

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE

4
5 Opal Key Resort & Marina and Virtual Key West, Florida

6
7 June 21, 2021

8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

- 10 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- 11 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
- 12 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 13 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 14 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
- 15 Robin Riechers.....Texas
- 16 Bob Shipp.....Alabama
- 17 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- 18 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
- 19 Troy Williamson.....Texas

20
21 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- 22 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 23 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- 24 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 25 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 26 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 27 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 28 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- 29 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 30 Greg Stunz.....Texas

31
32 **STAFF**

- 33 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 34 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 35 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 36 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 37 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 38 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 39 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 40 Jessica Matos.....Document Editor & Administrative Assistant
- 41 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
- 42 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 43 Kathy Pereira.....Meeting Planning - Travel Coordinator
- 44 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 45 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 46 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- 47 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

48
49 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

1 Chester Brewer.....SAFMC
2 Peter Hood.....NMFS
3 Jack McGovern.....NMFS
4 Nathan Putnam.....LGL, TX

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1 The Administrative/Budget Committee of the Gulf of Mexico
2 Fishery Management Council on Monday afternoon, June 21, 2021,
3 and was called to order by Chairman Phil Dyskow.

4
5 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
6 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
7 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
8

9 **CHAIRMAN PHIL DYSKOW:** I would like to call this meeting of the
10 Admin and Budget Committee to order. Just as a refresher, the
11 members of this committee are myself, Phil Dyskow, and General
12 Spraggins is the Vice Chair. Also, the members are Patrick
13 Banks, Susan Boggs, Dave Donaldson, Martha Guyas, Robin
14 Riechers, Dr. Bob Shipp, Ed Swindell, and Troy Williamson.

15
16 The first item on the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda. I
17 would entertain a motion to approve the agenda as written. We
18 have a first and a second, and, if there is no opposition, we
19 will adopt the agenda as written. Next, we would like to
20 approve the minutes of the January 2021 meeting, and there was
21 not a meeting in April, and so that was the last meeting, the
22 January 2021 meeting, and I would entertain a motion to approve
23 those minutes as written.

24
25 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** So moved.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** I need a second. All right. Is there any
28 opposition to that? If not, we will go forward, and the next
29 item is the Action Guide and Next Steps, and I believe Dr.
30 Simmons has a few words for us.

31
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
33 have several items on the agenda. Item Number IV, we'll need
34 the committee to review and approve the final funded 2021
35 budget. For Item Number V, staff has drafted two proposed
36 contractual projects for the committee to look at, with proposed
37 estimates of what those projects would cost, and we will present
38 those and get the committee's feedback. If you move forward
39 with those, we would need a motion for each of those, please.

40
41 We also have, for Item Number VI, a discussion of the SSC's best
42 practices and voting procedures, and what we're looking for
43 there really is some feedback from the committee. We plan to
44 take this also to the SSC, once the council is happy with it,
45 and I'm not sure that it needs to go in our SOPPs, but we're
46 planning probably on putting this on the website, close to the
47 membership list of the SSC, and we have one Other Business item
48 that is for the committee's information.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. The next item, as Dr.
3 Simmons mentioned, is the Review and the Approval, via motion,
4 of the Final Funded 2021 Budget, and I believe Beth has a
5 presentation for us on that, and I believe she has a chart that
6 shows the initial Calendar Year 2021 budget and then the funded
7 budget. Maybe the best way to proceed, in a timely fashion, is
8 just talk about the variances between the two.
9

10 **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FINAL FUNDED 2021 BUDGET**
11

12 **MS. BETH HAGER:** Yes, sir. As Mr. Dyskow just said, in Tab G,
13 Number 4, we're presenting you with both versions of the budget,
14 the one that was originally presented to you in January and then
15 the total funding, which we have received, which is \$3,904,000,
16 and it's \$99,000 different, less than, the originally-estimated
17 funding figure, and it now includes the reduction of the \$94,000
18 that was sent to the Southeast Region in support of the permits
19 software update, and, since this is our 2021 final numbers, the
20 committee will be asked, at the end, to approve the proposed
21 budget.
22

