

CHARTER* FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST CRAB RESEARCH GROUP

*This document is a living document that will be revisited and amended, as necessary, by the Coordinating Committee every two years (at minimum). Members will be asked to review and sign every two years to renew their membership. An accompanying Data Sharing Agreement is in development.

MISSION:

The Pacific Northwest Crab Research Group (PCRG) formed in December 2018 with the mission of promoting and supporting sustainable Dungeness crab populations in the Pacific Northwest. Broadly, the Group's goals are to pursue collaborative research to:

1. Monitor crab populations and develop tools to forecast crab abundance;
2. Better understand and sustain the ecological role of crab;
3. Produce information addressing multiple critical data gaps for Dungeness crab.

SCOPE:

The PCRG is a consortium of scientific research partners, resource managers, and community members looking to address critical research gaps in our knowledge of Dungeness crab. The aim of the PCRG is to bring together scientists and stakeholders from different disciplines and specialties relevant to Dungeness crab; prioritize research questions; identify how the PCRG can best tailor its research to inform management; and share research results from PCRG activities.

The projects developed and implemented by the PCRG and collaborators include three phases: 1) comprehensive research planning; 2) coordinated, standardized research; and 3) communication of the research results to resource managers and other stakeholders.

Research and management topics identified by the PCRG will contribute to the development, implementation, and refinement of long-term studies that improve the information available for Dungeness crab managers in the Pacific Northwest region.

TERMS OF PCRG MEMBERSHIP:

Any individual committed to contributing to the PCRG's mission and purpose may join the PCRG. There are three "types" of membership:

- (1) interested party (general member);
- (2) working group member; and
- (3) committee member (technical or coordinating).

The roles and responsibilities for each membership types are described below. As a non-negotiable condition of membership, all members -regardless of type- agree to comply with all requirements, procedures, and directives in this Charter.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER:

Any interested party may request to join the PCRG as a general member (Type 1) by emailing the PCRG Program Coordinator (role defined below). The Coordinator will provide a copy of this Charter for the

prospective member's review and signature. The prospective member is admitted as a general member upon receipt of a signed Charter by the Coordinator. Newly admitted members will be added to the Group's communication channels and shared documents by the Coordinator.

To become a working group member (Type 2), a prospective member or current general member must email the Coordinator requesting admission and specifying the desired role. See below for how to become a committee member (Type 3). All requirements of general membership, as defined above, must also be satisfied by working group and committee members. All members must renew their membership every 2 years, via reviewing and signing the updated Charter.

CHANGES OR TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:

Any member (Type 1-3) may end their membership with the PCRG by (1) transmitting a written notice of resignation to the Coordinator, or (2) failing to renew their membership. Subject to decision by the Coordinating Committee, any member's failure to comply with all requirements, procedures, and directives in this Charter shall also be grounds for termination of membership. Furthermore:

- Working group members (Type 2) – any working group member may exit their group by written notice of resignation.
- Committee members (Type 3) – any committee member may exit their committee by written notice of resignation. In addition, any committee member that fails to attend three (3) or more meetings without prior notice shall be automatically removed.
- Working group or committee members who resign or are removed may remain general members (Type 1) provided all requirements of general membership are met.

In the event that an individual's membership or specific role is terminated, the PCRG Program Coordinator will remove the individual from PCRG communication channels and shared documents/files as appropriate.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The PCRG operates under a framework that consists of a general member body, several working groups and their associated technical sub-committees, and a coordinating committee. The number of working groups/technical sub-committees may change as necessary to meet the research goals and priorities of the PCRG. Responsibilities of the different groups are described below.

