messaging about the crab fisheries closures. Heimbigner shared that ASMI has draft talking points about the closures that will be available in the coming week. She expressed that the closures are an example of sustainable fisheries management in action, foregoing harvests and commercial interests to preserve the long-term sustainability of the fisheries. Furthermore, ASMI has reached out to OMRs, domestic and international programs to learn what questions/comments have surfaced since the closure announcements.

Heimbuch asked Heimbigner if the messaging points to climate change as the primary cause of the population decline of crab to which Heimbigner confirmed. Heimbuch she said she was comfortable with messaging about science based processes and responses but was weary about attributing the decline solely to climate change due to differences in opinions, varying factors and uncertainties.

Kimball referenced formal statements released by NOAA and ADF&G that attribute climate change as the cause of the immediate and abrupt snow crab crash and longer-term decline of Bristol Bay red king crab. Chair Shanahan added that she doesn't think ASMI should be the lead in saying what the cause is, but rather defer to the agencies and scientists who are providing explanations. Anderson agreed that deferring to agencies is a good approach. Curry complimented the Communications Committee for referring to industry experts and other committee members for messaging and help. Squibb recommended adding bairdi fishermen as ambassadors.

b. **Salmon**

Carbon footprint messaging:

Shanahan mentioned the repeated request from multiple committees about messaging on the industry's low water usage and low carbon footprint compared to land-based protein sources. She asked Heimbigner what she thinks would be required to meet this request. Heimbigner stated that ASMI does not have the data or resources to pursue a project of this magnitude that would require industry-wide participation. Kimball asked if the project

would be limited to Alaska only, or if ASMI can reference work done by the University of Washington that compares the impacts of particular diets. Heimbigner stated that ASMI receives federal funds and cannot go head-to-head in comparing seafood to other U.S. protein sources.

Chair Shanahan referred to a voluntary Danish program that provides climate change scoring on food packaging. She questioned if it was ASMI's role to provide that sort of information for every fishery in Alaska and potentially run the risk of comparing fisheries, or leave such work to individual fisheries similar to the research done by Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers on the pollock industry's carbon footprint.

Squibb suggested taking small steps and generic messaging on this reoccurring subject and mentioned possible grant opportunities. She also recommended asking the Technical Committee for clarification on the feasibility of a carbon footprint study to share with the Board.

Marsh wondered if the messaging could be more holistic and suggested sharing individual stories of sustainability in action.

Kimball asked if messaging on carbon footprint exists and used by ASMI. Heimbigner confirmed sustainability messaging exists on ASMI's website. Goldberg referenced a recent study that shows consumers are taking climate into consideration and are willing to pay more for a product that is more climate friendly. She urged building out the ASMI sustainability webpage and materials.

Curry supported the idea of developing generic messaging and recommended further clarification and direction from the Board.

Anderson proposed using research by Dr. Ray Hilborn and University of Washington to build out messaging.

Heimbuch supported Marsh's suggestion of highlighting intentional reductions that fishing communities have already made that have a direct impact on seafood processors' carbon footprint. Hathaway suggested reaching out to ALFA, who is working to electrify fishing vessels.

Kimball shared doubts that it's ASMI's responsibility to conduct a technical study on the industry's carbon footprint.

Chair Shanahan summarized the conversation and the need for direction from the Board.

Low water use messaging:

Curry believes this is a fresh topic and exciting opportunity to expand on the different aspects of Alaska seafood sustainability. Chair Shanahan suggested adding low water usage as a topic of conversation to be had with the Board for further direction.

Ambassador program:

Curry said All Hands is a great place to recruit ambassadors. Heimbigner agreed and asked for help from Committee members on identifying candidates.

c. Halibut-Sablefish

Chair Shanahan approached the topic of decreasing fish size. Keplinger stated she doesn't think the Communications Program needs to address decreasing fish size, which is more of a responsibility of the Technical Committee.

Chair Shanahan mentioned the inquiry from the Halibut-Sablefish Species Committee about social media promotions from non-chef influencers. Ward covered how ASMI has been marketing sablefish and informed the committee of plans to use lifestyle influencers with culinary interests in the spring. Keplinger clarified there is a desire to highlight sablefish, which is relatively new to the market, in a way that shows it is easy to prepare. Additionally, Keplinger shared that the Halibut-Sablefish Species Committee meeting spoke about the high value of vitamin D found in sablefish (90% of daily value) which was not listed on ASMI's website.

d. Whitefish

Heimbigner shared that ASMI has actively been building out the media library and has a lot of new content of some of the less represented whitefish species, which will be available to share in the coming months. Curry suggested that inflation is providing a great opportunity to push some of the whitefish species that aren't as well known. Chair Shanahan addressed the Whitefish Species Committee's recommendation to increase messaging on sustainability beyond existing initiatives, particularly about the industry's low carbon footprint. She then spoke about tariffs and asked if it was ASMI's roll to create messaging about it. Heimbigner stated that messaging about tariffs is typically done outside of the Communications Program. Kimball did not recommend the Communication Committee's involvement with messaging about climate change impacts on groundfish stocks.