23 Other than the lines relating to the meetings and contractual
24 services, most of the costs presented in the initial draft were
25 unchanged, which is great. We have adjusted the meeting-related
26 costs to account for the meetings which have been held virtually
27 to-date, and we have reduced the number of anticipated public
28 hearing activities, since travel is just now being resumed.
29 Overall though, there are actually still a few more meetings
30 planned in 2021 than we originally planned in 2020, and we held
31 certainly more than we held in 2020.
32

33 In projecting the meeting costs for this budget, we have
34 included allowances though for the considerable uncertainty and
35 the actual costs that we may realize through the remainder of
36 the year is airfares, rental car costs, hotel rates, and all of
37 these are surging, due to the increased demand.
38

39 The stipend budgets were increased slightly at this time, as
40 council participation in more joint meetings, SEDAR, and ongoing
41 training with the travel is planned, and, as the SSCs are being
42 reappointed, the makeup of these committees can just be
43 estimated right now, and so we felt it appropriate there.
44

45 The meeting room cost line also reflects a change, and it is a
46 reduction from the 2020 budget, but it's also slightly higher
47 than we originally estimated in January, because of the increase
48 in demand, and meeting space costs are increasing, the cost of

1 space.

2
3 The contractual costs were adjusted by a net of \$68,000. We
4 removed the \$94,000 that was originally in the budget that was
5 funded to SERO, since it was funded directly from the Treasury,
6 but we have included the stipends for contracting independent
7 reviewers in the Great Red Snapper Count, which was \$30,000, and
8 an additional \$4,000 for technology services, as we're working
9 to ensure that we meet NOAA's electronic records keeping
10 requirements towards the end of the year, and that takes us
11 through all of the changes. Do we have any questions?

12
13 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Beth. I would just like to point
14 out one thing before we seek approval of this budget. The money
15 that was moved to the Southeast Center was approved at our
16 previous meeting, and so that's not something that requires
17 approval here, but what does require approval is to approve the
18 final funded Calendar Year 2021 budget, and so I would entertain
19 a motion to approve the funded budget for 2021.

20
21 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS: Motion.**

22
23 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** General Spraggins presented the motion. We
24 need a second.

25
26 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Second.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Great. We have a second as well. Is there
29 any discussion about this? It's pretty straightforward. Yes,
30 sir.

31
32 **MR. DONALDSON:** I don't have any discussion, but I've got a
33 question, a quick, question, for Beth. Can you remind me what
34 year, funding year, we are in the cooperative agreement? The
35 second year. Okay. So we've got some flexibility in the
36 spending. Okay. Thank you.

37
38 **MS. HAGER:** Yes, and we have plenty of carryover from 2020, and
39 now we're in 2021.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Okay. **If there are no further questions, is**
42 **there anybody opposed to the funding of the 2021 budget? If**
43 **not, the motion passes.**

44
45 The next item on our agenda is we have two potential funding
46 projects that we have discussed at prior meetings, and one
47 involves the fleet monitoring effort for the Gulf shrimp
48 industry, and the other is a sampling and ageing study on Gulf

1 of Mexico gray triggerfish. We have discussed those both
2 previously, but we do have some discussion, further discussion,
3 that Dr. Simmons would like to lead, and I will remind everybody
4 that, in order to go forward, we need motions on each one of
5 those individually, each one of those two projects. Dr.
6 Simmons.

7
8 **OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR COUNCIL**
9 **FUNDING**

10 **EXPANDED SAMPLING AND AGEING STUDY ON GULF OF MEXICO GRAY**
11 **TRIGGERFISH, WITH SSC RECOMMENDATIONS**
12

13 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, and so
14 we'll start with Tab G, Number 5(a). We put this together, and
15 it would be a mock of what we would post and distribute for a
16 call for competitive proposals, should the council decide to go
17 forward.

18
19 We did take a draft of this to the SSC, and they provided some
20 feedback to us. After that SSC meeting, we had some additional
21 meetings with Science Center staff, including some of the ageing
22 analysts that are at the Panama City Lab, and they also provided
23 some feedback on this draft call for proposals, as well as some
24 of your leadership as staff at the Science Center.

25
26 I think this version reflects those changes, and, essentially,
27 what we're looking at, or we're thinking we can do, is, within
28 the \$250,000 and the twenty-four-month period to fill the data
29 gap for ageing, and the ageing validation for gray triggerfish
30 in the Gulf of Mexico, by getting this call for proposals, and,
31 ideally selecting a proposal and then letting them complete the
32 work within twenty-four months.

