

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE**

**Charleston Marriott Hotel  
Charleston, South Carolina**

**September 16, 2014**

### **SUMMARY MINUTES**

#### **Dara Collection Committee:**

Mel Bell, Chairman  
Jack Cox  
Dr. Wilson Laney

Dr. Roy Crabtree  
Dr. Michelle Duval  
Jessica McCawley

#### **Council Members:**

Mark Brown  
Zack Bowen  
Lt. Morgan Fowler  
Doug Haymans  
Charlie Phillips

Ben Hartig  
Anna Beckwith  
Chris Conklin  
Chester Brewer

#### **Council Staff:**

Bob Mahood  
Mike Collins  
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
Kim Iverson  
Julie O'Dell  
Julia Byrd  
Chip Collier

Gregg Waugh  
John Carmichael  
Amber Von Harten  
Dr. Mike Errigo  
Myra Brouwer  
Dr. Brian Chevront

#### **Observers/Participants:**

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith  
Phil Steele  
Jason Didden  
Pat O'Shaughnessy  
Francine Karp  
Brett Pierce  
Jason Didden

Kevin Anson  
Pres Pate  
Scott Sandorf  
Robert Boyles  
Mike Cahall  
Dave Gloeckner  
Jeff Radonski

Additional Observers Attached

The Data Collection Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Topaz Room of the Charleston Marriott Hotel, September 16, 2014, and was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Mel Bell.

MR. BELL: I'm going to call the Data Collection Committee Meeting to order. The first item on the agenda is approval of the agenda. Any changes to the agenda needed? Okay, seeing none, then the agenda stands. The next item is approval of the March 2014 minutes. Are there any changes to the minutes? Seeing none; then the minutes are approved. That takes us to our first agenda item, which is the discussion of the Joint Gulf and South Atlantic Council Generic Dealer Amendment. Phil, were you going to handle that for us?

MR. STEELE: Yes, sir. The Joint Gulf and South Atlantic Councils Generic Dealer Amendment was sent to the Fisheries Service last year, September 26. The amendment would implement a generic dealer permit and require electronic reporting from the dealers. The proposed rule published in January with the comment period ending in February of this year. The good news is that the final rule published on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

There was a delay in the effectiveness of this thing until August so people could be coming up to speed. The system is about a month old now. I'm happy to say things seem to be running pretty well. Like any other new system, we were having a few issues with the timeliness and with some of the data quality, but we will continue with our science center partners. The system seems to be working fine. I'll answer any questions or Dr. Ponwith can certainly add to the discussion. That's it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BELL: Okay; and I actually have one question. I know in this we specifically exempted the shrimp fishery; but I noticed in the wording of the final rule where it discusses this final rule clarifies that federally permitted vessels may sell federally managed species harvested in either federal waters or adjoining state waters only to a dealer who has a valid Gulf and South Atlantic Dealer Permit.

Are shrimpers exempt from that? In other words, if you are a shrimper and have a federal permit for shrimp; does that mean then that you can only sell those shrimp state or federal waters to a dealer or because we exempted shrimpers is that all exempt? In other words, it just says "a vessel with a federal permit". Some of our shrimpers have federal permits and some don't. Some sell to federal dealers and some don't. Are shrimpers basically – we don't need to worry about that; is that off the table?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I would like to look at the rule before I respond to that and then get back to you and see what we said in the preamble and other parts; and then I'll give you an answer.

MR. BELL: Okay, thanks. Any other questions for Phil about that? Okay, let's move to the next item, which would be Electronic Technology Implementation Plan. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Just briefly to mention that we discussed this at our last meeting. There was a letter requesting input that is included as Attachment 2A. We went through that and we crafted

some comments and responses at our meeting; and then we finalized that after the meeting. A copy of that input is included as Attachment 2B. That letter was dated June 30, 2014.

The idea is this implementation plan will be finalized by the end of the year. There are representatives from each of the three councils that are on a group; and they're supposed to meet via conference call or webinar and work on input on the report. We were to get a progress report at this meeting; and then we'll get a presentation on the final implementation plan at our December meeting. I think Phil was going to give us some comments.

