

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

OUTREACH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Marriott Plaza

San Antonio, Texas

August 7, 2017

VOTING MEMBERS

- 10 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
- 11 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
- 12 Pamela Dana.....Florida
- 13 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 14 LCDR Stacy McNeer.....USCG
- 15 Greg Stunz.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- 18 Kevin Anson (designee for Chris Blankenship).....Alabama
- 19 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- 20 Doug Boyd.....Texas
- 21 Glenn Constant.....USFWS
- 22 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
- 23 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 24 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 25 John Greene.....Alabama
- 26 Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
- 27 Campo Matens.....Louisiana
- 28 Paul Mickle (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
- 29 Robin Riechers.....Texas
- 30 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 31 David Walker.....Alabama

STAFF

- 34 Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
- 35 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 36 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 37 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist-Statistician
- 38 Douglas Gregory.....Executive Director
- 39 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 40 Karen Hoak.....Administrative & Financial Assistant
- 41 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 42 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 43 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 44 Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- 47 Pam Anderson.....Panama City Beach, FL
- 48 Charlie Bergman.....NOAA

1 Chris Bianchette.....USCG
2 Eric Brazer.....Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance
3 Chester Brewer.....SAFMC
4 Bubba Cochrane.....Galveston, TX
5 Connor Cochrane.....Galveston, TX
6 Susan Gerhart.....NMFS
7 Shepherd Grimes.....NOAA GC
8 Dylan Hubbard.....Madeira Beach, FL
9 Mark Hubbard.....Madeira Beach, FL
10 Alison Johnson.....Oceana
11 Jason Klosterman.....Destin, FL
12 Shelly Krueger.....Technical Committee Chair
13 Jack McGovern.....NOAA Fisheries
14 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC
15 Andrew Ropicki.....Texas Sea Grant
16 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS
17 Kevin Wheeler.....
18 Jim Zurbrick.....Steinhatchee, FL

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1 The Outreach & Education Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the Marriott Plaza, San Antonio,
3 Texas, Monday morning, August 7, 2017, and was called to order
4 by Chairman Ed Swindell.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN ED SWINDELL:** All the members are here and present, and
11 so we'll move a little fast, because we're ten minutes short on
12 our time. The agenda should be in front of you, and so I will
13 ask for approval of the agenda as it's written. If there is any
14 other business, I would like to know. Yes, Madam Chair.

15
16 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I would like to add just one thing to Other
17 Business, sir, if we have time.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** So there is one other item. Any objection?
20 There being no objection, the motion carries to approve the
21 agenda with one other added under Other Business. Approval of
22 the minutes of the last meeting, do I have a motion to approve
23 the minutes of the last meeting? Dr. Stunz.

24
25 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** So moved.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Do I have a second for approval of the
28 minutes? Dr. Frazer. Any objection to the approval? There
29 being none, the motion carries. Thank you, people. Action
30 Guide and Next Steps, I will turn this over to Emily. Emily has
31 been a good source of information here for the meeting that I
32 attended for the technical committee, and so, Emily, it's all
33 yours.

34
35 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Thank you. This should be a pretty
36 easygoing committee meeting today, hopefully. There's just a
37 couple of things that we're going to do. First, we're going to
38 review our communications analytics, which is the same
39 presentation that we gave to our technical committee last week.

40
41 As you might remember, we restructured our technical committee
42 last year, so that it included members of the different state
43 agencies, some Sea Grant agents, plus an ENGO member and a media
44 representative. Last week, we met to gather information on
45 outreach efforts across the Gulf that target proper fish
46 measurement, barotrauma, lionfish, and angler-reported data
47 collection. In addition to that, we did some other things.

1 For you guys today, your next step as a committee is to -- You
2 will first hear my presentation on our outreach analytics, and
3 then we'll move into the committee report, and then there are
4 two motions that were offered by the committee that we would
5 like you guys to consider.

6

7 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Any discussion? Please proceed.

8

9

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS ANALYTICS

10

11 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Moving to the next agenda item, it looks
12 like it is time for me to give you a quick overview of our
13 communications analytics, and so I will just wait for that
14 PowerPoint to come up, and I will sort of buzz through this.

15

16 Like I mentioned, we gave this presentation to the Outreach and
17 Education Technical Committee and thought it might be something
18 that we should share with you guys today, and so, very quickly,
19 what I'm going to do here is go through the major forms of
20 communications that we use in our communications department, and
21 there are going to be two separate pieces to each slide that you
22 will see.

23

24 The first one, on top, you will notice a graph that actually
25 shows our quarterly reports beginning in January of 2016 and
26 then working all the way through the second quarter of 2017, and
27 so there should be six points here that you will be looking at,
28 and then there's always a table that is going to show you some
29 numbers of some of the most pertinent analytics for that
30 particular issue.

31

32 Starting with our website, we will look at the top here, and you
33 can see our graph that starts at 2016 and shows each quarter
34 since then. We have had two pretty interesting spikes, and,
35 believe it or not, those are associated with the red snapper
36 season announcement and also the second spike, which is a little
37 bit bigger than the 2016 spike, was also associated with our
38 changeover in our new website, and so I just wanted to give you
39 a quick overview of that.

