

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Omni Hotel Corpus Christi, Texas

August 22, 2022

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 Bob Gill.....Florida  
 Susan Boggs.....Alabama  
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1 The Outreach & Education Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
2 Management Council convened at the Omni Hotel, Corpus Christi,  
3 Texas on Monday morning, August 22, 2022, and was called to  
4 order by Chairman Greg Stunz.

5  
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**  
9

10 **CHAIRMAN GREG STUNZ:** I will call to order the Outreach and  
11 Education Committee, and, first, the members of this committee  
12 are I'm the Chair, Bob Gill is the Vice Chair, Kevin Anson, Ms.  
13 Boggs, Mr. Broussard, Mr. Dyskow, Ms. Motoi, and General  
14 Spraggins.

15  
16 Our first item of business is the Adoption of the Agenda. If  
17 everyone has had a chance to look through the agenda, is there  
18 any edits or changes or additions we need to include? Seeing  
19 none, is there someone who would like to make a motion to  
20 approve the agenda?

21  
22 **MR. BOB GILL:** So moved, Mr. Chairman.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** It's moved by Mr. Gill, and was that Mr.  
25 Broussard that seconded? Not seeing any opposition, we'll  
26 consider the motion adopted. The next item of business is the  
27 Approval of the January 2022 Minutes. Mr. Gill.

28  
29 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I may be murky, but I would  
30 rather not be considered swamp water, and so, accordingly, on  
31 page 2, line 20, I would like "Bog" to be changed to "Bob".  
32 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We can handle that one. Thank you, Mr. Gill.  
35 With those changes, is there a motion to approve the minutes?

36  
37 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** So moved.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Dyskow, and General Spraggins seconds that.  
40 Any opposition? Seeing none, we'll consider those minutes  
41 approved. Well, that brings us to the meat of the meeting. Ms.  
42 Muehlstein, would you like to go over the Action Guide and Next  
43 Steps for us, please?

44  
45 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Sure. We have a pretty abbreviated  
46 agenda today. Do you mind if we just go through each item now,  
47 or would you prefer to do it as we --  
48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Since we've got an abbreviated agenda, do you  
2 just want to go -- I think it's pretty self-explanatory.

3  
4 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Absolutely. Okay, and so, really, there are  
5 sort of two meaty items for today. The first one is, if you  
6 will remember, at the June meeting, the council had asked us,  
7 the Outreach and Education Technical Committee, to come up with  
8 some supplementary ideas on how to effectively communicate the  
9 importance of returning shrimp effort data to the Science  
10 Center, and so we will first deal with that communications plan,  
11 and you're going to hear what the Outreach and Education  
12 Technical Committee recommends, and then I would like you all to  
13 provide some feedback on the approach that the Outreach and  
14 Education Technical Committee outlined, and you can make any  
15 changes, or any supplements, that you want, and then we will  
16 then send a letter to NOAA Fisheries to promote the plan that we  
17 come up with, or agree upon, today.

18  
19 The next thing that we will look at is some draft media  
20 guidelines. You might be familiar with -- The last year or so,  
21 we've been trying to put together a whole suite of communication  
22 guidelines for both internal and external reference, and so,  
23 today, you will be looking at our media guidelines, or our draft  
24 ones, and we'll really just be asking for any feedback that you  
25 have, or recommendations, on how we can improve the guidelines  
26 themselves and how you can improve council member and staff  
27 function in this area as well. With that, I think we're ready  
28 to kind of jump in.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Emily, and so then our  
31 first item of business is this communications plan, regarding  
32 the shrimp fleet data, and so, Emily, are you presenting that?  
33 Okay. Go ahead.

34  
35 **COMMUNICATION PLAN TO PROMOTE RETURN OF SHRIMP FLEET EFFORT DATA**

36  
37 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I did want to start by just acknowledging that,  
38 during the Outreach and Education Technical Committee, we did  
39 have a number of people join the meeting that were incredibly  
40 helpful, and a lot of the NOAA staff was there to answer our  
41 questions, and Ms. Leann Bosarge was also available, and the  
42 meeting went really well, because we had so much help from the  
43 community around us, so that we could kind of understand this  
44 issue a little bit more.

45  
46 Just a little background, and the shrimp electronic logbooks  
47 stopped transmitting shrimp vessel position data at the end of  
48 2020, and that's when the 3G network expired, that cellular

1 network, and we used that program to understand shrimp effort  
2 across the Gulf, and so that's sort of why it's important.

3  
4 Now that that 3G network has expired, shrimpers are being asked  
5 to manually send in their data. There is an SD card that is in  
6 their unit, and they have to send that back twice a year, or  
7 every six months, in order to make sure that we have continuous  
8 industry effort data, until the new program is implemented. As  
9 you guys know, during the Shrimp Committee, you are working on a  
10 document to find the best, most efficient way to update these  
11 electronic logbooks, and so this is sort of a stop-gap measure  
12 until a new program is in place.

13  
14 Okay, and so we started with a presentation from NOAA staff on  
15 what they've already done to get the shrimp effort data back,  
16 and so they have sent three letters, and they have sent new SD  
17 cards in those letters, and those letters are coming in six-  
18 month intervals, and they simply tell the operator that, you  
19 know, here's your new SD card, and there's a self-addressed  
20 envelope, and they ask you to send the old SD card back.

