

NOYO HARBOR DISTRICT COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

1st STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday September 26 2018 Starting at 4:00 PM
Silver's at the Wharf (32260 N. Harbor Drive).

Attendees:

Noyo Harbor District: Harbormaster Bill Sanborn, Commissioners Stacey Bradley and Bill Forkner, Secretary/Treasurer Carla Slaven.

City of Fort Bragg: Community Development Department, Special Project Manager Scott Perkins.

Planwest Team: George Williamson, Linda Ruffing, Steven Hackett, Jenn McDonald

Noyo Harbor Stakeholders: Approximately 22 community members/stakeholders.

Outcomes:

- Understanding of Community Sustainability Plan benefits
- Collecting key information from stakeholders
- Consensus on key issues for sustainable working waterfront
- Commitment from Stakeholders for follow-up input and events

SUMMARY NOTES

Introductions & Agenda/Outcomes Review: Linda Ruffing

Community Sustainability Plan Scope & Schedule Overview: George Williamson

Key Information gathered to date: Steve Hackett slide presentation attached

Meeting Materials: Projected slideshow of Dr. Hackett's compiled data to date (Historical context, Commercial fisheries sector, focus area: groundfish subsector, Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) sector, social factors, and environmental factors), a 24" x 36" Harbor spatial data color plot on aerial photo, with City of Fort Bragg boundary and place names prepared by Planwest GIS Specialist Jason Barnes, and notetaking pad with markers for visual recording of community feedback.

Stakeholder Discussion

Stakeholder Meeting Facilitator, Linda Ruffing began the discussion by asking the meeting attendees a series of questions/prompts for engagement and meaningful discussions surrounding their concerns and ideas for the future community development of Noyo Harbor.

Subject matter ranged from the physical and regulatory conditions of the harbor, to key issues facing the commercial fishing community, and the enhanced services and infrastructure community members would like to see considered. A summarization of respondents input is bulleted below.

What are current operational & commercial conditions and constraints in the Harbor and surrounding areas?

- Need for a fuel dock and ice house are often cited as critical infrastructure for the commercial fishermen. There is no fuel dock (Closest ones are in Bodega Bay or Eureka)
- The sorely felt lack of a fuel dock means that the fleet currently relies on a fuel truck and transient boats are not entering the harbor, eliminating a sound opportunity to pull in vital tourism dollars.
- The Noyo Harbor fishing community has adapted by trucking in fuel which most agree to be a considerably inconvenient and inefficient way to operate.
- The (currently operational) ice house is in jeopardy of closing due to aging machinery and lack of revenue to upgrade its facilities.
- The lack of sufficient road access in and out of the harbor is a substantive problem. Many agree there is a need for another road option for entering and exiting for emergencies vehicles as well as for improved general traffic flow. With improved road access the Harbor will be more attractive to visitors.

Key Commercial Fishing Community Issues?

- The commercial fishermen who make landings out of Noyo Harbor continue to have their fishing rights depleted through a variety of fishery regulations.
- An environmental preservation/species conservation culture is heavily influencing the decision-making regulators & encouraging litigation against commercial fishermen. (PMFC, CDFW).
- 4 out of 5 groundfish trawl vessels have dropped out of the risk pool (California Groundfish Collective) due to membership fees. The context for the California Groundfish Collective is The Nature Conservancy looking for innovative solutions to the challenge of overfished species and fishermen constrained by quota limitations. A risk pool is an agreement to pool groundfish trawl quota and manage the risk associated with rules designed to conserve overfished stocks.
- Some people have left the groundfish fisheries for trap & shrimp fisheries (whether in Noyo Harbor or other ports—some have left for other states on the west coast seeking fishing economies that provide more supportive legislation regulating the commercial fishing industry.
- Some Noyo commercial fishermen feel lack of support from their city and county officials.
- The community is facing loss of industry complex, support industries and infrastructure.
- There are whale entanglement net fishing regulations hampering successful trips and landings. There is some opinion that this is unnecessary and that the abundance of whales is under estimated or that regulation creators are unaware of their numbers.
- There is a local demand for leasable quota (catch-shares).
- The cost of onboard observers can be up to \$750 a day. They are also sometimes unavailable when needed.
- Trawl industry supported the fishing related businesses so now they are suffering as a result of the strict regulatory environment.
- Dwindling commercial fishing industry support and infrastructure.