40

41 Then, looking at two of the metrics that we use to track our
42 website, the first is the number of sessions and the second is
43 the number of page views, and so a session is actually somebody
44 visiting the website, and that can include all of the things,
45 all of the pages, that they look at. That's just them going to
46 the website one time.

47

48 Then the number of page views is actually the number of

1 different views of our individual pages within that website that
2 we've seen, and you will see that, on all of these tables
3 throughout this presentation, we will show 2014, 2015, 2016, and
4 then our year-to-date. It looks like we're pretty well on track
5 with our website views, as we have been in the last couple of
6 years. If not, a little bit ahead of the game for our year-to-
7 date in 2017.

8
9 Just a couple of extra things that we threw in for our website
10 analytics, since we did just redo the site, is, in 2017, we've
11 had 200,000 views so far. This is a listing of the top ten sort
12 of most-visited pages, and so our homepage, obviously, is
13 usually found through Google searches and things like that.
14 Then our fishing regulations come into a close second here.

15
16 Also, some of the standouts were the red snapper season
17 extension press release that was put out by the Department of
18 Commerce and that we shared. That was a big one this year and
19 then our council meeting materials are always pretty popular as
20 well.

21
22 Then, on this pie chart, you will notice we have something
23 called a new visitor versus a returning user, and so we have a
24 pretty interesting breakdown. We have a lot of returning
25 visitors, and I think that can probably be attributed to the
26 fact that we have a very large internal audience of council
27 members and AP members and people that regularly access our
28 stuff, but then we also have a pretty good chunk of brand-new
29 visitors that have never been to the site as well.

30
31 Moving on to our Facebook analytics, this one, we'll start at
32 the top, with this table. There are three metrics that we
33 follow. The first is followers, and that's people that actually
34 have committed to wanting to get all of our updates on what is
35 called their newsfeed, and so, basically, if you -- If you
36 aren't familiar with Facebook, you have kind of a newsfeed that
37 you open up your account and you can see all these posts from
38 the people that you're friends with and the organizations that
39 you follow.

40
41 You can see year-for-year here, and, actually, year-to-date, we
42 have pretty much doubled our followers over the other years in
43 the past. The next thing that we have is engagements, and so
44 that is somebody that is engaging. If somebody is liking
45 something that we've posted or somebody that is commenting on
46 something that we've posted, that's people that are actually
47 directly interacting with our page, and you can see that we have
48 a 300 percent increase, year-to-date, over our previous years of

1 tracking these analytics.

2
3 Finally, impressions, and, in the Facebook world, what that
4 means is that you have seen our post on your newsfeed, and the
5 ways that that can happen is that you can either be our
6 follower, which is you can see -- We don't have as many
7 followers nearly as we have impressions, or something that you
8 can do in Facebook is, if you think something is interesting,
9 you can share it to your own wall, and so all of your friends in
10 your network would then see it as well, and so impressions just
11 means that it has come up on these people's pages. This year,
12 so far, in 2017, we have hit two-million impressions, which is a
13 444 percent increase over the previous year, and so that's
14 pretty significant. We've had a pretty large uptick in our
15 Facebook usage.

16
17 You will also notice, at the bottom, we have two separate graphs
18 here that track 2016 throughout its quarters as well as the
19 first two quarters of 2017. With our engagements and with our
20 impressions, you will notice that there is a small spike in the
21 April/June quarter, or the second quarter of 2016, and then a
22 really large spike in the 2017 engagements and also impressions,
23 and those, again, those upticks, can both be attributed,
24 potentially, to the red snapper season announcements and the
25 controversy around those.

26
27 Moving on to our email listserv, this is our constant contact,
28 and this is where people sign up to actually get our press
29 release notifications. We have a lot of members of the media,
30 as well as some members of the public, that sign up for this on
31 their own.

32
33 Again, if you look at the graphic, you can see a spike in -- You
34 can see one in July and September of last year and then another
35 one in April and June, and so that first box, where you see that
36 spike from July and September, was actually -- The only thing
37 that I could find here that was our most popular was the final
38 vote on the extension of sector separation, and so that
39 obviously garnered a lot of interest from the folks that get our
40 media alerts and stuff like that. Then the second box, again,
41 is the red snapper season announcement from this year.

42
43 Looking at the table, there is three metrics that we're using.
44 First is our subscribers on an annual basis. Next is the number
45 of publications we produce, and then third is the opening rate,
46 and so the amount of these emails that are actually being opened
47 by the user once they read the tagline, and you are notice they
48 are pretty much all on par for what they have been in the past.

1 It's pretty standard as time goes by for this one.
2
3 Next, we will move in to YouTube, and, if you look at the
4 quarterly reports from the last year and for the first two
5 quarters of this year, you will notice there is a pretty
6 significant spike in the April through June quarter of 2017, and
7 so this one actually -- We didn't have anything red-snapper-
8 based on our YouTube page at this time, and so this spike is
9 actually due to views for our videos explaining amberjack and
10 also the potential changes for vermilion, when we were doing a
11 public hearing for that.

12
13 Potentially, the explanation for this is that, this spring, we
14 had a lot of recreational closures, and what that did is sort of
15 sparked people to pay more attention not just to red snapper,
16 but to some of the other species that the council was making
17 considerations for.