33
34 We would have to come up with some type of review for that, and
35 I assume that we would use the same process that we did for the
36 other proposals, the Chair and Vice Chair and maybe the Chair of
37 the Reef Fish Committee and some staff that would make that
38 selection. If we come up with criteria, we could work that out,
39 should the council decide to go forward with this, and then the
40 idea would be that this data would be available and ready for
41 the data workshop during the research track that is currently
42 scheduled for gray triggerfish in 2024.

43
44 You may notice that one of the things that we have also included
45 in this call for proposals is not only better age validation,
46 but trying to come up with a metric, or calibration process, for
47 the otoliths to the spines, because of the under-ageing issue
48 with the spines, that they can currently use this large dataset

1 that we have for spines, and so there would be some way to
2 calibrate that, and so we're also asking the PI to consider that
3 as well. I will stop there and see if there's any questions,
4 or, Ryan, I don't know if you need to contribute anything from
5 the SSC, but I think I covered it.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Dr. Simmons, you just might want to point out
8 why we have this compressed timeframe of twenty-four months.

9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Well, I'm not sure it's compressed.
11 This is what staff was suggesting, I guess based on the feedback
12 we got from SSC members and the amount of time we think we would
13 need the data, to have it ready and available for the data
14 workshop for the research track.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** I may be misinformed, but don't we have to
17 spend the money within twenty-four months?

18
19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** No, and so this is the second year
20 of our five-year award, and so the council does not have to make
21 a decision right now, and they can continue to carry over this
22 money through our five-year award, which is the end of 2024, and
23 so, if we need more information, or we want to see this again,
24 or take some more time, we can certainly carry that money over.
25 Sorry about that.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Okay. We should vote on these two projects
28 separately. Are there any other questions about the study on
29 Gulf of Mexico gray triggerfish? Ed.

30
31 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Who put the system together to do the study?

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** We're asking for academics,
34 consultants, anybody that is interested, and this would be a
35 competitive call for proposals, where the PIs would provide this
36 information, in order to answer this question in this amount of
37 time, and so we're asking people to provide proposals to fill in
38 this data gap, to meet the needs of the stock assessment, which
39 I should say that you may recall that, during the last
40 assessment for triggerfish, there was multiple issues, and maybe
41 Dr. Porch is better at explaining this than me, but there were
42 multiple issues with that assessment, but one of them was this
43 concern about ageing of gray triggerfish.

44
45 What they found, like right before that data workshop, I
46 believe, is that the spines, which have historically been used
47 to age gray triggerfish, instead of the ear bones, the otoliths,
48 were under-ageing the fish by one to two years, and so now the

1 other hard part of the otolith would need to be taken and
2 compared for age validation across the Gulf, and then a
3 calibration, if we can, for all of those data that we already
4 have on the books, so that we can move forward with the stock
5 assessment.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Mr. Swindell.

8
9 **MR. SWINDELL:** Did any of this at all -- Was any of this taken
10 up by our SSC, to look to see if we were headed in the right
11 direction to do this kind of study?

12
13 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, sir. It is in the SSC report
14 from the May 3 and 4, 2021 meeting. They didn't make any
15 motions on it, but they provided some feedback and discussion on
16 it.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Okay. In order to allow this to move forward
19 in a timely fashion -- I'm sorry. Ms. Boggs.

20
21 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand the
22 timeline, and we gave them two years, so it can be used with the
23 interim assessment for gray triggerfish. Dr. Porch, is this
24 something that you all will use in your interim assessment?

25
26 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Well, it wouldn't be used in the interim
27 assessment, but, for the research track that she referred to,
28 yes, absolutely, and that's one of the key issues that came up,
29 as Dr. Simmons said.

30
31 **MS. BOGGS:** The reason I ask is I don't -- I mean, I am
32 supportive of this, but, if it's not something that is going to
33 help us move along with gray triggerfish, I didn't want to spend
34 money on something that is not going to be viable, and pardon
35 me, and I did misspeak, but in the research track. Thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** We have a hand in the back of the room. Ryan.