- Attempts to open a local squid fishery have been unsuccessful (last 5 years), lack of traction with CDFW.
- Decline in the salmon fishery is understood as being driven by river conditions in California.
- Oregon was cited multiple times as a state that, “takes care of their fishermen.” The general feeling from our Stakeholders is that California lacks the supportive environment for commercial fishermen.
- Newport, Oregon was specifically mentioned as an example of a harbor that manages to smartly balance the interests of the tourist population (and the facilities that serve them) as well as those of the commercial fishermen (and the infrastructure/support services they depend upon.)

What are essential space, infrastructure & other facility needs specific to the District? What are some main considerations for District sustainability practices?

- Access is very limited – one road in and out, and no safe pedestrian access in and out of the Harbor. The singular entry/exit point creates a concern not only for efficiency and flow, but also in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- There is a need for sidewalks (this is a safety concern with people walking along the narrow street).
- There is not consistent cleaning and maintenance of the streets and roadsides in the harbor.
- There is a significant lack of designated Harbor area parking for employees and visitors.
- Waterfront access is minimal for recreation seeking visitors.
- There is a second access road, past the dredge spoils site that could provide emergency access.

Beyond essentials, what amenities/enhanced services/facilities/infrastructure etc. should be considered in the CSP? Potential for expanded use? District and community roles? Potential for more revenue generating space? Shared facilities with City & other community partners?

- There was a general lack of enthusiasm towards annexation of the harbor into the city. Some long-term commercial residents felt that this is an over-regulated and economically challenged time period and therefore may not be the best time for the city to incorporate Noyo Harbor into the City’s boundary.
- Alternatively, some believe that the economic development as an outcome of annexation could be very helpful for the harbor.
- City representative, Scott Perkins stated the subject of annexation will be raised again in the staff report for an October 9th City Council Meeting.
- Concerns were raised about CSP potentially becoming yet another means to impose further restrictive regulations and more financial burdens for commercial fishermen.
- There is an interest in developing the small business of Airbnb’s as a means to create an alternative stream of income.
- The harbor is in need of more user-friendly signage.
- The harbor lacks roadside maintenance (landscaping and garbage removal). There does not appear to be accountability for completing necessary maintenance.
- Some noted there really isn’t enough for area youth and visitors to do (in the harbor).

- Improving river access on both sides is seen as desirable with dedications/maintenance/safety addressed.
- Coast Guard Road is eroded. Can this be fixed and offer to dedicate.

Next steps and close

ATTACHMENT – Steve Hackett Slide Presentation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOYO HARBOR FISHING COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN PROJECT

DR STEVE HACKETT, PLANWEST PARTNERS, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018



Noyo Harbor Fishing Community



OUTLINE

- Historical context
- Commercial fisheries sector
- Focus area: Groundfish subsector
- Commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) sector
- Social factors
- Environmental factors

