

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

OUTREACH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort Clearwater Beach, Florida

June 20, 2016

VOTING MEMBERS

- Roy Williams.....Florida
- Pamela Dana.....Florida
- Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- Myron Fischer (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
- Greg Stunz.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- Kevin Anson (designee for Chris Blankenship).....Alabama
- Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- Doug Boyd.....Texas
- Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
- John Greene.....Alabama
- Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
- Kelly Lucas (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
- Campo Matens.....Louisiana
- Robin Riechers.....Texas
- Ed Swindell.....Louisiana

STAFF

- Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
- John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist - Statistician
- Douglas Gregory.....Executive Director
- Morgan Kilgour.....Fishery Biologist
- Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- Emily Muehlstein.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist
- Kathy Pereira.....Meeting Planner/Travel Coordinator
- Charlene Ponce.....Public Information Officer
- Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- Charlotte Schiaffo.....Research and Human Resource Librarian
- Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- Patrick Banks.....LA
- Luiz Barbieri.....GMFMC SSC
- Jeff Barger.....Ocean Conservancy, Austin, TX
- Anna Beckwith.....SAFMC
- Randall Bibler.....FWC DLE

1 Chris Blankenship.....AL
2 Steve Branstetter.....NMFS
3 J.P. Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
4 Jim Clements.....Carrabelle, FL
5 Lee Crockett.....Pew Charitable Trusts
6 Jocelyn D'Ambrosio.....NOAA GC
7 Martin Fisher.....St. Petersburg, FL
8 Matthew Freeman.....FWC DLE
9 Susan Gerhart.....NMFS
10 Chad Hanson.....Pew Charitable Trusts
11 Frank Helies.....Tampa, FL
12 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA
13 Michael Kelly.....CLS America
14 Benny Gallaway.....LGL, TX
15 Mike Larkin.....NMFS
16 Rich Malinowski.....NMFS
17 Sharon McBreen.....Pew Charitable Trusts, Orlando, FL
18 Jack McGovern.....NMFS
19 C. Melancon.....Baton Rouge, LA
20 Cynthia Meyer.....NOAA
21 Daniel Padron.....Key West, FL
22 Todd Phillips.....Ocean Conservancy, Austin, TX
23 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC
24 Lance Robinson.....TX
25 Sunny Snider.....NMFS
26 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS
27 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
28 Michael Travis.....NMFS
29 Tom Wheatley.....Pew Charitable Trusts, Tampa, FL
30 Marlon White.....NOAA/NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
31 Roger Young.....FWC DLE

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1 The Outreach & Education Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the Hilton Clearwater Beach
3 Resort, Clearwater Beach, Florida, Monday morning, June 20,
4 2016, and was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chairman Roy
5 Williams.

6
7 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
8 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
9 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**

10
11 **CHAIRMAN ROY WILLIAMS:** The agenda for the Outreach and
12 Education Committee appears at Tab O, Number 1, and the first
13 item of business is Adoption of the Agenda. First, let me just
14 say the committee members are myself, Dr. Stunz, Myron Fischer,
15 somebody from the Coast Guard, and I doubt if Rear Admiral
16 Callahan is here, but Dr. Dana, Dale Diaz, and David Walker. Is
17 there any objection to the agenda that is before us? Hearing no
18 objection, we will adopt that agenda.

19
20 The next thing is Approval of the Minutes, which are at Tab O,
21 Number 2. We probably ought to have a formal motion here.
22 Could we get a motion to adopt the minutes, approve the minutes?

23
24 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** So moved.

25
26 **MR. MYRON FISCHER:** Second.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Moved by Dr. Stunz and second by Myron
29 Fischer. Is there discussion? Any objection? Hearing none,
30 the minutes are approved. The next item is Item III, Action
31 Guide and Next Steps, and that appears to Tab O, Number 3, and I
32 will turn it over to Charlene Ponce at this point. Charlene.

33
34 **REPORT OF O&E TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

35
36 **MS. CHARLENE PONCE:** Good morning. I just want to refresh your
37 memory. Last year, we reorganized the Outreach & Education
38 Advisory Panel, and we made it into a technical committee. We
39 added Sea Grant members, NGOs, and a media representative, and
40 so we've sort of expanded their scope from being just an
41 advisory body to they're also going to partner with us and
42 actually help us with our communications, help us get our
43 communications out.