MR. STEELE: I'll backtrack a little bit. The letter and the justification for this EMER is I think A2. It gives you the background information. I got some information from Mr. Strelcheck yesterday. To reiterate some of what Gregg said, the EMER Implementation Plan letters were sent to the three councils in May requesting input on the contents of the draft plans.

We got the responses from the Gulf, South Atlantic and Caribbean to the letters and the questions in July. The Gulf and South Atlantic Councils were briefed on the plan at their June meeting and the Caribbean was briefed last month in August. Several conference calls have been held with science center staff in July and August to discuss the contents of that plan.

Right now the way it stands, Andy is back at the office frantically trying to complete the draft plan, which is due in Headquarters on Monday. I'm sure he will be successful. The plan then will undergo an internal review before being distributed.

After internal review, Andy intends to convene the EMER Committee comprised of council staff and council members to review the draft plans. The draft plan will also be made available for public comment this fall with a final schedule for completion by December 2014. That is my report, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BELL: So we are sticking to the schedule. We're just kind of in a crunch here right now.

MR. STEELE: As I alluded, we're sticking to the schedule and it is due in Headquarters on Monday; and I'm sure Andy will get it there.

MR. BELL: Okay, and I know originally it may have said in some of the materials that we kind of hoped to see the draft plan here, but it sounds like Monday at Headquarters and then we'll convene the committee and move from there.

MR. STEELE: Yes; there will be plenty of time for review on this thing. It is a far-reaching plan and a lot of bells and whistles to it; but the councils are certainly our most involved partners on this thing. It is progressing quite well I think, Mr. Chair.

MR. BELL: Any questions for Phil about the plan? Well, you mentioned the committee will be engaged or the group will get together; this will be after it goes to Headquarters first; so it will be between that time and December that we have input?

MR. STEELE: That's correct.

MR. BELL: Any questions? We will move on to the next item, which would be a status of work in the northeast related to bycatch reporting. That will be Jason Didden, who has come down from the Mid-Atlantic.

MR. WAUGH: Jason has been kind enough to give us his presentation. He has worked some on these amendments. We had discussions with folks in the northeast region. They had some budgetary issues and could not attend; so Jason kindly offered to walk through this. He has been involved with this from the council perspective.

He is going to hit some on the methodology, but then I've asked him to focus a little bit more on the other aspects of it, how it can work for their FMPS and then to touch on the industry-funded portions of it and the funding issues related to it. You get some of the details; but we just felt that getting into all the nuts and bolts of the details, we can provide information about that; but we thought higher-level presentation would probably be a lot better.

MR. BELL: Yes; and keep in mind kind of the big picture with this is that as we move forward with implementation of bycatch reduction monitoring; we want to make sure we have the best possible plan in place that meets all of our needs and is one that we can actually implement. We're trying to learn from others who are perhaps a little farther ahead of us here.

Also, recall that part of visioning process for the snapper grouper fishery will be in October when we get together that we will also touch on this as well. We are moving in the right direction; perhaps not as quickly as we'd like, but we're progress; and from Jason here, we hope to just learn a little bit about what is going on up the coast. Jason.

MR. DIDDEN: I'm the Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish Plan Coordinator; so on SBRM I have more seen it kind of from the implementation side. I wasn't involved in the nuts and bolts, but there are reference documents that the center has that kind of gets in all the details. I'm sure your staff will kind of dig into those as you move forward.

On the Industry-Funded Observer Coverage Omnibus Amendment, they were looking to try to fill some gaps. I am on kind of the technical team developing that; so I've got familiarity with the nuts and bolts on that; and I will kind of give a higher-level overview of both. A couple things in common; NMFS is the lead for both these omnibus amendments.

They are both joint, I should have said also, between New England and Mid-Atlantic. They both address observer issues. The SBRM has been kind of a limiting factor now on the industry-funding amendment; but otherwise these are two different actions, separate technical teams, separate timelines. I'm of going to go through one and then go through the other.

This is kind of Take Two on SBRM. The first effort failed in a lawsuit challenge; and so the final result should be in line with the judge's order; but from several perspectives that I'll touch on as we go through, it may not lead to better information in the first one; and so that earns a face. I'm a policy analyst; so what is the optimal solution is kind of what I'm trying to help the council figure out.