VIII. Review and Discussion of Operational Committee Questions

***See Final Committee Report to the Board document**

1. What are the biggest opportunities for your program in the coming year or near future?

Chair Shanahan mentioned that climate change and sustainability influence how millennials and Gen Z spend their money on food. Vice Chair Squibb referenced a webinar held by Seafood Source where it was mentioned that consumers are swapping meat for seafood for health

purposes. She believes this is a good time for ASMI leverage an effort similar to ASMI's previous "Swap Meat" campaign for climate messaging.

Ward shared that she would like ASMI to continue highlighting the wild and pristine origin of Alaska seafood.

Marsh thanked ASMI for the outreach work done in partnering with cruise line companies. She recommended getting recipes on ships to encourage guests to become consumers of Alaska seafood at home. Ward agreed that it was a perfect opportunity to inspire guests to recreate their memorable experience of visiting Alaska by preparing Alaska seafood meals at home.

Curry circled back to an opportunity identified at the All Hands meeting the year prior, which was to develop messaging on the health and wellness and dietary guidelines for pregnant and perimenopausal women. Heimbigner shared that the answers from last year's question about opportunity were used as a guide while creating consumer care messaging and to help develop the Wild Natural Wellness campaign. She added ASMI has been working to connect with the perimenopausal audience and recently got coverage on the health benefits of Alaska seafood for women over 50. Vice Chair Squibb suggested continued outreach to perimenopausal and menopausal women.

2. What long-term challenges must your program continue to monitor and/or address?

Vice Chair Squibb anticipates that the fluctuations in supply will impact target audiences' perceptions that Alaska seafood is sustainable. As someone who grew up in Alaska and knows the fishing industry, she said she still gets confused by the complex processes and recommends developing better tools designed to make it easier for consumers to understand fisheries management.

Vice Chair Squibb said another potential challenge faced by ASMI will be a smaller budget next year (due to closures) which will limit opportunities. She shared her doubts that ASMI will have the resources to provide meaningful evidence that Alaska seafood is climate friendly aside from citing existing research. Furthermore, she predicts further erosion to the Alaska Seafood brand caused by ranking organizations.

Curry seconded the need to simplify fisheries management, recommended creating an infographic, and referenced infographics created by Rising Tide Communications. Ward added that FAM trips offer opportunities to share fisheries management to chefs and influencers and proposed developing itineraries with fisheries management as a priority. Heimbigner shared the video project with Channel Films, which includes a Fisheries Management video theory will help share easy to digest information about the processes.

Chair Shanahan brought up the challenges faced by global inflation and the rising costs of food. Keplinger inquired how to find a balance and position Alaska seafood as a premium product

while also making it available to everyone. She recommended developing recipes with multiple Alaska seafood options.

Keplinger added that certain high-end retail grocery stores in Seattle (like PCC Markets) will only sell salmon from very specific regions in Alaska based on this misinformation about orca populations losing their food source.

3. Please address the comments from the species committees that were directed toward your program. In response, do you have any recommendations for which your operational program should take action?

Addressed in section VII.

4. Are there any specific questions or items of interest pertaining to your program that you would like the ASMI Board to consider?

Chair Shanahan suggested requesting additional funding from the Board to continue in-state communications campaign.

5. Is there an action that this committee recommends the ASMI Board consider at All Hands or in the near future?

Vice Chair Squibb spoke in favor of the CAP forum at All Hands and wished for it to reoccur the following year. Curry, reiterated the value of the CAP discussion. Ward recommended an orientation for new committee members.

Anderson encouraged ASMI to utilize Alaska's Native corporations and CDQs to assist with representation and education.

IX. **Key Program Updates**

a. Website Update: One year in

Peters shared a presentation on the latest developments on ASMI's redesigned website. Goals for the redesign included increasing SEO, mobile-responsive design, easy to update and manage CMS, developing, Seafood U and Alaska Seafood Online Marketplace.

b. In-State Communications

Heimbigner provided a background and update on the in-state campaign, "Seafood Sustains Alaska" created to maintain and promote positive perceptions of and goodwill toward the Alaska seafood industry by instilling a sense of inclusion and pride. Heimbigner provided objectives, phases and timeline for the campaign.

X. **Committee Elections**

Chair Shanahan opened the floor for Chair and Vice Chair nominations. Curry nominated Squibb as Chair and Heimbuch as Vice Chair. Parker seconded the nominations. Hearing no additional nominations, Shanahan asked for all those in favor of the nominations to say aye. Hearing unanimous agreement, Shanahan congratulated Squibb as the new Chair and Heimbuch as the new Vice Chair of the Communications Committee. Curry thanked Shanahan for her phenomenal leadership as Chair, especially while navigating through a pandemic.

XI. **Public Comment**

Chair Shanahan asked if any public participants had questions or comments. Rachel Kallander of Kallander & Associates spoke in favor of messaging about climate change and offered support in the influencer space. She suggested collaborating with expert scientists, NSF and affiliates and young indigenous leaders to help share messaging about climate change impacts on the ocean.

Woodrow shared that it has been a pleasure to witness the evolution of the Communications Committee and gave credit to Heimbigner and everyone at the table for their vision. Heimbigner offered her gratitude for everyone in the room for their time, thoughtfulness and commitment to the mission. She ended by thanking Shanahan for her leadership as a Chair.

XII. **Old Business and Good of the Order**

Chair Shanahan and Heimbigner thanked Parker and Hathaway for serving on the committee.

XIII. **Adjourn**

Shanahan requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Curry made a motion to adjourn, Ward seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm AKDT.