GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

251ST MEETING

WEBINAR

March 3, 2015

VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Anson (designee for Chris Blankenship)..............Alabama
Martha Bademan (designee for Nick Wiley)....................Florida
Leann Bosarge........................................Mississippi
Doug Boyd................................................Texas
Roy Crabtree................................NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
Pamela Dana........................................Florida
Dale Diaz (designee for Jamie Miller).........................Mississippi
Myron Fischer (designee for Randy Pausina).................Louisiana
Johnny Greene........................................Alabama
Campo Matens.....................................Louisiana
Harlon Pearce........................................Louisiana
Corky Perret........................................Mississippi
Robin Riechers......................................Texas
John Sanchez........................................Florida
Greg Stunz........................................Texas
David Walker........................................Alabama
Roy Williams........................................Florida

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The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened via webinar, Tuesday afternoon, March 3, 2015, and was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Chairman Kevin Anson.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS
CHAIRMAN KEVIN ANSON: Thank you everyone out there. This is unusual circumstances, but we have some important business to take care of, I think, with this webinar and hopefully it will go as smoothly as possible. Welcome to the webinar. I am going to read the opening statement and then we will go through the agenda.

Welcome to the 252nd meeting of the Gulf Council. My name is Kevin Anson, Chairman of the Council. The Gulf Council is one of eight regional councils established in 1976 by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, known today as the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The council’s purpose is to serve as a deliberative body to advise the Secretary of Commerce on fishery management measures in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. These measures help ensure that fishery resources in the Gulf are sustained, while providing the best overall benefit to the nation.

The council has seventeen voting members, eleven of whom are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and include individuals from a range of geographical areas in the Gulf of Mexico and with experience in various aspects of fisheries.

The membership also includes the five state fishery managers from each Gulf State and the Regional Administrator from NOAA Southeast Fisheries Service, as well as several non-voting members. Public input is a vital part of the council’s deliberative process and comments, both oral and written, are accepted and considered by the council throughout the process.

The Sustainable Fisheries Act requires that all statements include a brief description of the background and interest of the persons in the subject of the statement. All written information shall include a statement of the source and date of such information.

Oral or written communications provided to the council, its members or its staff, that relate to matters within the council’s purview are public in nature. All written comments will be posted on the council’s website for viewing by council members and the public and will be maintained by the council as a part of the permanent record.

Knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the council is a violation of federal law. A digital recording is used for the public record and therefore, for the purpose of voice identification, Doug Gregory is going to handle the roll call at this time.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY: Please unmute yourself and then respond “present” when I call your name and mute yourself again. Roy Williams.

MR. ROY WILLIAMS: I am here, Doug.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Roy Crabtree.

DR. ROY CRABTREE: I am here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Martha Bademan.

MS. MARTHA BADEMAN: I’m here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Okay. Pam Dana is here. Right now she’s in the Mackerel AP meeting right next door, the next room, and so she will be here. John Sanchez. We have found where the reverb is coming from. John, it’s your computer, however you’ve got it set up. The next person is David Walker.

MR. DAVID WALKER: I am here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Johnny Greene.

MR. JOHNNY GREENE: I am here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Leann Bosarge.

MS. LEANN BOSARGE: I am here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Corky Perret.

MR. CORKY PERRET: I am here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dale Diaz.

MR. DALE DIAZ: Present.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Harlon Pearce.

MR. HARLON PEARCE: I am here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Camp Matens?

MR. CAMP MATENS: Okay.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Myron Fischer.
MR. MYRON FISCHER: Myron is here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Next on the list is Doug Boyd.

MR. DOUG BOYD: Doug Boyd is here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Greg Stunz.

DR. GREG STUNZ: I am here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Robin Riechers.

MR. ROBIN RIECHERS: I am here and Lance is also here.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Now everybody can mute themselves and, Kevin, everyone is here.

ADOPITION OF AGENDA

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Great and, again, welcome everyone. Before we go much farther, let’s talk a little bit about how we’re going to handle this. We’re going to go through the agenda and adopt the agenda and what we talked about, Doug and I, before we started the webinar today, was to have everybody present the individual items as listed. For instance, Dr. Patterson would give the SSC Summary and then after each presentation, if people had questions, to go ahead and indicate as such.

Robin is having some communication there in the chat box and if you just type “yes” in the chat box, you will be called upon and so if you have any questions as we go through or if you want to make a comment on something, please type in the chat box that you want to speak or comment and then Doug, since he’s in the office -- I tried to make it there in the office today, but the flight was canceled due to weather and so I am relying upon Doug to pretty much handle the meeting for me as far as who to call on and so that’s how we’re going to handle it.

With that being said, we have an agenda that’s Tab A, Number 1. Hopefully everyone has that in front of them and has had a chance to review it. Are there any changes to the agenda?

We have a motion to adopt the agenda as written from Roy Williams and it’s been seconded by Johnny. Is there any discussion to adopt the agenda as written? Any opposed to adopting the agenda as written? The agenda is adopted. That takes us to Tab A, Number 2, the SSC Summary. Dr. Patterson,
DISCUSSION OF FRAMEWORK ACTION TO REVISE RED SNAPPER QUOTAS

SSC SUMMARY

DR. WILL PATTERSON: I thought I would cover a couple of slides from Shannon’s presentation to us as well, to kind of frame the context of this. Is my screen being shown?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Okay and so I’m not going to go through all of the slides from Shannon Calay’s presentation to us on our webinar from February 19, but I would like to go through a couple, because I think they’re going to be important for some of the issues the SSC discussed.

This second slide of her presentation includes a timeline of landings estimates and it just shows that on December 3 that landings through 2013 were available for the update assessment. December 29, that update was submitted to the SSC and on January 8, that update was presented at the last SSC meeting, not including the webinar. On January 22, provisional total landings for commercial and recreational were available and so that was after the SSC meeting.

January 26, update assessment and preliminary run with the provisional 2014 total landings were presented to the Gulf Council and that’s when the discussion ensued about how to have the SSC comment or weigh in on using these provisional landings and whether the OFL and ABC might change.

February 6, updated provisional 2014 landings were available by fishing mode and region, which is important for the assessment, and then February 19, there was an updated run presented with provisional 2014 landings presented to the SSC.

The next slide here from Shannon’s presentation just indicates the various sorts of information for recreational, because the recreational landings, provisional landings, were more uncertain than the commercial and one of the issues you will see at the bottom -- There are two tables here and so we have 2014 provisional recreational landings estimated by various surveys and we have MRIP, the Louisiana Creel Survey, the NMFS Headboat Survey, and then Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Creel Survey.

In particular, MRIP -- We didn’t have information for the last
wave, Wave 6, November 1 through December 31. However, and this is the bottom table there, the comment was that no landings were reported by MRIP during Wave 6 from 2013 and so perhaps we’re okay there.

Then the other issue is that for Texas Parks and Wildlife there were no provisional recreational landings available from May 16th through December 31st and so, because of that, the 2013 information provided was utilized and so that includes 41,801 fish and 220,344 pounds of fish. That was what was estimated by Texas for that second half of the year of 2013 and then was utilized here as a proxy for 2014.

We had quite a bit of discussion about that uncertainty and one of the things that kind of sparked that is if you just look at the top table, you see the Louisiana Creel, for example, and we saw almost 77,000 fish estimated at landings and then, when you go down to Texas, it only shows 5,329.

There was some discussion about whether that was an accurate number and Shannon checked back with information that was forwarded to her by Andy Strelcheck and confirmed that information was accurate and then we discussed that was only from the first half of the year, but for a fishery that was open in state waters during that time period, there was still some question about the low number.