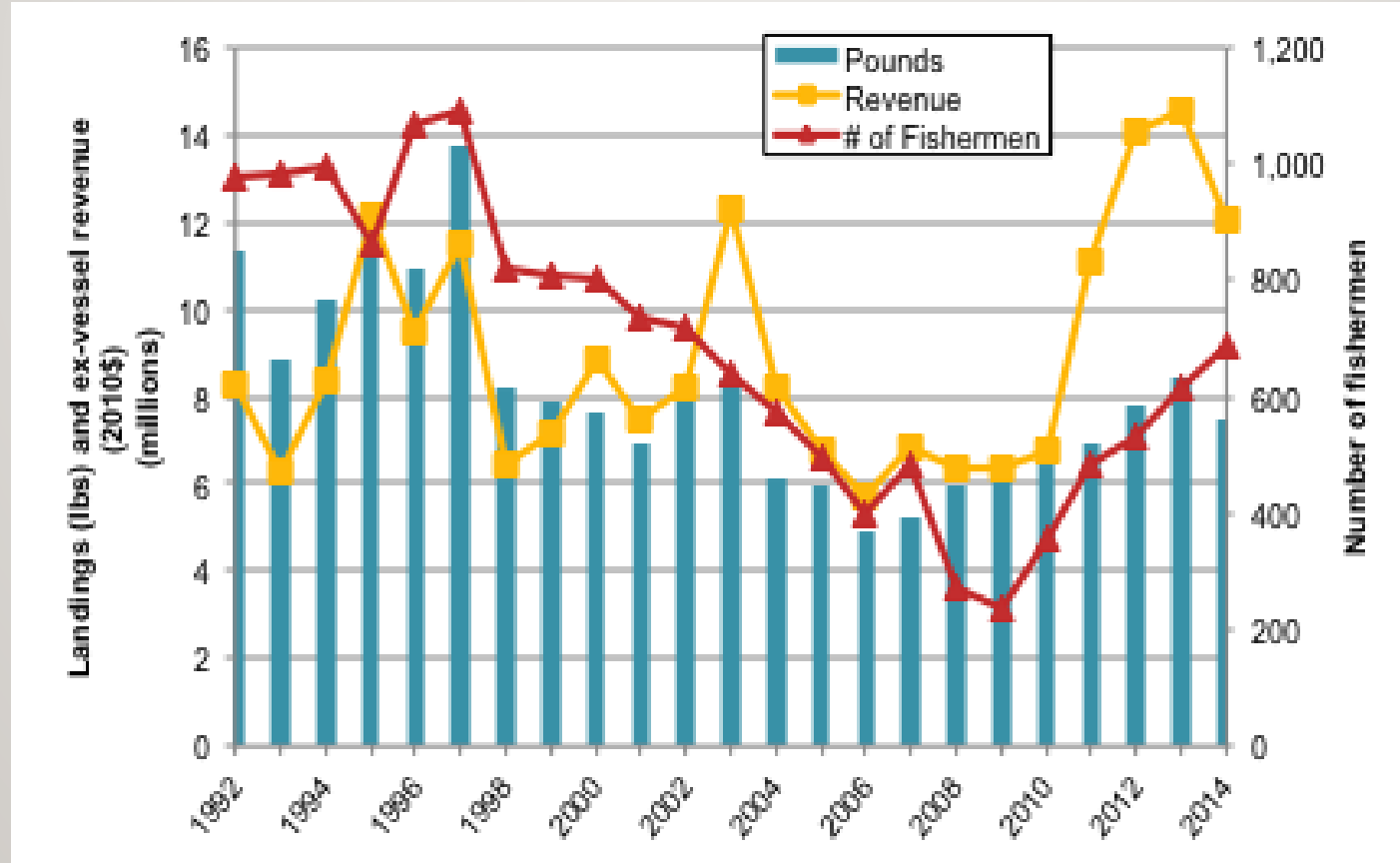
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Noyo Harbor and adjacent headlands served as a seasonal settlement for the Pomo people, who seasonally migrated between inland Mendocino County and the coast. Pomo gathered seaweed and mollusks from the rocks and caught salmon.
- Fort Bragg got its start as a short-lived military post located on the Mendocino Indian Reservation and named after Braxton Bragg, who later served as a Confederate General in the Civil War.
- The military post was abandoned upon closure of the reservation, and the City of Fort Bragg formed around the first sawmill on California's North Coast at the mouth of the Noyo River.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

