1   GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2
3   DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE
4
5 Hyatt Centric French Quarter   New Orleans, Louisiana
6
7   AUGUST 14, 2019
8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**
10 Greg Stunz...Texas
11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon)...................Alabama
12 Patrick Banks..Louisiana
13 Susan Boggs..Alabama
14 Roy Crabtree..NMFS
15 Dave Donaldson...GSMFC
16 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley)..............Florida
17 John Sanchez...Florida
18 Joe Spraggins..Mississippi
19 Ed Swindell..Louisiana
20
21 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**
22 Leann Bosarge..Mississippi
23 Glenn Constant..USFWS
24 Dale Diaz..Mississippi
25 Jonathan Dugas...Louisiana
26 Phil Dyskow..Florida
27 Tom Frazer...Florida
28 Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers)...............Texas
29 Bob Shipp..Alabama
30 Lt. Mark Zanowicz...USCG
31
32 **STAFF**
33 Matt Freeman..Economist
34 John Froeschke....................................Deputy Director
35 Beth Hager...................................Administrative Officer
36 Lisa Hollensead..............................Fishery Biologist
37 Ava Lasseter...Anthropologist
38 Mara Levy...............................NOAA General Counsel
39 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer........................Fishery Biologist
40 Emily Muehlstein....................Public Information Officer
41 Ryan Rindone..................Fishery Biologist & SEDAR Liaison
42 Bernadine Roy...............................Office Manager
43 Carrie Simmons............................Executive Director
44
45 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**
46 Greg Ball..Galveston, TX
47 Avery Bates.........Organized Seafood Association of Alabama, AL
48 Chester Brewer..SAFMC

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 1   James Bruce.........................................Magnolia, MS
 2   Nikki Bruce.........................................Magnolia, MS
 3   David Chalone......................................Covington, LA
 4   Troy Frady..................................................AL
 5   Susan Gerhart.............................................NMFS
 6   Benji Kelley....................................Panama City, FL
 7   George LaPointe..............................Net Gains Alliance
 8   John Law........................................Panama City, FL
 9   Kevin McIntosh............................................NMFS
10   Bart Niquet.....................................Lynn Haven, FL
11   Harlon Pearce.......................................Kenner, LA
12   Chance Seymour...............................Ocean Springs, MS
13   Clarence Seymour.............................Ocean Springs, MS
14   Jessica Stephen...........................................NMFS
15   Randy Sobieraj...............................Casselberry, FL
16   Bob Zales.......................................Panama City, FL
17
18                            - - -
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 1                         TABLE OF CONTENTS
 2
```

TABLE OF CONTENTS

```
22                              - - -
23
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1 The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the Hyatt Centric French Quarter,
3 New Orleans, Louisiana, Wednesday morning, August 14, 2019, and
4 was called to order by Chairman Greg Stunz.
5
6   **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7   **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8   **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9
10 **CHAIRMAN GREG STUNZ:** We will call to order the Data Collection
11 Committee. As far as the members of this committee, I am the
12 Chair, and Mr. Anson is the Vice Chair. Mr. Banks, Ms. Boggs,
13 Dr. Crabtree, Mr. Donaldson, Ms. Guyas, Mr. Sanchez, General
14 Spraggins, and Mr. Swindell, and everyone is present here today.
15
16 The first item of business, and the materials for this committee
17 can be found in Tab F, and the first is the Adoption of the
18 Agenda. If the committee has had a chance to look at the
19 agenda, is there a motion to accept the agenda or any changes?
20 It's so moved. Is there a second? Second by Mr. Donaldson.
21 Seeing no opposition, the motion is approved.
22
23 The next item of business is Approval of the Minutes. If
24 everyone has had a chance to look at the minutes, would anyone
25 like to make a motion to approve the minutes? Motion by Mr.
26 Donalson. It's seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Seeing no opposition,
27 the minutes are approved.
28
29 Primarily, today, we have a series of presentations that will
30 come before this committee, but, before we get to that, Dr.
31 Hollensead, would you like to talk us through the action guide
32 and what can we expect today from those presentations?
33
34 **DR. LISA HOLLENSEAD:** Yes, and thank you, Dr. Stunz. The first
35 agenda item that we have is a presentation, sort of a NOAA
36 Fisheries Permit 101 presentation, and so this will give an
37 overview of the procedures for the Permits Office, and the
38 committee can take this in as some information and ask any
39 questions of Mr. Kevin McIntosh, who will be giving the
40 presentation about the permitting process.
41
42 The next agenda item will be our continued discussion of
43 identifying unique commercial trip identifiers, and Dr. Jessica
44 Stephen will give some information highlighting -- A
45 presentation highlighting and addressing data gaps associated
46 with linking VMS data with federally-permitted reef fish and
47 individual fishery quotas for the IFQ participants. After that
48 presentation, the committee can discuss and provide feedback on

4

1 ideas for improving that data collection associated with that.
2
3 After that, we'll have a presentation from Mr. George LaPointe
4 from the Net Gains Alliance. The Net Gains Alliance sort of has
5 a global initiative committed to accelerating the modernization,
6 implementation, and adoption of robust information systems to
7 support sustainable management of ocean resources. After he
8 gives his presentation, the committee can again ask questions
9 related to tasks there from the Net Gains Alliance.
10
11 Then, finally, we'll have our ongoing sort of progress reports
12 on the SEFHIER implementation. Ms. Sue Gerhart from SERO will
13 give us an update about that, as to how they're moving forward,
14 but also getting stakeholders involved in knowing what that
15 timeline for that process is as well. After her presentation,
16 the committee should also ask for any clarification regarding
17 that implementation.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Hollensead. If there is no
20 other comments or questions from the committee, I think we'll
21 just move right into the presentations. Seeing none, our first
22 presentation up is Tab F, Number 4, and Mr. McIntosh is going to
23 go through the Permitting 101 presentation.
24
25   **NOAA FISHERIES PERMIT OFFICE 101 PRESENTATION**
26
27 **MR. KEVIN MCINTOSH:** Thank you, and thank you to the council for
28 having me here today to give this overview of the permit
29 processes and the Permits Office. Just briefly, my name is
30 Kevin McIntosh, and I'm the Supervisor in the Permits Office,
31 and I've been down there since April of 2018, but I've been with
32 NOAA since 2001, in Woods Hole and St. Petersburg.
33
34 The Permits Office was established in the early 1990s, and we
35 currently manage over 19,000 permits in the Gulf of Mexico,
36 Atlantic, and the Caribbean. This slide is a brief kind of
37 overview of the application process. For permit renewals, the
38 Permits Office is going to send out a letter sixty days prior to
39 the permit expiring as a reminder to those folks that their
40 permits are expiring.
41
42 At that point, for renewal, they have the ability to either
43 renew those permits online, via our online system, to mail in a
44 paper application, or to actually visit our office in St.
45 Petersburg. We have a walk-up window in the lobby where they
46 can drop off their application and get it reviewed.
47
48 Once we receive the application, we check it into our Permit

                                 5

Information Management System, or PIMS. At that point, your
application is received, and it's into the system, and so, if
you call us and ask the status of your application, we can tell
you at that moment that it either received or we're starting to
work on it.