Then if you take the 2013 proxy of 41,801 and add it to the 5,000, you come up with about 42,000 fish and it’s still about half of what was estimated to be caught in Louisiana during 2014 and so we had some discussion and another part of the discussion was the mean weight of landings in Texas. It was quite a bit lower than either Louisiana or Gulf-wide and so that was part of the discussion about the data.

Really, we just wanted to make sure there wasn’t any type of -- Whether data were transposed incorrectly, but, again, Shannon checked with the numbers from Andy and confirmed that these were the numbers as reported from Texas.

Another concern, and, actually, I am going skip here to the report, because this is broken out right before the first motion in the report and so basically this top paragraph says the following factors contribute uncertainties to projections made with these provisional landings.

First, the final landings estimates will not be available probably until June or later of 2015. However, based on
previous years, changes between provisional and final landings estimates have been small and so Andy then checked on what was meant by small and he said it’s typically less than a 5 percent change between the provisional and the final landings estimates and so we didn’t feel like that was a large percentage.

Next was this issue about the average weight of recreational catches from Texas and so the average weight for 2014 seemed low at 4.4 pounds, compared to 5.5 pounds from May 16 to December 31 of 2013.

Again, we had NMFS staff go back and look at the information they had and they confirmed it was accurate and so there was some discussion about the magnitude of the Texas landings and whether that was accurate forwarded from Andy and then also the mean weight of the landings was another thing. Again, both of those were confirmed from Strelcheck.

Then, lastly, discards in 2014 were assumed to continue at 2013 levels and there is another statement here that says projections for 2015 and beyond may require further revisions until discard estimates are finalized.

We probably could have phrased that a little differently and just said that these provisional landings will have this added bit of uncertainty because the total kill in 2014, we are borrowing the discard information from 2013 still and so we would rather have had discard, both dead discard and live discard, information available for 2014, in order to use those provisional data. However, that wasn’t available.

Based on all of this review and examination of Shannon’s information and analysis, the SSC passed a motion without opposition that reads: The red snapper SEDAR-31 update assessment model run with updated provisional 2014 recreational landings estimates represents the best scientific information available and is suitable for management advice.

From there, we looked at the OFL, using the currently adopted MSY proxy, and ABC, using the same methodology we used to compute ABC previously, and this is the table that resulted and so here we have year, OFL, and ABC. That table here is at the bottom of the page.

The motion was to set 2015, 2016, and 2017 OFL and ABC for red snapper according to the values presented in the table below and so OFL is 16.13 in 2015 and in 2016, it’s 15.32 and in 2017, it’s 14.80 and then ABCs for those years being 14.30, 13.96, and
13.74. This motion passed with one in opposition. That’s basically the gist of what we discussed and the report that was produced, including these two motions.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Will. I have a couple of questions for you. First would be Roy Williams, followed by Corky.

MR. WILLIAMS: I don’t have anything. I’m sorry, but I don’t have anything.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Sorry about that then. Corky, go ahead.

MR. PERRET: I am curious about the weight of the Texas fish at whatever it was, 4.4, compared to some of the other estimates. Did anybody look -- I don’t know how many headboats in Texas are in the headboat program, but did anybody compare the Parks and Wildlife average weights with the headboat catch, to see if it was similar or how different they were?

DR. PATTERSON: No, that question didn’t come up in the webinar. I don’t know if it’s been looked at outside of that, but that’s a good point and another comparison that could have been made, but we did not discuss that.

MR. PERRET: Another follow-up question. That’s the only area of the Gulf -- You used region, but that’s the only region that had that lower average sized fish, was that area of Texas during that period of time? Was that correct?

DR. PATTERSON: There was some variability among regions, but that was by far the lowest estimated mean weight.

MR. PERRET: Thank you. I suggest that Mr. Gregory or whoever the appropriate people are may want to look at Texas headboats and see how it compares with Parks and Wildlife data. Thank you, all.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Corky. I next have Dale.

MR. DIAZ: I’ve just got a question, just to be clear in my own mind and make sure I’m correct. I know all the state directors at one time sent in asking for another stock assessment in the next year and we went back and forth the last meeting I was at, but I was not at the January meeting and where are we at now as far as when will the next red snapper stock assessment occur, whether it’s a standard or a full or whichever level of stock assessment we will see again?
CHAIRMAN ANSON: I can try and look at my notes, but, Doug, if you have someone there from staff that might be able to provide that answer, but we’ll get that to you as soon as possible, Dale. Is there anyone else who has any questions for Dr. Patterson? David Walker, you have a question, I think.

MR. WALKER: Will, did you have much discussion about the inconsistent seasons?

DR. PATTERSON: I am not sure what you’re asking, David. Inconsistent in what way?

MR. WALKER: As far as the different states having different state openings. I think Florida is looking at seventy days right now for this year and I just wondered if there was discussion of the inconsistent fishing seasons for different states.

DR. PATTERSON: No, in this case we were just simply looking at what the landings estimates were and I guess part of the discussion with trying to rectify some of the perceived differences among the states and what has been reported is trying to get a handle on when fisheries are actually open, open in state waters versus federal waters.

There was some discussion of that in the context of why we have some landings reported from some periods and not from others, but otherwise, we didn’t really get into the states and how they’re managing state waters versus federal waters.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Does anyone else have any questions for Dr. Patterson? Leann.

MS. BOSARGE: Dr. Patterson, I was looking through the report and I see where there was a discussion about possibly using that constant catch, because of the uncertainties involved, and it says you all had a discussion about it and you decided that since this was the best scientific information available that you decided to go with the motion that takes it at face value, essentially, the 2015, 2016, and 2017 OFL and ABC.

I want to make sure I understand what, because I was not on that call, the discussion -- Essentially what you’re saying is you took the Texas information and the other pieces of information at face value and used them for what they were and so any uncertainty that we may have about maybe some of those numbers, that has to be put into our management uncertainty and what we decide to do on this Action 1 and that’s how that uncertainty is
going to be accounted for, through the management perspective, as opposed to the scientific uncertainty? That was your recommendation?

DR. PATTERSON: There is a lot to that. Uncertainty is quite the word here. We fully recognize that there is a considerable amount of uncertainty, one, in using provisional instead of finalized estimates. There is uncertainty also by using the proxy for 2013 for half the year for Texas, the proxy of 2013 for 2014. Then there is some uncertainty obviously in the mean size of the fish reported in Texas versus other places.

There was a presentation I gave to you guys a couple meetings back about whether the current ABC rule adequately captures the broad suite of uncertainties that are available, that are possible. That’s one aspect of this and so we do indicate that there is some uncertainty that perhaps we’re not fully accounting for here.

However, the issue about whether to recommend a constant ABC or to recommend an ABC based on the control rule, the discussion here was basically that the council didn’t give us specific instructions to recommend a constant ABC and so the predominant view was, given the fact that you guys didn’t give us specific instructions on a constant ABC, we provided you the ABC by year that came out of the control rule.

Whether you decide to adopt a constant ACL or ACT, that’s obviously your decision, but since you didn’t give us specific instructions to provide you a constant ABC, we gave you the control rule ABC. This wasn’t really related to the issue of uncertainty and uncertainties about these provisional catch estimates. That was basically we gave you this because we weren’t asked for a constant ABC scenario.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Let me have a few here. Doug or Steven, did you -- I see your comment, Doug. The next red snapper stock assessment is currently scheduled to be a standard assessment in 2017. Dale, that answers your question. Steven, did you want to add anything else to your statement that you provided in the chat box?