44
45 We had our first meeting at the beginning of June, and we hope
46 to meet at least once a year to work on council education and
47 outreach issues. I guess I will just go on to the report.

1 The committee met on June 1 and 2 at the council office. They
2 elected their Chair and Vice Chair. Shelly Krueger was elected
3 Chair and Rich Abrams was elected Vice Chair. The committee
4 approved the previous meeting minutes as written, and then staff
5 gave the newly-appointed members sort of an orientation on what
6 to expect.

7
8 Staff then gave an overview of current council outreach,
9 education and communication initiatives, and a summary of the
10 follow-up stakeholder communication survey that we conducted
11 late last year. Just to go a little bit into the survey, some
12 of you will recall that we did a stakeholder communication
13 survey back in 2013, and that was sort of just to get a baseline
14 on how effective our communications are, what people are using,
15 what is their go-to method, and we did a follow-up survey late
16 last year.

17
18 I won't go over the whole survey, but I would like to point out
19 a couple of the things that stood out. We had questions on
20 there about our website and our communications in general, how
21 easy or how difficult is it to navigate our website and how easy
22 or difficult are our communications to understand, and we
23 noticed that we had a 3 percent increase in difficulty for both
24 of those things.

25
26 We looked our analytics. Emily and I have been keeping
27 analytics on all of our communications for probably the last
28 three years, and we noticed that, while there was an increase in
29 people's difficulty to understand, we also noticed that we had a
30 50 percent increase in our website traffic from the last survey
31 to the most recent survey, and we also had a 45 percent increase
32 in our email subscribers, and so it's possible that the reason
33 that we had that 3 percent increase in difficulty was because
34 we've had such an increase in the number of people who are
35 actually looking at our materials.

36
37 One of the other things that I wanted to point out is that we
38 figured out that YouTube, our blog, and our Facebook page came
39 back -- They ranked basically they same as they did in 2013, as
40 underutilized. In follow-up questions, we found that the reason
41 they weren't being used is people didn't know they existed, but
42 a follow-up question to that showed that, now that people know
43 that they're available, they will continue to use them, and so
44 we feel like we will gain, both in awareness and in usage, on
45 those three things.

46
47 Here again, we looked at our analytics for these three things,
48 and we found that, from 2013 to 2015, our YouTube usage has gone

1 up by about 75 percent. Our blog reads have gone up by as much
2 as 74 percent. Our Facebook likes have doubled and then, in
3 Facebook, you can measure engagements and reach, and engagements
4 went up by 57 and reach went up by 78, and so we feel like we're
5 really making some gains in our reach, and we're kind of proud
6 of that.

7
8 At the end of the survey, we had an opportunity for folks to
9 give comments. Not everybody commented. We got about 112
10 comments, and 25 percent of those were not related to
11 communications. It was we want a year-round red snapper season
12 and raise the bag limit. Another 25 percent were very
13 complimentary of our communications, and then 50 percent we sort
14 of divided up into three categories: awareness, perception, and
15 areas of improvement.

16
17 Based on those results, the communications group, our panel, our
18 committee, developed a spreadsheet. It's on page 3 of your
19 backup, and it sort of addresses the challenges that we
20 identified, and we came up with this matrix, and I won't go
21 through the whole thing, but I will just highlight some of the
22 things that we plan on doing.

23
24 Again, we plan on doing these with our member partners, which is
25 our technical committee: partnering with fishermen in the
26 community to build stronger relationships to mitigate
27 adversarial interactions; working with our partners on the
28 Outreach and Education Technical Committee to disseminate
29 targeted publications; using translation services for written
30 materials, when appropriate, and real-time interpreters during
31 live meetings; develop more info-graphics and videos to sort of
32 make it easier to understand the information that we're trying
33 to impart on people; develop protocols to recognize
34 participation in public hearings and scoping meetings and
35 provide follow-up information on council actions; develop a
36 network of tackle shops for information dissemination and hold a
37 series of workshops to explain how data are collected.

38
39 On that one, some of you have participated in the Marine
40 Resource Education Program Science Workshop, and so what we have
41 in mind for this sort of a much more pared down version of that,
42 and try to go around the Gulf and try to get people to
43 understand how data are collected and how they are used.