18
19 **MS. BOSARGE:** I just wanted to say here that I think those
20 videos are very, very helpful to the public, where you summarize
21 the amendment in a video form. In fact, they were elevated all
22 the way to D.C. during the new council member orientation that I
23 went to several years ago. It was brought up there by the
24 gentleman that was giving the presentation, that the Gulf
25 Council has these on their website and we really like them and
26 they seem to be very helpful for the public, and so I just
27 wanted to give everybody on staff a kudos for that.

28
29 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Thanks for that feedback.

30
31 **DR. STUNZ:** Just to echo that exact concern, I think they're
32 very positive too, Emily. I have directed a lot of people to
33 those that have questions, and they have given me feedback, and
34 so I think that's a real good, positive, informative thing that
35 we can do that provides useful information.

36
37 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Thank you, guys.

38
39 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** Just to point out how some of this stuff --
40 There is an animated video on YouTube now, an interview with Dr.
41 Crabtree about the red snapper, and it is now over 40,000 views.

42
43 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Did you guys produce that in-house?

44
45 **DR. CRABTREE:** No, but nonetheless.

46
47 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Well, thank you, guys, for that
48 feedback. As you can see, looking at the table below, tracking

1 sort of our annual analytics for those things, the three metrics
2 we use are total views, video views, and the videos that we
3 produce.

4
5 One thing that you will notice is that -- We'll start on the
6 bottom on this one, and so, this year so far, we have created
7 nine videos. When we're looking at the video views metric right
8 above, that correlates to the videos that were produced within
9 that year, and so, this year, for instance, so far, we have
10 created nine videos, and they have had over 1,200 views, and so
11 they're not the most popular of our vehicles. However, I think
12 the people that do watch them find them useful, and so maybe
13 that's something that I need to take back and think about
14 promoting even more than we already do.

15
16 Then you will look at total views, which doesn't seem to
17 correlate with anything else, and so, just to clarify, what that
18 means is total views of all of our videos, and so, in other
19 words, even if we produced nine videos this year, all of the
20 previous videos that have ever been produced are still on our
21 YouTube channel.

22
23 What typically happens is somebody might surf around and find
24 the video they're looking for and then stay on our YouTube
25 channel and look at some of the older videos as well, and so,
26 this year, we're on par, if not a little bit above, what we have
27 been in past years on our YouTube views.

28
29 Moving to our blog, and this is a place where we sort of post
30 articles that answer questions that we're hearing a lot from the
31 public. That way, when we hear those questions more and more
32 times over, we can direct people to the blog article that
33 answers that question directly, or we do a pre-council sort of
34 preparatory article that lets people know what the council is
35 about to address.

36
37 Looking at our quarters since 2016, you will see there is a big
38 spike in April and June of 2016, and so this is all attributed
39 to an article that we wrote entitled, *How was the Red Snapper*
40 *Season Calculated*. That specific article had 6,000 reads to it,
41 which is a lot, and then, when you look down at our table
42 following each year's analytics, the three metrics we're using
43 is page views, post views, and posts.

44
45 Again, much like with our YouTube, we will start at the bottom.
46 The number of posts that you see is the number of posts that we
47 have published within the year, and the post views category is
48 directly correlated with those posts that we've done in that

1 year, and so, this year, we've had three so far, with 3,000
2 views, and then, if you look above that, the page views is not
3 post-specific, and so that's the views that we've had so far
4 this year on all of the posts that have ever been put up, and so
5 they're not necessarily specific to the issues that we're
6 addressing this year.

7
8 Moving on to our newsletter, one thing that you will notice on
9 the graph is that there are two major dips, and those represent
10 months that we did not have newsletters, and so that's why we're
11 seeing that anomaly there. Otherwise, you will notice that
12 things are remaining slightly steady, if not sort of trending
13 upwards pretty slowly.

14
15 Then, down at the table below, showing our annual metrics, it's
16 the same as the metrics that I just presented to you, with our
17 publications per year and our click through, meaning this is
18 when we have a link in an article or a newsletter. This is
19 people that are clicking through and actually going to whatever
20 the secondary site is. Then our readers for that year, and
21 those are not publication-specific. Those are just readers in
22 general.

23
24 I think, finally, last but not least, we move on to our
25 regulations app, and the metric that we're following here is our
26 downloads throughout the years. We're down a little bit this
27 year, if not sort of holding steady. No, I guess we're pretty
28 much down. We started dipping in 2016, and then, so far, year-
29 to-date, we might be on track with last year, but certainly not
30 what we were when we first published the app.

31
32 Then you will notice that there is sort of a trend in the
33 spring. People tend to download it more. They're getting ready
34 for their fishing season. Then, in the fall, in that last
35 quarter of the year, people lose interest in downloading our
36 app. That concludes the analytics portion of our agenda.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Any questions or comments for Emily?

39
40 **DR. STUNZ:** I've got a quick question for you. This is good.
41 You're reaching out to all of these avenues to capture everyone,
42 Emily, and so is there a lot that is consistent between all of
43 this information? For example, the blog, is that similar to
44 what's going on the webpage or wherever? I guess I'm trying to
45 see how much time do you have, for example, when you're
46 maintaining all these different avenues, and so is there ways to
47 consolidate that?