We have got five full-time processors now in the office, and
their job is to go to the shelf you see there in the slide and
to pull the next application in line. They are all sorted by
date, and we use the first-in-first-out method, and so we don't
move ahead for any applications, and we can't expedite any
applications. It's literally the next application in line in
queue in the process.

That processor will grab an application, and they will bring it
back to their desk, and they will work on it and review it from
start to finish. If there are no deficiencies related to that
application, they can go ahead and issue those permits and mail
them that day. If there are deficiencies, depending on what
they are, but there is a letter that's generated, and it's
mailed to the applicant with details on how to resolve those
deficiencies. Once those deficiencies are cleared up, at that
point we can issue the permits, and, again, mail them.

Just a little note that about 40 to 45 percent of our
applications, paper applications, have a deficiency for some
reason, and so we're working on getting those numbers down, and
I know that it delays the process of getting the permits back,
but we're definitely working on ways to improve those
deficiencies.

The online system, which was launched in 2015, you can now renew
thirty out of the thirty-three vessel permits. We can't handle
dealer permits right now or operator cards, and the eligibility
and the instructions are in the renewal letter that you receive
sixty days prior to your permit expiring. Once you set up your
account, and it takes about ten minutes to complete, because all
of the information related to the vessel, the permit holder, the
permits themselves, are in the system already and are pre-
populated.

There are compliance data and required documents checks in the
application, and they will identify those when we go through the
process, and then you can pay using a credit card or a bank, an
ACH. You do get your permit sooner, because, again, that first-
in-first-out method. With the online application, as soon as
you submit it to us, it's in line, and it's the queue waiting to
be processed, versus filling out a paper application and mailing

1 it, and it taking a couple of days to get to our office and
2 receiving it, and so you definitely will get your permit sooner
3 when you use the online system.
4
5 The system will email you deficiencies related to that
6 application once a week, and so you don't have to wait for a
7 paper application from us in order to know what you're missing
8 for that application, and, in the future -- We're in the very
9 early stages of developing a new system which can handle new
10 requests for permits, dealers, transfers, and possibly operator
11 cards.
12
13 The invitation code that's included in the renewal letter, that,
14 again, is sent sixty days prior to your permit expiring, and
15 it's unique and associated to the permit holder, and so, when
16 you redeem the code, depending on how your permits are owned,
17 whether it's a business or an individual, that information will
18 come up, so you know that your invitation code is correct.
19
20 Once the code has been redeemed and your online account is
21 created, you never have to use that invitation code again, and
22 the renewal letter you receive the next year will actually have
23 the email address that you used to create the account.
24
25 This is kind of small to see, but here are two side-by-side
26 comparisons of the renewal letters. On the left-hand side, down
27 at the very bottom, you will see your invitation code, and I
28 have blanked it out, because it actually is an invitation code
29 for somebody, but you can see there is an invitation code, and
30 it has the instructions on what website to go to, and then you
31 put in the invitation code and create your account, and, on the
32 right-hand side is a renewal letter for an individual that has
33 already redeemed their account, and they get a reminder of what
34 their email address is down at the bottom, and so that's what
35 your renewal letter will look like.
36
37 These next couple of slides are kind of -- Because this is the
38 Gulf Council meeting, I want to talk about the Office of Law
39 Enforcement and VMS. Because of the permitting process, the
40 reef fish permits require the Office of Law Enforcement VMS
41 group to basically check or clear any reef fish renewals, and so
42 I kind of wanted to talk about how our system interacts with
43 them and also the logbook office down in Miami.
44
45 We get a lot of questions with people calling and saying I have
46 a reef fish permit, and I spoke to the VMS group, and they told
47 me that everything is clear, but my permit still isn't issued,
48 and so I kind of wanted to give you guys a brief overview.

1
2 In the middle, where the computer is, you've got the permitting
3 system, and that's the system we log into. The Office of Law
4 Enforcement, the VMS group, they also log into that system
5 multiple times a day, and they will check to see if there are
6 any applications with reef fish permits associated with them, so
7 that they can clear them, or they can provide a reason why they
8 can't clear them.
9
10 On the right-hand side of the slide is the interaction we have
11 with the Science Center, and so Gulf shrimp data from the
12 Galveston Lab, the Miami Office pulls it every hour, and so, if
13 you submit your reporting requirements for your Gulf shrimp to
14 the Galveston Lab, it's going to take at least an hour for that
15 information to get to Miami, and then we pull every fifteen
16 minutes from Miami, and so it could take upwards of an hour-and-
17 fifteen minutes for us to get that information in our permits
18 system.
19
20 We get the calls that we've spoken to somebody in Galveston, and
21 they've cleared it, and can you issue the permits, and we can't
22 until that information is pulled over and provided to us.
23
24 This is what we see on our screen when we're about to issue the
25 permits, and, right below, in the middle there, if your permits
26 are compliant, we're going to get the compliant and the green
27 thumbs-up, and we can issue those permits.
28
29 Down at the bottom, that's a king mackerel permit. If it's not
30 compliant, we will have the reason why they're not compliant,
31 but the system will not allow us to issue the permits, and so,
32 until it's cleared up and until Miami clears it up, PIMS will
33 not allow us to issue the permits.
34
35 Then this is a description of what we see for reef fish permits.
36 Similar to the compliance, again, they're automatically -- When
37 you have a reef fish application to renew or to transfer, the
38 Office of Law Enforcement has to approve it or resolve it before
39 we can issue the permit, and so the middle picture there is an
40 application that the VMS group has not cleared it yet, not
41 resolved it, and you see the missing date for the resolved, and
42 so we can't issue that permit.
43
44 The very bottom picture is when they have resolved it. They
45 have logged into our system, and they've looked up the vessel
46 information, and they have put in a resolved. At that point, we
47 can go ahead and complete the renewal or transfer that reef fish
48 permit.