MR. STEVEN ATRAN: No, I had an older SEDAR schedule than Doug did. Doug’s information is more up-to-date than mine.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you and so that will take us next to Robin and then Doug Boyd and Corky.
MR. RIECHERS: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We will go to Doug Boyd.

MR. BOYD: My question is that there was one dissenting vote on this motion and I wondered if the dissenting vote was a vote against the OFL and then the ABC or was it a dissenting vote based on some component before you got to the final ABC and OFL? Does that make sense?

DR. PATTERSON: Your question makes sense, but I don’t have the information to answer that. We typically don’t ask folks’ rationale for dissenting votes and so I don’t even know who the dissenter was. I think the important thing is that it was nearly unanimous.

MR. BOYD: Okay and I just wondered if there was some component that was in question or maybe if it was based on the weights and they were dissenting because they didn’t like the way the weights were done or felt like there was incomplete data or something like that. I wasn’t really trying to question who the dissenter was, but more --

DR. PATTERSON: I couldn’t tell you what their rationale was, because I don’t even know who the dissenter was. Maybe if I knew who cast that vote, if they said something specifically about why they cast that vote, but I don’t even know who that voter was and so I’m not -- I wouldn’t even begin to try to recreate what their rationale was.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Steven, I see you have a comment on the dissenting vote.

MR. ATRAN: Yes and if you read the SSC summary, there was initially a motion made to set ABC at a constant catch level equal to the smallest OFLs and ABCs for that three-year period and that person felt that, as I recall, that because of the uncertainties that were previously outlined that the SSC should go with the more conservative level of holding a constant catch at that lower ABC and I believe that person was the one who cast the dissenting vote when the substitute motion was made to pass ABCs that were directly correlated to the OFLs.

DR. PATTERSON: Again, that’s possible. It’s supposition, because we don’t have it recorded, and so that is a possibility.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. I have Corky and then, Robin, I will try to come back to you after Corky.
MR. PERRET: Will, we can talk about uncertainties of all types, management and biological and so on and so forth, but just looking at a fishery where we’re talking a harvest of some eleven to now thirteen or fourteen-million pounds and I’m looking at these numbers on the uncertainty on the size of Texas fish.

We’re over by about a pound average per fish and if you look at the number of fish taken by Texas, we’re still talking about a very, very, very small percentage of the overall take and so, to me, that’s a very minor uncertainty, that one-pound difference basis, based on the number of fish that are taken in Texas. Do you agree with that statement or not?

DR. PATTERSON: Well, if you frame it as one-pound, in the context of the weight of my pickup truck, one-pound isn’t a whole lot, but when you couch it in the weight of a five-pound average, one-pound is 20 percent of the weight of the fish.

In that case, I think it does make a difference and can be substantial and that’s why we spent so much time discussing that data point and made sure to confirm that in fact we had the numbers right that were conveyed through Andy Strelcheck to Shannon.

MR. PERRET: Okay and I just respectfully disagree. I guess that’s an uncertainty, but if you look at the percentage of the total recreational catch taken by Texas, the number of fish, and multiply that by that one-pound, we are talking about a small percentage compared to the whole of your pickup truck. Thank you though.

DR. PATTERSON: Fair enough.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Corky. It looks like -- Robin, are you able to get on now?

MR. RIECHERS: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

CHAIRMAN ANSON: There is an echo, but that’s not as bad as it was before. I take that back. It is bad. I sent you a recommendation just a minute ago and I don’t know if you saw it or not to manage your sidebar there. That helped me the other day, by making sure that the appropriate audio source was checked. I will try you again in one second, but, Dale, you had a question?
MR. DIAZ: Yes and, Dr. Patterson, I noticed in the report, like Leann was talking about, when you all talked about constant catch this time that you recommend the lowest of the three years, but in the past when we have asked for a constant catch, how did you all do it in the past whenever we’ve asked for that?

DR. PATTERSON: I think the first thing to note here is that we didn’t recommend a constant catch. The original motion was crafted using the rationale that in the recent past the council has chosen to go with a constant ACL for red snapper and so I think what was presented was in the context of that recent past and the council having expressed interest in using a constant catch scenario, but since we didn’t have a term of reference asking us for a constant catch ABC, one wasn’t computed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

Given the fact that we didn’t have one computed across our time series of three years, the only other way -- One way or I shouldn’t say the only other way, but one way to provide the council with a constant catch scenario for ABC would just be to take the lowest among the three years, because using the control rule, none -- 13.74 would be the ABC resulting in year three and the ABC from the previous two years wouldn’t exceed that. 13.74 wouldn’t exceed what came out of the control rule.

I think that was the rationale for using 13.74 in the first motion that was offered for ABC, but this substitute motion was quickly offered and had quite a bit of support.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other questions to Dr. Patterson? Robin, do you think you might want to try it again?

MR. RIECHERS: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Robin, I can’t hear you if you’re trying to speak. I don’t see any other questions and maybe we can come back to Robin and he can make his comments a little bit later. That will take us to our next item and that will be Review of Framework Action and Steven Atran. Steven, are you ready with Tab A, Number 3?

MR. ATRAN: Yes, I can. Can you either give me control of the screen or put up the framework action and start on page 3? I wanted to point something out. Can you folks see my screen?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I can see it.

MR. ATRAN: This is a table that’s in the framework action and I
just wanted to show this to give you an idea of what the history of catches relative to the allocations look like. These catches, and the ones with the overages are highlighted in red, on the recreational side are converted to MRIP-equivalent values for the earlier years and it’s a little bit like comparing apples to oranges, because we’re comparing MRIP-converted landings to quotas that were based upon the old MRFSS method, but still you can see that almost every year since we started the allocations in 1991, the recreational sector has gone over its allocation.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Steven, I am sorry to interrupt, but I do see Leann had a question and hopefully Will is still on the phone. Will had a question and then I can read maybe what Robin had -- About what his comments were and Roy Williams might have a question. Leann, did you want to ask your question?

MS. BOSARGE: Yes and I was wondering -- I am leaning back and forth, as we look forward into Action 1, between this constant catch scenario and then the Alternative 2. I wanted Will’s perspective and it sounds like we did not specifically ask them to examine a constant catch scenario and therefore, we have the motion that was made for these OFLs and ABCs.

Will, if you think -- If we had asked you to look at a constant catch, what do you think the discussion would have been? Do you think that would have encompassed the uncertainties that we’re looking at more accurately than the Alternative 2?

DR. PATTERSON: No, I think the uncertainties are in the data themselves and so I don’t think, as far as the scientific uncertainty, being asked for a constant catch versus a constant fishing mortality rate scenario really would have impacted the uncertainties in any respect.

It’s simply averaging, in a sense, what that mortality is across three years instead of doing it year-by-year. One of the greatest uncertainties in this is the difference between east and west.

I have brought this up in past presentations on the red snapper stock assessments, but the SSC recommended in 2009 that the rationale for east/west assessments implies east/west populations and the SSC recommended that the east and the west be managed separately based on the biological information that indicated east and west subunits existed and the way that’s captured in how the stock is assessed.
One of the biggest uncertainties is what is going on in the east and when we presented the assessment results, it was shown that recent years of low recruitment in the east -- Hopefully that’s a temporary issue, but it has persisted now for four years. If it is temporary and perhaps recruitment will tick up here shortly, then that will affect projections.

