

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
OUTREACH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Perdido Beach Resort Orange Beach, Alabama

January 28, 2019

VOTING MEMBERS

- Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- Paul Mickle (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi
- Greg Stunz.....Texas
- Ed Swindell.....Louisiana

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- Doug Boyd.....Texas
- Roy Crabtree.....NMFS
- Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- Tom Frazer.....Florida
- Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
- Robin Riechers.....Texas
- John Sanchez.....Florida
- Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
- Bob Shipp.....Alabama

STAFF

- Assane Diagne.....Economist
- Matt Freeman.....Economist
- John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- Morgan Kilgour.....Fishery Biologist
- Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist & SEDAR Liaison
- Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- Camilla Shireman.....Administrative and Communications Assistant
- Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director

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- J.P. Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
- James Bruce.....Magnolia, MS
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1 Ron Chicola.....Ruston, LA
2 Bubba Cochrane.....Galveston, TX
3 Mike Colby.....Clearwater Marine Association, FL
4 Chris Conklin.....SAFMC
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7 Johnny Greene.....AL
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9 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA, FL
10 Laura Picariello.....

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1 The Outreach & Education Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the Perdido Beach Resort, Orange
3 Beach, Alabama, Monday afternoon, January 28, 2019, and was
4 called to order by Chairman Phil Dyskow.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN PHIL DYSKOW:** I will call the Outreach and Education
11 Committee meeting to order. The members of this committee are
12 myself, Phil Dyskow, Ed Swindell, who is the Vice Chair, and he
13 also has a lot of prior experience as Chair of this committee,
14 Susan Boggs, J.D. Dugas, Dr. Mickle, Dr. Stunz, and Lieutenant
15 Zanowicz.

16
17 The agenda for this meeting I believe is on the screen, or it
18 will be shortly, and the whole purpose of this agenda is to talk
19 about reducing the mortality rate, the release mortality rate,
20 on the recreational fishing sector, and we've got a lot of
21 action items to go through to explain that, and so, unless there
22 are some additions to the agenda, I would like to see if there
23 is a motion to approve it. Is there a second? Unless there is
24 objection to the agenda, we'll consider it approved and move on.

25
26 The next item is Approval of the Minutes, and the last time we
27 had minutes from this committee was June of last year, and the
28 two main items in those minutes were two motions that came up
29 and were approved by the Full Council. One was to adopt the
30 outreach plan for the use of venting tools, and the other was to
31 develop an action plan to ensure that the progress we make is
32 measurable and sustainable, and so those were the two action
33 items that were approved at that meeting back in June. Unless
34 there are some questions or changes to the minutes, I would like
35 to see if there is a motion to approve those.

36
37 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** I do just have one simple change to those
38 minutes. They do list you as the Chairman during that meeting,
39 where you were the Vice Chair operating as the Chair, and so --

40
41 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** I clearly identified in the record that I was
42 acting under false colors and that I was not the Chairman at
43 that time.

44
45 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I believe, in the identification lines, we need
46 to change you to Vice Chair.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Yes, ma'am, you are correct. All right. With

1 that change, if there are no other comments or questions about
2 the minutes, I would like to see if there is a motion to
3 approve. Is there a second? There is a second from Mr.
4 Swindell. If there is no objection, we will consider those
5 approved and move on. We have a number of -- Yes, ma'am.

6
7 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** I abstained, since I was not here at that
8 time.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Very good. You can abstain any time you want.
11 Next, we have a number of presentations by Emily Muehlstein, and
12 she, I guess, is going to integrate the action guide into some
13 of those other presentations, and so you may not see it flow
14 exactly as it is in the agenda, but, basically, she is going to
15 flesh us out on the progress that was made on implementing those
16 two motions from the June meeting, and so, Emily.

17
18 **REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT OF BEST FISHING PRACTICES**

19
20 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Great. Thank you. We will start with the
21 action schedule, and what we'll do is sort of go to each piece
22 of that action schedule as we get to it on the agenda. The
23 first thing on the agenda, after the action guide, is reviewing
24 our proposed draft of our best fishing practices website, and
25 so, if you look at the action guide and next steps, it does say
26 that, last year, the council had finalized a policy on the use
27 of venting tools and descending devices. That was added to the
28 June 2018 meeting, and you all adopted the council's outreach
29 plan, which had two major goals.

30
31 The first one was to promote the widespread awareness of the
32 council's policy, and that was in part by informing partner
33 agencies and the media of the policy's existence, and then the
34 second was to promote a widespread use of venting tools and
35 descending devices by serving as a unified voice that speaks
36 across all fishing sectors and targets the entire Gulf region.