1
2 Here is some reminders from the VMS group. The OLE welcome
3 package for permit transfers will be sent once the application
4 is received by the Permits Office, and there is a yellow
5 checklist that should be followed to make the process easier,
6 and all pertinent information and contact numbers, email and fax
7 numbers, are included in that yellow checklist.
8
9 The unit needs to be on and transmitting for more than twenty-
10 four hours, and installation and activation should be in the OLE
11 VMS office before we can clear the permit. For the permit
12 renewals, the unit should be on all the time, except if the
13 vessel does have a power-down exemption, and exemptions are
14 given on a case-by-case request.
15
16 Permits and IFQ, both the permit system and the IFQ system
17 utilize the same database, and so information filled out in a
18 permit application populates information used for IFQ management
19 and analysis, for example the percentage ownership, citizenship,
20 address.
21
22 In order to fish IFQ, your IFQ shareholder account must be
23 linked to a permit and vessel, and the name on the permit must
24 be exactly identical to the name on the IFQ shareholder account.
25 When there is a change in the permit holder or vessel ownership,
26 they need to establish a new IFQ account.
27
28 Expired vessel permits cannot fish, and expired dealer permits
29 are not available on landing notifications, and they cannot
30 complete landing transactions.
31
32 We get a lot of questions as far as how the permit expiration
33 dates and the primary mailing address is determined, and the
34 expiration dates and primary mailing address are all related to
35 the permit holder. The Southeast Region issues vessel permits,
36 and so the permit holder is the vessel owner.
37
38 In the first scenario, where the vessel is individually owned or
39 jointly owned, the expiration date is determined by the
40 individual owner's birth month. For the jointly-owned boats,
41 the individual identified as the primary mailing recipient is
42 used to determine the expiration date.
43
44 In Scenario 2, when the vessel is business owned, the expiration
45 date is determined by the month the business was formed, and the
46 primary mailing recipient is automatically set to the business
47 mailing address.
48

1   In the third scenario, for vessels that are leased, the lessee
2   is the permit holder, whether it's an individual or business,
3   and so they are the primary mailing recipient. The expiration
4   date is determined by the last full month of the lease. For
5   example, a least that expires June 15, 2020, it's not the full
6   month of June, and it will get a May 31, 2020 expiration date.
7   However, if you set up your lease so that it expires at the end
8   of the month, on June 30, 2020, you will get that full month,
9   and you will get the expiration date of 6/30/2020.
10
11 Some additional permit information, limited access versus open
12 access, limited access, the Southeast Region no longer issues
13 new permits, and you can obtain it via transfer from existing
14 permit holder. You have one year to renew after the expiration
15 date. After that, the permit becomes non-renewable, or what we
16 call terminates, after that one year is up.
17
18 With open access, the Southeast Region still issues new permits,
19 and they are non-transferable, because you can still request
20 these new permits for yourself, and they are still considered
21 renewable up to eighteen months past the expiration date.
22
23 Continuing with additional permit information, expired permits -
24 - Permits that are expired cannot be used to legally fish or
25 purchase fish. Expired limited-access permits have a one-year
26 grace period for renewal or transfer to another vessel with the
27 exact same ownership. Expired permits cannot be transferred to
28 a vessel under different ownership. The permits must first be
29 renewed, and then they can be transferred.
30
31 The transferring of limited-access permits, the permit holder's
32 signature on the back of the permit must be notarized, and the
33 permit must be signed and notarized before the expiration date,
34 and then a change in the permit holder or vessel ownership
35 constitutes a transfer.
36
37 Just the transferring of the charter/headboat permits, there is
38 a little extra step. If you're transferring it from one boat
39 you own to another, you still must sign the back of the permit,
40 attesting that you have removed the decals from the old vessel.
41
42 Vessel leases, there is no provision in the federal regulations
43 to lease permits. Permit holders may lease a vessel and obtain
44 or transfer their permits onto that vessel as the lessee. Note
45 the vessel lessor and lessee can't independently own federal
46 permits for the same vessel at the same time.
47
48 The Permits Office FAQ webpage is a great resource for

1 information related to leases, and we've got a whole section
2 listing all the things that we need in a lease agreement, and
3 then   the   Southeast   Region   website   has   moved   to
4 fisheriesnoaa.gov, and so we no longer have the seronmfsnoaa.gov
5 website, and that happened on July 1. For about a year or so,
6 you can still put the seronmfsnoaa.gov, and it will redirect you
7 to the old one, but, eventually, that's going to go away. You
8 can check your application status online, via vessel or
9 application ID, and that's it.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Mr. McIntosh. Is there
12 any questions from the committee? Ms. Boggs.
13
14 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:**   I don't have a question, but I do have a
15 comment. I have had to work with the Permits Office quite a bit
16 this year on some transfers and things, and you all have been
17 more than helpful, and I really appreciate the online ability to
18 renew. That has streamlined it a lot, I know for me and all the
19 other vessels in the Gulf, and so thank you.
20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Banks.
22
23 **MR. PATRICK BANKS:**   A question on the limited-access permits.
24 Let's say you have a year to renew it and after that it
25 terminates. Is there any provision, like a hardship situation,
26 where let's say a person was very, very sick for that entire
27 year and was not able to renew it, and is there any allowance
28 for anything like that?
29
30 **MR. MCINTOSH:** Typically, in those cases, I would consult Roy or
31 Mara on that, and so I can let Roy answer a little bit more.
32
33 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:**   Generally speaking, no, although there are
34 provisions under the Americans with Disabilities Act, I believe,
35 where we've had somebody who -- I recall, some years ago, we had
36 someone who was in the hospital in a coma, and so there have
37 been occasional instances of that, but, by and large, no,
38 there's not a hardship provision, outside of that kind of thing.
39
40 **MR. MCINTOSH:** Just to add a little bit more too, as long as you
41 have the application in our office, even the day before it
42 terminates, even if it goes beyond the termination -- If your
43 application stays open, and you're able to -- Even six months
44 after they terminate, if you have an application in, we'll be
45 able to renew those permits.
46
47 **DR. CRABTREE:**   If I could, I mean, we've had a general policy as
48 well that no one loses a permit because of a government