If you will recall, the projections are made -- One of the methodological details of the projections is that the recent recruitment -- An average of that recent recruitment is projected forward and so one of the reasons that the Gulf biomass, the eastern Gulf biomass, is not estimated to recover like what is happening in the west, is because that recent low recruitment is being projected forward.

If recruitment improves, then that projection should improve as well, but using the methods that have been used in the past, it leads us to that projecting to the out years of a very low stock size in the east and so that really is the biggest source of uncertainty, from my perspective, is that difference between east and west and what’s going on in the east, especially with low recruitment.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: There are a couple of comments that are made. I will try Robin one more time. You have a chat box comment, but do you want to try your phone one more time? He still seems to have some difficulty and so, Mara, your comment, was that related to the table that Steven was presenting or was that related to one of the tables that Dr. Patterson was talking about?

MS. MARA LEVY: The table in the document that Steven was presenting.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Can you repeat that? The volume was low and I could barely hear you.

MS. LEVY: The table in the document that Steven was presenting.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Johnny Greene, you have a question for Dr. Patterson?

MR. GREENE: Will, you said the recruitment was low over the last four years and what was the recruitment like before that? Was it comparable to the western Gulf or no or any idea?

DR. PATTERSON: In both regions, from maybe the late 1990s to the later 2000s, there was increasing recruitment from both
sides of the basin and spawning stock biomass was tracking quite
nicely. The east was growing at a faster rate than the west,
because the west had been higher when you guys started some more
restrictive management measures in the mid-2000s and so the east
really came along quite quickly.

Both the east and the west had a low recruitment event in 2008,
which was a very wet year, but then recruitment quickly
recovered in the west and there is lot of variability in those
recruitment time series, but recruitment recovered in the west
and continued to track upward, while in the east -- 2009 was a
have all been low.

One thing that Shannon Calay pointed out in her presentation is
that the benchmark, the recent benchmark for red snapper, the
most recent assessment, showed an estimated recruitment for 2010
of being really low, I think the lowest in the time series.

She pointed out that once you have year classes in the fishery --
- Once that year class had recruited to the fishery and you had
some information in the catch at age matrix coming from the
fishery-dependent data that that 2010 year class recruitment
wasn’t estimated to be quite as low as it was previously, when
there wasn’t any catch at age matrix information, as that year
class moved into the fishery.

It could be that these 2011, 2012, and 2013, similarly, will be
perceived to be higher recruitment once we have some catch at
age matrix information on those cohorts as well, but for right
now, recruitment for all of those years after 2010 is quite a
bit lower than it had been in the years before.

MR. GREENE: When will you have the catch at age matrix?

DR. PATTERSON: These fish start to recruit to the recreational
fishery when they’re about two and they’re fully recruited by
age three and so it typically takes about three years after
their birth date for them to fully be in the fishery and then
usually it takes a few years being in the fishery to really get
a good picture of the strength of a given year class. There is
that time lag.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Will, I have a question. With the increases in
average size of fish being brought to the dock, at least from
the recreational side, do you think that’s going to impact that
year class recruitment estimate, at least for the last couple of
years or -- Again, as average size increases, you won’t
necessarily see those fish recruit into the fishery, because they would be discarded fish on the recreational side and we wouldn’t have any length information and is that a possibility?

DR. PATTERSON: Definitely on the recreational side that will affect the catch at age matrix in getting that year class signal. On the commercial side, the small young fish are still being caught and so you get that signal in those data.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Do you think that’s being accurately accounted for in the assessment?

DR. PATTERSON: I am not sure of your question and what’s your question?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: If they were treated roughly 50/50 and if you put 50 percent weight on the recreational fish and 50 percent on the commercial fish to use to determine year class strength or recruitment, if now all of a sudden a large portion of that 50 percent from the recreational side is no longer being put into the model, is the model then weighting more heavily to the commercial or is it interpreted as missing information?

DR. PATTERSON: Part of your question is that the recreational 50 percent is not being included, but I don’t understand where that inference comes from.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I am unsure, and you may be as well, as to how much emphasis each of the two fisheries are placed when the data is compiled or used to look at recruitment or to compare to estimate recruitment.

If each of the fisheries were looked at equally to try to fill in that estimate or determine that number, the recreational data, again, is not going to provide a lot of information in the amount that it had previously provided, because those fish aren’t coming to the dock. Those three-year-olds aren’t coming to the dock and so I am just wondering if the model is then weighting or looking to heavily to the commercial fish for the information.

DR. PATTERSON: I’ve got you. I don’t think that the recreational fish in that context aren’t informing the catch at age matrix from the recreational samples and aren’t informing recruitment. It’s just that if larger fish are being targeted or retained, then there is going to be a longer lag, because if you’re now fully selecting five-year-old versus three-year-old fish, there will be a longer lag until you get that recruitment
Another thing to keep in mind is that there are more than just two fisheries, commercial and recreational, that are modeled in the statistical catch at age model, the SS3 model here, because you have closed season discards and open season discards and those are really treated as separate fleets.

One of the biggest uncertainties is what is the age and size composition of recreational discards, because if you think about it as total kill, you mentioned before 50/50, which is basically 51 percent and 49 percent, the split between the two sectors. In fact, if you look at the total kill, the recreational fishery has a bigger influence, because of the number of dead discards and live discards estimated to die that are coming from the recreational fishery versus the commercial fishery.

That’s a big source of uncertainty, because we don’t have really good information about what the age composition or even the size composition is of those discarded fish and so that would have a big impact on what you’re referring to here.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. I have been asked to read -- Robin had responded or written some comments relative to some of the discussion that has occurred or Dr. Patterson’s earlier briefing and I am just going to read those so they go into the record.

Robin wrote that he was going to respond in regards to the estimate on the weight of the Texas fish and that Texas measures the fish and then uses a weight/length relationship to determine the weight.

Then he had a second comment I think regarding Corky’s inquiry to headboat information and this is Robin’s statement. Comparison to headboats may provide some validation, but comparison to headboat landings may provide some info, but it may not be a comparison to determine if there is a difference. A comparison may be helpful, but it may actually be different based on depth of water fished, locations, et cetera.

Those are his comments and so I don’t see anyone else that has asked to ask any more questions for Dr. Patterson, but if you could stay on the line, Dr. Patterson, a little bit longer, that would be appreciated.

DR. PATTERSON: Sure and to Robin’s statement, it seems that weighing the fish would be easy enough to get rid of that uncertainty, but another important consideration is if they
could just report what that weight/length regression is and whether it’s different in that region versus other places and that could probably get at some of the uncertainty.

I agree with his statement about headboat landings and how that would be difficult to compare to the other fisheries off of Texas, because you have different selectivities, but what I thought Corky was saying is that you could compare headboat information from Texas versus Louisiana versus Florida and just see if you see similar differences in those datasets in the mean size or weight of fish among regions.

If that’s present, then it would sort of verify the fact that there is something different going on off of Texas that the SSC was questioning when we looked at the provisional landings data.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Points noted and hopefully if it’s provided, the Science Center -- Hopefully Robin and his staff can provide you the length/weight regression formula that they use to estimate weight and so at least you will have that available and could review it. Steven, could you continue on? I am sorry for interrupting earlier.

REVIEW OF FRAMEWORK ACTION

MR. ATRAN: That’s all right. This table has been up on the screen for some time and so hopefully it’s burned into everybody’s eyes by now and Mara is correct that that ACL for 2013 was a typo and it was in place for 2014.

The other thing I wanted to point out here, if you look at the bottom of the recreational landings, is although the recreational sector has been over in most of the years, in 2014 it was under by quite a bit, a 1.494 million pound underage in 2014.