38
39 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just, I guess, to
40 clarify it, it would be considered in the research track
41 assessment, just like any other new dataset, and I think we
42 should hesitate to say that anything will be used, and there
43 will be a lot of data that will be provided for consideration by
44 that panel to be examined for gray triggerfish, and this is
45 something that has a very strong chance of providing a very
46 meaningful contribution, which is why it's before you guys to
47 consider.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Are there any other questions? Ms. Boggs.

2
3 **MS. BOGGS:** I was ready to make a motion.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** That was my next question.

6
7 **MS. BOGGS:** I would make a motion that we fund the Expanded
8 **Sampling and Ageing Study on Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish.**

9
10 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Second.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** We have a second to that motion as well. Is
13 there any further discussion on this? **If not, is there any**
14 **opposition to this motion? If not, the motion passes.**

15
16 The next item on our list is the expanded sampling of the fleet
17 monitoring effort in the Gulf of Mexico for shrimp, and would
18 you like to talk about that a little bit about that, Dr.
19 Simmons, to kick it off?

20
21 **EXPANDED SAMPLING OF THE FLEET FOR EFFORT MONITORING IN THE GULF**
22 **OF MEXICO SHRIMP INDUSTRY**

23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
25 is Tab G, Number 5(b). We have drafted a request for proposals
26 to further test the hardware -- I guess it's software, the P-Sea
27 WindPlot, on the expanded shrimp fleet, compared to what was
28 presented, I guess, a few minutes ago during the Shrimp
29 Committee and be able to not only, I guess, maintain, but also
30 transmit, work on that second part that there's an issue with
31 transmitting of that data with that particular software.

32
33 That is what -- I think, currently, we have approximately a
34 third of the vessels that are participating in the ELB program,
35 and so the idea would be that this would be expanded to perhaps
36 something more closely to align with this number that we have,
37 and, Matt, there is probably, what, 1,300 vessels, or, Leann,
38 1,300 vessels in the fleet that participate, I believe.

39
40 That would be to expand this and develop this program to provide
41 continued collection, storage, and transmission of shrimp vessel
42 location data that are used to estimate shrimping effort, and so
43 this essentially would be a new hardware/software program that
44 would be intended to replace the recently-discontinued 3G shrimp
45 ELB program that we just talked about.

46
47 I think what we would need to consider with this proposal, I
48 believe, is what the minimum requirements are going to be by the

1 agency for the shrimp fleet, and so they would need to take that
2 into consideration, and, right now, we're operating as the
3 minimum requirements for what is currently on the books for the
4 3G network.

5
6 We're asking how -- The PIs that provide proposals should
7 identify, by region and state, the number of vessels that would
8 volunteer in this program to expand the pilot. They would need
9 to expand their methodology, and then the intent for these
10 requirements would be trying to get ahold of what that approval
11 process would be and what the costs would be to the industry
12 with this expanded project.

13
14 The estimate of cost that we came up with was the \$350,000, and
15 that did come from LGL's presentation, and staff did not do a
16 lot of other research on what that cost would be, and this
17 particular proposal actually did not go to the SSC. We did not
18 have it ready in time. I will stop there and see if there's any
19 questions, Mr. Chair.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Are there any
22 questions? Ms. Boggs.

23
24 **MS. BOGGS:** I appreciate all the efforts that Leann has put into
25 this, and I'm a little bit confused, and I'm not going to get
26 into all of that, but my main thing -- To me, I look at this as
27 kind of like an EFP for WindPlot, and is that not correct,
28 because it sounds like NMFS is still trying to develop, with the
29 shrimpers, what they need to converge, and I think I mentioned
30 this a couple of meetings ago, and I have no issue spending
31 money and looking for new ways of doing things, but, if this is
32 something that we find will work, I hope that we have the
33 funding to continue it moving forward and that we're not just
34 doing this and saying, oh great, it works, and then it drops.

35
36 That's my concern, but, I mean, I kind of look at this kind of
37 like an EFP, because it says you're testing it, and so are you
38 going to use the entire fleet, or will you be just using a
39 portion of the fleet, moving forward, if we approve this?

40
41 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Do you want to try to answer that, Leann?