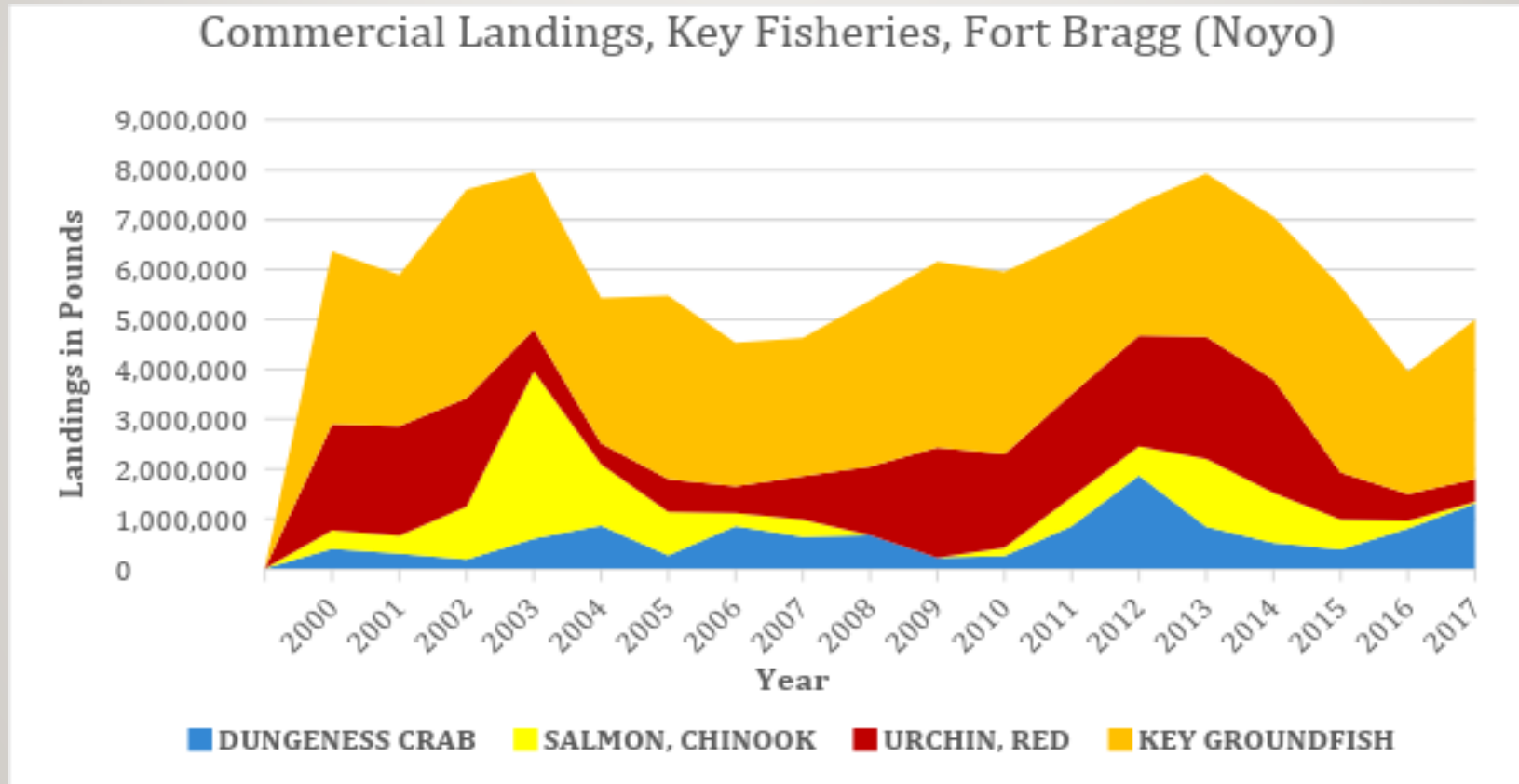
- Noyo Harbor became one of the most important fishing ports in Northern California, notable in recent years for its Dungeness crab, chinook salmon, red sea urchin, and multi-species groundfish fisheries, targeted by a fleet of commercial, charter, and sport fishing vessels.
- The Noyo Harbor District was formed in 1950. Harbor Commissioners direct all phases of operations of the Noyo Mooring Basin at Noyo Harbor and properties owned by the District.
- The Noyo Harbor fishing industry complex has demonstrated resilience in the face of setbacks to some of these key fisheries.

EX-VESSEL REVENUE, NUMBER OF FISHERMEN, ALL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES, NOYO HARBOR, 1992–2014



Revenue data have been adjusted for inflation in constant 2010 dollars. One can see that the number of fishermen making commercial landings in Noyo Harbor generally rises and falls with total ex-vessel revenue, though the overall trend (as in other California fishing ports) is a decline in numbers of active commercial fishermen up to about 2010.

LANDINGS, KEY FISHERIES, NOYO, 2000-2017



Key fisheries were selected based on current or recent historical economic importance. One can see that groundfish fisheries play a prominent economic role for the commercial fishing industry operating out of Noyo, oftentimes dominating the combined landings of salmon and Dungeness crab in this time period. One can also see the importance of red urchin landings over this 17-year period.

FOCUS: GROUND FISH

- Based on value of landings in Noyo Harbor in recent years, key groundfish species include Dover sole, short- and long-spine thornyheads, and sablefish (collectively, the DTS complex), historically the most important part of the California trawl fishery; lingcod; chilipepper, blackgill, and bocaccio rockfish; and petrale sole.
- The California groundfish fishery is managed by NOAA Fisheries and the Pacific Fishery Management Council under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Management Plan framework.
- 1985: The West Coast groundfish trawl fishery was seen as severely overcapitalized, with a fleet of approximately 500 vessels, two to three times the number of vessels needed to harvest the annual trawl allocation (PFMC, 2017).