11

1 shutdown, or I recall, after Hurricane Irma came through, our
2 permit software crashed, and it took us some weeks to get it
3 back up and running, and so --
4
5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Any other questions? Go ahead, Mr.
6 Anson.
7
8 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Kevin, for the presentation. I had
9 contacted you a few months ago about the tool, or the lookup
10 directory, that you had from the U.S. Coast Guard vessel
11 documentation information, and so your presentation reminded me
12 to contact Mr. Lewis to find out what, if anything, can be
13 resolved regarding that, but, if there is a possibility, if you
14 could put that back on, but with some of the data that needs to
15 be redacted, at least so it would be still confidential, or the
16 owner wouldn't be identified, but at least the documentation
17 number, just to know that it's valid and it's been issued to a
18 particular vessel, the vessel name, maybe where the hailing port
19 is, and that would be helpful information for at least my state,
20 for trying to resolve some of the information that we need to
21 check, not only for in-state purposes, but for NOAA purposes as
22 well. Thank you.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I think one last question from me real quick,
25 and so you mentioned, I think, something like 19,000 permits
26 that your office -- Obviously, the electronic thing is helping,
27 I would imagine, but how many staff are your office to handle
28 all of that?
29
30 **MR. MCINTOSH:** We have seven total, and we've got -- We're down
31 one processor. She ended up leaving about a month ago, and so
32 we've got four full-time processors, myself, an office manager,
33 and then a data analyst that handles all the data requests that
34 we have for our information.
35
36 Out of those 19,000 permits, it's about 7,500 to 8,000
37 applications, and so a vessel has multiple permits, and so thank
38 goodness we don't get 19,000 applications, but, yes, we get a
39 lot of applications, about 8,000 a year, which we try to be less
40 than two weeks out with processing applications. I think, right
41 now, we've -- I think, with the summertime, we were able to get
42 it down to -- I think we're five days out right now, but it
43 fluctuates during the year, depending on the number of
44 applications, and it will go up and down. We try to keep it
45 below fourteen days.
46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you. If there is no other
48 questions for Mr. McIntosh, then we'll move on. Thank you for

1 that presentation. We will move on to Agenda Item Number V, and
2 that's continuing some of this discussion about this unique trip
3 identifier that we've been having, as well as some commercial
4 IFQ issues, and, Dr. Stephen, I think you're up for that one.
5 That is Tab F, Number 5, by the way.
6
7 **DISCUSSION OF COMMERCIAL FISHING UNIQUE TRIP IDENTIFIERS AND**
8 **COMMERCIAL IFQ PROGRAM**
9
10 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** We had done a , a couple of council
11 meetings ago, about just unique identifiers as a whole, and it
12 was requested to make it a little bit more specific to the IFQ
13 program.
14
15 I just want to kind of go over some ideas about unique trip
16 identifiers and trip management systems before we get into the
17 specific IFQ, and there are a lot of other regions in NOAA also
18 looking into these types of options of creating a unique
19 identifier and some management system for that. In particular,
20 GARFO and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center are leading the
21 way right now, and we are in conversations with them.
22
23 The whole idea of a unique trip identifier, or trip management
24 system, is typically somewhat simple in context, but actually
25 how you go and enact it is a little bit more difficult than we
26 have realized, by looking at where our data systems are and how
27 modernized they are and how they were built.
28
29 Some ideas of the trouble that happens when we're looking at
30 these types of systems is we still have a lot of paper data
31 entry, and so that then has to get put into a system before it
32 can be used for a unique trip identifier. We have multiple
33 different types of systems that are receiving data, and the
34 systems need to be modernized, in order to interact more
35 appropriately and quickly with each other, and we still need to
36 always make sure that, when we're transferring data among these
37 different types of data silos, that you are ensuring
38 confidentiality of that data. Some other aspects are that you
39 might have regulatory changes that are needed to help us take
40 these steps forward to a trip identifier and trip management
41 system.
42
43 What is good about this kind of concept of a trip management
44 system is that you can get comprehensive datasets that you can
45 use that link together all the different aspects of the fishing
46 world, not just the fishing trip, but the dealers and other
47 information, and they typically result, when you're through with
48 them, with reduced reporting duplication, and so you can report

to a kind of one-stop shop for all your reporting, and all the
needed people can get access to the data in real-time.

Just to kind of refresh your memory of how it works in the reef
fish fishery for data collection, the top line is mostly the IFQ
process, and so fishermen will start by declaring a trip through
either the VMS unit or VMS call service. Once their hail-out is
completed, they are allowed to go fishing, and, on their return
from fishing, they submit what we call pre-landing notification,
and that is either done through their VMS unit, the IFQ website,
or an IFQ call service.

Once they are done with the fishing trip, the next part is a lot
more interaction with the dealer, and so the dealer will start
with an IFQ landing transaction that does need to be verified by
the fishermen when they enter their vessel PIN, and that needs
to be done on the day of offload or within ninety-six hours of
the pre-landing notification time and date.

The fishermen then can submit a coastal logbook, or a vessel
trip report, and that is no later than seven days after the
fishing trip, and the dealer must submit a trip ticket through
either the vessel program or the trip ticket application, and
that goes weekly, and that data first goes to the Gulf States
Commission before it ends up going to our Science Center.

Here, I just wanted to kind of illustrate all the different data
silos. As I mentioned earlier, it's a number of different
systems and how they interact that is critical to the way of
creating a trip identifier that gets passed through the systems.
In the VMS world, they have a database called the v-track
database. Information that goes into that is your hail-outs and
your pre-landing notifications, but there are two different
mechanisms for that data to get into the system, and that
creates some additional complications as we're moving along.

With the IFQ system, we have multiple ways to enter the hail-in
notifications, and that is either through the IFQ system
directly or our call service, which then enters it directly into
the website, or through the VMS units.

When you're looking, again, at the trip ticket, we have both
vessel and ACCSP's mechanisms for trip ticket data entry, and,
of course, our logbooks are still on the paper. Now, this all
said, we've actually done some work along the way to try and
help getting trip identifiers along the way, and so the logbook
report number needs to be entered in your trip ticket, but as a
manual entry by the dealer, and he must receive that from the

14

1 fisherman to get it, and then we have an optional mechanism for
2 that trip ticket number to be entered into the IFQ system.
3
4 I just want to point out that we also have a variety of other
5 types of data sources, and there are little separate silos, such
6 as our observer data, our TIP data, and the permits system, and
7 that, ideally, in a trip management system, you're trying to
8 link those into the unique identifiers as well.
9
10 The other thing I would like to point out is that every system,
11 in and of itself, has some unique identifiers within that
12 system, and so you want to keep track of that, as well as
13 creating the identifier for the entire trip, and so the ideal
14 way that a trip management system works is it facilitates the
15 creation and exchange of a unique trip identifier using some
16 type of logic, and that logic would help you eliminate the use
17 of people passing these unique identifier numbers around among
18 the different systems.
19
20 Ideally, something would start our here, and, as an example, if
21 the VMS hail-out was put out, that hail-out would then be sent
22 to a trip management system, and it would send back a unique
23 trip identifier. The next point is the transition process of
24 where the next transaction occurs that that unique trip
25 identifier would be passed along to each of the different
26 systems, and so, in some cases, you would be feeding back within
27 the same system for VMS, and, in other cases, you are passing to
28 other systems.
29
30 Here is one of our very first challenges. Not all of our
31 systems are electronic, and so the vessel logbook numbers are
32 paper entry and come at a different timeframe, and so that's one
33 of our first challenges in moving forwards.
34
35 The other challenges is that NMFS, as SERO and the Science
36 Center, we don't have control of all the data silos. Sometimes
37 we are fed the data from different organizations and groups.
38 The states have control of their individual trip ticket systems
39 and what data can be entered in it and how it can be passed
40 along, and, again, we get that information through the
41 commission and then sent to us.
42
43 The VMS database is a nationwide database, and so, when we have
44 changes to be made to the VMS data, we have to consider things
45 at a nationwide level and not just a regional level, and that
46 typically means that we can make the changes, but it's a little
47 bit longer than normal process.
48