42
43 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I can try, and we may have Nathan on the
44 line, Dr. Putnam, as well. Essentially, if you refer back to
45 that slide we had in our last committee, where there were kind
46 of three things that you really need to work out for any device,
47 moving forward, that we use for a shrimp ELB replacement, right,
48 and so P-Sea WindPlot has worked out two of those already.

1
2 They have put it on a boat, to make sure that, functionally,
3 it's going to work on a shrimp boat, and you will actually get
4 your GPS lock and signals and all that kind of stuff, and they
5 have also made sure that the data they collect will go into the
6 shrimp algorithm software that we have at NMFS and that it's
7 comparable to the old data, right?

8
9 The one piece that's left lacking is that automatic transmission
10 piece, right, and so, right now, for NMFS to get the data from a
11 P-Sea-WindPlot-type device, we would have to mail them a thumb
12 drive. We would have to mail NMFS a thumb drive, kind of
13 similar to what we're doing with the old cELBs right now, and so
14 this would essentially work out the transmission piece, on the
15 cellular-type basis, where it will automatically transmit to
16 NMFS.

17
18 At the same time, there will be a small expansion in the number
19 of boats that they are actually testing this on, and so, in the
20 first phase that industry-funded, I think they tested it on two
21 or three shrimp boats, making a couple of trips offshore, and
22 what they would like to do now is to -- They talked about a
23 random stratified sample, and so I think both of those boats
24 were out of Texas. No, one was out of Mississippi, and one was
25 out of Texas, but they want to pull in and make sure that,
26 number one, we have all the demographics, which we have a large
27 Vietnamese component in our industry.

28
29 We want to make sure there's nothing that they do just a little
30 differently that might cause an issue with the system, and so
31 expand that sample slightly, and hopefully get it up somewhere,
32 I guess, between ten and twenty-five boats, something like that,
33 and run it on those and work out the transmission piece, and so
34 that's what this would do, so that then it becomes a viable
35 option for consideration.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Dr. Simmons.

38
39 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just
40 point out, in this particular call for proposals, if we could go
41 back down, we're asking the folks that would provide a proposal,
42 should the council move forward with this, to identify how they
43 would stratify the sample, what are the vessels that they would
44 expand it to, what state are they landing the shrimp in, all
45 those types of things that would have to be worked out in the
46 proposal. Thank you.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Are there any other questions regarding this?

1 Patrick.

2
3 **MR. PATRICK BANKS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It seems like this is
4 a little bit of R&D for the company, if we're focusing just on
5 P-Sea WindPlot, which I am not opposed to doing the work, or
6 considering P-Sea WindPlot, but I am just questioning whether
7 the council should be the one paying to do R&D for this private
8 company, and it seems like that private company, if they wanted
9 to expand their product line, or their user base, they would go
10 out and do this necessary work on their own, and pay for it
11 themselves, rather than us having to pay them to go -- Or pay
12 somebody to do the necessary research for this type of company.
13 What am I missing, Leann?

14
15 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, so, the difference between the P-Sea
16 WindPlot path and some of these other private companies is that
17 there is actually nothing in it for P-Sea WindPlot. What's in
18 it is for your shrimpers. It's for your industry, because we
19 already have P-Sea WindPlot on almost every boat out there in
20 the offshore fleet, and so you see that P-Sea WindPlot stands to
21 gain nothing personally, because they have already sold the
22 software to all the shrimpers, right?

23
24 This is a very economical path forward for the industry, and so
25 you would be doing this for the industry and not for an
26 individual vendor. They have already sold the software to all
27 of us, right?

28
29 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** I am not trying to cut you off, Leann, but
30 this was discussed in great detail at our last meeting, making
31 all the same points, and that is why we went forward with this
32 project. They are looking for someone to pass this cost onto,
33 because they don't want to bear it, and, if we don't use some of
34 our surplus funds to do this, that burden would be passed onto
35 the shrimp fleet, and that's what we're trying to avoid. Any
36 other -- Sir.

37
38 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** A question, I guess for Carrie. As read
39 in -- This comes across as a sole-source contract, or excuse me.
40 It's not written as a sole-source contract, but it's written
41 essentially as that there is multiple contractors would compete
42 for this, and the only way that can happen is if P-Sea WindPlot
43 is essentially releasing the ability for contractors to come in
44 and work with them and modify their hardware and software setup
45 in order to do that.

