GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

IP Casino and Resort Biloxi, Mississippi

OCTOBER 19, 2016

VOTING MEMBERS
Doug Boyd.......................................................................Texas
Chris Blankenship...........................................................Alabama
Lcdr Leo Danaher..............................................................USCG
Pamela Dana......................................................................Florida
Dale Diaz...........................................................................Mississippi
Dave Donaldson...............................................................GSMFC

NON-VOTING MEMBERS
Patrick Banks.................................................................Louisiana
Leann Bosarge..............................................................Mississippi
Roy Crabtree.........................................................NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
Tom Frazer......................................................................Florida
John Greene.................................................................Alabama
Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....................Florida
Kelly Lucas (designee for Jamie Miller).....................Mississippi
Campo Matens...............................................................Louisiana
Robin Riechers..............................................................Texas
John Sanchez.................................................................Florida
Greg Stunz......................................................................Texas
Ed Swindell.................................................................Louisiana
David Walker.................................................................Alabama

STAFF
Steven Atran..............................................................Senior Fishery Biologist
Assane Diagne...............................................................Economist
Matt Freeman...............................................................Economist
John Froeschke.........................................................Fishery Biologist - Statistician
Douglas Gregory..........................................................Executive Director
Morgan Kilgour...............................................................Fishery Biologist
Ava Lasseter.....................................................................Anthropologist
Mara Levy........................................................................NOAA General Counsel
Jessica Matos..............................................................Administrative Assistant
Ryan Rindone...........................................................Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
Claire Roberts..............................................................EFH Specialist
Bernadine Roy.............................................................Office Manager
Charlotte Schiaffo......................................................Research and Human Resource Librarian
Carrie Simmons.......................................................Deputy Director

OTHER PARTICIPANTS
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PAGE 7: Motion to approve the law enforcement operations plan and strategic plan. The motion carried on page 8.

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The Law Enforcement Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the IP Casino and Hotel, Biloxi, Mississippi, Wednesday morning, October 19, 2016, and was called to order by Chairman Doug Boyd.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**CHAIRMAN DOUG BOYD:** I am calling together the Law Enforcement Committee of the Gulf Council. I am going to read the members from our new list. Doug Boyd, Chair, and that’s me. Then Lieutenant Commander Leo Danaher as Vice Chairman. Chris Blankenship is a member, Pam Dana, Dale Diaz, and Dave Donaldson.

We have the agenda before us. It’s Tab L-1. Are there any changes or additions to the agenda at this point, committee members? All right. Can I have a motion to accept the agenda? We have a motion and a second, and the agenda is accepted.

The minutes are at Tab L-2. Are there any comments or any corrections to the minutes? Not all of this committee was here at the last time, but I will accept any changes from current committee members who see something in there that is wrong. All right. Do we have a motion to accept the minutes? It’s been moved and seconded. Thank you. The next thing on the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps, Tab L-3, and Steven Atran.

**ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**

**MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** There is really two things on here. First of all, the Law Enforcement Technical Committee and the Gulf States Commission’s Law Enforcement Committee, which is almost the same thing, have been making some revisions to their law enforcement operations plan and strategic plan. Steve VanderKooy is here, and he’s going to go over those revisions. Since they do include the Gulf Council, the Gulf Council needs to approve those revisions or suggest any additional changes that you may want, and so that’s the first item.

The second item that’s on the agenda is a summary of the Law Enforcement Technical Committee meeting report. However, almost everything that’s in the report has already been gone over during the Reef Fish Committee or the Coral Committee or is about to be gone over with the strategic and operations plans. I will just have a couple of minor administrative items that I want to bring up when we get to that action.
CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. Thank you, Steve. Next on the agenda is Review and Approval of the Gulf of Mexico Cooperative Law Enforcement Operations and Strategic Plans. Steve VanderKooy is here from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF GULF OF MEXICO COOPERATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS AND STRATEGIC PLANS

MR. STEVE VANDERKOOPY: This is in the briefing material that you were sent. This is under Tab L. It’s 4(a) and 4(b). I will just give you a quick overview at about the thousand-foot level. The LEC and LETC really just needed to clean up a few of the objectives to achieve the now seven goals which were laid out in the four-year strategic plan, which is 4(b) in your briefing book.

Most of it was a lot of clarification in the language and a little catching up on the items and objectives that may have changed during the update from the last operations plan. The primary change was the addition of Goal 7, related to disaster response, which was in the previous operations plan, and the new goal was as follows. Goal 7 is the five states will work together for short-term response and long-term recovery from manmade and natural disasters.

In 4(a), the updated operations plan, which is a two-year plan, again, most of those changes were to clean up the language to match the strategic plan and provide more clarification in the tasks that may have been accomplished already, are still ongoing, not yet been implemented, or are new, based on current needs. There are a few tasks that, looking at it now, didn’t really fall into the most appropriate objectives, and so they are reorganized into other objectives.

In that document, the operations plan, Objective 3.4 was inadvertently left out of the last operations plan revision, and so they added it back in as all new tasks related to coordinated enforcement efforts.

Two new tasks were added under Objective 5.2, regarding the integrity of domestic fisheries products to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated, or IUU, fishing in the U.S. and from U.S. waters.

Finally, under the tasks of Goal 7, which was, again, added since the last operations plan, it was listed as continuing, as the LEC and LETC are sharing post-disaster reports with their
partner agencies to encourage improvements in future disaster responses.

