

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2  
3 LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

4  
5 Hilton Palacio del Rico Hotel San Antonio, Texas

6  
7 August 25, 2021

8  
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

10 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi  
11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama  
12 Susan Boggs.....Alabama  
13 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC  
14 Phil Dyskow.....Florida  
15 Lisa Motoi.....USCG  
16 Robin Riechers.....Texas  
17 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana  
18 Greg Stunz.....Texas

19  
20 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

21 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi  
22 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana  
23 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana  
24 Tom Frazer.....Florida  
25 Bob Gill.....Florida  
26 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida  
27 Bob Shipp.....Alabama  
28 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi  
29 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS  
30 Troy Williamson.....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 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist  
41 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer  
42 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison  
43 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager  
44 Camilla Shireman.....Administrative & Communications Assistant  
45 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director  
46 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

47  
48 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

1 Kerry Marhefka.....SAFMC  
2 Clay Porch.....SEFSC  
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4 - - -  
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1 The Law Enforcement Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
2 Management Council convened on Wednesday morning, August 25,  
3 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Dale Diaz.

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

9 **CHAIRMAN DALE DIAZ:** I would like to call the Law Enforcement  
10 Committee to order. The members of the committee are myself,  
11 Mr. Dyskow as Vice Chair, Mr. Schieble, Mr. Anson, Ms. Boggs,  
12 Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Riechers, Dr. Stunz, Ms. Motoi.

13  
14 The first order of the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda. Is  
15 there any opposition to adopting the agenda as written, or does  
16 anybody have any other business that they want to add to the Law  
17 Enforcement Committee? I would like to just make a small  
18 modification, and I want to recognize General Spraggins for just  
19 a minute, right after the Action Guide and Next Steps, for a  
20 short discussion. Any opposition to approving the agenda as  
21 amended? Then the agenda is approved.

22  
23 Approval of the October 2020 Minutes, is there any additions or  
24 edits to the October 2020 minutes? Seeing none, the minutes are  
25 adopted. Actually, at this time, I would like to recognize  
26 General Spraggins for just a minute for a statement. Thank you.  
27 General Spraggins.

28  
29 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not a  
30 member of the committee, but I would like to bring up something.  
31 I think most of you realize that, this past July, we lost one of  
32 our marine patrol officers, Senior Master Sergeant Tommy  
33 Jennings, and Tommy was forty-nine years old.

34  
35 He was in the process of maybe retiring next year, and, as a  
36 matter of a fact, we talked about putting his paperwork in, and  
37 he would have his twenty-five years. Tommy had taken both of  
38 the COVID shots in March, in that timeframe, and then found out,  
39 during that timeframe, that he had come down with diabetes, or  
40 had been diagnosed, and did not realize, at the time, that the  
41 COVID shot sometimes does not build antibodies.

42  
43 He went on a trip with his girlfriend that he had planned this  
44 summer, because that's one of the major reasons that he had  
45 taken the shots, and he came down with the virus the first of  
46 July, and he passed away about ten days later. I would ask each  
47 and every one of you just to remember his family in your

1 prayers. He was a great young man that served us very well, Mr.  
2 Tommy Jennings.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Thank you for that, General Spraggins, and I  
5 personally knew Tommy, and he was a great person and a great  
6 marine law enforcement officer. Thank you for that. Next up on  
7 the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps, and so, Dr.  
8 Lasseter, if you would, just talk about those before we go  
9 through each agenda item, and, if you're ready, Dr. Lasseter, go  
10 ahead and go through the action guide and next steps for Agenda  
11 Item Number IV, and let's move right into Agenda Item Number IV.  
12 Thank you.

13  
14 **LETC MEETING SUMMARY FROM MARCH 2021 MEETING**

15  
16 **DR. AVA LASSETER:** Wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
17 Actually, I'm just going to review this real quick, the whole  
18 rest of the agenda, because it's going to be really short, and  
19 so we have the Law Enforcement Technical Committee, the LETC,  
20 meeting summary from this past March.

21  
22 There is only two items there that I would like to highlight for  
23 you. The LETC did not make any motions this meeting, and the  
24 rest of the work from their meeting are the remaining two agenda  
25 items here, the strategic plan and the operations plan, and so  
26 we'll briefly touch on those. Those two items, we would request  
27 a motion from you to approve those, and so we'll go into them,  
28 and let's start with the first one, which is Agenda Item IV,  
29 which is their report.

30  
31 That is at Tab L, Number 4, and the two items that -- Again,  
32 this meeting was just a lot of information for the LETC, and  
33 they did not make motions or recommendations to you, but there  
34 were two items that I wanted to highlight.

35  
36 The issue of illegal charters that the council has been  
37 discussing at multiple meetings, the LETC did discuss this, and  
38 the State of Florida, FWC, and NOAA OLE have been engaged in  
39 dialogues with each other and with the charter captains in  
40 regard to this issue, and they did hold a workshop meeting of  
41 law enforcement officers and for-hire operators in St. Pete, and  
42 the two agencies, FWC and NOAA OLE, have indicated they are  
43 going to continue these dialogues and that they are going to  
44 have internal biannual meetings as well.