46
47 I guess my question is have you talked to contractor officers
48 within our agency, within your team, about whether this should

1 be a sole-source contract, if the council moves forward this?
2 Then I have I have another comment.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Dr. Simmons.

5

6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you
7 for that question, Andy. This would not be a sole-source,
8 because it would be a competitive process for multiple
9 individuals or academia or consultants could provide proposals.
10 We probably are limiting our pool, by suggesting that we want
11 them to continue development of the P-Sea WindPlot, but I assume
12 that, if other consultants, or folks in academia, wanted to
13 consider working on this, they could provide a proposal for
14 that.

15

16 The way we've discussed this with our grants coordinator is that
17 we are filling a data need for the council and the Science
18 Center to manage the shrimp fleet and get a better understanding
19 of the interactions, real-time, with protected resources and, in
20 the western Gulf, the shrimp interactions with juvenile red
21 snapper.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** That was a good question, Andy. Do you have a
24 follow-up?

25

26 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, at least my experience is, because you're
27 identifying a single software program, unless that software
28 programmer has kind of willingly released the ability for
29 anyone, any contractor, to compete for doing this work, to me,
30 it would be a sole-source contract, unless they've done that.
31 Essentially, they're willing to work with anyone, right, and so,
32 to me, that's my concern about how it's written.

33

34 Then my comment, I guess, or concern, about us moving this
35 forward is, once again, kind of P-Sea WindPlot is one solution,
36 and it might be the ultimate solution this council picks, but,
37 based on our conversation earlier, we talked a lot about type-
38 approval standards and what is needing to be met with regard to
39 those requirements, and we don't even know ourselves right now
40 what those type-approval standards might look like, and so I
41 feel like we're kind of getting out ahead of that, in eventually
42 approving something that, to Susan's concern, might not
43 ultimately be useful, if this council goes a different direction
44 or this proves not to, obviously, be a useful funded project. I
45 am not saying it will or it won't, but that's certainly a
46 concern, or a risk, here with proceeding.

47

48 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Andy. It's a good point.

1 Essentially, we have one more question from Nathan Putnam that I
2 am going to take, but the next point is we either take this to
3 motion and approve it, or disapprove it, or we defer it for a
4 future meeting, and so we've got to make one of those two
5 decisions, to either take it to motion or defer it, but, before
6 we do that, I would like to entertain a question from Nathan
7 Putnam.

8
9 **DR. NATHAN PUTNAM:** It's not so much a question as a comment on
10 the sole-source question. As you know, LGL has been working on
11 this with funding through SSA, and we do not have a contract or
12 anything formal with P-Sea WindPlot. I would say, at this
13 stage, a solution could be obtained. Again, the software is
14 posted, and it's freely available on the website of P-Sea
15 WindPlot, and there's no reason that a solution for
16 electronically automatically transmitting data couldn't be
17 achieved maybe even without the involvement of P-Sea WindPlot at
18 this point, and I think there could be some technical solutions
19 that would allow for that.

20
21 Obviously, it's nice to work with everybody, and I can't
22 imagine, if someone wanted -- Someone aside from LGL was awarded
23 this, and had funding for P-Sea WindPlot to contribute towards
24 it, I can't imagine the developer not being happy to work with
25 them, and certainly LGL would be happy to have competition in
26 this respect.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you. Any other questions? I think we
29 need to move on and either take this to motion or agree to defer
30 it to the next meeting, and so what would the pleasure of the
31 committee be? Any comments? Just as a reminder, the members of
32 the committee are General Spraggins, Patrick Banks, Susan Boggs,
33 Dave Donaldson, Martha, Robin Riechers, Dr. Shipp, Ed Swindell,
34 and Troy Williamson. Any comments from committee members? What
35 is your pleasure with this? Ms. Boggs.

36
37 **MS. BOGGS:** Is this something we can defer to Full Council, just
38 to give some time to give it some more thought, or do we have to
39 defer it to the next meeting?

40
41 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Well, that's an interesting point. We could
42 defer it to Full Council. Would that be the pleasure of the
43 committee? I am seeing a couple of nods. General Spraggins, as
44 Vice Chair, what would you like? It appears that the pleasure
45 of the committee would be to defer the decision as to taking
46 this forward with a motion or moving it to a future meeting to
47 be taken at Full Council, and so, with that, I don't think a
48 vote is necessary at this time.

