SCHOOL OF AQUATIC AND FISHERY SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

2026 Autumn Seminar Series

November 5, 4:00PM
Thursday (Th) (FSH 102)

The role of advocacy coalitions in Bering Sea fisheries management at the confluence of climate change and food sovereignty challenges

Anne Beaudreau, ***Associate Professor***
School of Marine and Environmental Affairs, University of Washington

A confluence of climate change, resource declines, and allocation conflicts have catalyzed new fisheries governance challenges in polar regions. In Western Alaska, steep declines in salmon abundance have had profound impacts on communities where salmon provide for subsistence, livelihoods, and cultural continuance. Incidental catch (bycatch) of salmon in Bering Sea commercial trawl fisheries has therefore been elevated as a major management concern over the last six years. Developing bycatch reduction measures emerged as a priority of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) since 2021 and has generated intense public engagement across a spectrum of diverse participants. We applied the Advocacy Coalition Framework to examine the core beliefs underlying policy preferences amongadvocacy coalitions in Bering Sea fisheries. We analyzed salient themes from more than 1000 written public comments submitted to the NPFMC from 2021-2026 to characterize (1) the core beliefs articulated in the public discourse on salmon bycatch and (2) how these beliefs were manifested in policy preferences and outcomes. Over this period, multiple advocacy coalitions emerged, organized around different sets of preferred management alternatives, values, and beliefs. The largest advocacy coalition coalesced around alternatives that would place the strictest bycatch limits on the pollock fishery. Their testimony highlighted impacts of federal fisheries on food security and food sovereignty for Alaska Native communities, inequities in conservation burden on rural communities, and conflicts among industrial and small-scale fisheries. Our findings show the complex interplay of formal and informal institutions in shaping fisheries governance in a changing ecological and sociopolitical landscape.

Anne Beaudreau and her team conduct applied, interdisciplinary research to understand how fisheries and wildlife systems respond and adapt to environmental, regulatory, and social change. Anne began her career at the New England Fishery Management Council, where she saw firsthand that the necessary ingredients for good decision-making are not only the 'best available science,' but also relationship-building, communication, and trust. Anne held a faculty position at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in Juneau, AK, from 2012 to 2020. She has been an associate professor at UW's School of Marine and Environmental Affairs and adjunct faculty in SAFS since 2021.



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