That may very well be a function of the very short season that we had. With the short seasons, any number of factors, weather conditions, environmental factors, or some other things might affect whether we’re over or under on the projections.

We will be getting projections from the Regional Office at the council meeting that’s coming up at the end of the month and so what we’re going to do here is decide what the quota should be and then they will calculate what they think the projections are. I just wanted to give you an idea of what the historical perspective was.
Going to the alternatives, which are on page 8, I believe, we kept the alternatives as simple as possible and there are three alternatives. Alternative 1 is no action and we would retain the current overall quota of eleven-million pounds and with the 51/49 split and that’s a 5.61 million-pound commercial quota and a 5.39 million-pound recreational quota. Since we have a 20 percent buffer to set an ACT, that would create an ACT of 4.312 million pounds.

Under Alternative 2, this is setting the quotas at the ABCs for each of the three years and so for the current year, the ACT, the total quota, would go up to 14.3 million pounds. That would be divided into a commercial quota of 7.26 million pounds and a recreational quota of 7.04. The ACT, which is what the season projections are based on, would be 5.632 million pounds.

In 2016, it would decline to 13.96 million pounds overall and a commercial quota of 7.12 million pounds and a recreational quota of 6.84 million pounds and a recreational ACT of 5.472 million pounds. Then in 2017, it would be 13.74 million pounds and a commercial quota of 7.01 million pounds and a recreational quota of 6.73 million pounds with a recreational ACT of 5.384 million pounds.

I put a “+” symbol after the 2017 and hopefully we’ll get the next stock assessment and we will get new projections in time for the 2018 fishing year, but if we don’t, the intent is that the 2017 quotas would stay in place until we got those new projections and can adjust it accordingly.

Alternative 3 is the constant catch scenario. As Will indicated, we did not get an analysis of some equivalent constant catch to the three-year ABC and so the alternative is to use the lowest ABC of each of those three years going forward and that would be 13.74 million pounds. The commercial quota then would be 7.01 million pounds and the recreational quota would be 6.73 million pounds and the recreational ACT would be 5.384 million pounds and those values would be in place from 2015 until the next stock assessment or the next projections are made.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Steve. Let me double check here and so -- Corky, let me go ahead and take you. You all submitted at the same time and let me go ahead and take your question first. Robin has proffered a motion, but, Corky, go ahead and then Robin.

MR. PERRET: My question, Steve, is this. Under Alternative 2
or Alternative 3, setting something for 2015 plus 2016 and 2017
or Alternative 3, 2015 plus, that’s all well and good, but six
months or a year from now the council, with a majority vote, can
change that, can’t they, as long as they stay within the limit
that the scientists say we should be in?

MR. ATRAN: Yes, the council could always request a change in
the quotas. I think we would probably want to have some new
information on which to base that. The Regional Office has
usually not been very good as far as approving a change just for
the sake of approving a change and so if we had new information,
and that might be perhaps requesting a new projection after a
year or so that showed that we could go with a different ABC, we
could do that. Right now, we could go with any ABC or any quota
that the council wishes, as long as it doesn’t exceed the ABCs
that are listed here.

MR. PERRET: Thank you, Steve, and I just wanted to make a
comment that the council in the future can change it and I just
wanted that brought out. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Corky. Robin, I’ve got your motion
here and you moved to select Alternative 2 as the preferred
alternative. Is there a second to the motion? Dale seconds.
Any discussion on the motion?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: A point of order, Mr. Chair. We
had scheduled for public testimony.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: But aren’t we just selecting a preferred at
this time and then we’ll come back after public testimony to --

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Okay. That will be fine, if this
is like a preliminary.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I think this is what we normally try to do, is
select a preferred and then the public has an idea of which
direction the council is going. Leann, do you have a comment or
a question to the motion?

MS. BOSARGE: I know Robin can’t talk to us, but I was hoping
maybe he would type in some of his rationale for why he likes
Alternative 2, because I am going back and forth between
Alternative 2 and 3. Just so that maybe Robin can respond to me
when he types in.

Right now, I am sort of leaning towards Alternative 3, just
because we do have some uncertainties in there and that’s one
thing and in Alternative 2, we do have the declining ABCs and humans being humans -- It’s kind of like your income and you always want to see it go up and you don’t want to see it come down, but I like Alternative 3 in the sense that they will have a constant 13.74 for 2015 plus. Last time, we did it for three years, but at least they won’t have something that is declining.

I know that there are some things out there that make us think that maybe when we get more information that some of these numbers may go up, but that’s a big if and I think I would rather see something constant that’s a little more conservative that will allow people to at least catch the same every year rather than see things decrease. Maybe Robin can help me with that and convince me otherwise.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Robin, do you want to try one more time on the phone or are you typing? Maybe he’s typing. Corky, do you have a comment?

MR. PERRET: I just have basically the same comment Leann had. We’ve got a fishery that’s improving, yet we’re going to have a number that goes down and to me, that’s just a negative. If the number were going up from 2015 to 2016 to 2017, that would be one thing, but to start higher and then go lower, to me that’s a negative.

We are not talking about a whole lot of difference, but I do prefer to see a constant catch rather than a declining catch in a fishery that is supposedly being better managed and is improving. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Roy Williams has a question for Dr. Crabtree and I will read it. His question is could we take the average of the three years in Alternative 2 and set ABC at fourteen-million pounds?

DR. CRABTREE: If you were to set it at fourteen-million pounds, you would be okay in 2015, but you would be exceeding the ABC from the SSC in 2016 and 2017 and we’re not allowed to do that and so I think to try to set it at fourteen that you would have to go back to the SSC and get a new ABC for 2016 and 2017.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Dale, do you have a question?

MR. DIAZ: I guess it’s kind of a comment. I was just going to kind of make a comment on what I’m thinking about. I agree with a lot of stuff that’s been said here recently. The numbers are not a whole lot and Corky said that. I do agree that I don’t
like to see a number going down either.

I probably would support a constant catch if it was some sort of an average across the three years, but being as we’re picking the lowest year out of the three and it doesn’t sound like that’s the way we’ve done constant catches in the past, that’s kind of my rationale for seconding Robin’s motion and leaning towards Alternative 2.

I do want to hear public comments and see what kinds of things we hear from the public, but I just wanted to get my thoughts out there and let people know what I was thinking. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Dale, and so Robin did type in some rationale. Leann, you had the question and I will go ahead and read it. His response is either way we will be revisiting this information, as we do, especially for red snapper, each year. While I do agree typically with the continuity notion from year to year, red snapper gets reviewed every year and the uncertainty we are talking about is there every year. The constant catch scenario is at the lowest of the three years and this is just leaving poundage, trips, and fishery dollars on the table.

Then Robin also had a question for the Science Center and has the economic analysis been done for the alternatives? Doug, do you know if Bonnie or someone else from the Science Center is on the phone call?

DR. CRABTREE: Kevin, I don’t believe she is on and I think whatever economic analysis is going to be done should be in the framework amendment.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. It certainly would help explain or justify the rationale for what we’re attempting to do or what methods are selected. They’re reviewing the document right now to see if it’s at the end. There is some economic analysis there.

DR. CRABTREE: Kevin, if you look on page — Starting on page 37 of the document, there is the effects on the economic environment.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Okay and so we do have some analysis in there. Thank you. Doug Boyd, do you have a question?