1
2 We do have a couple of other items on the agenda that I would
3 like to proceed with and keep us on schedule. At our last
4 meeting, there was a lot of questions regarding the SSC's voting
5 practices and voting procedures, and, to follow-up on that
6 discussion, Dr. Simmons and Mr. Rindone would like to walk us
7 through the SSC's best practices and voting procedures. Dr.
8 Simmons.

9
10 **DISCUSSION OF SSC'S BEST PRACTICES AND VOTING PROCEDURES**

11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you just
13 stated, there was a lot of questions about what are -- Do we
14 have anything in writing on our practices and procedures for
15 voting, or motioning and voting, for SSC members, and I looked
16 in our SOPPs, and we don't.

17
18 We did develop something for the SSC meeting regarding the peer
19 review process, the most recent one that was posted online and
20 available to the members of the SSC, and it came to our
21 attention that we needed to probably flesh that out a little bit
22 more, think about it a little bit more holistically and come up
23 with a best practices and voting procedures.

24
25 I did reach out to all the other regional council Executive
26 Directors, and some of them have something like this, but, just
27 operationally, none of the other councils vote, and they usually
28 come to a consensus for their SSC. If there is a member of the
29 SSC that can't reach a consensus, they provide a minority report
30 on that particular topic, or issue, that they can't reach that
31 consensus on.

32
33 We have not historically operated that way in the Gulf, by
34 consensus, but I think we could, and it would be up to the Chair
35 and the topic, to decide how they wanted to approach the various
36 issues that may be on the agenda for that committee, and so what
37 we've tried to do, as a staff, is just put in writing the
38 National Standards and what's in Magnuson and what the
39 responsibilities and aim of the SSC is, and that's the first
40 part of this. Then if you go down, what the peer review process
41 is in the National Standard Guidelines.

42
43 We also put a little bit in here about this SOFIs and what is
44 required for SSC members, with some links, and then laying out
45 the peer review process here again, and most of this is just
46 taken right out of Magnuson or the National Standard 2
47 Guidelines.

48

1 Then I think the meat and potatoes is probably here at the
2 bottom, if you want to go down to that, the motion and voting
3 practices. When the SSC is acting as a peer review body for a
4 stock assessment or other study, an SSC member should abstain
5 from any motions and voting on the issue of best scientific
6 information available if they have served as the analytical
7 lead, as a lead investigator, or been otherwise directly
8 involved in the development of a stock assessment beyond the
9 role of a workshop panelist.

10
11 During the BSIA deliberations, the SSC member is free to
12 participate in the discussion, answer questions, and provide
13 pertinent expertise and feedback to the SSC. However, after a
14 decision has been reached on BSIA, the SSC member is at liberty
15 to motion and vote on remaining management advice.

16
17 Again, if the agenda topic is a consensus, and there is not a
18 need to vote, perhaps, on that agenda topic, we still feel like
19 this is a good process to lay out.

20
21 Our intent was to bring this to the council first. Once the
22 council is happy with it, and perhaps you want to see something
23 different, again, or perhaps you're happy with this, we would
24 take it to the SSC, during their August meeting, for them to
25 take a look at and provide feedback on, and then we would post
26 the final practices on our website.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. No motion is required
29 here, but this is an opportunity to ask questions, and you will
30 have another opportunity before Full Council. I have one
31 question, and we've talked about this before, and so shame on me
32 for not asking it prior to this, but who is the person that
33 oversees this assessment, as to who can vote and who is in
34 conflict and has to abstain? Is it the chair of the SSC? Who
35 is the policeman?

36
37 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think probably the Chair, but
38 also me as Executive Director and the lead staff member have
39 been historically kind of keeping an eye on this. Whether we've
40 been consistently doing things, I am not sure, historically, in
41 the thirteen years I've worked for the council, that we have,
42 with various staff members, and Steve Atran used to lead this
43 group, and he did things a little bit differently than I think
44 we're doing them now, but I think what we're trying to do is lay
45 out a clear process, moving forward, for how we would handle
46 this in the future.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. My point is the

1 policy and the procedure is important, but the oversight is
2 equally important, because, as we learned during the Great Red
3 Snapper Count evaluation by the SSC, these things can get gray
4 very quickly, and so I think that's a key point. Ryan.