37
38 In order to sort of hit on that second goal of the outreach
39 plan, the Outreach and Education Technical Committee recommended
40 that we develop a best fishing practices website, and so they
41 had mentioned that there was a number of smaller websites that
42 were around that sort of were regionally specific or specific to
43 one species, and so they asked that we sort of create our own
44 website that kind of is a culmination of all of that outreach
45 material and all of the research that is already done, and so,
46 with that, Bernie, if you can take us to that link, I would like
47 to show the committee -- I am going to go ahead and go over this
48 draft webpage, and then, for this item, I would like you guys to

1 provide us with any feedback or any ideas or modifications that
2 you would like to make to what you see so far.

3
4 Bernie has it up on the board, and it's called Fishing for our
5 Future. Again, that Outreach and Education Technical Committee
6 sort of asked that we make it more general to discard mortality
7 rather than to just venting or descending, and so they kind of
8 wanted us to broaden our horizons and talk about ways that we
9 could promote best fishing practices that would lead to reduced
10 discard mortality.

11
12 You will see, if you scroll down a little bit, it says:
13 "Improving the way we fish today can increase our opportunities
14 to fish in the future." Now, you will notice, throughout this
15 site, we are very careful, actually, to sort of avoid the catch
16 and release language. I think, in a lot of ways, sometimes
17 people glom onto that and think that that means that we are
18 going to shut down fisheries for harvest, and so I have tried to
19 craft language that sort of talks about ways to improve fishing
20 practices and releasing a fish without sort of using that direct
21 language.

22
23 You will see there is a button right to our policy on venting
24 and descending, and so that's where it's going to be displayed,
25 kind of front and center. Then, if you move down a little bit,
26 there's just a little paragraph that says: "Fishermen release
27 fish they have caught for a variety of reasons. Unfortunately,
28 each time we catch and release a fish, there is chance that the
29 fish will not survive. Those fish negatively impact the overall
30 health of the fish stock and can reduce the amount of fish that
31 can be harvested. Fortunately, there are a number of things
32 that we can do to increase the survival of released fish."

33
34 That is sort of the introduction, sort of to talk about what
35 we're talking about in this website, and then, of course, you
36 can see this slideshow that is displaying different types of
37 venting and descending mechanisms that can be used.

38
39 Scrolling down, this is a really big -- There is kind of three
40 huge parts to this webpage. This first one is how big of a
41 problem is the mortality of released fish, and you will notice,
42 and this is just a draft, we are actually missing this major
43 portion of the site so far.

44
45 We had done a data request to the Southeast Fisheries Science
46 Center in early December, and we were waiting on them to give us
47 a list of discard -- Like basically all the data that we needed
48 to show how big of an issue discard mortality is Gulf-wide, and

1 so, eventually, this will be a tool that anglers can play with,
2 and it's going to show release discard mortality by species, by
3 sector, and you will be able to -- It will be a tool that you
4 can manipulate, and so you can sort of do your own drilling-down
5 to sort of follow whatever you're interested in, what species it
6 is, what sector it is.

7
8 I apologize that that's not in there yet. We're still waiting
9 for that information, and I know we've had some pretty big
10 conversations with the committee in the past, and I think this
11 portion, and the way that this data is displayed, is going to
12 end up being really important, and I'm really hoping that the
13 committee will be able to help me, once we do have this part
14 built in, look at it and make sure that it's displaying what we
15 want to show and the way that we want to show it, because I do
16 realize that this is the bread and butter of this website.

17
18 Moving down from there, the next portion is what can I do to
19 increase the chance that the fish I release will survive, and
20 then there's just a couple of tips for best practices for
21 catching and best practices for releasing. The big portion
22 though is, if you scroll down even farther, is this map. It
23 says, "click the area you fish for more information", and so
24 what we've done is we've made a clickable map, and, if you can
25 click Texas for me.

26
27 This is the western Gulf, and it encompasses both Texas and
28 Louisiana, and it brings us to another page that displays all of
29 the outreach materials that were done in that region on catch
30 and release, and so recognizing that, in Texas, red snapper is
31 probably going to be sort of the species that is more popular,
32 whereas, maybe in Florida, it's going to be grouper, and so we
33 wanted to find a way to organize the different outreach
34 materials that were done across the Gulf in a regionally-
35 specific way.

36
37 Then, if you go back to that page, you can scroll down, and we
38 have brochures, and so I guess that's all we have for the Texas
39 region, and so, if you go back to that map, and if you click on
40 the eastern Gulf, over by Florida, we have brochures, again,
41 just like you saw in Texas, and, if you scroll down some more,
42 you can see there is groupers in this one, and so there's a ton
43 of videos that were done by FWC, and then even more will get to
44 -- There is going to be some websites that we're going to be
45 able to feature that are specific to Florida.