45  
46 This sentence was cut off, but the revised report has been sent  
47 out, and it should say that they will have biannual meetings to

1 share information regarding ongoing law enforcement efforts to  
2 address illegal charters, and the feedback I have received is  
3 that the for-hire operators seem to be very receptive to this  
4 new attention. Then the other item that I just wanted to  
5 highlight for you was that the LETC members --

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ava, can I interrupt you for just a second?

8  
9 **DR. LASSETER:** Of course. Please.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** I just want to point out, on the record, that  
12 this is an example of our entire process working, and so,  
13 through public comments, we've had people come, on several  
14 occasions, and talk about the issue with illegal charters.

15  
16 Our LETC are communicating together, and they've got an action  
17 plan that they're working on, and they have actually made some  
18 cases, and I think this is just a really good example of how all  
19 of the coordination that we're working on here at the council  
20 level and at the LETC level is all coming together to make some  
21 differences out in the fishery, and public participation and  
22 public comments are the things that got the ball rolling on the  
23 strides that we're making in this area, and so thank you, Dr.  
24 Lasseter, and you may proceed.

25  
26 **DR. LASSETER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a really good  
27 point, and that is actually a really good connection to the  
28 other item that I wanted to highlight for you, which is just a  
29 little bit more about the Fish Rules app.

30  
31 This is another example where the public had commented to law  
32 enforcement that, hey, it would be great if we had state-  
33 specific contact information for reporting violations in the  
34 Fish Rules app, and the LETC requested that council staff figure  
35 out if this could be added, and I brought this back to Emily  
36 Muehlstein, and she coordinated with the Fish Rules app  
37 developers, and we have had all of the contact information for  
38 reporting violations for all five states and NOAA OLE and the  
39 Coast Guard added to the app. Again, great communication and  
40 coordination between the public and law enforcement agencies.

41  
42 Those are the only two items in here, apart from the strategic  
43 plan and the operations plan, and we're going to go through  
44 those separately, for this report. The LETC will be reviewing  
45 and approving this report at its October meeting, which we  
46 anticipate to be virtual. We can go ahead and switch over to  
47 the strategic plan, which I believe is Tab L, Number 5.

1  
2                   **APPROVAL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**  
3

4 The strategic plan, when the LETC reviewed it, they did not make  
5 changes. They did just review it and rubber-stamp it, and we  
6 updated the years and changed some photos, and Steve VanderKooy  
7 did some little editing work there, and so you're welcome to  
8 review this. Again, changes have not been made, but we do  
9 request a motion that you review and approve it, as the Gulf  
10 States Commission has done at its spring meeting, and I will  
11 pause there.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ms. Boggs.

14  
15 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** I will make a motion to approve the Gulf of  
16 Mexico Cooperative Law Enforcement Strategic Plan for 2021 to  
17 2024.

18  
19 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Second.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** All right, and so we're going to wait while that  
22 gets up on the board. We do have a motion by Ms. Boggs, and it  
23 was seconded by Mr. Donaldson. **The motion is to approve the**  
24 **2021-2024 Cooperative Law Enforcement Strategic Plan.** Is there  
25 any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**  
26 **opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Dr.  
27 Lasseter.

28  
29                   **APPROVAL OF COOPERATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS PLAN 2021-**  
30   **2022**  
31

32 **DR. LASSETER:** Wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay.  
33 Moving right along, our last item will be the operations plan,  
34 which is at Tab L, Number 6, and the version we have provided to  
35 you in the briefing book is a red-lined version, so that you can  
36 skim through it and see the changes that have been made.

37  
38 We do have Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Les Casterline,  
39 who I believe was there in person, although I believe it was  
40 Jerod Barker was actually attending the meeting, but we do have  
41 Les here, who could probably answer any questions, but, really,  
42 they just updated their work, what they have been doing, their  
43 activities, and updated some language, and, again, the Gulf  
44 States Commission has reviewed and approved this with all the  
45 red-lined changes accepted, and we request that you review it  
46 and approve as well.  
47



1 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ms. Boggs.  
2  
3 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, sir. **I will make a motion to approve the**  
4 **2021-2022 Gulf of Mexico Cooperative Law Enforcement Operations**  
5 **Plan.**  
6  
7 **MR. DONALDSON:** Second.  
8  
9 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Okay. We have a motion by Ms. Boggs, and it's  
10 seconded by Mr. Donaldson, to approve the 2021-2022 Cooperative  
11 Law Enforcement Operations Plan. Is there any discussion on the  
12 motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion?**  
13 **Seeing none, the motion carries.** Dr. Lasseter.  
14  
15 **DR. LASSETER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. That is all  
16 of the items that we had for the Law Enforcement Committee  
17 today. The LETC will be meeting before your October meeting,  
18 and, just to let the committee know, the 2021 biennial report on  
19 IUU has come out, and we will forward that to you for the  
20 October meeting, for your review as well, and we'll be  
21 discussing that with the LETC as well, and so that's just a  
22 little information there, and that is all I have. Thank you  
23 very much.  
24  
25 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Thank you, Dr. Lasseter. Is there any other  
26 business to come before the Law Enforcement Committee? Seeing  
27 none, this concludes the Law Enforcement Committee.  
28  
29 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 25, 2021.)  
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31 - - -  
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