

Fishery Management Plan Development and Review Process

Fishery management plans (FMPs) provide a framework for how a fishery resource will be managed based on a species life history, habitat, and fishery utilization over time. Maryland law (Nat. Res. Art. Sec. 4-215) contains a statutory mandate for the development of FMPs for a given list of species and other species plans may be developed as needed. FMPs can be prepared for species based on specific concerns about the status of a species and after consultation with the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission (TFAC) and the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission (SFAC). A Maryland Task Force on Fishery Management (Task Force) was convened in 2008 to review the current fishery management planning process and recommended improvements to the process that would increase stakeholder input and transparency during all stages of the fishery management plan (FMP) development and review process (see Figures 1 and 2). Fisheries Service has proposed a change to the review process that would utilize required legislative reports in the review process (see Figure 3).

Current Review Process

The FMP review begins with the designation of a Plan Review Team (PRT) by the Fisheries Service Director. The PRT evaluates the FMP goal, objectives, management strategies, and actions for their implementation status and applicability to current management needs. Beginning in 2012, the review process includes applying the DNR Policy: Fisheries Allocation Review. Depending on the particular species, the FMP review could also include the Chesapeake Bay Program and/or coordination with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). After reviewing the components of the FMP and providing comments on the status of the management actions, the PRT recommends one of three pathways: 1) continue implementing the plan; 2) develop an amendment to significantly change or add to the FMP; or 3) develop a new FMP to change the overall management framework. The PRT drafts a FMP review report for review by the Fisheries Service (FS) Senior Management Team. The draft is also sent to the TFAC and SFAC for their review and input. The final, revised FMP review report is submitted to the Fisheries Service Director who makes the final decision regarding which of the three options to pursue: status quo, amendment, or revision.