44
45 Then staff provided an overview of the Gulf Council Data Portal.
46 You are going to get a presentation on that later in the week,
47 but the technical committee heard that and discussed potential
48 outreach methods to inform people about deep-water corals and

1 the tools that we have available on our portal.

2
3 They gave us suggestions on how to do that, including presenting
4 at professional conferences, reaching out to online fishing
5 magazines, marine sanctuaries, diving clubs, and other
6 organizations.

7
8 Then, finally, the committee discussed the potential for a
9 shared photo library. We are always looking for new photos to
10 use in our publications, as are state representatives, and so we
11 thought we could come together and come up with some sort of
12 portal where we could share photographs. We talked about
13 administrative rights and photo credits, and so Emily and I will
14 be putting together a set of protocols on how to set that up and
15 how people will access it and what the rules will be.

16
17 Then, Thursday, the meeting -- It lasted pretty much all day,
18 but it was basically a training session for members and for us.
19 It was put on by the Water Words That Work folks. It had three
20 sessions: Culturally Sensitive and Targeted Outreach; Messages
21 that Connect; and Combat Communication for Conservationists. It
22 was very interactive. We broke out into small groups, and we
23 had little scenarios that we were given and we had to work
24 through them. Unless Roy has anything he wants to add, that's
25 really all I have.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Thank you very much, Charlene. I have
28 nothing else. Are there questions for Charlene? Dale Diaz and
29 then Dr. Stunz.

30
31 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Thank you, Ms. Ponce. When you were going
32 through this multicultural approach to communications, and maybe
33 having people available to translate, I am just trying to figure
34 out how you're going to know ahead of time. I mean the Gulf
35 Council meetings that I've been to in the area where I am at,
36 there just hasn't been a need for that, but I could see, on some
37 issues, where it might arise, but you wouldn't be able to be
38 prepared.

39
40 Like, in Mississippi, in the times where we've had to do these
41 translation type of things, it's mostly with the Vietnamese
42 community, and, fortunately, we have been able to know that
43 there's enough interest generated from that community ahead of
44 time to be able to set that up, but I'm just wondering how
45 you're going to be able to know ahead of time.

46
47 For the Vietnamese community in Mississippi, I would imagine, if
48 you were going to get them out, a shrimp issue might do it, but

1 how are you going to plan to deal with that ahead of time and be
2 prepared?

3
4 **MS. PONCE:** Well, so, we've done it in the past, actually. Doug
5 had us hire an interpreter for a meeting we had in the Keys,
6 because we knew we were going to have a large Hispanic
7 population present, and, again, you're right that we're not
8 going to always know, but there are going to be times when,
9 based on the issue and the location, we can get a pretty good
10 idea, and so we had an interpreter, and it was very successful,
11 and people were very happy that we did it.

12
13 For example, when we do 17B, that might be a good time to get a
14 Vietnamese interpreter when we're out in the areas where we know
15 that that community is going to be present, and so it's really
16 something that we're just going to have to trial and error.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Dr. Stunz.

19
20 **DR. STUNZ:** I am just wondering, and I'm new to the committee,
21 and so I'm just trying to learn. I am not real clear, and maybe
22 there is some documents I can read, and I couldn't quite find it
23 easily from the webpage, but what's the goals for the committee?
24 Is this to get information out or what's the primary goals? The
25 reason I'm asking that is because, depending on what our goals
26 are -- I mean obviously if you look on the Facebook, for
27 example, it's pretty darned adversarial, and do we want that or
28 do we not? I don't know. Is it a place to vent or do we want
29 to do more I guess what I might consider positive things, like
30 outreach of information and outreach of better ways to fish or
31 maybe ways to reduce discard mortality. I don't know. You name
32 it, but it seems to me that it's -- I am not real clear on what
33 exactly we're trying to do.

34
35 Then, finally, my last question for, I guess I'm not sure who,
36 is about some analytics to look at -- You guys just presented
37 some good stuff, but you can get analytics that show on a
38 regional basis where people are coming from and where they're
39 going to your outreach media, and it allows us to see if we're
40 missing certain groups or certain areas, and I would be
41 interested to see that maybe next time. I mean this isn't some
42 pressing issue, but I'm trying to, in general, figure out where
43 do we want to be in terms of our outreach, particularly as it
44 relates to social media.