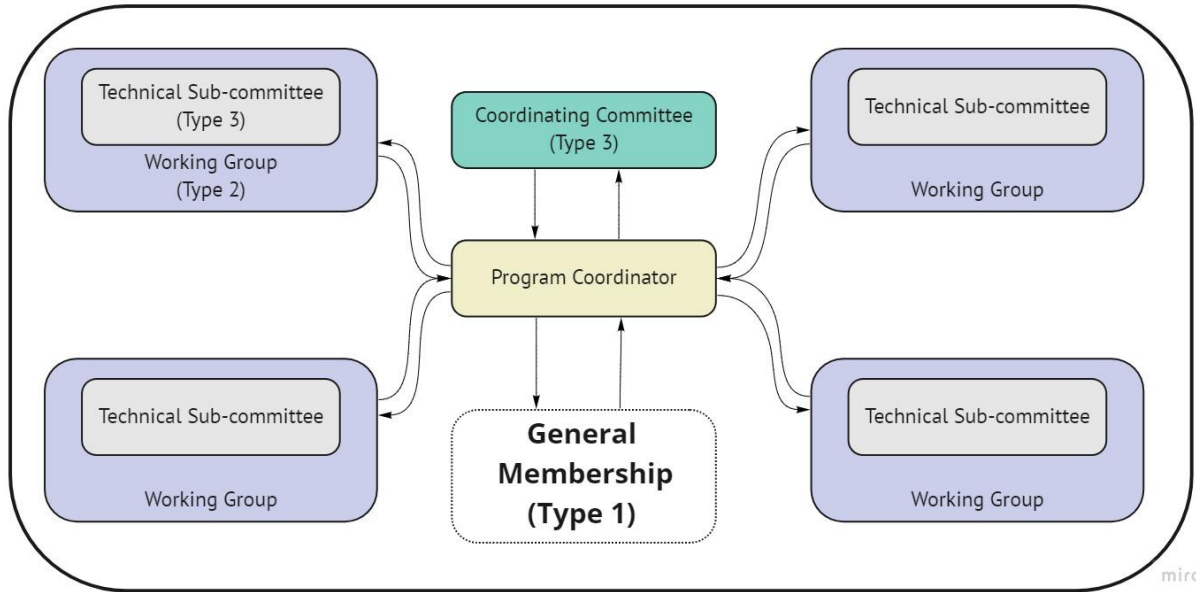


Figure 1. Schematic of the organizational structure and communication channels of the Pacific Northwest Research Group.

General Membership -

Individuals who wish to be a part of the group, but not on a working group, technical sub-committee or coordinating committee, will be considered an ‘interested party’ or general member. These members may include individuals interested in following/tracking the PCRГ’s work with the hope of more active participation in the future, volunteers assisting in PCRГ-guided research, etc. General members may request to join a working group or receive communications specific to a working group at any time, and may vote in the PCRГ coordinating committee election (detailed below).

Working Groups and Technical Sub-committees -

The working groups are charged with developing and implementing strategic activities that contribute to the goals and mission of the PCRГ, whether that be through the initiation of research projects or responding to broader PCRГ needs (e.g., community engagement). Working group membership is based primarily upon the level of participation by any individual in the research planning and/or project implementation process. Each working group will be led by a technical sub-committee, consisting of 3-5 working group members who volunteered, or were nominated, and then were confirmed by the Coordinating Committee. Both the working groups and their associated technical sub-committees will meet at a frequency that is deemed appropriate by the working group.

The technical sub-committees will:

1. Direct the PCRГ Program Coordinator in the coordination of working group activities.
2. Provide updates on working group progress at PCRГ meetings.
3. Act as lead point of contact for internal and external communications.
4. Make decisions regarding research plans/protocols, research results, communications, and publications.

Working groups developing research projects will:

1. Develop projects guided by the research priorities identified in annual meetings and in conversation with the Coordinating Committee.
2. Compile and analyze existing information. Develop hypotheses and research plans that are collaborative, both within and outside of the PCRG, and seek to synergize with other PCRG efforts.
3. Write proposals and actively seek funding for research activities in collaboration with other PCRG members and individuals outside of the PCRG.
4. Implement and track progress of research projects.
5. Develop protocols to ensure standardized data collection. Provide a QA/QC document for each data type collected to establish a minimum standard for data to be used in further analyses.
6. Disseminate the research results and work with the Coordinating Committee to make recommendations for improving Dungeness crab management. Publish the research results independently and/or provide the research results, general conclusions, and specific recommendations for improving Dungeness crab management in various PCRG reports and documents.

The working groups will operate independently of one another, but strive to ensure their strategies and goals are well aligned. All-member, bi-annual meetings will be held to help facilitate this coordination, but additional communication between working groups/technical sub-committee members is encouraged. The technical sub-committees report to the Coordinating Committee and Program Coordinator, who will assist in organizing and facilitating regular working group and technical sub-committee meetings.

Coordinating Committee -

The Coordinating Committee helps guide the PCRG, provides oversight, maintains coordination with the relevant agencies and other initiatives, advocates for and helps identify funding opportunities for prioritized research, and works to ensure that PCRG research reflects current management and scientific priorities. This Committee should adequately represent the diversity of agencies involved in the PCRG, a composition consisting of representatives from tribes, state/provincial agencies, federal agencies, academia, nonprofits and industry. In general, it is anticipated that the Coordinating Committee will strive to be representative of the entities participating in working groups.