48

1 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** That's a great question. We do sometimes have
2 crossover. It depends on the platform, right? In other words,
3 I can't share something on YouTube that's in the newsletter.
4 However, like we'll post an article on our blog that we'll then
5 feature in our newsletter, and so do have crossover, as much as
6 we can, and, like Facebook, we don't have any original content
7 at all. That's just directing people to the content that we've
8 created in other places, and so we've tried to make it as
9 efficient as possible, and we do use snippets of things, as much
10 as we can, but sometimes the platform just won't allow for it.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Any other questions? Kevin.

13
14 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Emily, thanks for the presentation and the
15 update. I know you've been doing the videos for the last
16 several years now, and so this may be a question you can't
17 answer or may be difficult to answer, but do you get a sense --
18 I mean, obviously, people are consuming them. They're taking it
19 in and such, but do you get a sense that the questions that are
20 asked prior to YouTube videos, are they much different or are
21 they more complex now, now that you have provided kind of a
22 summary of the topic?

23
24 Is it evolving or are you getting to the full audience, or are
25 you still getting people that are asking the same questions as
26 before? I mean, do you get a sense as to how that's working
27 out?

28
29 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** So that's a great question, and it actually
30 sort of begs a larger conversation, but, in the context of
31 YouTube, I think the point is to get people to make informed
32 comments, and so, usually, we're doing those videos during
33 public hearings, so that we can explain things.

34
35 I guess the short answer is I do think that it bolsters people's
36 individual understanding of the individual items. However,
37 what's really sort of neat, and also frustrating, about
38 communications in an agency like this is there is almost an
39 endless amount of people that will continue to ask you the same
40 basic questions, and so I think what they do is they take the
41 elevated users and really sort of flesh out their understanding,
42 and then they introduce the new users, but the thing is that,
43 next week, there will be a new user again, and so it's hard for
44 me to tease the answer out properly.

45
46 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Any others? Then we'll move along.

1
2 **REPORT OF O&E TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING**
3

4 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. So I guess we can move to our next
5 agenda item, which is the Report of O&E Technical Committee
6 Meeting, and I just want to take this moment to introduce Shelly
7 Krueger. She's in the back, and she is the Chairman of our
8 Outreach and Education Technical Committee, and she is here to
9 help me field any questions, if they come up while or during or
10 after I give this report.

11
12 We hosted our meeting on August 1, and so that was last Tuesday,
13 and I have to apologize that we didn't get this committee report
14 to you until I think Friday, but I promise that we were working
15 on it.

16
17 We had our technical committee convene in our office, and, like
18 I said at the beginning of the meeting, the point of that was to
19 sort of gauge an overall -- To get an overall understanding of
20 what the different agencies around the Gulf coast were doing in
21 some areas of outreach and education, and so I will just go
22 through this report really quickly, and please feel free to stop
23 me with questions.

24
25 The first part of the meeting, we wanted to discuss the use of
26 proxy attendees in the place on the named technical committee
27 members, and so, since we've switched over to a technical
28 committee, what we have is a number of different agency
29 personnel and sort of official personnel that we want to sit in
30 those chairs, but sometimes, if an agency person can't come,
31 then they will want to send a proxy in their place, and so we
32 didn't really have a technical protocol for that, and so we had
33 a discussion on what the committee sort of thought about using
34 proxies, since we had more of a position in mind rather than an
35 actual person.

36
37 After the committee discussed this, they reasoned that empty
38 seats don't really accomplish the goals of the technical
39 committee and that agency personnel, specifically, should be
40 allowed to send proxy attendees, and so, with that, they made a
41 motion that passed with unanimous support that the technical
42 committee recommends allowing the use of proxy attendees subject
43 to approval of council staff.

44
45 The idea here, the reason that it wasn't everybody and that it
46 was subject to council staff approval, is because we do have
47 media members and ENGO members who may not have a proper proxy.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** So, committee members, we have a discussion
2 here on whether or not we want to allow for proxies to attend
3 the meeting on behalf of certain members of the technical
4 committee. Do I have a motion of any sort or discussion? Doug.

5
6 **MR. DOUG BOYD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not on your
7 committee, but just a question, I guess, for Mr. Gregory. Is
8 the Outreach and Education Technical Committee considered to be
9 an AP?

10
11 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUGLAS GREGORY:** Not precisely, because most
12 of the members are agency representatives, similar to the Law
13 Enforcement Technical Committee. Not the same, but similar.
14 Two years ago, we selected to have them be a technical
15 committee, which means the Executive Director and the Chair
16 appoint those people.

17
18 Now, they're communications people from each of the states,
19 there are representatives from each of the four Sea Grant
20 Programs in the Gulf of Mexico, and then there is three other
21 people, and the three other people on the committee thought it
22 was appropriate for the state and Sea Grant people to have
23 designees, but not for them to have the designees, and it's
24 something that had been allowed in the past with certain states,
25 when they requested it, but it wasn't a formal thing, and I
26 wanted to bring it to the council and formalize whether or not
27 we can allow designees to participate if they're representing an
28 agency.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Dr. Stunz.