21  
22 Also, at the recommendation of the Shrimp Advisory Panel, they  
23 decided to send a compliance letter, and that's sort of a law  
24 enforcement nudge that they are required to send this effort  
25 data back in, and they also asked -- NOAA asked the Shrimp  
26 Advisory Panel, as well as the Outreach and Education Technical  
27 Committee, to sort of informally promote the return of these SD  
28 cards, and so I know that the advisory panel members for the  
29 shrimp community sort of took that on as their own role, and  
30 then the Outreach and Education Technical Committee already had  
31 some established pathways of communication with the shrimp  
32 industry, and they have been sort of working informally to  
33 promote the return of these cards, too. Despite all of those  
34 efforts, the return of these SD cards -- The return rates are  
35 very, very low.

36  
37 **MR. DYSKOW:** Emily, could you tell us what is the percent -- Are  
38 we getting 20 percent back, or 10 percent? What's the number?

39  
40 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** You know, that's a great question, and hold on.  
41 Let me pull it up really quick, and I will let you know. It was  
42 low enough for us -- For it to be a concern, and, basically,  
43 what the Science Center was telling us is that it was low enough  
44 that shrimp effort data is going to have gaps in it and be not  
45 terribly useful for kind of these years in the gap, and so I  
46 will look at that up, but I don't have it right now.

47  
48 **MR. DYSKOW:** Is this an abnormality compared to other shrimp

1 reporting? Is it just this specifically that we've seen this  
2 problem with, or is it an overall issue for the shrimp  
3 community?  
4

5 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** So my understanding is that the units were kind  
6 of self -- You know, they were taking care of themselves, and so  
7 we did have good data until that 3G network expired. I think,  
8 before the 3G network was being used, it was actually NOAA folks  
9 who were collecting those SD cards from the vessels, and  
10 somebody can correct me if I'm wrong, and it looks like John can  
11 answer better.  
12

13 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** Emily, I'm available as well.  
14

15 **DR. JOHN WALTER:** Thanks. I'm happy to weigh-in here. We get  
16 about 58 percent of the cards back, and, right now, that's not  
17 great, but probably about average. The problem, also, that  
18 we've been having is that, of the fleet of about 1,300 vessels,  
19 originally, about half of them were selected for the original  
20 electronic logbook program, but there's a number -- Now, there's  
21 a whole lot less who still either have active units or are --  
22

23 Of those 58 percent that are reporting, that's even less, and so  
24 that means we've got only about a third of the fleet with effort  
25 that's being reported, and so it's declining in reliability and  
26 in coverage of the overall fleet, because we have to then  
27 extrapolate from that sample to the overall fleet, to get  
28 overall effort, and that's one of the reasons we're going down  
29 the path of developing what's going to be the improvement in the  
30 future, which is an ongoing process with a number of studies in  
31 play, both evaluation of cellular VMS, evaluation of the  
32 existing navigational software, as I think has been presented to  
33 the council, and then right here is how we can triage, in the  
34 short-term, to continue with the electronic logbooks.  
35

36 On that note, I will say that there is two parts to it, which  
37 I'm really glad the Outreach Committee is working on the carrot  
38 approach of trying to ensure and get people to understand the  
39 importance of this. There's also the stock, or the compliance,  
40 approach, where vessels may not get their permits renewed if  
41 they aren't reporting back and returning the chips, and so  
42 that's in a letter from Dr. Clay Porch that went to the shrimp  
43 fishery.  
44

45 Then we hope to get as many of those chips back, which will give  
46 us the effort data we need to meet a number of mandates we have  
47 for the use of that data. Thanks, and I'm happy to answer any  
48 more questions, if they come up.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Walter. Susan, I think your  
3 hand was up, and I didn't see you. I thought I might have heard  
4 someone online, but I didn't catch it, and so, if that's the  
5 case, please speak up, but, Susan, go ahead.  
6

7 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** I have a couple of questions, and I hope I'm  
8 not getting offtrack, and so you said there's 1,300 shrimp  
9 vessels in the fleet, and it was a voluntary program that they  
10 report, or it was a pilot program and they are required to  
11 report? That's the first part of my question.  
12

13 **DR. WALTER:** So that original subset was selected by the Science  
14 Center Director, according to I think the rulemaking, and the  
15 Science Center Director makes a determination of who is selected  
16 for the program. It's not voluntary. It's mandatory.  
17

18 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay. I'm just trying to make sure, because I stay  
19 confused with the shrimp industry, and so, in most of these --  
20 My understanding is with the 3G program, they self-funded all of  
21 that. I mean, they bought into this, and now we're in this  
22 issue of trying to be diverse and get to a new twenty-first  
23 century system, and so it's not the fault of the shrimpers, in  
24 essence, that this has happened, and so anything I think that we  
25 can do to encourage them, but not penalize them, while we're  
26 kind of going through this transition phase, and you've done the  
27 communications via mail, but have we put boots on the ground, to  
28 try to reach out to these people and communicate with them and  
29 help them understand the importance, because sometimes you get a  
30 letter in the mail or something, and you just toss it, and you  
31 don't pay it any attention.  
32