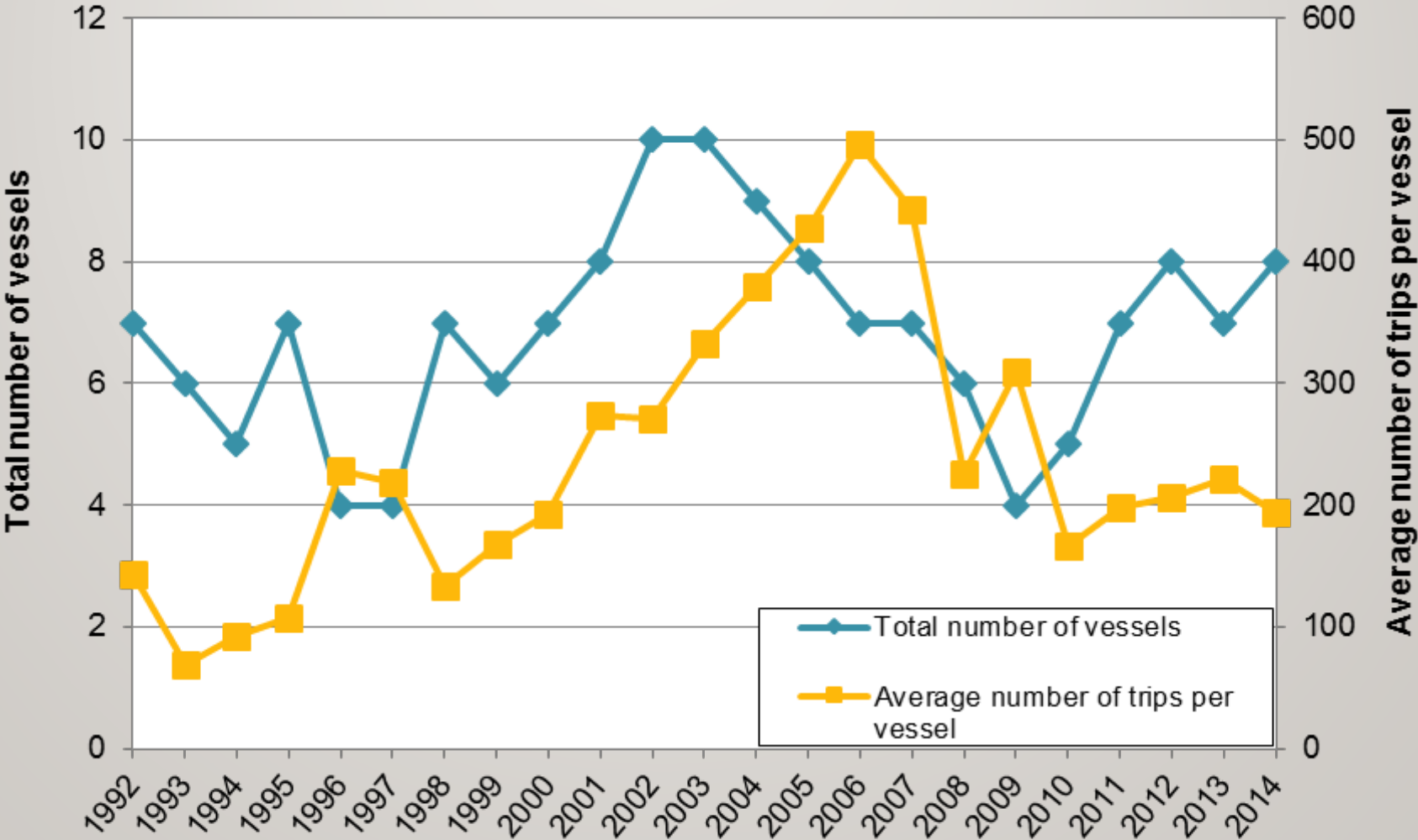
FOCUS: GROUND FISH

- 1994: Limited entry permit (LEP) program initiated.
- 1999: non-whiting groundfish landings and ex-vessel revenue had declined by more than 50 percent from the early 1980s. Shoreside trawl vessels were typically operating at only 27-41 percent of capacity (PFMC, 2017).
- 2000: NMFS declared the West Coast groundfish fishery a disaster.
- 2003 federal groundfish vessel buyback program: 92 trawl vessels were removed from West Coast trawl fisheries (PFMC, 2017). In Fort Bragg, 7 of 12 resident groundfish trawlers participated in the buyback program and exited the fishery. Impacts on Noyo processors and other support services and businesses.
- 2011: West Coast shore-based groundfish IFQ program initiated, with quota becoming transferable in 2014.