MR. BOYD: A comment and a question. I agree with Dale on the reduction each year. I would rather see a constant catch
scenario, but I feel like the numbers should be higher and I didn’t realize that we had not asked the SSC for a constant catch scenario and so what they’ve done is take the lowest year and just give it to us and I would rather see a higher number, even if we have to go back to them, or I would rather go with the Alternative 2.

The question was when will the 2017 standard be available to us? Will it be available for the 2017 fishing year or will it be available for 2018?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Dr. Crabtree, do you want to respond to that?

DR. CRABTREE: I don’t recall whether we specified when the assessment would be done. If it was done in 2017 and you wanted to get the data through 2016, then we wouldn’t get it until 2018. If it was done in 2017 and you were willing to have the terminal year of data be 2015, then it could be done in the first half of the year, but I don’t know -- Maybe Mr. Gregory can recall, but I don’t know if we were that specific in terms of our scheduling request.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: The 2017 is a date that was recommended by the SSC in January. We brought it to the council in January and the SEDAR Committee and we discussed it briefly, but the discussion became more focused on the amount of effort it’s going to take the Science Center analysts to do the MRIP effort estimation updates and calibrations and so the council never really discussed specifics about whether the 2017 recommendation of the SSC was okay or if they wanted to use 2015 data and get the assessment in time for the 2017 season, similar to what we’ve done this year, getting an assessment at the end of 2014 in time for the 2015 season.

The one thing I do recall from our SEDAR Steering Committee meeting is that the Science Center was not eager to do an assessment in 2015 and so the council did not make a motion in January, but we presented that schedule to the council in January and I think we just got sidetracked in our discussion.

Also, on the question of constant catch, we have been asking the analysts and the SSC to provide us with a constant catch scenario for every stock assessment we’ve had since we did this with red snapper in 2014, 2013. The analysts have not provided that information. It’s more work and so the SSC kind of punted and just said, well, we’ll recommend the lowest number and that could be constant catch.
At this point in time for this upcoming season, I don’t think there’s enough time to do a constant catch scenario for the council to review and approve and get it in place for 2015, but it’s something I intend to make sure we get in the future when we have these stock assessments that have declining or increasing catch trends, that we also get a constant catch analysis that’s equivalent to those three-year trends that we’re presented.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you for the update, Doug. Based on some of the discussion that we’re having here in regards to the rationale for selecting Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative, specific to red snapper, we may want to make sure when we ask for analyses, we being the council, that we include that in any motions, because it is a burden on staff, Science Center staff, the assessment scientists, to run the analyses.

If it’s not the intent of the council to ask for a constant catch, again relative to red snapper, seeing that it’s a unique species of the species we manage, we need to be -- I think we need to be clear when we make our motions of what it is we would like to see generated and reviewed by the SSC so that we can make these decisions.

If it’s not our intent to do such analyses, then maybe that’s all that we should be requesting and so, anyway, we can deal with that for the next time around, but I have a -- I think Doug Boyd has a question.

MR. BOYD: I don’t have another question. I had input that twice, because I didn’t see it go through. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Corky.

MR. PERRET: Did I understand Doug Gregory to say that with the constant catch scenario, if we selected Alternative 3, we would not be able to have that in place for the coming season or did I misunderstand him?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: That was a misunderstanding. The constant catch scenario we did in 2013, where we ended up with eleven-million pounds, that eleven-million pounds was equivalent to the three-year trend in landings.

We do not have a similar constant catch estimate before us now. The one that was presented in Alternative was the lowest of the three years and so it’s like a no-brainer that yes, you can do this and you’re not going to exceed any of the other ABCs, but
it’s not equivalent to the average, let’s say, of all three years and the analysts have not been providing us with an average of the three years since we did that in 2013.

That’s what we do not have in front of us and we would not have time for the analysts to calculate that and provide it to the SSC and then back to the council in time for our 2015 season this year.

MR. PERRET: Okay. Then that leads to my next question. Are we able to modify or to include an additional alternative? My suggested alternative would be a modification of Alternative 2 and for the year 2015, the total quota would be 13.96 million and for 2016, it would be 13.96 million and for 2017, it would be 13.74 million.

That alternative, if it’s allowable and if the council wants to go that way, we would only have a decrease that third year, in 2017, and who knows. Perhaps we may get an assessment earlier in the year that could change that, but at least we would not be -- First off, we would not be exceeding the quota that the scientists say we could get at 13.96 million in 2016 and we would be under what we’re suggested in 2015, which is a good conservation measure. Are we allowed to modify an alternative at this stage of the game?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Yes, that can be a substitute motion or a different alternative added to the framework and then voted on.

MR. PERRET: If I make a motion -- Robin has got a motion on the floor and could I make a substitute motion to have a fourth alternative included or should we vote on Robin’s motion first?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Corky, since this is still going to public comment, we could probably vote on Robin’s motion. It is to make Alternative 2 the preferred and then if you wanted to make a motion to add a new alternative, I don’t see necessarily any problem with that, but the document would have to go back for analysis and the new text would have to go with the new alternative and that could potentially slow things down, the extra staff time and such, and so I don’t know -- It depends on how the vote goes and what we recommend to the Secretary, but if we vote on Robin’s motion for the preferred and it stays that way all the way through the process, the it’s just additional staff time and effort to add the additional alternative.

MR. PERRET: It seems like the analysis I am talking about is
already done. Dr. Crabtree, if we add an additional
alternative, is that going to slow the process down?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, it will slow it down. I don’t know how much
it would slow it down, but we would have to go into the document
and add the alternative and do the additional edits and
everything else that it would take.

I would remind you that time is of the essence here and to try
and get this done by June 1, and you’re really talking about
relatively small amounts of fish here, and I guess there’s some
kind of psychological concern about having the catches go down.
I guess I am not so sure, Corky, that what you’re asking is
really worth it, but it would slow it down some and I don’t know
if it would slow it down enough to be a real concern or not.

MR. PERRET: The last thing I want to do is slow things down.
We all want to get what we can in place this year. It’s a
psychological thing and when you see a number that we’re going
to start at one level and then instead of increasing in
subsequent years, we’re going to go down and so that’s my issue,
but thank you, Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: If I could just make a comment. I think there’s
the notion that a constant quota equates to having a stable
fishery, but, in fact, the quotas are coming down because the
abundance of the fish is declining over time and so by having
the higher catches now, while you have higher fish abundance and
higher CPUEs, you probably would have a more stable season, at
least on the recreational side, if the quotas fluctuated and
tracked the fish abundance. Again, I would point out these are
relatively small changes from year to year.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a motion on the board and that is to
make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative. It was seconded.
Doug, how do you want to go about -- Do you want to do a roll
call like we did for introductions as far as getting everyone’s
vote?

MS. CHARLENE PONCE: Kevin, Doug just stepped away. I am happy
to go through the council member list and do that for you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That might be the easiest, because we would
probably have to read them off anyway if everyone responded in
the chat box. If you can do that, go down the list, that would
be great.

MS. PONCE: We will start with Roy Williams.
MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Martha Bademan.

MS. BADEMAN: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Dale Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Robin Riechers. You can type yours in if you need to. He said yes. Doug Boyd.

MR. BOYD: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Camp Matens.

MR. MATENS: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Pam Dana is absent. John Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Corky Perret.

MR. PERRET: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Johnny Greene.

MR. GREENE: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Myron Fischer.

MR. FISCHER: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Harlon Pearce.

MR. PEARCE: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Leann Bosarge.

MS. BOSARGE: Yes.
MS. PONCE: David Walker.

MR. WALKER: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Dr. Stunz.

DR. STUNZ: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Chairman Anson.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes.