45
46 **MS. PONCE:** The charge of this group is essentially for them to
47 assist us, staff and the council, in meeting the goals and
48 objectives that are outlined in our strategic communications

1 plan, and I can send you a copy of that. I'm not sure if it's
2 on our website, but it was approved by the council. They would
3 do that by sharing their knowledge and their expertise and
4 resources and helping us disseminate information to the
5 different groups.

6
7 For example, a lot of the states will take our press releases or
8 meeting notices and send them out, but they explain to us that
9 sometimes that's cumbersome, because we have ten different
10 meetings, and maybe only one is in Mississippi, and they've got
11 to cull through this whole list of meetings.

12
13 We came up with a solution that we'll send out our regular
14 meeting notice, but we will do a separate one for each state, so
15 that they don't have to repackage. They can just send it out,
16 and so, really, they're going to be our partners and help us
17 develop tactics on how to get information out.

18
19 We didn't really discuss the value of social media. We discuss
20 that in our office a lot, and I think we have differing views on
21 that, but, as you can see by our analytics, I mean we're
22 reaching an enormous amount of people, and these numbers are
23 from 2015, and so I know it's grown since then.

24
25 I know Emily has some opinions on that, and I don't know if we
26 want to get into that discussion today, but, essentially, what
27 this group is doing is they are sort of serving in an advisory
28 capacity on improving our communications and developing new
29 methods and also serving as boots-on-the-ground and helping us
30 disseminate that information.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Okay. Greg, do you have -- Did that answer
33 all of your questions?

34
35 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes, it's getting there. If you could provide the
36 communications plan, and I'm sure I could dig it up, but it
37 would be nice if you just sent that section around. It would be
38 good, so I can be a better committee member and figure out what
39 the real goals are, but also, the analytics you're talking about
40 -- In the report that I am looking at, and maybe I'm just
41 missing something, but where can those analytics be found?

42
43 **MS. PONCE:** Those are something that Emily and I just do on a
44 quarterly basis. We keep them on our server in the office. I
45 can share those with you, of course.

46
47 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes, just for informational purposes. I would be
48 interested just to see, so we can kind of get a feel for kind of

1 what is what. I guess my other concern would be the adversarial
2 thing. If you guys are looking on our Facebook page at the Gulf
3 Council, it sounds like our discussions around the table are
4 much worse than public testimony, and so I can't help but
5 wonder, when I read that, and I read it just to get a general
6 tone kind of for what's going on. Pretty much what you see on
7 there is the polar ends of the viewpoints and not so much in the
8 middle.

9
10 That's informative, in a way, but I am also questioning, is that
11 a positive thing? To me, it doesn't seem as positive as putting
12 out some -- I am trying to remember the last thing Emily sent
13 about something for a real positive basis, but it always seems
14 like it gets hijacked back into the red snapper controversy.

15
16 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** I can address that really quickly, just
17 since it's on the table. The thing about Facebook is you're
18 right that it is very adversarial, and there are some theories
19 on participation that say basically the 10 percent from either
20 side of the scale is going to be your vocal minority, and so
21 those tend to be -- There is about twenty people that
22 continuously post on the social media feed.

23
24 What you're not seeing sort of as a council member and you're
25 not an administrator of the page, is, for example, our email
26 list has about 5,000 people on it, and one Facebook post will
27 get up to 60,000 in a day, and so the one thing that Facebook
28 does that you can't really get from any other avenue is it
29 spreads like wildfire.

30
31 If you look at 60,000 people getting that information and then
32 twenty-five people saying something rude, that's pretty good,
33 actually. It doesn't sound good and it doesn't feel good a lot
34 of the time, but, if you want, we can sort of discuss the way
35 that I moderate that page.

36
37 I mean there is some wisdom to not letting people comment at
38 all, and that does though sort of shut down the dialogue that
39 could happen, and so there are some theories that we can go
40 into, and I would be happy to discuss that on any level at any
41 time if it's something that makes you guys uncomfortable, but I
42 would say that really, just for the reach and for that automatic
43 instant gratification of being able to get our information off,
44 that social media, Facebook in particular, is our most effective
45 way to say a sentence and get the most people on the Gulf Coast
46 that are fishermen and that are engaged in our community to get
47 that information.

48

1 **DR. STUNZ:** I think that's great, Emily, and I think sharing
2 some of those analytics that you're talking about would really
3 help, because, as a public person going in and just looking at
4 the Facebook and not being able to have access, all you see is
5 just sort of this negative back-and-forth stuff.