FOCUS: GROUND FISH

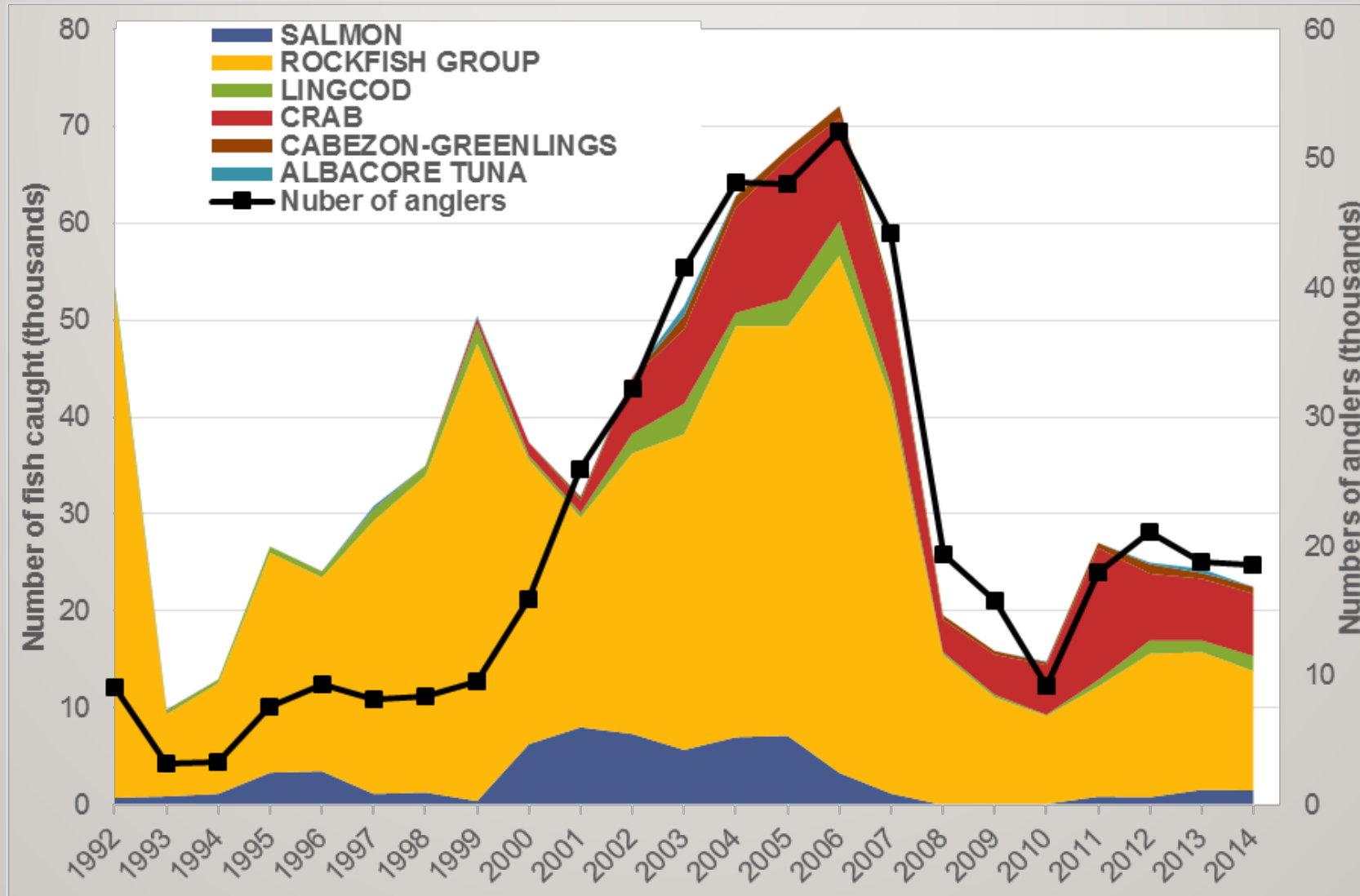
- Noyo Harbor-based trawlers received about 6.3% of total West Coast trawl ex-vessel revenue from 1996-2000, a percentage that declined a bit by 2011-2015, to 4.8%.
- By contrast, Eureka-based trawlers received 9.25% of total West Coast ex-vessel revenue from 1996-2000, though that share declined to 6.7% by 2011-2015.
- 2013: Eureka and Noyo Harbor have the largest active groundfish fleets of any ports in California. Noyo Harbor has the highest “fishing engagement index” of all California fishing ports that are “highly engaged” in the shore-based West Coast groundfish trawl IFQ program (PFMC, 2017).
- 2016: 10 Fort Bragg-area community members were the top holders of West Coast non-whiting shore-based IFQ quota shares, exceeding Astoria and Coos Bay (PFMC, 2017).