This is going to make sure the process is standardized but synergized may not be optimal; and we will get into that a little bit. There's kind of two critical parts. One is the performance standard; what kind of certainty do you want on your discard estimates? I bobbed back and forth between discard and bycatch some. I prefer the word "discard". Bycatch has lots of different meanings among lots of different people. Discards is a little clearer, but in some language it is bycatch.

What level of certainty do you want on your discards; so that is a performance standard. The other part of it is we don't have enough money to reach a performance standard; so given that, how are we going to kind of prioritize the funds? The kind of crux of the lawsuit was the way that we were doing was not standardized and it is supposed to be standardized, since that is the language. Take Two on it tries to do that prioritization in a standardized way.

The performance standard is a CV-based performance standard. I really hate CVs as a tool to describe uncertainty; because you ask ten different people what a CV of 20 percent and 30 percent means, you will get ten different answers. However, the information that underlies the CVs can be used to create confidence intervals; and I think those are a little more informative.

Let's say an estimate was a hundred fish with a CV of 30 percent; what does mean, who knows; however, this is the same thing. This is saying the same thing. The answer is a hundred fish; and I'm 68 percent sure that the real answer is between 70 and 130. I think everybody, whether it is managers or the public, has a better sense of what that means; or the answer is a hundred, and I'm 95 percent sure, some I'm really sure that the real answer is between a wider range.

Both those two things, if you're assuming kind of normally distributed data, are the same thing as a hundred fish with a CV or 30 percent. If you look at the new MRIP estimates, CVs and PSEs kind of follow the same issue there of what does it mean? You can translate to a confidence interval.

If you've noticed on the MRIP Website, they've started to put in the confidence intervals now; so it is not just an answer of 50,000 fish with a PSE of 30. They've actually started to put in the confidence intervals, which I really like, Anyway, beware of CVs, but that is what it is; it is a CV of 30 percent; but if you use those to construct confidence intervals, you can kind of get a better sense of what they're talking about.

That is the performance standard; it is being able to say we know the answer in some range with a certain amount of confidence. That is really what it is. Then how do you break down your discard data? It is by modes and species' groups. We get these giant crazy tables; and I put that just for effect. I'm not trying to get you to read because you get these crazy tables; but the modes are just gear-type-area combinations.

It might be longline gear in New England waters or small-mesh otter trawl, large-mesh otter trawl, Mid-Atlantic/New England. The modes are just gear types and areas; that's it. Then we've got the species' groups; and the species' groups are just our FMP groups. One FMP could be one species; one FMP could be multiple species, but they're treated as species' groups.

As the Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish Plan Coordinator, I'm not really so much concerned with the combined discards of all Atlantic mackerel, squids and butterfish across the modes. What I'm most concerned about is the accuracy of, say, total butterfish discards across all modes. I still haven't totally resolved how in the original SBRM things got broken down into these species' groups rather than just all the individual species; but that's the way it goes. When they're looking to prioritize things, they're not looking at prioritizing a certain performance of butterfish discards. They're looking at all discards within essentially an FMP

In terms of how the prioritization gets done, that has some impacts that I don't know that we've totally kind of figured out yet; but again it is done by these species' groups for FMPs. Also, it is only for federally managed species. In the mackerel fishery, river herring and shad has become a big issue of discards and retained incidental catch of them.

The science center will use the data that they're collecting to estimate bycatch of river herrings and shads; but that doesn't go into how they're going to prioritize observer resources. That is just something to keep in mind there; maybe ways to build into some kind of SBRM saying, hey, we'd like to nominate other species.

That's just something that we've kind of thought of recently, but for the time being it is only our FMP species are what drives the observer coverage. We talked a little bit about the performance standards. Now we're going to talk a little bit how SBRM prioritizes those funds since we don't have enough money to reach that performance standard.

First, it filters the day and then it prioritizes the day. There are really just two ways to triage where we're going to put observers in a standard way; because again that's where we failed in the lawsuit, it wasn't standard. Once we got to this point, councils would have some meetings, they'd meet with NMFS and try to figure out how to shuffle around our limited resources based on council priorities.