46
47 However, I haven't done that, because I am waiting to hear from
48 the committee before I start plugging in those webpages, because

1 I want to make sure that you guys like the direction we're going
2 before I get permission from everybody that I need to get
3 permission from to share the websites on our page.

4
5 Then, if you go back, there is a central Gulf, and that is
6 Mississippi and Alabama. Those states do not have a ton of
7 state-specific outreach materials, and so we have kind of put
8 all of our general Gulf-wide materials in that region.

9
10 Then we can go back to the main page, and then, all the way at
11 the bottom, the third and final part of this website is what
12 research has been done in the Gulf of Mexico on improving
13 survival of released fish, and you will see we have this built-
14 in tool, where you can search all of the articles that we have
15 been given by our partners, and we asked the Outreach and
16 Education Technical Committee, as well as the committee members
17 themselves, and a number of our SSC members, if they had
18 anything that might be germane to this search tool, and so we've
19 had submissions, and we've also done some literature searches
20 and found everything that we could, all of the papers that are
21 relevant to descending and venting and discard mortality in the
22 Gulf, and some of the wider United States as well.

23
24 There is forty-five papers in this database right now, and that
25 is something that we'll be able to update more and more as we
26 get more information and more studies completed.

27
28 With that said, I just want to very quickly take an opportunity
29 to thank everybody who submitted outreach materials or research
30 materials to this page so far, and I was hoping to take some
31 feedback from the committee, based on what you see.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Well, Emily, you either have to get a faster
34 computer or you need to talk slower, because there is a
35 tremendous amount of information there that was lost on us. I
36 think, from our meeting that we had over the summer, the biggest
37 takeaway that I had is the tremendous amount of embracement that
38 we've gotten from the recreational fishing community and the
39 stakeholder groups within the recreational fishing community.

40
41 They are very interested in minimizing release mortality, and
42 there is all sorts of materials being developed, as you saw from
43 the website, even though it went through there pretty quickly,
44 and so I think the thing that I took away from that meeting was
45 the amount of buy-in that we get from the recreational fishing
46 community. That was very impressive. Dr. Mickle.

47
48 **DR. PAUL MICKLE:** Thank you, Chairman. I just wanted to bring

1 up, and I think this is the time to do it, but you're looking
2 for input, Emily, on kind of maybe some avenues, potential
3 additional avenues, to go down or some more refining detail to
4 some of these bullets, and is that the stage we're at?

5

6 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Sure. Yes, absolutely.

7

8 **DR. MICKLE:** Okay. Well, I think it would be really interesting
9 to add really when to vent, or if to vent, because some areas of
10 the Gulf are shallower than others, and I know it's species-
11 specific in depth and all those things, but I've seen it in
12 Mississippi, people venting and doing certain things,
13 descending, in very shallow water, when it's unneeded, and I'm
14 pretty sure it has a negative effect.

15

16 Also, one of the most interesting things I've come across, in
17 the years of talking to some of the best fishermen in the Gulf
18 and expert long-term captains, is, under your best practices of
19 catching, one of the bullets here, and I think it's the second
20 bullet, to fish in shallow, cooler waters, but a lot of the
21 discussions that I hear from the long-term captains that really
22 have a lot of water time is to just not fish on the bottom.

23

24 You can go to deeper waters, but just don't go to the bottom all
25 the time. They can fish half-way down in the water column, and
26 you can have a really profound effect on decreasing discard
27 mortality, and just getting over that social stigma of bottom
28 fishing, and you don't have to be on the bottom. You can catch
29 sometimes even better fish.

30

31 I've got a buddy that he fishes shallower than anybody on the
32 boat, and he usually gets the biggest snapper doing that. He
33 doesn't catch as many, but he usually gets the biggest one, and
34 so, anyway, just those little kind of really good, long-term,
35 historical -- These long-exposed captains that really know what
36 they're talking about and making their way into that education
37 that is reaching the public seems to be pretty valuable at this
38 point.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Mickle. Just to that point,
41 and, again, we didn't have a chance to go through all of the
42 printed materials, but there is everything from a very small, or
43 a number of very small, brief folders that just give you a
44 snapshot to something like the telephone book, that goes through
45 vast detail on fish venting and release tactics, and so all of
46 that information is available. It's sometimes hard to find, and
47 what Emily is trying to do here is put it in all one place and
48 make it easy to find for the person that wants to find it and

1 wants to get more details and more information.

2
3 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** Emily, good job, and I've got a question
4 related to the website. Do you have some embedded tracking in
5 there to know what kind of traffic is hitting it and what pages
6 they're on and all that kind of thing?

