
“Dunsmuir 2”

Technical Meeting on Ecosystem Objectives: Lessons Learned and Future Directions

**Chair: Dr. Jake Rice
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Background

In 2001, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) held a workshop to start a process towards identifying ecosystem-level objectives for use in oceans policy and management. The “Dunsmuir Workshop” identified a high-level framework for Ecosystem Objectives and recommended next steps for developing the basis for an ecosystem approach to management in Canada’s oceans. Following the Dunsmuir Workshop, both Science and Oceans have undertaken a series of initiatives under the Oceans Action Plan (OAP) to move forward on those “next steps.”

More recently, Fisheries and Aquaculture Management (FAM) has given increased priority to placing the management of Canada’s fisheries and fish stocks into a larger ecosystem perspective, consistent with principles and concepts promoted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and resolutions from the United Nations General Assembly. Several new initiatives in the overall package of programmes associated with the current sustainability agenda reflect greater ecosystem considerations in management of fisheries. Many of the initiatives in Policy Sector, particularly on the international front, also have the ecosystem approach to management as their central theme, with implications for domestic policies and practices as well as for international commitments.

Significant experience has been acquired in the several years since the Dunsmuir Workshop and from the growing profile of ecosystem considerations in the other Sectors. There is a need to take stock of the Department’s progress towards an ecosystem approach to management. What lessons have we learned? How do we move forward? What are the priorities for Science that would best serve the needs of the full Department and move DFO forward in a unified manner?

“Dunsmuir 2” will provide scientists and managers with the following opportunities: to share experiences and consolidate lessons learned; to review progress on setting ecosystem objectives and discuss their potential uses; and to consider the role of science in supporting the goals of all the DFO Sectors with regard to implementing an ecosystem approach in their policies and management activities. In facilitating discussions on how

the Department will set and use the ecosystem objectives and move towards an ecosystem approach to policy and management, Dunsmuir 2 will contribute crucially to setting the priorities for Ecosystem Science within the Science Sector and its partners for the coming years.

Objectives of Technical Meeting

The Technical Meeting has two objectives:

1. Share Lessons Learned
 - How have our *processes* for conducting ecosystem assessments and identifying conservation objectives worked?
 - Are the *products* of these processes comparable, with differences reflecting differences among the ecosystems rather than inconsistencies in approach?
 - How do the products and processes from the Large Ocean Management Areas (LOMAs) under the OAP and those from initiatives in FAM and Policy relate to each other?
 - What is the common science foundation shared by all these initiatives?
2. Evaluate Conservation Objectives and Other Products according to Client Sector Needs
 - What *do* the Client Sectors consider to be their needs for Conservation and other Ecosystem Objectives and related tools?
 - Do the Conservation Objectives from the OAP work serve the needs of clients?
 - What are the areas of convergence?
 - What are the challenges?

Strategy and Format of Technical Meeting

The Technical Meeting will focus primarily on Objective 1 (Lessons Learned) and begin to consider Objective 2 (Client Sector Needs).

For each OAP LOMA, the following will be undertaken:

- a. Present the *process* used to produce the Ecosystem Overview and Assessment Reports (EOARs), Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) and Ecologically Significant Species and Community Properties (ESSCPs), and the Conservation Objectives, highlighting the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the approach used.
- b. Present the list of candidate Conservation Objectives and describe the reasoning for why they emerged as the priorities from among the EBSAs, ESSCPs, and depleted species.

For the other ecosystem-related initiatives in or for other Sectors, the following will be undertaken:

- c. Describe the *products* that have been produced (or are expected to be produced) and the function that they are expected to fulfill in Sector's work activities.
- d. Present the *process* used to produce the specified products, highlighting the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the approach used.

Based on this information, all meeting participants will undertake the following:

- e. Evaluate the degree to which the guidelines on Conservation Objectives succeeded in producing consistent results across LOMAs, and identify areas in need of improvement.
- f. Evaluate the degree to which other products produced as bases for actions on implementing an ecosystem approach have performed consistently across applications, and have fulfilled their intended uses.
- g. Evaluate the processes used in producing EOARs, Conservation Objectives, and any other products being discussed. To the extent possible, identify the "best practices" for each task, including the possibility that "best practices" will vary with the type of information available and its sources.

Product of Technical Meeting

By the end of the Technical Meeting, participants will have agreed on the points to present to senior departmental management. The results of the meeting will be published as a Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) Proceedings document.

Participants of Technical Meeting

Participants will have been involved in the technical aspects of science-based initiatives in support of ecosystem management (e.g., LOMA coordinators from Science and Oceans Management), and FAM and Policy initiatives related to actually implementing ecosystem approaches in their work.