1 Another challenge is the different reporting timeframes and who
2 is doing the reporting, and we have both fishermen and dealers
3 reporting, and, as I mentioned earlier, we have some that are
4 submitted kind of within the day of offload, and others are
5 weekly or two weeks later.
6
7 Not all of our systems talk to each other, and that's a data
8 modernization issue. As we get all the data silos up to a
9 higher level of data modernization, that should increase our
10 ability to transfer data, as long as it meets security standards
11 for NOAA for transfers of data.
12
13 Then the last point is that the starting point for every trip
14 may not actually be the same, and so, in IFQ, we typically start
15 with a hail-out, but there can be instances where someone forgot
16 a hail-out and went out, and so we have to incorporate
17 mechanisms to assign a trip identifier when that hail-out isn't
18 present.
19
20 Now I kind of want to go directly to IFQ-specific challenges.
21 In the VMS world, we have some challenges, because not all hail-
22 outs that are submitted on a VMS unit actually result in a trip,
23 and so they're supposed to hail-out whenever they're leaving the
24 dock, and so, a lot of times, they can be declaring out of
25 fishery, or perhaps they are in, if they're dually-permitted,
26 another fishery, and they're not doing IFQ, and they may be
27 doing a for-hire or a personal trip.
28
29 In addition, we have issues where the VMS call service hail-outs
30 that are given over the phone -- One, they have to be
31 transcribed to the database from the phone, and then some of our
32 units actually overwrite that the next time the VMS unit
33 transmits out at-sea. It's a little bit out of our hands and
34 able to get those units to be updated to not do that.
35
36 Within the IFQ system, the main thing we need to consider is
37 that IFQ does not report trips. It reports transactions, and so
38 what does this actually mean? A lot of times, a vessel will
39 come in and he will land at more than one dealer, and so we have
40 more than one landing transaction for a trip, and so that's an
41 instance where we're going to have to create the logic to kind
42 of join those different landing transactions together for a
43 trip.
44
45 Likewise, we kind of have an opposite problem. We can have a
46 day-tripper who goes out and doesn't offload the fish and goes
47 out again the next day, and, when he lands at a dealer, he's
48 landing two trips as one landing transaction, and he may also

16

land at more than one dealer, and so there's multiple to multiple connections that we have to consider.

Where are we right now and how have we moved forward to thinking about this problem? A couple of years ago, we added the optional trip ticket identifier to be added to the landing transaction. Again, this is entered by the dealer, who is the one who initiates the landing transaction in IFQ.

Some of the things we have noticed since we've entered this optional field is that trip ticket formats are different state-by-state, and so it's difficult for us to understand or kind of create technological ways to make sure they're entering it in the correct format that, when we get the data from another state, we can match it together.

The timing is also a little difficult. The IFQ information is recorded on the day of offload, and, typically, the trip ticket might be done at a later date, and so we have tried to create some solutions that, by building an additional view, where dealers can come in after the fact and enter their trip ticket.

One of the largest concerns is it's not a mandatory field, and so it's optional, and so we're getting people who are being proactive in helping us with this, but, potentially, changing that from voluntary to mandatory may make an impact. Currently, we don't have a method to record the vessel's trip ticket report number.

Looking forward, how can we start moving towards a unique trip identifier, given the challenges that we have, and I have kind of identified here some sort of baby steps to get us there, so we can analyze how the data is coming in and then formulate a way, as the systems get more modernized.

We do a regulatory requirement to enter both the vessel logbook trip number as well as the trip ticket on every landing transaction, and we'll be able to gather the information and see where some of the other challenges arise and maybe find a way to format it, so that we don't get information that doesn't match with either of the other systems.

As I mentioned before, there is some differences with the trip tickets state-by-state, and, typically, this is just a QA/QC challenge for us, and it's insurmountable, but it would just require more staff time devoted to looking over the data and making the corrections as needed.

1 One of the other challenges is still the multiple, due to
2 entries per transaction, and this would require, in order to do
3 this appropriately, probably some new IFQ database structure,
4 some logic and some additional forms to be created, and one
5 thing I want to point out is that we're in the middle of
6 transitioning the IFQ system, because it's at end of life in the
7 software, into new software, and so that's something that we can
8 think about building in, but our priority is making sure the
9 system works in the new software right now.
10
11 The other challenge is that this data probably will not be real-
12 time, and so that trip identifier is going to be linked after
13 the fact, which will be helpful for scientific analysis, and we
14 just have to keep in mind that and figure out ways to speed up
15 that timeline process for entering the data, and, typically,
16 this, again, as I mentioned before, might require additional
17 staff in order to audit those records.
18
19 As I mentioned, the kind of path forward that I see right now is
20 assigning a trip identifier after the fact, and this is a little
21 bit repetitive here of the others, but IFQ currently does not
22 record the hail-out, and so the hail-out is only within the VMS
23 system. The IFQ system could obtain this data, but we'll just
24 need, again, to create new database structure and some logic for
25 how to grab the data and make sure it filters into the other
26 data streams accurately.
27
28 Our data will be dependent still on fishermen and dealer input,
29 and that comes with typical human error. You can swap around a
30 number or two, and it will take some time to investigate what
31 the value should have been to match, and the amount of
32 automation we can do is somewhat limited at this point in time.
33
34 The IFQ system will also need access to other data streams at
35 this point. Currently, we just talk back and forth with the VMS
36 data streams, and we do not talk back and forth with the Science
37 Center databases, and this has been, more traditionally, a data
38 modernization problem that we are now addressing as we move the
39 IFQ system to its new backend and frontend, and, again,
40 additional staff may be needed. At this point, I'm willing to
41 take any questions.
42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Stephen. Any
44 questions from the committee? Obviously, I think maybe Leann
45 and others thought that this was a good idea and it was
46 something pretty simple, to just make them match up, but,
47 obviously, it's a little more complex than that, and so I'm not
48 sure where we want to go as the committee, but, first, is there