7
8 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Yes, and so that is certainly something that
9 will come as part of our analytics, because it's attached to our
10 website. We don't have it yet. These actually aren't live yet,
11 because I'm still waiting for that one big piece that I was
12 hoping to have to display today, but, once it goes live, we will
13 absolutely be able to track it and see how much people are using
14 it in general and then see where people are clicking and where
15 people are going, and I think, at some point, I would love to
16 revisit the site with the analytics alongside of it, and we can
17 figure out if things are prioritized properly or if we need to
18 tweak it a little bit.

19
20 **DR. STUNZ:** Related to that, that's good, because, obviously, we
21 know what pages they're liking or using or gauge how much impact
22 that we're having. One, I think there's a lot of information
23 out there to build on this as well, and so, when you're
24 soliciting input, who are you asking? Are you just reaching out
25 to people you know and that kind of thing, or -- In other words,
26 I think there's a lot more resources you could easily build on
27 here, and so I was wondering what's the best way to reach out to
28 those individuals that might have information you can build on.

29
30 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** That's a great question. So far, I have pretty
31 much just employed the members of our Outreach and Education
32 Technical Committee, and they have sort of -- I have emailed all
33 of them, and they've all gotten back to me with here's what we
34 have in our region. There were some people that were at that
35 Outreach and Education meeting last April who have also been in
36 touch with me and given me things, but, if you have any
37 suggestions on how I can get more stuff, I would love it,
38 whoever can contribute.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Did you have a --

41
42 **DR. STUNZ:** I was just going to say that, yes, I do, and we can
43 talk about that offline.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** I think what you will find is that you're both
46 saying the same thing. A lot of the people that you want Emily
47 to reach out to are on the committee, and they're the ones
48 producing some of these materials, and so there's a lot more

1 sharing of information than it might appear at first blush. Any
2 other questions on this topic before we move on? Okay. Next.

3 4 **OVERVIEW OF BAROTRAUMA WORKSHOP PLAN** 5

6 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay and just, right before we move on from
7 this, if you have a moment to look at this after the committee,
8 and I know we're sort of showing it live, and, like you said, it
9 was kind of a fast demo, please feel free to email me, and that
10 goes for not only the committee, but the Full Council and
11 anybody in the audience or the internet land that is listening
12 to us. There is a link, and I would love suggestions or any
13 materials that you can send my way that you would like me to
14 curate on this site.

15
16 That takes us to the overview of our barotrauma workshop plan.
17 Just to revisit our action schedule really quickly, we will look
18 at it, and so just a little bit of information on the background
19 of this.

20
21 At the June meeting in 2018 of last summer, the council directed
22 staff to work with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
23 to develop a meeting of scientists, agency personnel, and
24 stakeholders to develop an action plan that includes information
25 dissemination and science and monitoring needs and ensure the
26 policy, purpose, and objectives are both measurable and
27 successful.

28
29 In sort of more plain English terms, basically, the council came
30 up with this descending and venting policy and wants to make
31 sure that it doesn't just live in a vacuum, and so the idea is
32 that, through outreach endeavors, we can find a way to make sure
33 that this policy is actually enacted and that it becomes
34 something useful.

35
36 Since we had that meeting with the council in June, the folks
37 from the Deepwater Horizon Restoration folks have come and said
38 that they are looking for a similar product that we are planning
39 to sort of get out of this workshop, and so they have been in
40 communication with us, and they are hoping to align the
41 objectives of the RESTORE Act and some of the funds that they
42 will be handing out with the objectives that we come up with
43 from this workshop.

44
45 You will notice, when I show you the agenda, that a lot of it is
46 actually aligned with what the RESTORE Act folks are looking
47 for, so that we can kind of make sure that, if there is some
48 sort of research and some funding that needs to happen, that

1 there's actually a real-world place where we can give our
2 suggestions and it's not just going to go into the ether.

3
4 With that, Bernie, if you can go ahead and bring up the draft of
5 the discard mortality workshop, we'll go through that.
6 Unfortunately -- The RESTORE folks were supposed to be here this
7 morning to give a presentation on their timeline and how that
8 whole process is going to work. Since they're not here this
9 morning, we're kind of doing this without them, but we hope to
10 get an update from them, I think, at our next meeting.

11
12 Here is the agenda. You will see that the objective is right at
13 the top. It says to create a roadmap or action plan to promote
14 the use of barotrauma mitigation tools, data collection efforts
15 for discard mortality by fleet and species, and ultimately
16 incorporate results into stock assessments.