It was a little bit of a painful process to update these two documents via conference calls, but there just wasn’t enough substantive changes to warrant a face-to-face meeting, although it was offered, both by the council and the commission. We will revise the operations plan again in the summer of 2018, to get us through another two years, until the strategic plan needs revision again in 2020. If you want any details, I’ve got a red-line copy that I can go through of where things moved, but that’s essentially the major changes.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Any questions for Steve? As we all know, the cooperation between state law enforcement and Coast Guard law enforcement is extremely important. It’s where the rubber meets the road in accountability, and we need to support and encourage catching the bad guys and giving them obstacles to doing what they do, at almost any cost, and I want to thank law enforcement for that. Steve, did you want to go over L-4(a) also?

MR. VANDERKOOPY: That actually covered both of those documents.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: That covered both of them?

MR. VANDERKOOPY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. Anything else, Steve?

MR. VANDERKOOPY: Other than I guess, at the committee’s preference, if you want to have some sort of a motion to accept those or make any further additions, we can make those, but we would like to get those approved, if possible.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. I would entertain a motion for acceptance of these documents. Chris.

MR. CHRIS BLANKENSHIP: I move that the law enforcement operations plan and strategic plan be accepted.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. I have a motion and a second. The motion is coming up on the board. We have a motion that has been made and seconded to approve the law enforcement strategic plan --

MR. BLANKENSHIP: It’s to approve the law enforcement operations plan and the strategic plan.
CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. Let me read it again. To approve the law enforcement operations plan and strategic plan. Is there any opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion is approved. Thank you, Steve.

MR. VANDERKOOY: My pleasure.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Mr. Atran said a minute ago that we had already pretty much gone through the Law Enforcement Technical Committee report when we did committee reports, but, Steve, did you have something else that you wanted to go over?

SUMMARY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

MR. ATRAN: Just a couple of administrative items that didn’t make it into the other overviews. Right now, the Law Enforcement Committee for the Gulf States Commission and the Law Enforcement Technical Committee for the Gulf Council always meet jointly, or nearly always meet jointly.

It’s the same group, with the exception that the Coast Guard representative serves on the commission’s Law Enforcement Committee. He is not a member of our LETC, since he is a council member. Other than that, the two committees are identical.

They have been electing separate chairs and vice chairs, and so, each time they meet, we have two chairmen and we have two vice chairman. There was some discussion of maybe merging them together and just having a single chair and a since vice chair for the combined group, for efficiency and less confusion, and so that will be taken up, I believe, the next time we have elections. In the meantime, I guess staff was directed to make sure that there were no policy or legal ramifications involved in making that merger.

The other thing that I wanted to mention is that the LETC was reminded that we need to get candidates for the next Officer of the Year Award. They indicated that each of the agencies would submit a candidate by December 1. If that’s the case, that would not need to go back to the LETC. It would come directly to the council.

Depending upon the timing and how much we have on the agenda, you could evaluate who you wish to give the 2016 Officer of the Year Award to in either the January council meeting or the April council meeting. That is all I have to say that wasn’t already covered.
CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. Commander.

LCDR LEO DANAHER: Thank you. I just wanted to ask, are we allowed to submit any Coast Guard law enforcement members as nominees for that award?

MR. ATRAN: Yes. In addition to the state agencies, each of the federal agencies can submit one, and so the Coast Guard can submit somebody. Actually, since we have two Coast Guard jurisdictions, I suppose each jurisdiction could submit somebody, if they wished, and NOAA Enforcement could submit somebody, if they so desire.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Dale.

MR. DALE DIAZ: Steve, just a quick question. As far as — I think it’s a good idea to have one chair and one vice chair, by the way, if there is nothing that stops us from doing that legally. Are the chairs and vice chairs just elected, or do they rotate through each state over time and pick from those states?

MR. ATRAN: No, they are elected. I believe we hold elections every two years, and anyone who is a member of the committee can be elected. There is no succession from Vice Chair to Chair or any sort of rotation.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. I didn’t have any other business, but I would like to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Rusty Pittman. He is Chief of Parole for — Not Parole. Chief of Patrol for Mississippi, and he wanted to say a few words.

OTHER BUSINESS

MR. RUSTY PITTMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don’t mind that. It’s a lot better than them calling on me in the commission meeting, and when, I step up there, they always say, would you please stand up when you’re talking to us, Rusty? I’m used to that.

I am Rusty Pittman. I’m Assistant Chief of Marine Patrol with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. One thing I wanted to address is what Dale was asking. We are elected every two years. This past meeting last week, Scott Bannon was elected Chair of the LETC, and Grant Burton was elected Vice Chair of the LETC. I was elected Chair of the LEC, and Chad Ebert was elected Vice Chair of the LEC, and so every two years
we do that, and we’re going to discuss about combining those and just having one chair and one vice chair for both committees.

The main reason I came up was to thank Steve VanderKooy for a great job he did, and I don’t know he put up with us through all of this with the operations plan and the strategic plan, and also to Steven Atran for his good advice during the whole time. We had a hard time getting together. We kept putting dates off, but we finally got together and passed it, and so I really would like to thank both of those guys. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That’s all.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Thank you, Rusty. Any other comments or questions for the committee? Then that is our committee meeting.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 19, 2016.)

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