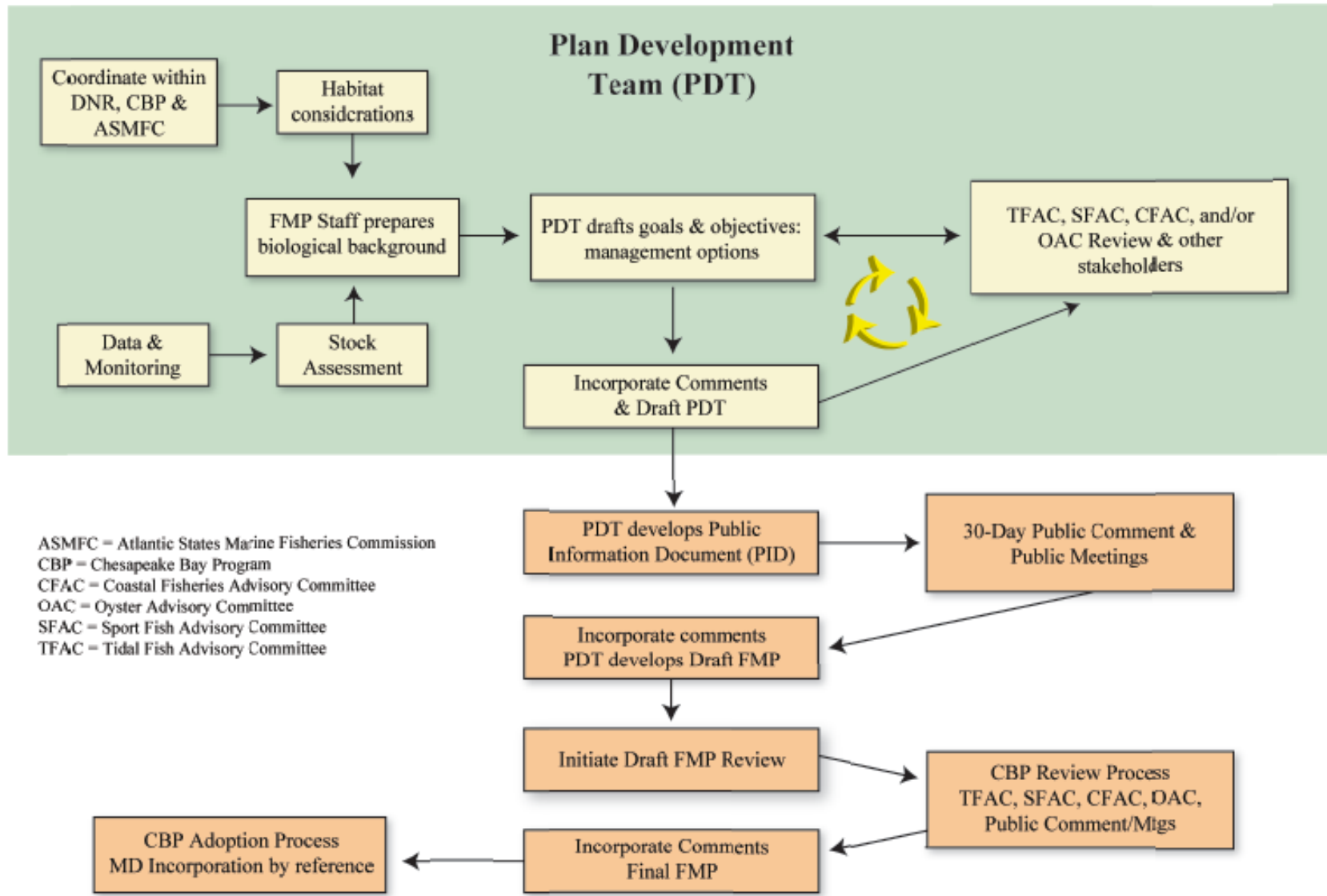
Proposed Review Process

Instead of reviewing several FMPs each year, FMP staff and biologists would develop the mandated FMP Legislative Report containing 24 sections and covering 32 species. This report contains a current narrative on each species that the Department manages by FMP including an implementation table that tracks the status of management actions. . The table provides a synopsis of each plan and illustrates the strategies used to achieve the goal and objectives of the plan. Depending on the particular species, the Legislative Report also includes any new Chesapeake Bay Program and/or ASMFC actions. The species-specific biologist will assess the management framework and provide a recommendation as to the continued management pathway, i.e., continue the existing management framework; develop an amendment; or complete revise the plan. If the Department believes that a change to a plan's management framework is needed, that recommendation will be provided to the SFAC/TFAC for consideration. The SFAC/TFAC will be given an opportunity to comment and then will be discussed at a meeting. Comments and recommendations from the Commission will be considered by the Director. The Department will review those comments and may make any needed changes to the report before submission. The Department will also review the comments and recommendation to determine if the plan is sufficient (no changes needed), or an amendment or revision is needed. The Legislative Report will be incorporated by reference into regulation each year. All the FMPs are incorporated into regulation and this addition will serve as a supplement and update to the existing FMPs for each species in regulation.

With the current review process and the proposed review process, the consideration of an amendment can occur outside of the review process. An ASMFC action or other information may trigger the need for an amendment. Regardless how the amendment is suggested, it follows the FMP Development Process, a separate public process. The FMP Development Process is illustrated in Figure 1. The development process is not proposed to change. If a plan is to be amended, it will follow the public process and the TFAC and SFAC will review and consider the draft plan and changes.

Figure 1.

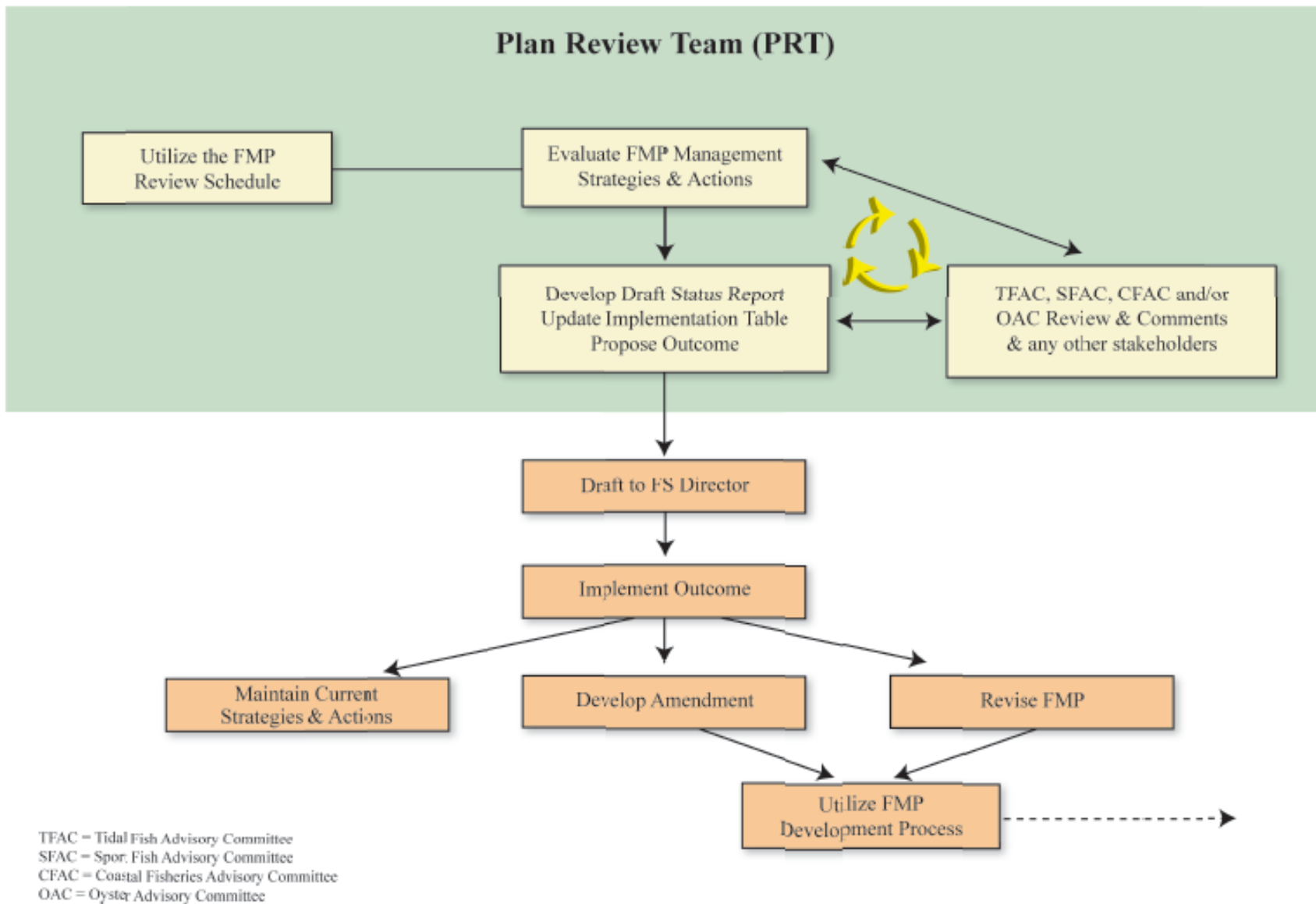
Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Development Process



CFAC Coastal Fisheries Advisory Committee) no longer exists. However, a meeting of coastal representatives would be convened if it is a plan specific to the coast or coastal bays.

Figure 2.

Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review Process



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Figure 3.

Potential FMP Review Process