CPFV SECTOR: NUMBER OF CHARTER OPERATORS AND AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF TRIPS



Source: Hackett et al. (2017)

CPFV SECTOR: NUMBER OF FISH CAUGHT AND NUMBER OF ANGLERS



Source: Hackett et al. (2017)

SOCIAL FACTORS

- Some active fisherman organizations in Noyo Harbor:
 - The **Salmon Troller's Marketing Association**, Incorporated, is a 501(c)(5) nonprofit association based out of Fort Bragg. Organized to educate and inform on matters of shared economic interest, in this case salmon and related fisheries in waters fished by the Noyo Harbor salmon troller fleet. The organization is active in providing a fisherman perspective on fisheries-related public policy.
 - **Noyo Women for Fisheries**. Juliee Estes.
 - The **Fort Bragg Groundfish Association** (FBGA), established in 2011. The FBGA focuses their efforts on collaboration, resource stewardship, fishery advocacy, and innovation.

SOCIAL FACTORS

- **Fort Bragg Groundfish Conservation Trust (FBGCT):** Founded in 2014 to obtain and manage fishing privileges (e.g., quota) and hold them in Fort Bragg for the public benefit (FBGCT, 2018). Accordingly, the FBGCT claims it offers affordable quota pound lease rates to local commercial fishermen in the shore-based groundfish IFQ fishery to supplement their existing access to fishery resources and incentivize best practices.
- In August 2016 the FBGCT announced the acquisition of 4,349,544 pounds of commercial groundfish trawl fishing quota from The Nature Conservancy. The purpose of this acquisition was to secure local access to the groundfish fishery for the Fort Bragg community (Norvell, 2016).
- Leasing quota share is strategy designed to retain a local groundfish fleet and to reduce entry costs for the next generation of local groundfish fishermen.

SOCIAL FACTORS

- A recent example of the FBGA productively networking and collaborating is the California Groundfish Collective (CGC), formerly known as the California Risk Pool.
- CGC purpose – pool groundfish trawl quota and manage the risk associated with rules designed to conserve overfished stocks.
- The TNC states that since launching, the CGC has reduced bycatch of overfished species, increased target species harvests, and improved the tracking and sharing of fishing information.
- Members of the CGC who catch overfished species are covered by the pool's quota (made up of the combined quotas owned by TNC and individual fishermen).

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Complex fishery regulations: Licenses, seasons, vessel permits, exclusion areas (MPAs, RCAs), quotas. Balancing tasks of conserving and rebuilding stocks; rationalizing fisheries; conserving economic value of fisheries.
- Disastrous collapse of chinook salmon fisheries and emergency closures in 2008-09. Complicated riverine and oceanic factors exacerbated by drought, diversions, and climate change.
- Naturally fluctuating stocks of Dungeness crab, now a mainstay fishery.
- Red sea urchin (and sport abalone) crisis linked to sea star wasting disease, purple sea urchin population explosion, and catastrophic loss of kelp forests.
- Overfished and later rebuilt status of many key groundfish stocks.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Stock assessments of key groundfish species:

- Blackgill rockfish: 2011 assessment indicated that the stock biomass south of 40° 10' N. latitude was at 30 percent of unfished biomass, in the precautionary zone (PFMC, 2017).
- Bocaccio stocks were declared rebuilt in 2017 (PFMC, 2017).
- Dover sole are not overfished on the West Coast, and are not subject to overfishing based on 2016 catch data (NOAA Fisheries, 2018b).
- Lingcod stocks were declared rebuilt in 2005, are not considered overfished, and stocks are above target population levels (NOAA Fisheries, 2018b).
- Petrale sole stocks were declared rebuilt in 2015, following strict harvest limits (NOAA Fisheries, 2018b).
- Short- and long-spined thornyheads are not considered overfished (NOAA Fisheries, 2018b).
- Sablefish are near target population levels. According to a 2015 stock assessment and 2016 catch data, the West Coast sablefish stock is not considered overfished (NOAA Fisheries, 2018b).