17
18 The first big thing that we plan to do at this workshop is to
19 have a presentation from folks at the Science Center to really
20 sort of couch the conversation in an understanding of how big of
21 an issue discard mortality is across the Gulf. Very similar to
22 the information that I am missing for our website right now,
23 we're hoping that the folks from the Science Center will kick
24 the day off by really talking about discard mortality and how
25 big of an issue it is across sector and across gear type and
26 across year for the species that you see listed here.

27
28 Once we sort of get a feel for how big of an issue discard
29 mortality is in the Gulf, we thought about bringing somebody in
30 from the west coast. Now, there's a number of different
31 examples on the west coast that they've had a success story,
32 where they went from no management measure to a management
33 measure that required the use of barotrauma mitigation and then
34 the changes in the discard mortality rates were then put into
35 stock assessments, and so we thought what we would like to do is
36 sort of also set the tone of the day by having somebody who has
37 been through that process sort of be able to talk us through it
38 and how it worked, and hopefully that will kind of help us with
39 our roadmap on how we can do it over in the Gulf.

40
41 We did talk with some folks over on the west coast, and it
42 sounds like the best example is yelloweye rockfish, and we have
43 two potential presenters that are willing to come over and sort
44 of talk to us about the story of the yelloweye rockfish and how
45 they went from regulation to changes in their stock assessment.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Emily, who are those two people? Do you know,
48 off the top of your head?

1
2 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Dan Wolford, and so we haven't contacted these
3 guys yet, and so he's going to be surprised, and then John
4 DeVore, and so one of them is a past member of the Pacific
5 Council, and then one of them is on the SSC for the Pacific
6 Council. We will be contacting them.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** A third candidate, if you need one, who is
9 involved with this is the former chair of the recreational
10 fishing committee on MAFAC, and you're going to ask me his name,
11 and it's -- It starts with an "F", I think, and I will get it to
12 you, but he's very qualified, and he's been involved with this
13 from the beginning as well.

14
15 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Great. Thank you. Okay. Once we go
16 through that presentation, the next part is a facilitated
17 discussion, and this item on the agenda is one of the things
18 that the RESTORE Act folks had asked us for specifically,
19 because we're hoping that what we get out of this workshop can
20 sort of just be plugged into the RESTORE Act action plan, and so
21 we would have a facilitated discussion on barotrauma mitigation
22 by fleet and by reef species.

23
24 The idea here is that we would sort of kind of have a discussion
25 about what the best practices are for each fleet when it comes
26 to barotrauma mitigation. It became pretty obvious, at our
27 Outreach and Education Technical Committee meeting from last
28 year, that different fleets had different preferences, and so,
29 while descending might be sort of the gold standard for one type
30 of fisherman, that it might not be feasible for other types of
31 fishermen, and so I think the conversation here would be which
32 fleet preferred which method, and then also a conversation about
33 what the roadblocks are, or the barriers, for the methods that
34 they are not using as fleets, and so I think we'll have a
35 discussion facilitated to that point.

36
37 Then, if you scroll down, the next part would be having a
38 presentation from the folks at the Science Center about the
39 stock assessment inputs that we currently have and that could be
40 improved with better information about discard mortality.

41
42 Then we would also ask the group to suggest any research ideas
43 that could lead to barotrauma mitigation efforts being
44 incorporated into those assessments, and so, again, this is one
45 of those things that might help drive the RESTORE funding to
46 ensure that the council's desire to go from policy to
47 incorporation into the stock assessment becomes a reality.

48

1 Then, if you look down further, it's the proposed composition of
2 workshop attendees, and so we're hoping to have a good mix of
3 scientists and stakeholders. There is five scientists, folks
4 from the Science Center, the SSC, and some other -- If there is
5 anybody else that sort of seems pertinent or germane to the
6 discussion.

7
8 Then five managers, and that would be folks from Gulf States,
9 folks from the council, and also from NOAA Fisheries, and then
10 six stakeholders representing commercial, for-hire, private
11 recreational, and NGO interests.

12
13 Then we do have some proposed dates for the one-day workshop,
14 and those dates are sort of most helpful if you couch them in
15 these deadlines, and so our deadlines here are we would like to
16 present the results of this workshop at the October meeting this
17 year, and then, once the council blesses those workshop results
18 we would forward them on to the RESTORE Act folks, and we have a
19 deadline from them of November of 2019. That is all I have on
20 this agenda item, and I would be happy to have discussion or
21 feedback from the committee.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Susan.

24

25 **MS. BOGGS:** The only suggestion I have, Emily, is the workshop
26 dates, if you're going to use the for-hire, that you not do it
27 maybe in July or August, just because they'll still be -- Or at
28 least kind of confirm with those that you look to recruit what
29 their schedules might be, just because they might still be
30 fishing.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you. One of the unique things is that
33 some of the strongest advocates for the idea of reducing
34 mortality within the recreational community are charter and for-
35 hire vessels, and so that is important. Do we have any other
36 questions from the council? If not, we will move on to the next
37 item.