31
32 **DR. STUNZ:** I would really defer to Emily, I guess, on a lot of
33 this. I don't necessarily see a problem with that. I sort of
34 think we want the best expertise we can get in the room, and, if
35 they want to send designee that might understand some component
36 better than others, plus if it builds participation and that
37 sort of thing, I will be happy to make a motion, if there's not
38 other opposition around the table.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Seeing none, why don't you make a motion?

41
42 **DR. STUNZ:** Okay. Feel free to help me here, committee. **I move**
43 **that the technical committee allow the use of proxy attendees,**
44 **subject to the approval by council staff.**

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Do I have a second to the motion? Dr.
47 Frazer. Thank you. Any opposition to the motion? I have one
48 thing to say. This is not a -- I don't know that these were

1 appointed to this committee by name or by position from the
2 state and Sea Grant.

3
4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** The state communications people are
5 on the committee by the fact of their position, their title.
6 The Sea Grant people are there, and some applied when this was
7 an AP and were appointed by the council, but, since then, we
8 have contacted the directors of each state, asking them to
9 nominate somebody for us to consider, and so we've really been
10 going to the organization itself to find out who best represents
11 the organization, because we want somebody who will take the
12 information back and spread it, particularly with Sea Grant,
13 among the other Sea Grant agents and expand our network, and so
14 it's like using leverage to expand our outreach.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Thank you, because it seems to me like
17 perhaps, somewhere along the line -- I think I'm okay with this
18 motion, but I do think, somewhere along the line, we probably
19 need to look at it and make certain how these people are
20 appointed, that we ask the states to appoint somebody and that
21 we ask the Sea Grant people from certain areas to be appointed,
22 rather than a person by name, so that it's much easier to
23 manipulate.

24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** That's basically what we're doing
26 now.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Thank you. **Any opposition to the motion?**
29 **The motion passes.** Let's move on, Emily.

30
31 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Thank you. The next thing that we did at our
32 technical committee was review the communications analytics that
33 I just went through for you guys, and, as you can imagine, there
34 was very robust communication about this topic, because we are
35 all communications professionals, but, in sort of going through
36 the minutes and listening, we came up with four pretty distinct
37 conclusions that I will share with you.

38
39 The first one is that it is normal and should be expected that
40 there will be negative feedback on our Facebook page. I know
41 that's a topic that we have discussed at the council level, and
42 the committee sort of reasoned that the number of constituents
43 that are reached through this medium make it worthwhile.

44
45 The next point was that newsletter analytics should be tracked
46 better, so that, next year, the committee would like to look at
47 our readership and our click-through per edition and look at our
48 constant contact reads and the website analytics to determine

1 whether or not a newsletter remains a useful medium for our
2 communications.

3
4 Next, the committee would like to take a look at the potential
5 for streamlining our current regulations app. In noticing sort
6 of that dip in downloads in recent years, they recommended that
7 staff should gather more in-depth analytics for the next
8 meeting, and they may also consider making a concerted effort to
9 promote the use of the app in its current form before the next
10 technical committee meeting.

11
12 Finally, we discussed a platform that we're not using, which is
13 Instagram. It is the most rapidly-growing social network,
14 especially among young adults. However, it was reasoned that it
15 may not be appropriate for council use, and that's mainly
16 because it's a photograph-based platform, and it does not
17 encourage text or dialogue, and, since we only own a couple of
18 our photographs and mostly farm them out to our generous
19 constituents who let us share those, it gets a little bit tricky
20 if we're going to be using a photograph platform that doesn't
21 necessarily garner the exchange of news or ideas.

22
23 Moving on, the committee then went to talk about the summarized
24 efforts of the different agencies at the table as it relates to
25 a couple of different outreach topics that we have been
26 considering in our office, and so we'll start with fish
27 measurement and outreach, and this really started with our
28 conversation about triggerfish and how to make sure that anglers
29 are aware of the most appropriate way to measure triggerfish,
30 because they kind of have a tricky tail.

31
32 What I'm going to do is, rather than read these verbatim, is
33 just kind of summarize what we got about what's going on around
34 the Gulf for each one of these efforts.

35
36 With fish measurement outreach, it sounds like a lot of the
37 field staff for the different state agencies are trained, so
38 that, when they do dockside intercepts, or even law enforcement,
39 when they're checking folks, that they will actually show
40 anglers the proper way to measure fish, if they're realizing
41 that this might be one of the issues that they're having.

42
43 Most of the states have information on their websites, and they
44 mostly all produce brochures. They actually -- A couple of the
45 states hand out measuring tapes at all of their in-person events
46 that they attend and do fish-measuring exercises. The FWC
47 actually has a triggerfish-specific measurement graphic that
48 they have put up on brochures and also on their website.

1
2 One thing that we did discover is that the State of Texas
3 measures triggerfish in total length, whereas the federal
4 government, as well as all of the other states, use the fork
5 length metric for triggerfish measurement, and it was questioned
6 as to whether or not this might affect a compliance issue that
7 we're having in Texas, and so we wondered if there was a
8 potential need for a targeted outreach effort in Texas
9 specifically for that reason.