33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Emily, if you can answer that.  
34

35 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I think that's exactly why we're here today,  
36 because the Outreach and Education Technical Committee is coming  
37 up with a plan that does involve some boots on the ground that  
38 will get the information out in a non-compliance-based fashion,  
39 in more of an encouraging fashion, and so the next couple of  
40 slides I think will answer that question for you, because that's  
41 what we're presenting, is this idea of how we can communicate  
42 without being, you know, law enforcementy, and I don't know if  
43 that's a technical term.  
44

45 Then I did just pull it up, and, the first mailing, there was 64  
46 percent compliance, and the second mailing was 58 percent  
47 compliance, and then this third, most recent mailing, which was  
48 on June 21, and so it's not that old, there had only been 7

1 percent compliance by the time we held our technical committee  
2 meeting on August 1, and so there is sort of a step-down in  
3 compliance, kind of over time, and so I think it is time for us  
4 to sort of figure out what kind of communication plan we can  
5 come up with to promote the return of the cards.

6  
7 We'll go ahead and move on into the plan itself, and so the  
8 first thing that the Outreach and Education Technical Committee  
9 sort of wanted to understand was whether or not there was any  
10 provision for a no-fishing report, and so a lot of people had  
11 indicated that maybe shrimping effort is down, or maybe, since  
12 fuel prices are up, it's not necessarily the -- The cost-benefit  
13 isn't putting people on the water immediately, and so there is  
14 no current way to file any sort of no-fishing report, and so  
15 what we're not doing is, when we're asking for those SD cards,  
16 in that six-month period, if the vessel had not been fishing --

17  
18 Maybe they're not sending their effort data in because there is  
19 none, right, and so the first thing that the committee  
20 recommended was that, in those mailings where they are provided  
21 with a new SD card and asked to return their old one, that they  
22 also give them a mechanism to just simply file a no-fishing  
23 report, and so just have a little addressed postcard or  
24 something that allows those operators to check a box and  
25 complete the no-fishing report. That might -- That sort of  
26 latency, or that non-active fishing effort, might sort of take  
27 care of some of these missing reports.

28  
29 The next thing is it was said that quarterly postcards should be  
30 sent to operators to address equipment issues, and so I guess  
31 there used to be an effort to do this, where NOAA Fisheries  
32 would send quarterly postcards to operators who, through this 3G  
33 network, were having incomplete data, or no data, or something  
34 appeared to be malfunctioning, and so they would send these  
35 postcards out to those operators, to sort of remind them to  
36 check their units and see if everything is working, and so there  
37 was a suggestion that maybe we resume those postcard sendings to  
38 operators who either are not sending in their SC cards or, when  
39 they do, if the data is corrupted, or if the data is missing,  
40 and so just really creating a regular timeline to have these  
41 communications to remind these shrimpers.

42  
43 Then, finally, in this conversation, the O&E suggested that NOAA  
44 send targeted letters to individual operators who have  
45 repeatedly been non-compliant, and so really just start --  
46 Instead of doing these blanket efforts that we've seen, where  
47 they're going to all permit holders, it's to really start  
48 zeroing-in on those folks who have been non-compliant and just

1 sending them individual letters.  
2  
3 Then we went into a conversation about face-to-face outreach and  
4 how these boots on the ground are really the most effective way  
5 to talk to the shrimpers. You know, really, we had a  
6 conversation about how the shrimp fleet is especially hard to  
7 get in touch with, because they're out on their vessels for a  
8 month, or two months, and some of them swing all the way around  
9 Florida and go up to the Carolinas, and, I mean, it's a very  
10 transient fleet, and so we recognize that, when we can get that  
11 face-to-face interaction, it's really, really useful.  
12  
13 The first thing we suggested was that the shrimp gear experts  
14 that run out of the NOAA Pascagoula Lab in Mississippi should  
15 promote the return of SD cards during their regularly-scheduled  
16 workshops. Those guys are working with the industry to, you  
17 know, enhance their nets, their BRDs, their TEDs, and so they're  
18 already talking to those folks, and so we just want to add that  
19 as a piece of conversation that they have.  
20  
21 Next, we talked about having port agents promote the return of  
22 these SD cards when they encounter shrimp vessels. Now, we did  
23 have a conversation, and we noted that those commercial port  
24 agents don't always run into shrimpers, but, when they do, it  
25 would be an appropriate conversation to have, and we also  
26 discussed that there are some dedicated port agents for the  
27 SEFHIER program, but that's not in their contract, and so it  
28 wouldn't make sense to ask those guys, you know, to go out of  
29 their way to talk to the shrimp vessels.  
30  
31 We also said that we should ask the observers, those observers  
32 on the shrimp vessels, to promote the return of the SD cards, if  
33 possible. There was a conversation that this might require a  
34 small change of contract, so that they're having the  
35 conversation, if we want to have it done in a formal way, but,  
36 if we don't want it done formally, it can just sort of be an  
37 add-on to what we're asking those observers to do, and then,  
38 finally, it was noted that Sea Grant agents should promote SD  
39 card return, if possible.  
40  
41 We said "if possible" because some Sea Grant agents do interact  
42 with the shrimp fishery, and it's in their scope of work. Some  
43 Sea Grant agents do not and so we can't rely, ubiquitously,  
44 across all of the Sea Grant agents to do that if, you know,  
45 that's not part of what they're already doing, is communicating  
46 to the industry, but, if they do have established relationships,  
47 and established job items with the shrimp industry, that they  
48 will then start promoting the SD card issue.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Susan.