6
7 I am not saying at all that we go away from social media. I
8 mean I am all about social media, but I am just trying to
9 portray it in the most positive way possible, and sometimes when
10 I look on there, it's not.

11
12 If you haven't, you probably should look on there to see, and is
13 that something we want or do we -- I don't really know where I
14 am on this, but do we curb some of that ability to post those
15 comments or do we just let it free flow? I don't know, but,
16 from someone looking out and not realizing that reach post is
17 getting 60,000 reach or something, you just sort of see a lot of
18 negative comments up there.

19
20 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** It may seem like we don't groom it, but we do.
21 What I have seen is that actually it becomes a learning
22 opportunity. If you notice, I pretty much respond to
23 everything, even when people are being really negative, and so
24 it ends up, even if that person is not getting the point, it
25 provides an opportunity for me to answer technically or with a
26 link to a blog or with an explanation of some kind.

27
28 I guess my thought, and maybe I'm wrong, is that, even if
29 somebody is angry and they come at you and then I give a
30 response, somebody that is reading that from the outside can
31 say, hey, this guy is mad and here is how they answered, and
32 it's then a learning opportunity as well. Again, I am happy to
33 sort of discuss how that happens.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Okay. Doug, did you still want to speak?
36 Then I have Kevin after that.

37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY:** I encourage all the council
39 members to monitor our Facebook page. If this concern is of
40 more than just one or two people, yes, we can do that. Now,
41 what we have done, in extreme cases, is kick people off the
42 Facebook page. Sometimes it's been effective and sometimes they
43 sign on as other names, but it is disconcerting to hear all that
44 negativity and the misinformation that goes on there, but you
45 heard from Emily the broader picture of it too, but it is an
46 ongoing discussion we have within the office, because it
47 disturbs us as well.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** A quick question for you. When you say you
2 have kicked them off and they sign on under a different name --
3 I am not a Facebooker, and so I don't know the answer to this,
4 but do people sign on in their real name, or do they have one of
5 these phony names like a lot of the forums have?
6

7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Most people use their own name, and
8 it's easy to recognize who they are.
9

10 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** That's a distinct advantage of using Facebook
11 over something like going onto one of those fishing forums, like
12 if you think about the Whole Truth or Florida Sportsmen, where
13 they can sign on under an alias and don't have to be a person.
14 In order to participate in our Facebook page, you have to have
15 your own account, which is typically populated with your family
16 and pictures of your friends, and so there is actually a sort of
17 accountability on Facebook that you don't seek or you don't get
18 from some of those other fishing forums that can be just as
19 negative, if not worse, because there is an external moderator
20 instead of us that can determine sort of what the dialogue looks
21 like.
22

23 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Thank you. Kevin.
24

25 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you. I'm not on your committee, but,
26 Dr. Stunz, I too had wrestled with what's the benefit and what
27 are we getting or gaining from having Facebook interactions to
28 the folks that post comments on there, and I talked to Emily
29 about this on one or two occasions in the past, and I think, in
30 the end, at least right now, my opinion is that there is some
31 benefit in having that direct interaction, where Emily can
32 respond to these comments and to the folks that are bringing up
33 negative comments about the process, because it does two things.
34

35 It provides an opportunity to allow them to vent, but then for
36 Emily, representing the council at least in that venue, to
37 provide some feedback, and that negativity, I think, draws in
38 folks, and so it's kind of a double-edged sword. People like
39 conflict, because it kind of gets their juices flowing and kind
40 of gets them drawn into that thing, and so, for now, I see that,
41 overall, there is a benefit to having it the way it's set up
42 right now.
43

44 Now, as far as addressing some of those more negative folks or
45 people that have negative comments, maybe Emily could couch her
46 response a little bit more of, well, that's a good point.
47 However, the council considered that and this is their decision
48 or this is what the decision is, and so maybe just the tone or

1 how she responds might be something that could kind of assuage
2 what you're maybe getting at.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** All right. Any other questions for Emily
5 from the committee or the council? All right. Hearing none, is
6 there any other business to come before the committee? Thank
7 you very much, Charlene, for your presentation. I believe we
8 are adjourned.

9

10 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m., June 20, 2016.)

11

12

- - -