1 any questions for Dr. Stephen? Mr. Banks.
2
3 **MR. BANKS:** Any thought on whether, if all of these data streams
4 were coming in all electronically, would that help in any way?
5 Is some of the issue that some of us are still dealing with
6 paper trip tickets and things like that?
7
8 **DR. STEPHEN:** That helps with kind of the speediness of doing
9 the trip identifier with a trip management system, which is kind
10 of the gold star out there of what we want to do. Once we get
11 everything electronic, that's possible, and we can still do this
12 kind of after the fact. In some way, that paper gets in, but
13 you're going to have a time lag.
14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Ms. Boggs.
16
17 **MS. BOGGS:** Is there any other fishery in the country that has
18 something like this, where it's a flow all the way through,
19 where you can track, and is that something we have looked at,
20 I'm sure?
21
22 **DR. STEPHEN:** I don't think within the U.S. we have anything
23 like that. Both the GARFO and the Northwest Fisheries Science
24 Center are really trying to get there, and they have run across
25 a lot of these same stumbling blocks. They have gotten
26 definitely to a higher degree than we do at this point, and I
27 have talked to quite a few of them in making this presentation,
28 to see where they're at, and I kind of keep up with what they're
29 doing.
30
31 Some of the confidentiality and the sharing between systems is
32 one of the major hurdles that they are noticing, and a lot of
33 theirs are more electronic, and so they don't have the paper
34 worry as much as we do.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Ms. Bosarge.
37
38 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Thanks for looking into it. I don't have
39 any questions, because it's a little complicated, and I wouldn't
40 know where to start, but I'm glad to hear that our timing sounds
41 like it was right, on asking for this request, because you're at
42 end of life with the program that you have now, and so I hope
43 we'll be able to work through this and build some things into
44 the next information system that will help to get at this.
45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, Leann, I have a question for you. On the
47 slide right before this, Dr. Stephen pointed out that sort of
48 one path forward might be the trip identifier after the fact,

1 but that didn't solve the problem that you were discovering with
2 your fleet when you brought this up. You needed that trip
3 identifier ahead of time, right?
4
5 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, I don't think it really matters when the
6 trip identifier is generated, just so long as -- Like, if it's
7 generated at the end, as long as tracks the trip from the
8 beginning to the end, that's all they were concerned about, and
9 so it doesn't really matter when it's generated, as long as it's
10 generated and you can follow a trip from the time you leave the
11 dock to the time you get back and link it with the landings.
12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Any other questions for Dr.
14 Stephen? Thank you, Jessica, and we'll go ahead and move
15 forward to the next presentation, if there's not any other
16 questions. Up next, Item VI, is the Net Gains Alliance
17 Presentation by Mr. LaPointe. The presentation is at Tab F-6.
18
19   **NET GAINS ALLIANCE PRESENTATION**
20
21 **MR. GEORGE LAPOINTE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks,
22 everybody, for having me this morning. I am part of a group
23 called the Net Gains Alliance, and I will explain what that is.
24 We gave a presentation to the Council Coordinating Committee in
25 May, and, after that meeting, Carrie asked if we could come down
26 and talk to you and get your input as well, and so that's why
27 I'm here today.
28
29 The net gains alliance is building on the recommendations from
30 Fisheries Data Innovation Taskforce 2017 Report, called
31 *Improving Net Gains*, and the same kind of issues you're talking
32 about, how do we use data better, faster, smarter, and people
33 have a lot of ideas around the country, and, last year, the
34 Walton Family Foundation provided support to further data
35 modernization efforts, and we have also received support from
36 the Packard Foundation.
37
38 We launched what we call the Net Gains Alliance as an initiative
39 committing to accelerating the modernization and implementation
40 and adaptation of robust information systems to support
41 sustainable ocean resource use, and, importantly, we aren't
42 trying to replicate what Jessica just talked about and what
43 other groups are talking about. We're trying to get people to
44 talk together and add a little bit of extra emphasis, where we
45 can do it try to improve individual data management systems and
46 management systems across regions.
47
48 Our goals are to strengthen relevant NOAA Fisheries policies and

1 accelerate the pace of modernization, to support regional
2 projects that unlock better fisheries data, and to expand the
3 constituency for supporting information system modernization.
4
5 Our structure right now is we have a core team that involves
6 Scott Burns, George Chmael, myself, Dorothy Lowman, and Kate
7 Wing, who are both west-coast based, and we have an advisory
8 panel, and on it is Mike Cahall, now retired and formally of
9 ACCSP; and Rick Bellavance is a charter captain from Rhode
10 Island; Eric Brazer, who you know from the Gulf; Chris Brown
11 from New England; Erika Feller with the National Fish and
12 Wildlife Foundation; Leigh Habegger with a commercial fishing
13 group; John Henderschedt, formerly with NOAA's International
14 Affairs Office; Lori Steele with Pacific Seafood Processors
15 Association; Nancy Munro with an electronic monitoring firm out
16 of Alaska; and Gregg Waugh, the Executive Director of the South
17 Atlantic Council.
18
19 Our national policy engagement involves a number of things, and
20 one is regular communication with key decision-makers, and we
21 meet with Chris Oliver and his staff whenever we can, just to
22 talk about what we're doing and to share information about what
23 they are doing, to share information about what we're doing,
24 because we have found that helps everybody move their processes
25 along.
26
27 We're sponsoring, or we have sponsored, some workshops to help
28 inform procedural directives and best practices, and Net Gains
29 convened a workshop in June to talk about third-party EM
30 arrangements with the National Marine Fisheries Service and some
31 of the people on the west coast, just to try to get past some of
32 the procedural hurdles that we have encountered.
33
34 We are trying to support the agency's regional implementation
35 plan development, and that process has been slowed by the
36 government shutdown, but it's moving ahead through the second
37 half of this year, and we have the option of submitting formal
38 recommendations, where appropriate, and, if you guys have
39 suggestions, if the Gulf Council members have suggestions, we
40 would like to hear that.
41
42 We have an effort at expanding to constituency support and
43 trying to get more people and organizations involved in data
44 modernization. The seafood harvesters are involved in that, and
45 EMinfo is, the Nature Conservancy, and others.
46
47 We have some regional grantmaking ability, and we anticipate six
48 to eight grants over the next couple of years, some of which