3  
4 **MS. BOGGS:** Emily, can you back up a slide, and I apologize, but  
5 that second -- Quarterly postcards to be sent to operators to  
6 address equipment issues, including non-functioning units and/or  
7 corrupted SD cards, to me -- I mean, I don't know how they would  
8 know they have a corrupt SD card before they send it in, which  
9 is obviously the reason for this, but something like this, with  
10 equipment failure, or the corruption, it would seem to me like  
11 verbal communication would be more appropriate than yet another  
12 postcard, because you keep getting these postcards in the mail,  
13 and it's just like, oh, it says the same -- You just toss it,  
14 and I think, something like this, you maybe have more verbal  
15 communication, or one-on-one communication.

16  
17 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I think your point is well made. They are  
18 doing that when they can. I think the unfortunate part of this  
19 is -- It's my understanding that there is one person who is  
20 responsible for this entire program, and their budget is also  
21 not hugely bloated, and we'll put it that way, and so I think,  
22 when possible, when she does have established relationships with  
23 those folks, she is doing that, and I think this was sort of a  
24 way to get around the idea that there's not a whole lot of  
25 resources for this.

26  
27 **MS. BOGGS:** So, to that point, I mean, if it's the failure of, I  
28 guess, the Science Center to communicate, there needs to be -- I  
29 don't want to use the word "leniency", but we need to think  
30 about the fact that, you know, these guys on the water, and  
31 women, are doing the best that they can do, but, if the Science  
32 Center, or NMFS, or whomever, can't communicate, there's a  
33 breakdown there, and I understand staff shortages and all of  
34 that, and I'm right in the middle of it, but, like I said, I  
35 don't want to say leniency, but we need to look at this a little  
36 more openly, I guess, before we start initiating any types of  
37 fines or things like that, because, I mean, we want the  
38 shrimpers to buy into this, and we want them to become  
39 compliant, and, if they don't know they have a problem, because  
40 the funding wasn't there for the staff member to notify them,  
41 then how are they at fault? Thank you.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thanks, Susan. Mr. Gill.

44  
45 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I agree that personal  
46 intervention, or interaction, is certainly better. On the other  
47 hand, we ought to remember that, one, this is additive to all  
48 the personal interaction that has been discussed already, but

1 also that these vessels come and go and are gone for extended  
2 periods of time, and so personal is a hit-and-miss kind of  
3 situation, hitting all the vessels that go back and forth, and  
4 so that gets to be problematic. I think that's a good idea, and  
5 it may not be very effective, but, on the other hand, a little  
6 more wouldn't hurt.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Go ahead, Emily. Dr.  
9 Walter.

10  
11 **DR. WALTER:** I would just like to respond, and I don't know --  
12 Being from the Fisheries Service, I'm not sure how happy people  
13 are to get a phone call from the Fisheries Service, and we don't  
14 always get the best response when we call up and say, hey, we're  
15 from the government, and we would like to talk to you.

16  
17 I am cognizant of the position we come from, and I also know  
18 that, yes, we don't have a large, dedicated staff to call 600  
19 people and make sure we get every one of them, and I think our  
20 best option is what we're doing actually face-to-face with the  
21 port agents and Sea Grant and the people on the docks, but I  
22 will also note that all the fishermen, every single one of them,  
23 do know how to re-up their permits, and that is something that  
24 they do every year, and so their communication with the agency  
25 does happen in that way, and we usually send them letters that  
26 way, and so there has been prior using that route of  
27 communication.

28  
29 I think the question of the compliance aspect, and the stick  
30 approach, and I hear the sensitivity to that, but we also have  
31 to realize the criticality of this information and that this is  
32 what keeps the fishery operating around a number of biological  
33 opinions where we need this data, and we want the fishery to  
34 keep operating, and we don't want to be pinned by that, and  
35 that's why we need this data, and that's why we're requesting  
36 using both the carrot and the stick approaches. Thanks.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Emily, go ahead.

39  
40 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. In addition to sort of using our  
41 established communication networks with these Sea Grant agents  
42 and with the observers and with the Pascagoula Lab folks and  
43 those face-to-face interactions, we did recommend the  
44 development of some outreach materials, and so the committee  
45 recommended that print and multimedia materials be developed  
46 that do two main things.

47  
48 First, explain why compliance is importance, and these materials

1 would ideally include examples of how vessel positioning data  
2 has been used to preserve access to historical fishing grounds.  
3 That's sort of a way to encourage them and let them know that  
4 this data can be used sort of -- I don't want to say in defense  
5 of the industry, but to the industry's advantage.

