Alternative SSC Organizational Structures for Council Consideration

Gulf Council Administrative/Budget Committee

January 2018

The Gulf Council has a unique SSC structure with a Standing SSC supplemented by 7 different Special SSCs. Other regional Councils operate with only a single SSC. The Gulf Council has utilized Special SSCs since the SSC was formed in 1977. The purpose of the Special SSCs was to include people with life history expertise to supplement the more general expertise of the Standing SSC which, at that time, consisted of only 8 members. Today we have 17 members on the Standing SSC and up to 5 members on each of the Special SSCs. A major difference in the Standing SSC today, relative to the original Standing SSC, is that we now tend to appoint people with specific expertise. The number of participants currently involved in our SSC has become cumbersome, and convening the Special SSCs concurrent with the Standing SSC usually requires us to convene up to three Special SSCs due to the diversity of topics covered. Thus, our meeting space is becoming too crowded for effective discussion. It is also more expensive when we have to meet at a hotel rather than in our office, partly due to needing a larger room to accommodate a larger group with the special SSCs.

Staff would like the Council to consider some modifications to the existing SSC structure.

Alternative 1. Status Quo
The Standing SSC currently has 17 members with another 28 members on the Special SSCs.

The Special SSCs include: Coral, Mackerel, Red Drum, Reef Fish, Shrimp, Spiny Lobster, and Socioeconomic SSCs.

From Council SOPPs:

The Standing SSC will consist of 18 individuals that include approximately 7 stock assessment or quantitative biologists/ecologists; 3 ecosystem scientists; 3 economists; 3 quantitative anthropologists/sociologists; and 2 other scientists. Each Special SSC will consist of no more than 5 members. The Special Socioeconomic SSC will be comprised of 2 economists and 2 Anthropologists/Sociologists.

In 2015 the Council appointed 20 people to the SSC, but three people left the SSC since being appointed.

Alternative 2. Reduce the size of the Standing SSC and add two additional Special SSCs

Reduce the size of Standing SSC to 13 and keep Special SSCs to 5 or fewer people, plus add two additional Special SSCs for “Stock Assessment” and “Ecosystem Modeling’.

Change the SOPPs to read:

The Standing SSC will consist of 13 individuals that include approximately 5 stock assessment or quantitative biologists/ecologists; 2 ecosystem scientists; 2 economists; 2 quantitative anthropologists/sociologists; and 2 other scientists. Each Special SSC will consist of no more than 5 members. The Special Socioeconomic SSC will be comprised of 2 economists and 2 Anthropologists/Sociologists.

Alternative 3. Reduce only the size of the Special SSCs and add two additional Special SSCs

Keep the current size of Standing SSC at 18 members and reduce Special SSCs to 3 or fewer people, plus add two additional Special SSCs for "Stock Assessment" and "Ecosystem Modeling'.

Change the SOPPs to read:

Each Special SSC will consist of no more than 3 members. ~~The Special Socioeconomic SSC will be comprised of 2 economists and 2 Anthropologists/Sociologists.~~

Alternative 4. Keep the Standing SSC at 18 people and eliminate the Special SSCs

The size of our standing SSC is in line with the SSCs of other regional Councils, except that the other Councils don't have supplemental special SSCs (the South Atlantic Council has a separate Socioeconomic Panel).

NEFMC	– 18 SSC members
MAFMC	– 18 SSC members
SAFMC	– 19 SSC members, 10 SEP members
CFMC	-- 10 SSC members
PFMC	– 19 SSC members – members are assigned to 1 to 3 of 6 sub-committees.
NPFMC	– 15 SSC members
WPFMC	– 17 SSC members

Instead of having Special SSCs, we can let the Standing SSC develop appropriate sub-committees when deemed necessary.