From a policy analysis point of view, that makes sense but it is not standardized so it failed. First we filter – what does filter mean? We're getting rid of observer day drivers that either don't contribute much to total discards or there is not much mortality for that species' group from discarding in general.

Like there are some longlines that every now and then may snag a scallop on the bottom; we don't want trying to estimate scallop discards in a longline fishery to drive observer coverage; and that is what this does. It tries to filter out so there are some percentages these. If it doesn't reach a certain threshold, like it is only 1 percent of total discards – the exact discards I don't have down here and that is not so critical.

If it is some very low levels, we're not going to use that to figure out where we're putting all of our observers. I mean, if you do these on these small odd things, it is thousands and thousands of day; so it is just not practicable either. That is the filter. Then the prioritize part of it is that even after you do that first high-level filtering, there is still too many observer days that are needed even after you do that.

Essentially what it has is it uses the available money in that giant box that we talked about. All those little numbers; those are CVs. What it is trying to do is get as many of those boxes to the 30 percent CV as possible. It is called penultimate approach. Essentially what it boils to is what would you rather have; one of those little boxes filled and it takes a thousand sea days to get there or you could get ten other of those boxes that takes a hundred days each, still a thousand sea days – well, what it says is go for the ten.

You spread your money out and there is kind of a complicated pattern of how it works. What it is trying to do is just look at, okay, this getting squid, mackerel, butterfish discards in small mesh, that takes an extra ten days; that is not that very many days; figure out that one rather than something else that is going to take a thousand days.

It is just trying to fill as many of those boxes as possible; and it is a very standardized way of doing it; but it may not address one's management priorities. That's kind of where my sad face is coming from. Maybe turtles take a ton of days. It is not going to be a driver because it takes a lot of days to get turtles in some fishery; so it does it in a very standardized way that I guess will address the lawsuit issues.

But it is not considering, okay, which of those species and different fishing gear types are really the most important to the council; that has kind of gotten taken out of it. There is some additional minimum pilot coverage provisions. One is saying so you get like a little bit of coverage in every fishery. Okay, that is my quick kind of overage of SBRM. I've never thought of the acronym for the observer funding omnibus before I did this presentation, but I'm now going to jump to that unless you want me to stop for questions on the SBRM before I jump forward.

MR. BELL: We can break this down if that would be logical. Related specifically to the SBRM portion; are there any questions for Jason? Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Jason, does ecosystem-based management needs fit into the picture anywhere? I'm specifically thinking about your mention of river herring and noting how important it was historically certainly as a forage species, as a prey for a lot of very important species that are the topic of FMPs. Has there been any consideration for ecosystem needs in terms of prioritizing maybe data collection for some of those species like river herring?

MR. DIDDEN: Not that I'm aware of. Again, it is driven by the discards of our federally managed species and filling as many of those boxes as possible; so I don't think so.

MR. COX: I was wondering if we could just take just a breather and take a step back for a second and talk about SBRMs and being that we have some new council members in relation to what the Magnuson requirements; not get in depth but just a real quick overview of where we are and where we're headed; just to kind of get an idea. I know we're pretty deep into it.

MR. BELL: Do you mean in terms of where we are right now?

MR. COX: Yes.

MR. BELL: Well, moving forward with this is all kind of tied to CE-BA 3. That is how it all evolved. This predates me actually in terms of the involvement. If you look at the overview document; it kind of runs through the history there of the whole thing. The point is this is a requirement that we address these bycatch discard data issues in all the plans.

We've been kind of slowly moving in that direction. Evolutionary-wise you can see, if you follow this document how it was in CE-BA 3, it ended up being the only left in CE-BA 3. Then recall we got to a decision point in March where we were looking at trying to move forward there. Some concerns came up related to folks moving in a similar direction up north, lawsuits, what would meet secretarial approval, and that sort of thing; so what is still on the table is CE-BA 3 as kind of the mechanism.

We basically didn't move forward with that until we, one, kind of learned some more about what might work, what might not work before we commit to a course of action. That's sort of, if you will, why we kind of cooled off on that a little bit in terms of moving forward. Also, I mentioned the visioning process with the snapper grouper fishery as we move forward with that and kind of retool the whole fishery; how will that influence the way we might want to go.