38

39 **UPDATE ON "SOMETHING'S FISHY" DATA COLLECTION TOOL**

40

41 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Great. We will go back to that action guide,
42 and so the last one is the overview of our Something's Fishy
43 data collection tool, and so you guys may remember the council
44 spent a little bit of time sort of trying to figure out a way
45 that we could get information from our fishermen on the water
46 and that we can incorporate that information into either the
47 stock assessments or into our management decisions or both.

48

1 What we landed on was development of this tool that we're
2 calling Something's Fishy, and, at our last meeting of this
3 committee, we showed you a draft of the tool and decided that
4 the best thing to do was to launch that tool on a trial basis,
5 and so we've had the opportunity to do that.

6
7 We did it with red grouper, and we have sort of gone almost all
8 the way through that, except the stock assessment isn't finished
9 yet, but we created the tool, and what we did was contact the
10 stock assessment scientists that were handling that assessment,
11 and we asked them if there was anything specific that they
12 wanted to add to that tool, and this was along the time that the
13 red tide was really terrible in southern Florida, and so the
14 assessment scientists asked that we add a couple of questions
15 about the red tide and how it was affecting the stock.

16
17 We deployed that tool, and we got a hundred responses from
18 anglers across the Gulf, and then we were able to bring the
19 responses to the data workshop during the stock assessment, and
20 you will see just some of the quick analysis that we did. Each
21 comment we coded red or green, and that is to indicate whether
22 they were indicating a negative or a positive trend in the
23 stock.

24
25 We also just did some very sort of rudimentary analysis of who
26 responded, where the people were that were responding, where
27 they were seeing their observations, and then whether their
28 observations were indicating negative or positive trends based
29 on location, and then one of the major things that we heard from
30 the folks on red grouper was that it seems like there may be
31 more juveniles out there than there have been, but there is not
32 a whole ton of keeper-sized red grouper out there. We gave that
33 information to the stock assessment scientists, and they were
34 very complimentary. They seemed very excited about getting this
35 information.

36
37 Moving on to yellowtail, we are just starting the yellowtail
38 snapper stock assessment. We deployed this tool, and we
39 actually asked for FWC to help us with their network, and they
40 shared it across all of their social media, and we got an
41 incredible response, and so I do just want to take a moment to
42 thank FWC for sharing that tool.

43
44 We, so far, have 360 responses. We haven't done any analysis
45 yet, because the tool is still open, but that, to me, is just a
46 really fabulous display of the fact that our anglers want to be
47 able to submit their perspective and their understanding of
48 what's happening with our stocks, and so, because we've had such

1 a great response to this tool, it just -- To me, it really is
2 encouraging that this is at least -- If it's not the right thing
3 to do, it's the right path to go on, and so I just wanted to
4 sort of show you an update of that and let you know that, unless
5 you guys think otherwise, we're just going to continue doing
6 this for each stock assessment.

7
8 Carrie just reminded me that, as sort of a secondary benefit
9 from deploying these tools, anglers have gotten ahold of these
10 and shown more interest in actually coming to the stock
11 assessment workshops and participating in that process, and so I
12 think we got two from the yellowtail -- That saw this yellowtail
13 tool and contacted us and asked to be observers in that
14 assessment, and so that's kind of a neat thing. It seems like
15 people are really excited to get involved in the science, now
16 that they feel like they have an opportunity to do that.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Leann.

19
20 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Thank you. I just wanted to say that,
21 Emily, I was reading through the comments for the spreadsheet
22 that's in our briefing book for the angler feedback, commercial
23 and private angler and for-hire, on red grouper, and we got some
24 really amazing comments in there.

25
26 I mean, very specific, and I have been fishing since 1979, and
27 this is what I saw then, and this is what I see now, and giving
28 depth-specific information, talking about ecosystem-type issues
29 that they're seeing, some trends they're seeing with sharks and
30 how they think that might be interplaying, things they see with
31 red snapper and how they think that may be having an effect.

32
33 I really hope that the scientists will find this useful. I
34 found it useful, just from a management perspective, to read
35 through the comments, and I'm glad that we're able to get that
36 many different perspectives and inputs from that many different
37 stakeholders to go to the stock assessment scientists in
38 addition to the two, three, six, however many stakeholders are
39 actually at the assessment meetings, and I think it's great, and
40 thanks for your hard work on it.