5
6 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We had reached out to
7 the PIs, the co-PIs, for the Great Red Snapper Count prior to
8 that meeting, and then we reiterated the position that we were
9 trying to maintain, commensurate with National Standard 2,
10 during the meeting, and they were all in acknowledgement, and we
11 didn't receive any input from them that indicated that they
12 disagreed with us trying to follow National Standard 2, as best
13 we could in the circumstances.

14
15 The idea here, behind these voting practices, is to, as closely
16 as possible, follow National Standard 2, but we have a great
17 history of cooperation and camaraderie with our SSC members, in
18 terms of professionalism on these sorts of things, and so my
19 expectation would be that that would continue, and just good
20 communication between us and them and the Southeast Regional
21 Office, to make sure our interpretation of National Standard 2
22 is accurate, and hopefully it will keep us even-keeled on this.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone. We have one other
25 question from Martha.

26
27 **MS. GUYAS:** I have I guess a related question, and so I guess it
28 was almost ten years ago now that the South Atlantic Council
29 chair was a scientist, or group of scientists, that did a third-
30 party stock assessment, and they came up with -- I believe their
31 SSC came up with a whole process, basically, for how that would
32 work, another peer review process, and I'm wondering if there is
33 value in us looking at something like that.

34
35 I have it pulled up, and I can email it to you guys if you want
36 it, but it's just a little bit more detailed about how to
37 actually go about that process, from kind of top to bottom, so
38 that I guess the PIs on whatever project and the SSC are all on
39 the same page about how it's going to go.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you for that additional information.
42 Just to clarify, we're not trying to approve anything at this
43 meeting or at Full Council, and this will also have to go before
44 the SSC for their input, and so we have plenty of time to run
45 all that stuff down, and so is there any other discussion on
46 this topic, or should we move on to our last topic? Andy.

47
48 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just a comment about what's on the screen, and

1 so I generally like what's been indicated here. The first part,
2 or the first sentence, talks about stock assessment or other
3 study, but then, as you read into that sentence, it seems to
4 only pertain to an analytical lead, lead investigator, or
5 otherwise someone directly involved in a stock assessment, and
6 so I think there's maybe some clarification with the sentence
7 that refers to not only involvement of stock assessment, but,
8 also, there's other studies, like we just had with the Great Red
9 Snapper Count.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Andy, and that's a good point, and
12 we have ample time to evaluate all of that. In an effort to get
13 us back on schedule, I would like to move on to the final item
14 on our agenda, and this is along the same vein as the previous
15 discussion, and this will be led by Dr. Simmons and Ms. Levy,
16 and it's in regard to NMFS' draft policy and NMFS' draft
17 procedure. Carrie, would you like to kick us off?

18
19 **OTHER BUSINESS**

20 **INFORMATIONAL OVERVIEW OF NMFS DRAFT POLICY 01-116 AND NMFS**
21 **DRAFT PROCEDURE 01-116-01**

22
23 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We posted
24 these on here because these were discussed during the Council
25 Coordinating Committee, and they are the financial disclosures
26 and recusals, and one is a policy and one is a procedure.

27
28 They are still draft, and you probably looked at these, but it
29 had some information in there about the council SOFIs and the
30 SSC SOFIs, and most of this is practiced already by us, and
31 there is a little bit more detail on I think my role, as far as
32 reviewing the SOFIs, and keeping track of those and recusals for
33 voting.

34
35 The one big-ticket item that I just wanted to point out to the
36 council and everyone was that, when these are implemented, and
37 when the new SSC membership is finalized for the next three-year
38 term, the SOFIs of the appointed SSC members will be posted on
39 our website, and that is a change in these policies from what we
40 have historically done.

41
42 The intent of that was to increase transparency, and so all the
43 councils are going to be moving forward with doing that, and so
44 not only will council members' SOFIs be posted online, but so
45 will the appointed SSC members, and I will see if Ms. Levy may
46 have some additional information.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Any questions regarding that? Okay. We have

1 no other new business, and we have seconds left to stay on
2 schedule, and so that concludes this committee.

3

4 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 21, 2021.)

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