As Jason has pointed out, this is really about you have to come up with the proper acceptable performance standards you need to get the data that you need. Then on top of that, you throw in the funding question, which we'll hear a little bit more in a second. It is not just a matter of coming up with the perfect solution that looks good on paper.

You've got to somehow figure out how you're going to pay for that. Up north and in other areas what we've seen is a desire to have industry kind of partner and help pay for some of those things. We would need to perhaps explore down here as well, realizing that our fisheries aren't exactly like fisheries in other regions in terms of capitalization and ability to do that.

I guess in terms where we are; I still view CE-BA 3 as moving forward as the tool that we would use, which could address then all the fisheries. That's the other thing you want to do; whatever you come up with, you want to basically do this in one plan that addresses all the fisheries; so that's why it makes sense for it to remain in that amendment, I think.

Where we are right now is just trying to help determine what might and might not work from experience from other regions; because if they've gone through this already and run into stumbling blocks – and that was the point that I think we made earlier from March and all; there is no sense in committing to something that is going not meet what we needed to do and not meet secretarial approval and perhaps be subject to lawsuits and then stopping there.

I view what we're doing as moving forward. It has been a long process, certainly; and in the timeline I looking at that, it goes back to 2012 or so. Where we are right now is from this we hope to learn some things about what is acceptable and not acceptable perhaps in other areas that might help us. Again, we'll bring the discussion of the visioning; but we have a mechanism in place through CE-BA 3 to move forward with this at the appropriate time. Jason.

MR. DIDDEN: I think the Magnuson language established a standardized reporting methodology to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery; and so that is kind of what has driven us to do it at all. Then the standardized part is what has kind of really hung us up.

It was decided that the way that we're figuring out where to put observers was not standardized enough and trying to do this kind of triage to deal with insufficient funding in this kind of ad hoc way that they were doing it, which was trying to balance council priorities, didn't meet the letter of the law; so we're kind of going from there.

MR. BELL: And something else just in terms of I mentioned anyone in this room would argue that it is important to get just a handle on these data. You have to in order to understand what you're doing with the fishery. The council in its five-year plan, if you will, or recommendations or research needs that we've provided the science center, if you go through that you will see in all the fisheries' data needs bycatch, bycatch, bycatch, bycatch, bycatch by every species that is in there.

It is identified as a research priority, as a need, and it is a matter of what we're trying to do right now is a process to craft the proper – and again every region is different; so you need to craft what works for your fisheries in your region in terms of the standards; and then you have to craft the ability to pay for it. That's where we are right now. We're moving forward perhaps not as fast as we might like – I mean, does that answer your question in terms of where we are and what we're doing?

MR. COX: It does; and I know we're talking about some observer coverage and things; and, of course, I think of the sea bass pot fishery and different things that could help us along the way. So, yes, I appreciate those comments.

MR. BELL: And one other thing; this also ties into when you go out to try to acquire these data, observers. This ties directly into a discussion of electronic reporting, electronic monitoring and that sort of things. Are there available tools and technologies that you can incorporate into this to improve your observer coverage and in a cost-effective manner? That is another thing we've discussed, too, is you might have the ability to acquire these data through better technologies, but it might end up costing a lot more. Those are things we're all going to have to work through and weigh out in our region and custom fit to our fisheries.

DR. CRABTREE: Jason, so this was done as one omnibus amendment that amended – and it was a joint amendment with Mid-Atlantic and New England for all of their plans. Then you had these various filters and criteria that were used to determine the priorities, right, and that was across all of the fisheries in both regions. There wasn't anything like the Mid-Atlantic gets this percentage and New England gets this percentage. It was strictly based on the fisheries themselves regardless of which council they had jurisdiction over?

MR. DIDDEN: In the original one there was I think some kind of hog trading and discussion and weighing priorities between the councils. I think some of that did occur in terms or priorities between the two councils. The new one, again, is just strictly looking at the observer days

needed to fill those different species' mode squares. I think actually some of the fisheries I'm involved with are going to get big bumps up, actually, because of this. It will kind of look at all those species' modes in an equal way and not consider differences between the two regions going forward with that.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, in the original one that had some horse trading or whatever in it; did the court speak to that and was that part of the ad hoc nature of it that the court –

MR. DIDDEN: Yes, that was I think a big – that was certainly a part of why it was disapproved.