1 will be awarded this fall, and I will talk about those in a
2 minute.
3
4 It's not an open solicitation process, and we're using the
5 information that we gathered through that initial report and in
6 talking to fisheries leaders around the country, council
7 members, federal agency staff members, and people in the
8 industry, to try to find out what those highest priorities are,
9 and we are working with potential grantees to develop those
10 proposals, and, as I had said before, we want to complement or
11 leverage other available funds. We aren't starting the
12 programs. We don't have enough money for it, and it's not
13 efficient, and so we're trying to build on what other people are
14 doing. The grants can include federal or state agencies,
15 councils, and the industry.
16
17 The criteria for selecting projects are building capacity and
18 data literacy in the regions, councils, and Science Centers;
19 meeting a core need, like stock assessment, identified by
20 councils and/or regions; taking pilots to scale or building on
21 existing work; informing national guidance and actions that
22 smooth paths toward broader advancement; and, importantly,
23 projects that span regions or fisheries.
24
25 Some of the areas of interest right now, folks know that I'm
26 involved with SERO, on the SEFHIER process, but there's a lot of
27 other for-hire ER efforts around the country, and we're
28 interested in two things from this perspective.
29
30 One is sharing information among the regions, so that we all
31 advance in as coordinated a way as we can, and as smartly as we
32 can, and then, secondly, I've talked to a number of charter
33 captains, and I would love to talk to people this afternoon, if
34 they are available, about providing business benefits to the
35 reporting platforms, and everybody says that's a good idea, but
36 we don't know exactly what it means, and so we're talking about
37 convening a number of charter captains from around the country,
38 with some agency folks, and some software developers, to kind of
39 discuss further what that could mean, to see if there are
40 benefits that we can provide to the people who are using
41 electronic reporting platforms.
42
43 Integrated fisheries reporting is an issue on both the east and
44 west coasts, and Jessica talked about some of the challenges
45 there, and I was involved, and a number of the people in this
46 room were involved, with the unique trip identifier and trying
47 to get that reported electronically, and we started I think with
48 a workshop about three year ago, and it's like the Holy Grail.

1 We're still looking for it, but we haven't found it, and trying
2 to work on advancing that process, and one of the projects we're
3 talking about for that is convening people from around the
4 country, to see where we are and how we can move ahead in small,
5 incremental ways to advance the idea of unique trip identifiers.
6
7 One-stop reporting, we use one-stop and one-touch, and one-stop
8 reporting is an effort on the east coast, where people would
9 report once, and their report would go to the various management
10 agencies that need the report, rather than having to report
11 multiple times, and Rick Bellavance, our advisor from Rhode
12 Island, says he may have to report to GARFO, the state, and HMS
13 for one trip, and we want to make that more efficient.
14
15 On the west coast, they call it one-touch reporting, and they
16 are working on data mapping and working with captains to try to
17 make that more efficient from a user perspective as well, and
18 then, on the Pacific, there is an effort at integrating the
19 pelagic data between what I call the Hawaii Pacific and the West
20 Coast Pacific pelagic systems.
21
22 There is all kinds of international organizations, which
23 confuses the heck out of me, and, right now, we're just trying
24 to figure out how to get the west coast of the U.S. and Hawaii
25 to work together, and we're interested in other ideas, because
26 we're starting to think about our second year.
27
28 I am really interested in your views, now or throughout the
29 course of the day, on how we can best engage and support the
30 national policy and regional strategy issue, regional
31 grantmaking. Are there focus areas that are important to the
32 Gulf Council that you can share with me, and what are the
33 projects we can consider in the Gulf of Mexico and how to
34 improve constituency building, and then any other ideas that you
35 have as well.
36
37 Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report, and I'm happy to answer
38 any questions, and, as I mentioned, I will be around through the
39 course of the day to talk to people, if they want to talk to me
40 later.
41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, George. Are there
43 questions from the committee? Mr. Diaz.
44
45 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Thank you, Dr. Stunz. I am not on your
46 committee, but thank you, Mr. LaPointe, for your presentation,
47 and it was a very good presentation. You all are doing a lot of
48 good work. I did talk to you after the CCC meeting for just a

minute, and your idea about trying to make these things where
they might be beneficial for the businesses that use them at a
later date, to me, is a good one, and so, if I'm a charter boat,
and you have a secure way that I can only access that site, and
I could have some other business information that might help me
make more money in my business, it's an incentive for me to use
it.

If we're in March, and I had a guy that fished with me last
April, and he hasn't contacted me yet, if I could go into this
system and look, and, if he hasn't contacted me about a trip, I
might want to give him a call and see if I can get him on the
books for April, like he came last year, or something like that,
and there's probably a lot of benefits like that.

I do think the State of Louisiana tried this. They tried to do
a reporting system at one time, and I don't know if they still
have it, but there are a couple of people in the room that might
be able to tell you what their experience was, and Mr. Schieble
is in the back, and then Mr. Banks is here from Louisiana, and
he might have some insight on that, but I do think that's a very
good idea and a very good incentive.

MR. LAPOINTE: Importantly, we want to make sure we talk to
charter captains, so it's not cranky old ex-agency people
thinking that we're providing a service when we really aren't.
State agency and not federal agency. Sorry, Roy.

CHAIRMAN STUNZ: Any other questions? Well, seeing none, thank
you, George, and, as you mentioned, you will be around to talk
to others.

MR. LAPOINTE: Thanks very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN STUNZ: Sure. No problem. All right. Moving on, our
next item is the SEFHIER update, and, Ms. Gerhart, it looks like
you're up.

UPDATE ON SEFHIER

MS. SUSAN GERHART: Thank you. Just, as usual, as I do at each
meeting, I'll just give you an update as to where we are with
the for-hire electronic reporting program. Just a reminder to
everyone about what these requirements are, there are three
parts to the for-hire reporting requirements, and first is the
hail-out, and that is necessary before leaving on a trip, and
second is the logbooks, which need to be submitted before
offloading fish, and then, finally, there is the location device

1 that needs to be affixed to the vessel and operating.
2
3 A little bit about our general timeline, and the amendment was
4 approved in September of last year by the Secretary of Commerce,
5 and we published a proposed rule in October. We took a comment
6 period, which we actually had an extension on for a little while
7 into January, and then we have been addressing the comments that
8 we received to develop the final rule, and so we're at the final
9 rule stage right now, where we're developing that, but we are
10 working on the implementation itself.
11
12 We have been since the council started working on this document,
13 and I gave a fairly thorough presentation last time about all of
14 the implementation challenges that we have had, and so I won't
15 be going back into those.
16
17 A little bit more about how we expect the implementation to
18 proceed from here on out is we hope to have the final rule
19 published in late 2019. One of the things that will be in that
20 final rule will be the effective date for the first phase of
21 this program, and I told you last time that we were going to
22 implement this in two phases.
23
24 The first involves requiring the hail-out and the submission of
25 the logbooks, and we expect that to be sometime in early 2020.
26 Then the second phase will be the part with the location devices
27 being required, and there is a little bit more involved in
28 getting that part ready, both on our part as well as for the
29 fishermen, and so that will be later in 2020, in our plan right
30 now.
31
32 Before each of those phases, we plan to have outreach sessions,
33 working with council staff, Emily, and going out and sharing
34 with the fishermen in different areas what is going to be
35 expected of them and what the requirements are and how to
36 fulfill those requirements.
37
38 Again, I went through details last time about the various
39 challenges that we have and why it's taking a while to get this
40 implemented, and, just to remind you what some of these are, we
41 have limited funding and staffing right now, and so we're trying
42 to do this while we're doing the rest of the work on amendments
43 and things like that, and the same staff works on that.
44
45 We do have -- We did require, in the amendment, that fishermen
46 use NMFS-approved hardware and software, and so we do need to go
47 through the approval process and develop the approval processes
48 and then do the approvals themselves before we can have that