MS. PONCE: The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Charlene. I saw an email that -- Do we need Dr. Patterson anymore? He asked, I think, to leave. I think he is no longer needed and so I guess, Will, if you’re still online, thank you very much for attending the meeting. That will take us to our next item and that is Review of Codified Regulations, Tab A, Number 4. Do we know who is going to review that? Doug, do you know who is going to be reviewing the -- Go ahead.

REVIEW OF CODIFIED REGULATIONS

MR. ATRAN: It’s actually intended that somebody from the Regional Office review it, since they were the ones who wrote it, but if there is nobody there to review it, I looked this over and there is a lot of placeholders in the codified text, because obviously they did not know which alternative was going to be adopted.

However, I looked it over and it appears to adequately portray the intent of the council if you go with this alternative that is currently the preferred alternative. It updates the recreational quotas and it updates the commercial IFQ quotas as well.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and do we have any questions to Steve? Mara.

MS. LEVY: I just wanted to point out that it does have a lot of placeholders. It assumed the preferred alternative that you picked, just to show you what it would look like to put in all the quotas for the different years, as they changed, and it also assumes that Amendment 40 would be approved and implemented and so that’s how it’s structured, because we proposed that, and that the accountability measure framework will be implemented.
We have all these things going on at the same time and so the way that we structured this codified text is assuming those are implemented and this comes on top of it. If any of those things don’t happen, obviously the things in this would need to be changed to reflect that, because all of these things are still pending. I just wanted to point that out.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Does anyone else have anything they would like to add before we move on to the next item? That will take us to Written Comments Received, Tab A, Number 5, and Emily.

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN: Thank you, Kevin. Just very quickly, we don’t actually have a tab for this, because of the nature of this. We kind of sprinted to gather comment as soon as we could and we published a video and I didn’t actually summarize those comments until noon today, because we had been receiving them up until then.

On our video, we received 575 views, but very few comments. Many of the comments were in support of increasing the quota and there was also support for the no action alternative, because recreational anglers didn’t want to see the commercial sector benefit if there wasn’t going to be an increase in the recreational season, despite some sort of quota increase.

There was also support for Alternative 2, because the red snapper are rebuilding and we should catch as many as possible, and also support for Alternative 3, which is that constant quota scenario.

Many of the comments that we received focused on the short recreational season, with some recognition that the season lengths are not directly dependent on the stock health or the quota size. Anglers suggested that we try smaller bag limits or higher minimum size limits in order to extend that recreational season and also some wanted to find a way to pick their own fishing days in the private recreational sector and then there was also support for more local-scale management and that’s all we got.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Does anyone have any questions for Emily? That will take us to Item Number IV, Public Comment. I have already read the introduction regarding requirements for testimony. Doug, I think you or Charlene were going to handle
calling on those that are in order if they wish to speak. At this point, I will pass this on to you.

PUBLIC COMMENT

MS. PONCE: Okay and so to the members of the public out there, if anyone has a comment that they would like to present to the council, if you could click on the hand icon on your desktop in the control panel, that will let us know that you have a comment and we will call on you in the order that your hands are raised. The first is Bob Zales.

MR. BOB ZALES: Bob Zales, II, President of Panama City Boatmen Association. We support the 14.3 million and we also support the --

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Bob, there seems to be an echo.

MR. ZALES: I am hearing it, too. How about now?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That’s much better. Thank you.

MR. ZALES: Anyway, like the email I sent earlier, we support the 14.3 and I believe the motion that you all did, the way I understand it, is saying that for 2015 we’re looking at 14.3 and then you’ll play with 2016 and 2017 down the line.

There is a lot of concern by fishermen, and I’m currently at the Mackerel Advisory Panel and we have the same issue with the mackerel recommendations, is when these projections come out, you get a high number this year and it trickles down to a low number over the next several years, the way that the SSC does these projections.

People don’t understand this and what we’ve suggested in the Mackerel Panel, and I think this is a way that you could do this here, is that you simply have the SSC review the numbers, kind of in a mini update, to look at the next year’s recommended ABC or ACL, to try to get away from this decrease, because if the fishery shows that you can increase it, you need to take that increase.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bob. Charlene, I just wanted to add the time limit. I think for this webinar we’re going to use a two-minute time limit for each of the members of the public that want to provide testimony.

MS. PONCE: Yes, that’s what we decided.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: I just wanted to make sure that everyone was clear. Thank you.

MS. PONCE: The next speaker is Chris Wilson.

MR. CHRIS WILSON: I am from the Panhandle, up here in Pensacola. I have been keeping a close eye on -- for the past two years now and I actually am in the process now of getting a commercial license to start doing commercial fishing.

From what I have seen from all the recent posts from all the meetings lately, we are in agreement with the numbers that you are trying to work with right now and I also noticed something about possible tagging in the future, to try and keep a better track of the numbers, and I believe that would be good, especially on the recreational side, to help us be able, as recreational fishermen, to have more opportunities to go out and catch the red snapper, because I know here in the Panhandle, we catch them yearly, all year-round, and there is even times where we can actually catch them from shore. I mean the population up here has got so big.

MS. PONCE: Okay. Thank you, Chris. Next up is Eric Brazer. Eric, it looks like you need to pin into your telephone, number 193#, to allow me to un-mute you so you can speak. While you are doing that, we will move on to J.P. Brooker.

MR. J.P. BROOKER: This is J.P. Brooker with the Ocean Conservancy based in St. Pete, Florida. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, Chairman Anson and the council. On behalf of the Ocean Conservancy, more than 120,000 members, who are concerned fishermen, environmentalists, outdoorsmen, and average citizens, we recommend that the council select Alternative 3, which would set the total red snapper quota at 13.74 million pounds for 2015 through 2017, as this alternative offers the greatest conservation benefit for the stock.

Alternative 3 will facilitate rebuilding and may result in a decrease in the rebuilding timeframe for the stock and will reduce the chances of overfishing. From a conservation perspective, these benefits will aid the long-term health and resiliency of Gulf red snapper and, again, thanks for the opportunity to give comment.

MS. PONCE: Eric, we’re going to try you again. Go ahead.

MR. ERIC BRAZER: Thank you. My name is Eric Brazer and I’m the
Deputy Director of the Shareholder’s Alliance and thank you for the opportunity to comment. I will make this brief. We had hoped that the council would take a precautionary approach and approve Alternative 3.

We do feel that it promotes conservation and that it’s going to help us rebuild this red snapper population more quickly and, just as important, it doesn’t implement declining quotas over the next three years. We feel this constant catch helps us hedge our bets against the uncertainty that we talked about earlier, that you guys talked about earlier, and we feel that it promotes better commercial and charter business stability and, in the long term, increased recreational access.

-- Robin typed in, and I am paraphrasing here, that because there is uncertainty there every year and so they don’t want to leave poundage in the water and money on the table and maybe I am missing something, but having uncertainty there every year is exactly why we would want to take a precautionary approach and go with Alternative 3.

When it comes down to it, Corky hit the nail on the head. We don’t like to see declining yields when we have a recovering resource, especially when we have clear choice to avoid it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

MS. PONCE: Thank you. I don’t see any more hands and so I will ask again if there is anybody out there who wants to provide the council with some input on this. Kevin, I am not seeing any more hands and so I will hand it back over to you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Charlene. That will take us to our next agenda item, Number V, Council Action on Framework Action and Codified Regulations. We just voted on making Alternative 2 the preferred alternative and is there any discussion? Does anyone want to make a motion?