MR. BELL: Okay, other questions related to this part of Jason's presentation so far? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Jason, the timing on this; the Omnibus Amendment for the SBRM you've got in place; has it been approved? I guess where is it in the timeframe in terms of responding to the lawsuit?

MR. DIDDEN: I believe they're going out with a proposed rule in a bit; but I think they're using this methodology because they had to figure out some way to assign observers in the meantime. I think they're using this essentially as kind of a stopgap, but it will go through a proposed rule and final rule process.

I think the design of it as you're developing it, if it is going to have to be standardized, try to incorporate some way to – my advice would be some way for priorities to enter that in into a standard for a prioritization beyond just kind of the high level. If you can figure out a way to do that in a standardized way, you may still kind of retain some control without getting hung up in a lawsuit, but we haven't figured that out so far.

Okay, moving on, again, there is not enough money. We've got some fisheries that the council would like to have more observers on; so one way that has been thought is, hey, let's do some industry funding ways. However, we have this industry-funded observing omnibus. However, it also does not solve the core problems that we're facing.

It doesn't and I think maybe that it can't; so we're doing the best we can; but high cost of observers, lack of funding, the inflexibility of the SBRM, Notice of the Interpretation of the Anti-Deficiency Act and Miscellaneous Receipts Act which impact how industry is able to contribute – the action can't address that so it earns another sad face from me.

That really frustrates me as a policy analyst, but we're trying to set up a situation that will at least help some. What does it do? It says, okay, these parts, mostly the at-sea portion, are things that industry can pay for; and these other parts of observer coverage like some of the data digesting and some of the management are things that NMFS must pay for and industry cannot pay for or you run afoul of the Anti-Deficiency and Miscellaneous Receipts Act.

We have a situation where industry cannot pay a hundred percent of the coverage. NMFS has decided there are certain components of observer coverage that it has to pay for; and we have really been struggling to identify those costs. It is probably going to be somewhere in the

ballpark of about 400 bucks for the NMFS must-pay costs and about \$800 a day that the industry can pay for based on my general sense, but we haven't gotten NMFS to nail that down year.

We're getting there, but that is just kind of my rough ballpark now. That \$400 a day that NMFS must pay for; that can't come out of its SBRM funding because we have this standardized prioritization. What is going to happen – and there are also some requirements for the providers, if they're doing that; but what is going to happen is if NMFS doesn't – even if you have said, okay, industry has to pay that \$800 a day or 700 or 900 or whatever it is going to be, if NMFS doesn't have money out of some pot to that \$400 a day program, it won't run in any given year.

So far they've told us they're not going to have that; so even if we set up this program, it won't actually do anything until some magic pot of money appears for NMFS to pay for the side that it has decided it must pay for. The New England Council and the Mid-Atlantic, we're pushing back on that, but the lawyers are pretty steadfast in their interpretation of the Anti-Deficiency Act and the Miscellaneous Receipts Act; and I don't know if we're going to make a lot of headway there.

Anyway, the first thing it does it sets up what NMFS thinks it must pay for and what industry can. Then if that money appears for NMFS to pay its side of things, it has a prioritization process for, okay, let's say you've got several fisheries in the Mid-Atlantic and New England that want to do these; how are you going to use that pot to cover which of those since you're not going to be able to cover all of them. That prioritization has a couple of ways.

One, it goes through this NMFS led or council led – a real policy analysis thing that says, okay, look at the legalities, the plan objectives, risk, other criteria. If NMFS has this little magic pot of money that it is going to use to fund its side of the industry-funded observer programs; how are you going to do that?

Again, we're struggling with the fact that this is not standardized and is this going to be subject to some kind of legal battle. We're trying to build in that way that I'm talking about to do this prioritization in a relatively standardized way; we're not there yet; or, you do these kind of standardized ways to prioritize – let's say you only have 80 percent of the funding to run this; do you cut them all 80 percent? Maybe you just drop the most expensive program.

I think that is going to get eliminated because like maybe that is your most important one. You use the ratio of your needed sea days to recent fishing activity; we're still trying to figure out what that even means.