6  
7 One of the examples that we thought about was when we were  
8 creating Coral 9, which was not too, too long ago, and I know a  
9 lot of you guys were around for that, and one of the things that  
10 we did was overlay shrimp effort data, as well as commercial  
11 fishing effort data, to make sure that, when we were looking at  
12 these areas that were up for consideration for being preserved,  
13 that we also were then able to balance the historical fishing  
14 grounds and preservation of that behavior, and so I think it  
15 would be a useful thing for us to explain the good side of why  
16 compliance is necessary, rather than the stick approach, using  
17 that encouragement of, hey, this could be good for you, and for  
18 your industry, to make sure that we have that continued data  
19 stream.

20  
21 Then the next thing is that those materials should also note the  
22 timeline for this SD mailing, and so an understanding that  
23 mailing in these cards is really a stop-gap measure until we get  
24 something in place to collect vessel position data that  
25 automatically transmits.

26  
27 Once we created those outreach materials, or not we, and I think  
28 we were suggesting that NOAA Fisheries create those outreach  
29 materials, in conjunction maybe with Sea Grant, and we have  
30 offered -- We will plan to offer, in this letter, that the  
31 council -- You know, we are happy to also help either review or  
32 help produce those materials, if necessary.

33  
34 Once those materials are produced, there were two sort of places  
35 that we wanted to make sure that they were deployed. We wanted  
36 to make sure that the print materials got to all the Sea Grant  
37 agents, all the port agents, those Pascagoula Lab folks, and so  
38 all these people who are going to have these in-person  
39 encounters, as well as the law enforcement officers that are on  
40 patrol who might be encountering these vessels, any state agency  
41 outreach staff, and then, also, any of the regional and local  
42 shrimp associations and so finding a way to make sure that we're  
43 mailing those out to those associations, so that they can  
44 distribute them to their members.

45  
46 Then, next, we wanted to make sure that the online materials  
47 were published on our council website, through the Gulf States  
48 website, through NOAA, through all of the actual individual

1 state websites, through Louisiana Fisheries, Shrimpers of the  
2 South, Shrimp Boat Enthusiasts, and through the regional and  
3 local shrimp associations, and so really just trying to make  
4 sure that we get the most coverage we can with those materials  
5 that we do produce.

6  
7 This is our final slide here, and, really, it was just a  
8 suggestion that any of our outreach materials be developed prior  
9 to the next mailing of SD cards, which is going to happen in  
10 January of 2023. That way, we can make sure that everything is  
11 sort of being rolled out alongside this next effort for  
12 compliance, A so that the shrimpers are able to get sort of that  
13 message from a lot of different sources at the same time, and  
14 hopefully promote compliance for this next effort, and that  
15 concludes that presentation.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Emily, I've got a couple of questions  
18 for you, but I want to make sure there is no other questions  
19 from the committee or other council members. Go ahead.

20  
21 **MS. BOGGS:** I know this isn't the Shrimp Committee, but is there  
22 any update on where we are with getting this new -- I think LGL  
23 is doing that pilot program, because you're saying 2023, and so  
24 how far away are we from getting something on the water for  
25 these shrimpers, without having to keep doing this antiquated  
26 form of reporting?

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Simmons.

29  
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so  
31 we've asked for updates from Dr. Putman, LGL, to give us an  
32 update on where they are for the project in October, and the  
33 agency staff is also going to provide an update on where they  
34 are with the VMS pilot project. That's our plan for October.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Are there other questions? I kind of  
37 have a follow-up question, Emily, to Susan's point. This is the  
38 Outreach Committee, and so we're trying to get the word out to  
39 fix the problem, but also the Shrimp Committee can actually  
40 solve the problem, with newer technology, but I'm a little bit  
41 concerned, and maybe this should be in front of the Shrimp  
42 Committee, and, you know, if you're on this six-month, twice-a-  
43 year, kind of return your cards, you're six months into before  
44 you know there's a problem, and so, you know, that creates  
45 issues for John's shop, and I don't know -- I don't know if  
46 there's a way around that. Is there any -- I guess maybe just  
47 let this committee know, and is there earlier -- Do we have to  
48 wait until October, or what's the general timeline for having

1 this more permanent fix?  
2

3 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I think Matt Freeman wants to speak, and he's  
4 online, and he's our shrimp guru.  
5

6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Matt, you may not know, since it's  
7 slated for October, but it would be nice, just so, in the back  
8 of our minds, we have a general framework for the time that --  
9 You know, how long is this going to be a problem?  
10

11 **DR. FREEMAN:** We'll have an update, both from NMFS on their  
12 pilot study as well as from LGL, at the October council meeting.  
13 The tentative plan is, at the April 2023 council meeting, we  
14 will have final results from both of those projects, and then  
15 hopefully we can be proceeding with the action and the current  
16 draft framework a little more quickly, once those results are  
17 available, but, given that it will still a little bit of time to  
18 go final on that document, have it implemented, and, obviously,  
19 have the rollout with the industry itself, we are looking  
20 probably, ballpark, at maybe another two years until the devices  
21 are actually on shrimp vessels and transmitting data.  
22