Any PCRG member can sit on the Coordinating Committee if nominated and elected. Coordinating Committee elections will be held every year, with 3 or 4 positions being voted on in alternating years, and all PCRG members are eligible to vote on nominated Coordinating Committee members. The committee will be composed of seven (7) members at a time: three (3) tribal representatives, one (1) state representative, two (2) federal/academic/nonprofit/industry/other representatives, and one (1) 'open' representative (this person could be from any of the aforementioned groups). The Coordinating Committee will be expected to meet between 6 and 12 times a year with the PCRG Program Coordinator.

The Coordinating Committee will:

1. Provide PCRG oversight;
2. Review, help finalize, and rank the research priorities and subsequent research plans;

3. Maintain coordination and communications among participating parties;
4. Develop work plans for the PCRG Program Coordinator;
5. Serve as an interface with other relevant initiatives;
6. Develop a 5-year strategic plan.

PCRG Program Coordinator(s) -

The PCRG Program Coordinator will provide project facilitation, communications, and fundraising support for the PCRG. Specifically, the PCRG Program Coordinator will:

1. Coordinate and facilitate meetings to develop the research plans and maintain collaborative research efforts.
2. Organize PCRG member meetings.
3. Organize other workshops to facilitate engagement with the broader community interested in the research or management priorities outlined by PCRG.
4. Maintain complete and accurate records of the matters discussed, decisions made, and actions recommended during meetings (including Coordinating Committee meetings).
5. Distribute meeting summaries, decisions, and action items, reports, and other documents to the working groups, technical sub-committees, and the Coordinating Committee.
6. Develop and maintain the PCRG website and social media for collaboration and outreach.
7. Support data management including developing and maintaining a secure location for PCRG member data and data products.
8. Compile and help evaluate research trends and, as interest and qualifications dictate, assist in the writing and publishing of peer-reviewed papers.
9. Develop and help pursue funding mechanisms for research.
10. Perform communications and outreach, such as through the website, presentations at workshops and conferences, and other various forms of media.

This is a full to part-time paid position and a hiring team will be formed at the direction of the Coordinating Committee to fill this position when vacant.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

Convening Meetings

- Meetings for the PCRG will be held at the time and place chosen by the Coordinating Committee.
- Meetings for working groups will be held at the time and place chosen by the associated technical sub-committee.
- The PCRG will hold a minimum of two all-member meetings per year, however, more meetings may be planned as necessary. Working groups will determine the appropriate number of meetings per year at their origination, as agreed upon by working group members.
- PCRG members and relevant working groups/technical sub-committee members will be informed of meetings through email at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Code of Conduct

All PCRG members and PCRG meeting participants must be treated with respect, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, ethnicity, ability, religion, language, professional status, institution, veteran status, or age. As a group, the expectation is that there is space for differences

in perspective and that all PCRG members and PCRG meeting participants will abide by the Code of Conduct. PCRG aspires to be an organization that leads with its values, and embraces diversity, respect, and collaboration as vital to our learning culture.

Expected behavior includes (but is not limited to):

- Treating all other members and meeting participants with respect and consideration.
- Speaking from your own experience and critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Respecting the rules and policies of meeting venues.
- Abiding by principles of academic integrity and ethical professional conduct.

In the case of a violation of the Code of Conduct, the affected parties are encouraged to notify the Program Coordinator or any member of the Coordinating Committee (contact info listed on website) and work to address/resolve issues (see 'Conflict Resolution' below). Affected parties can also utilize the anonymous [report form](#) to document/report any incidents

COMMUNICATION:

The PCRG Program Coordinator will act as the point of contact for communications inquiries and requests to the working groups and Coordinating Committee. The PCRG Coordinator will ensure that these communications are promptly conveyed to the appropriate committee or PCRG member. All technical sub-committee members, Coordinating Committee members, and the PCRG Program Coordinator are authorized to act as PCRG spokespeople, when appropriate, to communicate their research. In the case of communication regarding specific papers or reports, the named authors should be the main points of contact.

The PCRG Program Coordinator will manage all PCRG social media accounts. In the case of media inquiries, contacted PCRG members should notify the Program Coordinator. PCRG members should also refer to the suggested language provided below (which will also be on the PCRG website) in speaking with media representatives or in public presentations.