10
11 Moving on to barotrauma and the use of venting and/or descending
12 devices, and just, again, to summarize the Gulf-wide efforts,
13 there is a lot of different agencies that are distributing
14 descending devices for their anglers to try. There are a lot of
15 different agencies that are actually taking anglers on trips to
16 try and show them the use of these devices and get them more
17 aware of how to properly vent or descend fish.

18
19 There have been numerous videos and brochures produced by
20 different agencies across the coast. Florida has a citizen
21 science program that they have distributed descending devices to
22 folks that don't have them and then sort of wrapped in some
23 folks that already do have them, and they are trying to
24 understand barriers to using those devices.

25
26 Sea Grant has produced a survey to gather better understanding
27 about the use of barotrauma devices, and Sea Grant has also
28 worked with a group of outdoor writers on a project to take them
29 out and try and facilitate the publishing of different articles
30 all throughout the coast and things on the use of those
31 descending devices.

32
33 Next, we will move on to the lionfish outreach issue. It sounds
34 like mostly in the western Gulf that most of the outreach is
35 focused on awareness campaigns, and I know that, in the eastern
36 Gulf, where lionfish might be more prevalent of an issue thus
37 far, specifically in Florida, they have some dedicated staff
38 that works on the lionfish eradication issue. In the State of
39 Florida, they have incentive programs, where, if you catch a
40 certain number of lionfish and turn in tail clippings, they will
41 actually allow you to harvest an extra fish, and I think it's
42 cobia, and, off the top of my head, I don't remember -- What is
43 it? Sorry. Martha knows.

44
45 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Red grouper. You will hear more about it
46 this afternoon in the presentation.

47
48 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Cool. I don't want to reinvent the wheel by

1 saying all of this stuff, but they also have a Reef Rangers
2 Program, which is kind of like Adopt a Highway, but you do it
3 for a reef, and they're also working with the supply chain, and
4 so what they're trying to do is bolster the commercial market in
5 the State of Florida as well. I think that's it for lionfish.

6
7 Finally, we'll move on to this idea of anecdotal data
8 collection, and so we introduced this idea and sort of the
9 framework, because I know this is something that the council has
10 been discussing a little bit, and they had a very robust
11 conversation about the use of anecdotal data, and they made two
12 recommendations before sort of going over what their agency
13 efforts were.

14
15 The first is they wanted to make clear that it is important to
16 gather data, but that data collection must be done carefully, to
17 reduce bias and ensure that the data is used, and so sort of two
18 important things that they were focused on here.

19
20 They also suggested that the council consider gathering
21 qualitative information on a loosely-formed database rather than
22 sort of reinventing the wheel and getting another trip-per-trip
23 type of program going. The data collected should be summarized
24 and reported out to the Scientific and Statistical Committee,
25 much like public comment summaries are currently done at the
26 council level.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Yes, Madam Chair.

29
30 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks. Yes, I did listen in to this during this
31 AP meeting, and the meeting itself, I just want to back up and
32 say that I found it -- It was great. I had so many ideas, and I
33 find that in general though about our AP meetings, that, to me,
34 I have so many new ideas about ways to solve problems when I
35 listen to an AP meeting versus maybe what may pop into my head
36 around this table, but I think that speaks highly of our APs and
37 how insightful they are, and so I listened to this discussion,
38 and I thought it was a very robust discussion.

39
40 They had a lot of insight as to the pros and cons and being very
41 careful in how you develop a portal such as that and collect
42 that information, and I think that they were probably spot-on
43 when they said, you know, this type of portal, you would really
44 want it for like 30,000-foot-view type information that the
45 fishermen could input and have that go directly to the right
46 scientists, because I think that is part of the issue.

47
48 The system is so diverse, because we do have so many partners,

1 state partners and federal partners and universities. They are
2 all participating in these stock assessments, and you really
3 don't know -- Even around this table sometimes, we might not
4 know who to reach out to and say, hey, this is what I'm seeing
5 and that person's area of expertise, and they would be able to
6 take that and find it useful somehow.

7
8 They also talked about managing expectations, that, you know, if
9 you create a portal such as this for fishermen to put those
10 30,000-foot views in for the scientists, that the fishermen need
11 to be aware, upfront, that, hey, this is a qualitative data
12 stream that we're going to present to those scientists and this
13 is not something where you're going to tell us that your discard
14 rate on red snapper is this and we're going to plug it into the
15 stock assessment and have it change some output of the stock
16 assessment.

17
18 This probably would be more aimed at helping the scientists
19 understand a trend that they may be seeing in the data or even
20 possibly changing something that they do with their fisheries-
21 independent data in the future, maybe there's a range changing
22 for fish that they didn't realize, which I think is actually
23 what they're interested in in New England with some of their
24 groundfish surveys. Using something like this, where you
25 elevate some of that anecdotal data, but I hope that maybe this
26 will be something that the council can pursue.

27
28 I think that one thing that all fishermen seem to be onboard
29 with is that they want better data, and they want to be part of
30 that process, and I think maybe this could be a very small first
31 step. This is not a citizen science effort, where you're going
32 out on a trip-level basis and trying to report that voluntarily.
33 It's not that. It's more of that big-picture view, to help
34 those scientists understand maybe something that they didn't see
35 in the numbers, and so I hope we can pursue that. Thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Pam, do you have a question?