23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Matt. Are there other  
24 questions from the committee regarding this? I would just say,  
25 again, this is Outreach, and we can take it up in the Shrimp  
26 Committee, but, you know, that's a long time, especially if  
27 there's not compliance, and I completely understand what Susan  
28 is saying about, you know, the carrot versus the stick kind of  
29 thing, but, at some point, if the cards aren't coming in, we're  
30 going to have to probably put a little more teeth in it, but I  
31 guess that's for the Shrimp Committee to take up, and, I mean,  
32 obviously, the purpose of this group is to get the word out, so  
33 that we can get as much compliance as possible. With that,  
34 John.  
35

36 **DR. WALTER:** I just want to add, and something that I think the  
37 Outreach Committee can help to make this much more resonate with  
38 the fishery, is what a lot of this data is used for is not  
39 necessarily for bad purposes, and that it actually was used to  
40 inform the offshore wind siting, and that actually worked out, I  
41 think, very well for the shrimp fishery, in terms of finding  
42 areas that minimized conflicts.  
43

44 By having the best available spatial information of where they  
45 fished, and we'll hear a presentation on where the offshore wind  
46 siting is likely to be, we were able to find better areas that  
47 avoided a lot of conflicts, and so that is marine spatial  
48 intelligence being used, I think, really to help fishery, and so

1 I think, if you can convey that, and convey that message, that  
2 will probably be a very good thing for people to hear it.  
3 Thanks.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John, I think that's a great point, and, Emily,  
6 I'm sure you're on that, as far as conveying the advantages of  
7 reporting and what they're getting out of it, versus just, you  
8 know, some method to ensure compliance and, you know, catch and  
9 effort, and so there is some real potential there, I think.  
10 Carrie.

11  
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think just  
13 keep in mind that it's the agency staff that's going to be  
14 developing these materials, with our staff and other Sea Grant  
15 agents helping, and so, once we have that singular bit of  
16 information about how it is important to return these, and the  
17 postcards go out again, we have one place that we can provide to  
18 our port samplers, to Sea Grant agents, to anybody else, law  
19 enforcement, that explains the purpose of returning these, how  
20 important it is, what it provides, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,  
21 but we need to develop that with the agency, and they need to  
22 take the lead on that, so that we can help roll that out before  
23 the next postcard is mailed, and so keep that in mind.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dale.

26  
27 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Also, to add on to what Dr. Walter said, you  
28 know, I do know that states have used this data also for the  
29 siting of artificial reefs, and so that's another place where  
30 this data has been utilized and to the advantage of the shrimp  
31 fishery.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am not seeing any more hands up  
34 regarding this topic. If there's not, we'll move on to Item  
35 Number V, Emily, and that's the draft media guidelines, if  
36 you're ready.

37  
38 **DRAFT MEDIA GUIDELINES**

39  
40 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I'm ready. Okay, and, well, thank you, guys,  
41 for your input, and I will make sure that we incorporate that  
42 into our draft letter for the shrimp communication challenges.

43  
44 Moving on to our draft media guidelines, I figure what I will do  
45 here is just sort of walk you through these draft media  
46 guidelines, and I'm hoping that you can provide me with any  
47 feedback on how we as a staff, or as council members, can  
48 improve not only these guidelines, but maybe our functioning in

1 these areas.

2  
3 Just to get started, these guidelines are written to provide  
4 guidance to both staff and council members who represent the  
5 Gulf Council when responding to media inquiries, and so these  
6 are not necessarily appropriate to guide you in your personal  
7 life and, you know, how you deal with the media, but this is if  
8 you are responding on behalf of the council, specifically.

9  
10 It's important for you to know that council members may freely  
11 represent their own interests when speaking to the media about  
12 council-related topics. However, if that is to happen, you need  
13 to make it clear that you are not representing the council as a  
14 whole.

15  
16 Council members are not obligated to speak with the media, and  
17 you can refer any questions to myself, the Public Information  
18 Officer, as well as to our Executive and Deputy Directors. If  
19 you want to push the media off onto us, and have us respond on  
20 behalf of the council, you are more than welcome to do that.  
21 Also, it's important to note here that there is a note that  
22 staff is asked not to express any sort of personal opinions on  
23 any fisheries issues to the media, ever. It is not our job to  
24 have our own personal opinions. We support our council, and so  
25 that is spelled out here pretty clearly.

26  
27 Just to sort of paint the picture here of what we are asking  
28 for, all of the media inquiries that are received by council  
29 staff should be directed to the Public Information Officer, who  
30 is myself. I will then develop responses, using the expertise  
31 of our staff and of our leadership staff and, in some cases, our  
32 council members, if necessary, and I will just make sure that  
33 that response is well coordinated amongst all of the experts who  
34 have any dealings with the issue.

35  
36 However, in some cases, media requests require an immediate, or  
37 very abbreviated, timeline for a response. You know, they will  
38 call you at 3:00 p.m., and say I have a five o'clock deadline,  
39 and they will need something immediately, and so, in those  
40 cases, the Public Information Officer, the Executive Director,  
41 the Deputy Director, the Council Chairman and Vice Chairman are  
42 allowed to respond as spokespersons on behalf of the council  
43 without review.