1 ready, and that's part of the delay that we have with the Phase
2 2 part, is that we have to do all of those approvals for any
3 units that are used for that location devices.
4
5 A lot of other processes to developing involving storing the
6 data, how the transmission is, protecting the transmission, and
7 how we're going to share that data with other agencies and with
8 ACCSP, who is our data warehouse.
9
10 The South Atlantic has a similar, but different, program that's
11 going on, and we're trying to coordinate with them, so that
12 fishermen that have permits in both areas are not doing
13 duplicative reporting and that it's not confusing for them with
14 the different things going on in the two different areas, and
15 all of this involves lots of different forms that people have to
16 fill out, and we do have to fulfill requirements of the
17 Paperwork Reduction Act.
18
19 One of the things that the council brought up at the last
20 meeting is they wanted us to do some more outreach to the
21 fishermen, letting them know where we are with this
22 implementation plan and what our timeline is, and so, working
23 with council staff, we have come up with a newsletter that we're
24 going to send out to each of the permit holders.
25
26 We hope to get this out next week, and we're finishing designing
27 and developing the document, and so this will go to the
28 fishermen, talking about this expected schedule and timeline
29 that we have and the different phases and what's going to be
30 required in each phase, giving them more information on what
31 they can be doing now to get ready for these requirements early
32 next year, and, also, what else they can expect from us, and so
33 this newsletter, right now, is a one-time thing, and we may
34 continue to do newsletters for fishermen.
35
36 In addition to that, we are updating our FAQs, frequently asked
37 questions, on our website, and this has more information about
38 where we are. There were sticking points that Emily addressed
39 to you at the last meeting and that we gave you some responses
40 to, and so those are now addressed in the FAQs as well, and we
41 hope to have those up on our website, again, next week when the
42 newsletter goes out, and there will be a link to that in the
43 newsletter.
44
45 We are developing informational packets that will go out when
46 we're ready for Phase 1 implementation, and these packets will
47 go to each of the permit holders, and that gives them more
48 detailed information and has some handouts and such that they

can keep with them to help them get through these requirements.

As I mentioned in the timeline, we will have some outreach sessions before each of the phases, to give them some hands-on how-to of how to actually meet these requirements. We will continue to put out Fishery Bulletins. When we have the final rule publishing, there will be a Fishery Bulletin, and, anytime we make any major steps, we will certainly put those bulletins out and available.

We do have a webpage on our new NOAA website, and the link is there in the presentation here, and it is for all of the Southeast electronic reporting, and so it includes both the Gulf information as well as the South Atlantic program and some other technologies that we are working on as well.

At that website, we are now posting -- We have now posted, and are in the process of updating, the development plan that we went through. The development plan was actually written by George LaPointe, who you just heard, the previous speaker, and he's been under contract with us to work on this development plan, and it shows the different decision points that we have had, some of which we've made decisions about and some of which we're still working on, and so, if you're interested, go to that link that's there, and the development plan is available, and that is what I have for you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STUNZ: Thank you, Sue. Are there questions from the committee? Martha.

MS. MARTHA GUYAS: I just want to say thanks for all the outreach efforts that you guys are doing in the newsletter and all that. When you send that newsletter out to permit holders, could you also send it out to state folks, at least, and I would like to send it to port samplers that are working for us, so that they're aware, in case they get questions.

MS. GERHART: Sure. We'll do that, and, actually, I think Emily is going to be sending that out, or council staff will, but I think we'll send them to all of the council members as well.

CHAIRMAN STUNZ: Ms. Boggs.

MS. BOGGS: I do have a question, Sue. The rollout, doing it in two different parts, is there no way to roll out the program at one time, and what I understood you to say is the VMS part is a little more complicated, and I have a hard time understanding that, because we are testing some of those VMS units, and it may

1 be not complicated on our side, and I guess I need to understand
2 what is the complication on the NMFS side, because we just put
3 it on the boat, and we're done.
4
5 **MS. GERHART:** We have a VMS program that is housed at our
6 Headquarters, and they are the ones who approve the units that
7 can be used. The ones that are currently approved for the
8 commercial fishery have to be reapproved for this fishery,
9 because there are different requirements, and so that's part of
10 the issue.
11
12 We're also working on a process for the non-VMS-type units, the
13 ones that will be cellular-based, and we call them store-and-
14 forward units, and so part of it is regulatory, and part of it
15 is just the testing and making sure that they're going to be
16 able to -- The units are going to be able to talk to the system,
17 as well as have secure transmission of the data, because it's
18 very important for us to protect the fishermen's data, and so
19 those are some of the things that make it take a little longer.
20
21 We have gone back and forth about this phased approach. We
22 started out with it, and then we were going to do everything at
23 once, and now we're back to the phased approach. Our feeling
24 was that we didn't want to, if possible, delay the first part,
25 the logbook part of it, to wait for the location devices.
26
27 We also thought that it would be easier for people to learn a
28 little bit at a time, figure out how to do the hail-outs and the
29 logbooks, and then we'll worry about these location devices.
30 It's also a staffing thing, too.
31
32 For right now, putting all of that at once is difficult on our
33 staff, and so it's easier for us as well if we do it in phases,
34 but I am not promising that we won't change that again and end
35 up doing it all at once.
36
37   **OTHER BUSINESS**
38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Any other questions for Sue? Well,
40 I am not seeing any. Thank you, Sue. I think just planning to
41 update us regularly on this, because, obviously, there's a lot
42 of people with high interest on the progress and that kind of
43 thing, and that would be a good idea for this committee.
44
45 Seeing no other questions, that covers everything that we had on
46 the agenda today, other than Other Business, and so is there any
47 other business that needs to come before this committee? All
48 right. Seeing none, then, Mr. Chairman, this committee stands

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1  adjourned.
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3  (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 14, 2019.)
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