38
39 **DR. PAMELA DANA:** Thank you, Ed. I agree with you 100 percent
40 on the importance of gathering relevant information from the
41 fishermen that are on the water and what they're seeing, just
42 the qualitative kind of -- To provide a qualitative data stream
43 to the scientists that are actually doing the assessments.

44
45 I know that, when the Gulf Council staff came to Destin, and I
46 forget what the fishery we were doing a meeting on was right
47 now, but there were some fishermen that hardly ever weigh-in or
48 show up to these council meetings, but they showed up to this

1 particular workshop, and I think, Carrie, you were there, and it
2 was really insightful, the information that they brought
3 forward, historical insights of what they were seeing that was
4 changing, and I think it was triggerfish and what they were
5 seeing that was kind of an anomaly from the past.

6
7 Carrie and I spoke about it, and she said this is really
8 interesting, and so I tried to put Carrie and that particular
9 older generation of fishermen together, so that she could learn
10 a little bit more.

11
12 All that said, I think that, rather than having it a per-meeting
13 kind of -- Gathering that information per meeting, a portal, a
14 specified portal, that people could go into, the fishermen could
15 go into, and then it would be redirected to the appropriate
16 scientists would be smart.

17
18 **As a member of this committee, I don't know if this would be the**
19 **appropriate time, but I would like to make a motion to direct**
20 **staff to develop a data portal for collecting public anecdotal**
21 **comments regarding council-managed species, if I could get a**
22 **second.**

23
24 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Do I have a second from the committee? Mr.
25 Banks seconds it.

26
27 **DR. DANA:** I guess I would just add "regarding council-managed
28 species". Just as another example of how useful information
29 coming from the fishermen is, FWC just heard, over the course of
30 the spring, what the fishermen were seeing this year and last
31 year regarding cobia.

32
33 Well, maybe they're not showing up in the spring because they
34 are changing migration patterns, or maybe they are just coming -
35 - We are seeing a lot of them right now, and it's the
36 summertime, but FWC listened to that, what the fishermen were
37 seeing, and quickly acted to try to address it.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Dr. Stunz.

40
41 **DR. STUNZ:** Pam, I'm all for your motion, and I'm going to vote
42 for it, but I guess I see also that it could take a lot of time,
43 and so I don't know if maybe the staff could come back to us and
44 talk to us about what a program like that might look like, or,
45 for example, do we go out with specific questions in mind,
46 whether it might be cobia or amberjack, so we -- In other words,
47 if we give a little guidance. Otherwise, it could just be a lot
48 of information coming in, and how would it be used?

1
2 In other words, I am for it, and I think it's a great idea, but,
3 if the staff could come back and give us some guidance on what
4 it might look like or how it would all work, I think that would
5 go a long way to make sure that we're collecting usable data and
6 being efficient with the time, because I could see this being a
7 big time issue.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Leann.

10
11 **MS. BOSARGE:** Leann, and I agree with you, Dr. Stunz, and I'm
12 sure that -- To me, this motion would get staff started on
13 developing something, but, yes, it would definitely need to come
14 back to the council for us to take a look at it and make sure
15 it's headed on the trajectory that we were hoping for it to go
16 and make sure we have all of our safeguards in there, as far as
17 expectations, and consult with the Science Center and see if
18 there's any tweaks they want to make to it that may make it more
19 helpful, and so I think we'll all be involved in this,
20 definitely.

21
22 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Just to chime in, I think that we would really
23 appreciate having some guidance too, just so that we're not
24 thinking one way and you all are looking at something different.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Any other comments? Bonnie.

27
28 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if
29 the motion might be more to the spirit of your intent if you
30 substituted the word "information" for "data". Information
31 could include data, but it's more generic than specifically
32 data. Someone isn't going to hand you a table of data always.
33 It could be that, hey, I'm seeing a change in the average size
34 or I'm seeing a lot of really small of X fish and maybe you
35 should look into the fact of whether was a big recruitment
36 increase or something like that.

37
38 That is the type of information that I could picture coming in,
39 and so it would look different than actual data. My sense is,
40 if you use the word "information", it helps the potential users
41 of this website recognize that it's more than just here are my
42 landings for my recreational season this year.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Any other comments? Pam, do you want to
45 make that change?

46
47 **DR. DANA:** Yes. As the maker of this motion, I may have said
48 "data", but I didn't mean to. I meant to say, "anecdotal

1 comments", which essentially is information, and so, yes, I
2 agree, and thank you for the correction, if I said "data".

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Any other comments? Mr. Anson.

5
6 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you. I'm not on your committee, but we
7 had discussed a little bit about this relative to MREP, and we
8 talked about those that went through the MREP class or program,
9 that they would be certified and they would be another source.

10
11 Now, granted, it might be more at the assessment-level output,
12 post-assessment and not pre-assessment, potentially, to kind of
13 direct questions or something like that, but I just wanted to
14 bring that up. I don't know if that portal can be developed
15 with an eye towards that too, if that's still a desire or if
16 that's being discussed within the MREP program. I know it's
17 kind of people outside of the council, but, if there is
18 discussions that have already been started that try to look at
19 the two groups, potentially, if this were to go forward.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Thank you. Any further discussion on the
22 motion as it is? **Then, seeing none, is there opposition to the**
23 **motion? Seeing none, the motion passes as it is.** Thank you.