COUNCIL ACTION ON FRAMEWORK AND CODIFIED REGULATIONS

MR. PERRET: Yes, I’ve got discussion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Go ahead, Corky.

MR. PERRET: I would like to move that we make Alternative 3 the preferred alternative.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: There is a motion to make Alternative 3 the preferred alternative and is there a second to the motion?
Leann has indicated she seconds the motion. Is there any discussion on the motion?

MR. PERRET: I would like to discuss it, please.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Go ahead, Corky, and then Leann.

DR. CRABTREE: A point of order. Since we just passed a motion establishing a preferred, wouldn’t this require a motion to reconsider?

MR. PERRET: What about a substitute motion?

DR. CRABTREE: I would ask Mara to comment, but we passed a motion and if we’re going to change it, I think it’s a motion to reconsider.

MR. ATRAN: It was my understanding that the first motion was made just for purposes of public testimony.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I made that comment, but we are in full council and so we didn’t officially go through a committee and so I may have misspoken on that. Mara, do you have any comments?

MS. LEVY: I tend to agree that the motion was related to the same -- You need a motion to reconsider. There is nothing on the board to substitute at this point.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and so it sounds like we need a motion to reconsider the previous motion making Alternative 2 the preferred. Does anyone want to make that motion?

MR. PERRET: I was under the impression we simply had a preferred alternative for public hearing and we would discuss it after we had public testimony. Now, that’s fine if there has been misunderstanding. I would like to move that we reconsider the motion that we made that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a motion to reconsider the motion that we passed previously to make Alternative 2 the preferred. Is there a second?

MR. PEARCE: I will second it.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s been seconded. Is there discussion? Do we have any discussion on the motion or, Doug, do we just go right to a vote? Is there any discussion for a reconsideration
of previous motions?

**MS. BOSARGE:** Kevin, am I able to give my discussion at this point?

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Let me just make sure that I am not doing anything to conflict with any parliamentary procedure, because I am unsure as to what the proper procedure is for reconsidering of a motion, if there is a comment period or if we just vote on it directly. Doug, could you assist?

**MR. ATRAN:** A motion to reconsider is debatable.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you very much. Go ahead, Leann.

**MS. BOSARGE:** Obviously I want to see the quota go up each year. I think that if 2016 rolls around and we have a quota that’s lower than what the fishermen received in 2015 that the screaming that we will hear will wake the dead, probably, and I can’t blame them.

I think that Alternative 3 would alleviate that situation. It is more conservative, but on the same token, you will have a little bit of short-term pain, if you want to look at it that way, for a long-term gain. If you catch fewer fish than what you say you’re allowed to catch, then surely you will see some increases in the future.

In the big scheme of things, I see it, even with Alternative 3, we are taking a fishery that was scheduled to be at eleven-million pounds for 2015 and increasing it to 13.74 and so they’re still getting a 2.74-million-pound increase and so I still see Alternative 3 as pleasing all sectors, in the sense that all sectors are going to get substantially more fish than what they had previously been scheduled to get and yet, leave us a little wiggle room for, number one, some of these uncertainties that we haven’t been able to hash out just yet and, number two, to have hopefully an increasing quota for the next three years.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Does anyone else want to make a comment to the motion? It appears that no one else wants to address the motion to reconsider. I guess we will do the same thing as we did with the previous motion, is to go down a roll call. Charlene or Doug.

**MS. PONCE:** Okay. Are we ready?
MR. PEARCE: Could you explain what a yes vote means and a no means on this one?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: A yes would mean that we would reconsider the previous motion, essentially the alternatives would be available to make a preferred. A no would be that there would be no further discussion and the Preferred Alternative 2 would go forward.


MR. GREENE: Yes.


MR. BOYD: No.

MS. PONCE: Roy Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: No.

MS. PONCE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: No.

MS. PONCE: John Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: No.

MS. PONCE: David Walker.

MR. WALKER: No.

MS. PONCE: Leann Bosarge.

MS. BOSARGE: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Harlon Pearce.

MR. PEARCE: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Dr. Dana.

DR. DANA: No.

MS. PONCE: Myron Fischer.

MR. FISCHER: Yes.
MS. PONCE: Dr. Stunz.

DR. STUNZ: No.

MS. PONCE: Camp Matens.

MR. MATENS: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Dale Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: No.

MS. PONCE: Corky Perret.

MR. PERRET: Yes.

MS. PONCE: Martha Bademan.

MS. BADEMAN: No.

MS. PONCE: Kevin Anson.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: No.

MS. PONCE: The motion fails.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That would mean that the Preferred Alternative Number 2 would go to the Secretary or go to the Regional Office.

MS. PONCE: It’s eleven to six.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: The motion failed. Okay. That will take us to -- We need to accept the codified regulations as well with that approval and is that correct, Doug? We need to make a statement to send the codified regulations as written.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Yes, we do.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and so we need to have a motion to send the codified regulations as written.

MR. WILLIAMS: Can I make that motion?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Roy Williams moves to send the codified regulations as written to the Secretary of Commerce.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I do.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: Do we have a second? Dale, I see that you second. Any discussion to the motion? Mara, would you like to make a comment?

MS. LEVY: I think did you actually make the motion -- You picked a preferred and then you would make the motion to submit the framework action to the Secretary of Commerce and deem the codified regulations as necessary and appropriate, but I didn’t see the motion to actually submit the framework action for implementation. Did I miss it?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: No, you did not. Good catch. Roy Williams --

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: We are retyping that now. We are retyping that motion and so please wordsmith it, Mara.

MR. WILLIAMS: We need an “and” after “implementation.”

MS. LEVY: Send the framework action to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation and deem the codified regulations as necessary and appropriate.

MR. WILLIAMS: That’s my motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I think “to the Secretary of Commerce” needs to go before “implementation”. Roy, is that still agreeable to you?

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I move to send the framework action to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation and deem the codified regulations as necessary and appropriate. That’s my motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. Dale, do you still second the motion? I see that he has written in that he does still second the motion and so any discussion on the motion? Steven, do you have a comment?

MR. ATRAN: I don’t know if this really needs to go in the motion, but I am assuming that there will be editorial comment to revise the codified regulations and in the outcome of Amendment 40 and the framework action for accountability measures.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I think that was stated earlier and I think everyone understands that.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: Does anyone else want to comment on the motion? All right and so, Charlene, do you want to do this one as well?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: She has passed it on to me. I will call on Dr. Dana first.

DR. DANA: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Matens.

MR. MATENS: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Ms. Bosarge.

MS. BOSARGE: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Perret.

MR. PERRET: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Riechers. He typed in yes. Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Pearce.

MR. PEARCE: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Stunz.

DR. STUNZ: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Ms. Bademan.

MS. BADEMAN: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Diaz.
MR. DIAZ: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Fischer.

MR. FISCHER: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Greene. Mr. Greene noted in the chat box yes. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Anson.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It’s unanimous. The motion passes to send the framework action to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation and deem the codified regulations as necessary and appropriate.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Doug. That takes us to our last item on the agenda and that’s Other Business. There was no other business brought forward at the beginning of the webinar and would anyone like to add anything? I am giving the opportunity.

MR. PERRET: Good job.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Corky. Thank you, everyone, for your participation and patience in working through this. Hopefully we won’t have too many of these. I prefer to see everyone in person and thank you, Doug, you and your staff and, Dr. Crabtree, you and your staff for bringing this document forward in a timely manner and hopefully it can continue so, so that we can reap the benefits for this fishing season. I appreciate your efforts. With that, I am going to adjourn the webinar. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m., March 3, 2015.)