41
42 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Well, and you just reminded me, Leann, that we
43 did present the red grouper results to the SSC, because they had
44 heard about this tool, and they were also excited about it, and
45 I guess that sort of begs the question of, when you guys hear
46 the results of the stock assessments, would that be an
47 appropriate time -- Would you like to see the results of each
48 one of these tools as you see those stock assessments, or does

1 anybody have any suggestions on how you would like to handle
2 that, if you would like to see it at the council level rather
3 than just at the scientific level?

4

5 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Leann.

6

7 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, I don't know if you necessarily have to go
8 through them at the council level, but if that could definitely
9 be a background piece of information in our briefing book when
10 we get ready to either look at a major management decision for
11 that particular species or to review the assessment. I would
12 love to just have it in the briefing book to go through at my
13 leisure and read. It really made me think about some things.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Kevin.

16

17 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm not on your
18 committee, but, Emily, when you go and present this to the stock
19 assessment folks, I mean, it's with the understanding that
20 you're telling them that, hey, if you see something on here --
21 The questions could be formatted differently, to get down
22 deeper, drill down, and are you getting some of that, or do they
23 at least know that's available, so that they can kind of
24 recognize and become more familiar and they might see some
25 potential in trying to expand this?

26

27 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Yes, and so that's a great question. Before
28 deploying the tool, I contact the lead scientist on the
29 assessment, and it sort of came out of the blue for the folks on
30 the first one at the Science Center, and so I had to kind of
31 explain to them what the purpose was, and they seemed very
32 receptive to it, especially after they saw the results of this
33 first one, and so I suspect, as we get farther down the road
34 with this, it will become more familiar to the assessment
35 process.

36

37 Regarding their ability to sort of craft the questions, we still
38 live under the Paperwork Reduction Act requirements, and so we
39 can only do so much to ask directed questions without sort of
40 getting into that scary zone of having a survey, and so what I
41 have to do is craft it so that it's still public comment, which
42 is why you'll see that it's a very open-answer-type of response.

43

44 I still do ask the analysts, before deploying the tool, if there
45 is something specific that they would like us to look at, and
46 then there is a question that says can we contact you for more
47 information, and so we sort of reserve the right that, if an
48 analyst sees something interesting, they can actually go back

1 and have a one-on-one conversation.

2
3 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** I just want to say that I like everything this
4 committee is working on. A lot of times, we deal with us being
5 reactive, and this committee is proactive with everything that
6 we're doing, and so we're talking to people about stewardship,
7 and we're encouraging that.

8
9 We're having workshops to try and figure out the best way to do
10 some research, and we're trying to look for measurable -- Ways
11 we can measure our results and make sure we're being effective,
12 and we're trying to get information from people that's actually
13 out on the water, and I just think everything this committee is
14 doing is wonderful, and I want to comment Ms. Muehlstein and Mr.
15 Dyskow and all the people that's been involved with it, because
16 I think it's going in the right direction, and please keep doing
17 what you're doing. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Leann.

20
21 **MS. BOSARGE:** I was wondering. Emily, you said that it was
22 presented -- The results of the red grouper one were presented
23 to the SSC, and I know things on the red grouper assessment --
24 Wasn't their last workshop supposed to be towards the end of the
25 year? I'm wondering, with the shutdown and everything, have
26 they seen this yet, and will they see this before they finalize
27 that assessment?

28
29 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Yes, and so the SSC did see the red grouper
30 tool. It was sort of added under Other Business, I think, at
31 the last SSC meeting. They had sort of caught wind that this
32 was something that we were doing, and they had an update on how
33 that red grouper assessment was going, and so we added this in
34 and sort of explained to them what we were doing and the results
35 that we got, and so they have seen it.

36
37 The stock assessment panel has seen it. The data workshop of
38 the stock assessment is sort of the first big workshop that they
39 host, and it's the first part of that process, and so that's
40 when the analysts come, and they also have fishermen observers
41 that come to that, and, basically, from a non-scientist's
42 perspective, what I saw them doing was that's when all of the
43 scientists get together and sort of look at all of the potential
44 inputs into the assessment, and so all of the potential datasets
45 and things that can be included, and they sort of sit around and
46 say here's what we have and what can we do with it, and so that
47 was an opportunity for us to bring what we had, which was the
48 results of this tool.

1
2 I don't think -- I do want to be clear that I don't think that
3 this is going to be added into the assessment as like an
4 indices, right, and so it's not like mathematically put into an
5 equation. However, it did help groundtruth what they were
6 seeing from some of the other datasets they were getting.

