

**Ecosystem Committee Report
December 1, 2020
Dr. Bob Shipp – Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab Q, No. 1**) as written and approved the minutes (**Tab Q, No. 2**) of the October 2018 meeting as written.

Update on Gulf of Mexico Fishery Ecosystem Plan (Tab Q, No. 4)

Council Staff summarized the recommendations from the Ecosystem Technical Committee to develop a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf). The Committee acknowledges that the science of ecosystem-based management is evolving and the FEP should be designed as a living document that will change as data become available. Council staff will modify the presented goals and objectives and include this information in the Request for Proposals, pending the approval of funds.

Southeast Regional Efforts to Build a Foundation for the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (Tab Q, No. 5)

Dr. Mandy Karnauskas presented an un update on ecosystem-based fisheries management effort that can inform the development of a Gulf FEP. An FEP lays out the socio-economic, biological goals for the region and provides the framework for reaching those goals through management decisions. Dr. Karnauskas presented the results from participatory workshops in parts of Florida. The results from these workshops identified the major concerns of stakeholders and what they value from the ecosystem. For example, water quality was identified as a major concern. Dr. Karnauskas used the effects of red tide on red and gag grouper populations and the studies and management actions that took place as a case study.

Ms. Bosarge recommended that before moving forward with developing an FEP for the Gulf of Mexico, it would be beneficial to revisit the results from the latest Ecosystem Status Report at a future Council meeting.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.