44  
45 In that instance, if there is some deadline shift, those people  
46 that I named are allowed to speak to the media on behalf of the  
47 council without sort of going through a review process of the  
48 council peers.

1  
2 In some cases, if one of those people is not the appropriate  
3 person, other staff and council members are allowed to  
4 temporarily serve as what I'm calling a spokesperson, as long as  
5 they have permission from the Council Chair, Executive Director,  
6 or Public Information Officer.

7  
8 Just to sort of give you an example of that, I am not a shrimp  
9 expert, and, if somebody calls me and says that I have a  
10 deadline in fifteen minutes, and I need somebody to tell me  
11 about shrimp, I am probably going to talk to Matt Freeman, on  
12 our staff, and say, hey, I need you to respond to this media  
13 inquiry on behalf of the council on this topic that I am not  
14 qualified to talk on, and so that might be an instance where we  
15 could sort of designate that spokesperson shift.

16  
17 It is important to know that, if you are serving as a  
18 spokesperson for the council, you have to make sure that your  
19 messaging is both accurate and that it reflects the unified  
20 voice of the council, so that it's not reflecting your personal  
21 opinion as a council member. If you are speaking on behalf of  
22 the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council itself, we have to  
23 use that consistent council-based messaging that is reflective  
24 of our council votes.

25  
26 It's kind of difficult, right, because, at this table, we have a  
27 lot of differing opinions. Sometimes, even when an issue goes  
28 final, there are people on the dissenting side of the vote, and  
29 they might have a separate opinion. However, council  
30 communications to the media, that are on behalf of the council,  
31 have to reflect that council vote, whether or not your personal  
32 opinion reflects that. That's just sort of the nature of our  
33 beast.

34  
35 Now, if we are speaking on behalf of an issue that has not yet  
36 been finalized, any messaging that we develop has to reflect the  
37 nuance of having multiple opinions at the table, and so we sort  
38 of talk about the council is considering, and using language  
39 like that, rather than, you know, sort of -- We have to tread on  
40 both sides of an issue, right?

41  
42 Next, the media often asks for quotes. They want to directly  
43 quote somebody important. When possible, we ask for staff to  
44 avoid being quoted, and we rely on the Council Chairman to be  
45 our primary source for council-related quotes.

46  
47 I don't want that to make the Chairman feel nervous, because the  
48 Public Information Officer, as well as appropriate council

1 staff, are always available to help craft a quote on behalf of  
2 the Chairman, and so, if they're asking for a direct quote to  
3 come from Dale, Dale, if you want to go ahead and take it, you  
4 can, but, if you want help crafting that quote, we are here to  
5 support you in that. It's just going to come from your name,  
6 but it might reflect that unified voice, and we'll put some  
7 work, in the background, to make sure it's a very intentional  
8 quote that we're sharing.

9  
10 In cases where the Chair is unavailable to provide that quote,  
11 the appropriate committee chair, the Executive Director, or  
12 Deputy Director can be used as a substitute with the media, but,  
13 like I said, generally, staff is going to avoid being quoted,  
14 since you guys are the council and not us.

15  
16 Then, finally, and this came up at our last meeting, and it's  
17 been sort of informal, the way that we handle this, but you'll  
18 notice that, every once in a while, members of the media want to  
19 come into our public meetings and take video recordings, or take  
20 photographs, and so, since we are open to the public, and these  
21 meetings are open to the public, those meetings can be openly  
22 and freely recorded and photographed, as long as the method of  
23 recording is not disruptive to the council process.

24  
25 In other words, we don't need, you know, somebody running around  
26 the middle of the U with a video camera, but we allow that  
27 public reporting, or that public photographing, to occur, as  
28 long as it's done openly and it's not disruptive.

29  
30 Now, that does not speak to any media outlet might have a need  
31 to get a waiver, if they're going to show your image or your  
32 name on TV, and so that is up to them to handle and not up to  
33 us, and so that's just another -- The final thing that is  
34 spelled out in this policy, that media is welcome to come and  
35 record freely, and that's sort of an overview, and are there any  
36 questions, additions, or subtractions?

37  
38 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Emily, I would just like to let you know  
39 thank you very much for trying to get this to work. I can tell  
40 you, because we're a member of the council, anything we say,  
41 somebody -- If we're not even talking about the council,  
42 somebody can put that as a little underlying thing, as a member  
43 of that council, and so understand that -- I think that most of  
44 us try very hard to do exactly what you're asking for, and  
45 sometimes people just like to quote what they want to quote,  
46 and, in the same way as me, and I have to watch what I say,  
47 because they say you work direct with the Governor, and now the  
48 Governor said it, and so it's the same thing, but I appreciate

1 it, and we try hard, and I would ask the council to look at the  
2 states, and please be careful with that. Be careful with what  
3 you say, because it reflects against each state, whether we may  
4 or may not agree with what your point is, but just be careful  
5 with that too, but we appreciate you.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, General. Other questions or  
8 comments? Kevin.