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

9
10 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** I think the conversation has been excellent,
11 and I think you've done a good job, Mr. Dyskow, and I think
12 you've done a good job with what's going on with the committee
13 right now. I just what the council to realize that a lot of
14 these people that are working with this group are Sea Grant
15 people, which is very important, the fact that these people do
16 have the funds to put this kind of stuff out there in the public
17 as best they can, and they're doing a good job, and, with the
18 help of the council work that's been done, I think it's just
19 going to progress, and I'm happy to see this going the way it
20 is. Thank you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** That's a good point, Ed, because there is
23 money out there to do this, and there are people that are doing
24 this, and frankly have been producing these materials, but they
25 haven't been working collectively under a common agenda, and
26 that's what Emily has been able to craft, because she has got
27 these people laser-focused on what they are trying to
28 accomplish, and they may go in a million different directions,
29 but they are doing that with a common focus, and so I'm also
30 very impressed with what they are doing, and I would like to
31 compliment the Outreach Technical Committee and Emily for what
32 they are doing. This is a great group of people that are very
33 passionate, and they are very serious about reducing release
34 mortality, and so it's very energizing to work with this group.
35 Greg.

36
37 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just had a question, if
38 we could just step back a little bit, Emily, because we went
39 through it before I could ask the question. We were supposed to
40 get that presentation regarding RESTORE, and we couldn't,
41 obviously, but between now and the next meeting is a long time.
42 Is there anything you can share, any progress that's been made?

43
44 The reason I'm asking that, before you answer, is because,
45 obviously, if you all recall, my preference was to have a little
46 more stringent regulations, but we delayed, waiting for this
47 group, and I don't want -- I want to hold their feet to the
48 fire, in other words, so we can implement these kinds of things.

1
2 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Good question. From what we understand, and we
3 have gone back and forth with them quite a bit, which is why, in
4 large part, that workshop agenda looks like it does, because,
5 like I mentioned, we want to make sure that we align the goals
6 of our workshop with deliverables that can help inform the
7 RESTORE Act folks, so that we can make recommendations about the
8 different type of research and data gaps that need to be filled
9 in order to go from management recommendation to use these tools
10 to changing the stock assessment.

11
12 The folks at RESTORE are really enthusiastic about this
13 workshop, and they did sit and sort of help us figure out what
14 we need to give them, in order to make sure that, when they set
15 their priorities for funding, those priorities will be aligned
16 with what our group determines needs to be done in the Gulf.

17
18 The best I know is they told me that like the end date for them
19 to get their recommendations is November of 2019. That's like
20 the last opportunity that we have to give them our feedback from
21 what we get from this meeting, and so that's why that's written
22 as a deadline.

23
24 Now, as far as where that is in their timeline of determining
25 who gets funding and where it goes and how it happens,
26 truthfully, I have a hard time putting my finger on it and
27 really understanding it.

28
29 **DR. STUNZ:** One more follow-up question, and this is the last
30 one. Well, that's good, Emily, that you're just keeping on
31 track about it, and they seem to be engaged and that sort of
32 thing, but my question has to do with the agenda that you had
33 put forward, and, obviously, that's something I've been asking
34 for for a long time, about those discard numbers.

35
36 Certainly, for this program to be successful, in terms of
37 venting or descending or whichever way all that ends up going,
38 it's that the anglers feel like they're doing something that is
39 going to make a difference. For them to gauge that, we need to
40 have some handle on what that discard rate looks like,
41 obviously, and that has been a very difficult number. If
42 everyone recalls, we got something that was pretty good, but it
43 wasn't anywhere near where I think we needed to be.

44
45 My question to you, Emily, is you're on that, or do we need to
46 give you some help with a motion or anything to continue that,
47 or there's discussions back and forth, or -- I mean, we don't
48 have to, but I just want to make sure that we're not back here

1 in another three or four months still wondering if we're going
2 to get that kind of information that we'll need.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** To that point, I don't think we can make a
5 motion at this meeting, because of the Federal Register issue,
6 but we can certainly give guidance and direction, if you think
7 that's necessary.

8
9 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I don't think so. I think our leadership in
10 our staff has contacted the leadership at the Science Center,
11 and I do believe that those wheels are in motion, and the
12 intention is there, but it's just that it's been delayed, and so
13 I appreciate the offer, but I think we will be able to get what
14 we're looking for.

15
16 **OTHER BUSINESS**

17
18 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Are there other questions on these issues
19 before we go on to new business? The first piece of new
20 business is when our committee meets the next time, and we've
21 talked about meeting in Tampa in the spring/summer, but I don't
22 think we've picked a finite date yet, have we, Emily? It will
23 be at an easy-to-reach location in a nicer time of year than
24 this.

25
26 Is there any other new business that you would like to put
27 before the committee? If there isn't any other new business,
28 that completes our presentation, and I will adjourn the meeting.

29
30 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on January 28, 2019.)

31
32 - - -
33