“The Pacific Northwest Crab Research Group seeks to inform the sustainable management of Dungeness crab populations by pursuing research that will provide the best available science to resource managers. The PCRG itself has no managerial authority over the Dungeness crab fishery.”

DECISION-MAKING:

Decisions made by the Coordinating Committee and technical sub-committees will be by consensus. Whenever possible, the Coordinating Committees and technical sub-committees should clearly articulate those decisions and the decision-making process to working groups and the general member body. When appropriate for a particular decision, the Coordinating Committee may solicit feedback and input from the larger group(s) to guide their decision-making. In the event of an impasse (inability to reach consensus) by a sub-committee, the matter will be referred to the Coordinating Committee. In the event of an impasse at the Coordinating Committee level, decisions may be resolved by a two-thirds majority vote of the full PCRG membership body.

For research planning, PCRG has created a research guide where members ranked topics in order of priority (see “Research Guide for Dungeness Crab in the Pacific Northwest”, IN DEVELOPMENT). These research priorities will be revisited and updated regularly, and will be a process that involves the entire PCRG member body.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

If a conflict or dispute arises, PCRG members agree to:

- Work with the Program Coordinator, Coordinating Committee, and any other affected party to try to resolve the problem;
- Revisit the PCRG Code of Conduct (above);
- Revisit the goals of the PCRG and look at the conflict in light of these goals;
- Continue to comply with all responsibilities under this Charter throughout the conflict or dispute resolution process;
- Abide by any final decision of the Coordinating Committee, which has the authority to resolve any conflict or dispute between PCRG members and/or arising under this Charter. Such authority shall be exercised if necessary and requires consensus among the Coordinating Committee.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT & GRANT PROPOSALS:

If any individual (member or non-member) requests a letter of support from the PCRG for a grant proposal they should submit a request to the Program Coordinator with a draft or overview of their proposal, allowing at least 2 weeks for the Coordinating Committee to review.

For any grant proposals that will be leveraging the PCRG Program Coordinator’s time, it is expected that commensurate funding for that time will be written into the proposal’s budget. The Program Coordinator and Coordinating Committee will work with individuals submitting these proposals on a case by case basis to determine the appropriate funding request.

PUBLICATIONS:

It is assumed that working group members will pursue peer-reviewed science papers associated with the work of these projects as individual investigators, as groups within the PCRG, or with colleagues outside the PCRG. Interim research progress reports and/or annual data summary reports will also be produced by the PCRG as a whole to be shared internally and externally, as appropriate and in accordance with the terms of the Data Sharing Agreement (IN DEVELOPMENT). Papers associated with PCRG products such as research plans/protocols will likely be published and pertinent information resulting from the research findings will be shared with fishery managers.

Authorship for individual or group papers associated with the PCRG should be determined by the relative contributions of the various authors to the manuscript (see Brand et al. 2015 and McNutt et al. 2018 for a suggested framework). Alternative approaches, such as for research plans/protocols, include strict alphabetical order of PCRG members or the appropriate working group/technical sub-committee or members listed by order of contribution to the document, as appropriate.

Before reporting results to a broader audience, new findings should be presented and discussed with the appropriate working groups and members who were invested in the effort to develop the data. If the findings disproportionately affect any particular groups outside the PCRG membership, that group or groups should also be notified before broadly communicating results. This notification to outside groups or individuals is recommended as a professional courtesy and does not confer editorial or pre-publication approval authority.

When preparing a PCRG-authored manuscript or technical report, authors will contact the appropriate technical sub-committee involved and request participation from an internal reviewer. In addition, a member of the Coordinating Committee and the PCRG Coordinator will review the manuscript or technical report. A 10 business day comment period is requested for PCRG-authored manuscripts and technical reports by the technical sub-committees involved. To manage comments and expedite the review process, authors will not be required to address comments submitted after the 10 day period. This review process is in addition to, not in lieu of, standard review processes instituted by participating members and their respective agencies who are authors of a particular manuscript.

Required Acknowledgements:

Publications authored as part of, or using data from, a PCRG-sanctioned project are asked to consistently acknowledge the PCRG. In addition, it is suggested that all relevant working groups/technical sub-committees and/or specific individuals or supporting parties who contributed to the design and/or implementation of the study are acknowledged, as appropriate, as well as funding sources.