9  
10 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** I will just add, on what General Spraggins  
11 said, from the state perspective, I know we have to -- We are  
12 requested to provide comment as to what goes on on the council,  
13 through our, you know, department, and, you know, they ask for  
14 quotes and such, and so we try to say this is the position of  
15 the council member representing the state, and so there's a  
16 little bit of a nuance there, as to how we might, you know,  
17 message a certain thing, because, you know, as a state  
18 representative, we're trying to at least tell the public  
19 citizens in our state of what we are -- What our position is,  
20 and so it's a little bit of a nuance, as to where you're coming  
21 from, as to how the message would be, and so I would just say  
22 that, in certain instances, not representing the council, we  
23 might have a different message than we would have if we were,  
24 quote, unquote, representing the council as a council member.

25  
26 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Just to respond, I tried to sort of tease that  
27 out. There is a sentence that says, you know, you can represent  
28 your own interests. It's just, if you are representing the  
29 council interest, the idea is that you're trying to do that, and  
30 so there is definitely a nuance, and it's sort of hard to tease  
31 out roles.

32  
33 To your point, you know, we definitely don't have control over  
34 what the final product is, and, as a member of the council,  
35 since you're here, you might be quoted, or what you say might be  
36 misconstrued, and that's just the nature of that game of  
37 telephone that we all play, right, but I appreciate both of your  
38 comments, and I will just make sure that, when I give this final  
39 draft a look, that I'm trying to express both of those points  
40 that you guys made pretty clearly.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dale.

43  
44 **MR. DIAZ:** This is kind of off-topic, but I want to bring it up,  
45 and maybe you can help a little bit, Emily, or Dr. Simmons, and  
46 so the council speaks to its record, and I know folks might be  
47 at the table sometime, and debating on whether or not they want  
48 to say something on an issue, but, if you have something that

1 you think might be important to the issue at-hand, it's  
2 important that you bring it up, because, for one thing, Emily is  
3 going to use the record, whenever she has to talk to people,  
4 but, anytime there's a legal action against the council, I mean,  
5 they want to see that the council fully considered things, that  
6 they thoroughly think through things, and so I just want to  
7 encourage people, as we're having discussions on different  
8 issues, to -- If you think something is important, don't be  
9 afraid to say something. Emily, did you want to -- Can you  
10 speak to that anymore?

11  
12 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I think you make a good point, and you're  
13 right. We, as staff, often refer back to the minutes, when  
14 we're looking at an issue and we're trying to either develop  
15 technical documents, or like, in my case, when I'm trying to  
16 sort of represent what the council has discussed, and we use  
17 those minutes a lot, and so it is really helpful when you guys  
18 do have those conversations, sort of out in the open, and I  
19 think, like you mentioned, in case there is any sort of legal  
20 consideration.

21  
22 I think it's also just really beneficial for our stakeholders to  
23 hear that we are thoroughly discussing and weighing the  
24 benefits, and maybe potential drawbacks, of anything that we do,  
25 and so I agree with you. I support that encouragement.

26  
27 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes, and I just want to make one more comment. This  
28 is a deliberative process, and I'm getting probably off-topic,  
29 but some of the best ideas that has ever come out of this  
30 council has come from public comments, and I really like to hear  
31 council members, when they're talking about an issue, you know,  
32 mention that they heard from the public on something, or there  
33 was concerns about things, or it was mentioned that the idea  
34 came up in the public. Thank you, Greg. I appreciate it.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am looking around, to see if there's  
37 any more comments regarding these media guidelines, and I am not  
38 seeing any. If not, then, Emily, that moves us to some  
39 discussion of the recent technical report.

40  
41 **AUGUST 2022 OUTREACH AND EDUCATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

42  
43 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** We have covered most of what the Outreach and  
44 Education Technical Committee covered on their August 1 meeting.  
45 The only thing that we left out, and I will just give you guys a  
46 brief update, is we did get an update from Nick Haddad on the  
47 Return 'Em Right program, and you guys will remember that's the  
48 NRDA program that dedicates funding to both the research and as

1 well as the education and distribution of descending tools, in  
2 an effort to reduce discard mortality.

3  
4 That's a project that we, as a council -- I am the liaison staff  
5 member that's on that project, and we have sort of worked with  
6 them, throughout the development, and the Gulf States have been  
7 a really integral player in that project, and so Nick came on,  
8 and he gave us just a quick update, and he reported that 155  
9 federally-permitted for-hire captains had completed the training  
10 and received devices and that 9,455 private anglers had  
11 completed the learning module and received their gear so far as  
12 well.

13  
14 We also are scheduled to have them come in January, I believe,  
15 and give us a presentation and an update on where they are with  
16 the outreach and distribution of gear, as well as where they are  
17 with some of the funded research that's being performed, and,  
18 other than that -- I think that covers everything that was in  
19 the report.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, Emily. That's good news, especially  
22 considering I'm sure we'll hear more about discards this week,  
23 but any other questions for Emily regarding the report or,  
24 really, anything we've been discussing, before we move on in our  
25 agenda? All right. Seeing none, that takes us to our last  
26 item, Other Business, and is there any other business that needs  
27 to come before this committee? Seeing none, that concludes the  
28 business of this committee, for the Outreach and Education  
29 Committee.

30  
31 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 22, 2022.)

32  
33

- - -