**Closing the loop: Stakeholder involvement in the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process-- Advancing Management Strategy Evaluation, Session 2**

**A Proposed Symposium**

**at the American Fisheries Society 147th Annual Meeting**

**Convened by:**

Sean Lucey, Sarah Gaichas, John Walter, Daniel Goethel, Aaron Berger, and Patrick Lynch

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Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) is a closed-loop simulation tool, which has been widely utilized to explore the potential impacts of a suite of management actions. In the most basic terms, MSE attempts to replicate the assessment-management framework by simulating observed data, performing a stock assessment, and utilizing the assessment results to implement a harvest policy based on a pre-specified management control rule. The process is then repeated to address management performance over the long-term, which has been extremely helpful in exploring various aspects of management systems and their ability to achieve harvest and conservation goals. Most importantly, MSE allows natural resource managers an opportunity to test various harvest strategies and determine which are likely to minimize negative consequences while optimizing resource use. Ideally, stakeholders should be closely involved in the development of MSEs, particularly when defining alternative harvest strategies and control rules, because their insight improves the design of these studies and their participation can improve acceptance of the final management framework. However, inclusion of non-scientist stakeholders in the MSE process is not universal. Focus of the session will be on presentations highlighting the benefits of including stakeholders in the process, while exploring case studies illustrating how MSEs could have been improved if stakeholders had been involved in MSE development. We will explore best practices for incorporating non-scientific partners and discuss lessons learned. Involving stakeholders presents a real opportunity to close the loop of the MSE process in a way that will result in better buy-in of the final product. Through interactive discussion, the session aims to identify ways to help scientists to engage stakeholders, while challenging stakeholders to think about the potential tradeoffs which can be explored using MSE. The session is the second in a two part MSE mini-symposium. The first session, “Under Pressure: Defining Harvest Strategies that Account for Biological, Environmental or Anthropogenic Spatiotemporal Complexity”, is aimed at providing a forum to identify how MSE has recently evolved and what modeling techniques are still lacking given real-world observed dynamics. This session will then focus on how stakeholders can be better incorporated into MSE development, application, and interpretation. The two sessions will be linked through interactive discussions.