24
25 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Sort of just to round out the
26 conversation that we had as a technical committee on anecdotal
27 data collection, when it came to our discussion of what the
28 agencies were doing, it looked like there is basically two types
29 of anecdotal data collection efforts being made throughout the
30 Gulf Coast.

31
32 The first is more specific targeted anecdotal data collection.
33 For example, the State of Texas has the Tarpon Observation
34 Network that looks for tarpon-specific landings information, and
35 FWC uses an angler logbook called iAngler for snook, redfish,
36 and seatrout, and then they also have a horseshoe crab and a
37 red-tide-related citizen science program and hotline.

38
39 Then there was a second kind, which is sort of just more general
40 data collection efforts that are happening. In the State of
41 Florida specifically, they shared that they had a non-formal
42 marine inbox, where people can make observations about what is
43 happening, and there is also a fish kill hotline that sort of
44 ends up being a catchall for sort of anomalous things being
45 reported. Then, moving on, we discussed the idea of creating a
46 best practices website for angling -- Go ahead. Sorry.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Madam Chair, we are considerably over our

1 time. Do you want us to continue with this? We still have to
2 come up here the discussion on that committee about the webinar,
3 and so --

4

5 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** That should be quick.

6

7 **MS. BOSARGE:** Do you think you can get through it in maybe about
8 five minutes?

9

10 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I will be done in a minute. It's up to you
11 guys though.

12

13 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right. We will cut it off at 12:30. That
14 will give us about five minutes. Then, if we need to pick it up
15 at Full Council, we can.

16

17 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay, and so we talked about the utility of
18 having a best practices website for sort of conservation-minded
19 ethical angling practices, and, basically, the committee
20 recommended that we could go ahead and put something like that
21 up on our website, but there is no need to reinvent the wheel,
22 and what we should be doing is linking to some of those other
23 best practices websites that have already been created by our
24 different Gulf agencies.

25

26 Finally, before concluding for the day, the committee talked
27 about whether or not it was appropriate for committee members to
28 participate via webinar, much like the conversation you guys
29 just had, and, with unanimous support, the committee motioned
30 that the Outreach and Education Technical Committee members
31 should be allowed to participate via webinar, if necessary.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** So they passed a motion, and so would the
34 committee like to make a motion to that degree, or do you want
35 to just carry through with the webinar discussion we had
36 previously? Dr. Stunz.

37

38 **DR. STUNZ:** I see this different, in a way, from the discussion
39 we had before about council members. Here, I think we're trying
40 to get a lot of participation, and so I would be in favor of
41 this, but I would ask Emily if this would be -- I mean, I
42 wouldn't want this, I guess, to go to a complete webinar system
43 either, and so there's a fine line, but I think, to encourage
44 their participation, and I know these outreach groups are always
45 out doing all kinds of events and other things, which complicate
46 timing, and so, to maximize the participation, I would be in
47 favor of that, and I will offer a motion and see what, I guess,
48 everyone really wants to do. **I will move that the O&E Technical**

1 Committee members be allowed to participate by webinar, as
2 necessary.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Do I have a second? Seconded by Dr. Frazer.

5
6 **DR. STUNZ:** Emily, was there any indication that -- I mean, this
7 would be sort of relatively rare or is it going to be most of
8 the committee or not or --

9
10 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I think you're right that it would be
11 relatively rare. However, maybe to avoid it as becoming a
12 crutch, you say "with staff discretion" or "staff approval",
13 much like we did with the previous motion, just so that we can
14 help to monitor whether it's a choice or a convenience issue.

15
16 **DR. STUNZ:** I am fine with that. "As approved by council staff"
17 and is that too firm, or is that good? Sorry. **It would say**
18 **"participate via webinar" and then, right after "via webinar",**
19 **just insert "as approved by council staff" and get rid of the**
20 **rest.** Does that make any sense? What I am trying to say is to
21 just get approval to participate via webinar. **"With approval by**
22 **council staff". That would work.**

23
24 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Dr. Frazer, is your second still good?

25
26 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Yes.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** **Any opposition or discussion to the motion?**
29 **Seeing none, the motion passes as presented.** Thank you.

30
31 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** That concludes my report of the technical
32 committee meeting.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Thank you, ma'am. I will carry on with one
35 brief item, and you have something that you wanted to -- Or do
36 you want to carry on later?

37
38 **OTHER BUSINESS**

39
40 **MS. BOSARGE:** Mine can wait. It's not a problem. Go ahead.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN SWINDELL:** Well, mine can too. What I will briefly
43 tell you is that I discussed with the committee, after the
44 meeting, or at the end of the meeting, about outreach and
45 education and making certain that we weren't relying strictly on
46 the electronic data information systems, and we're not.

47
48 Florida does a lot of work in going to fishery shows and et

1 cetera, and I think all the states are participating in all
2 kinds of outreach programs that I was very pleased to hear
3 about. Thank you.

4

5 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 7, 2017.)

6

7

- - -