We're trying to figure out how to prioritize that. Right now the amendment also has, saying, okay, here is how you do it generally. It also is considering two specific fisheries to actually implement it in, herring and mackerel.

There is a range of covering levels; but again if there is no money for the NMFS portion, it is not going to do anything. Maybe it sets up if some day there is money there, you could run it; but the only way to really ensure that target level would occur is to say, okay, you're only going to let the fishery fish if NMFS has the money.

That could eliminate 90 or 95 percent of the fishing trips if NMFS says in this year we don't have it and you have that provision in there that the trips don't run unless they get an observer; that doesn't seem very practicable. Anyway, this sets up like the framework; but it doesn't solve those key problems, it may not do anything until we get that magic pot of money.

Anyway, again it creates a framework that you could do it; but if NMFS doesn't have the money to fund its side of things, nothing will happen. Anyway, it has been a bit of a frustrating amendment. I think we're getting into a situation where we'd have a framework where it can run; but if the funding is not there, it won't run. That's it.

MR. BELL: I don't think there is a magic pot of money that is going to fall from the sky; and if it does, I hope it falls down here first. That just being a reality, I think we're going to have to give some serious thought to making do with what we have somehow, and we'll get into that in a second. First, any questions for Jason regarding that. Bob.

MR. MAHOOD: Jason, what kind of legal advice are you getting relative to the council moving ahead and putting this in an amendment yet knowing that NMFS won't have the money to implement it?

MR. DIDDEN: I think it is at it is more it may have the money to implement it; and if they don't, they can't promise they won't do it. They're kind of saying we can't promise we're going to do it if we're not sure we have the money, because that would be illegal. I think the idea is that if this provision is in place, there would be pressure on NMFS to find some money. People would say, hey, look, you could get all this observer coverage if you just cover this \$400 a day; and so if this program is in place, maybe it works into their budget in the future.

MR. MAHOOD: So basically the position the council finds itself in; you have a court order to do something, but yet on the other hand the agency that you need to have the funds to help you do that something may not have the money.

MR. DIDDEN: Yes; and the court order is on the standard first part of things. There is no court order saying you have to have higher observer coverage in the Atlantic mackerel and herring fisheries. There is a desire by the council to have it; but there is no court order saying you have to have higher coverage in the Atlantic mackerel and Atlantic herring fisheries as of yet, anyway.

MR. MAHOOD: But you'd have to have a standard bycatch reporting methodology in your next amendment?

MR. DIDDEN: Well, it is in the SBRM will implement soon the standard and codify and make it formal, but they were trying to go a hundred percent observer coverage in the Atlantic mackerel and Atlantic herring fisheries. SBRM is going to almost totally wipe out what observer coverage we did have because of that prioritization scheme thing.

I think it is like the real good example of what SBRM may do is we had some fisheries that had been expanded their coverage through that horse trading because they were real priorities; but SBRM is going to really reduce observer coverage in those fisheries. This could address it if

some money becomes available in the future as a way to do an industry-funded program, but it is uncertain as to its long-term efficacy.

MR. MAHOOD: Did you do the economic work to determine what the industry could pay or was that an industry estimated?

MR. DIDDEN: In a species-specific FMP; they kind of said we'll contribute \$325 a day. There was some west coast that was going on that was kind of around that range. That got rejected from NMFS because said, well, we can't pay the rest. We're currently working up the economic analysis for what the economic impacts of the industry paying \$700 – first we have to get that number down and then we will do the economic impact analysis of what it would do to them if they were actually paying that number, but that hasn't been done yet.

MR. CONKLIN: I just had a question as to the funding and do you get for \$400 a day. I was a little vague on that. Is that one observer, is that to fund the entire program; can you go a little deeper into it?

MR. DIDDEN: Again, we're working on these numbers right now; and this is kind of from some preliminary work we did for a different amendment a few years ago. It is roughly \$1,200 a day per observer; and about \$800 a day is the at-sea cost. There is training, there is insurance, there is the – you know, the observer isn't getting \$800 a day. There is the travel to get them to wherever the port is; their actual pay.

There is a whole suite of costs like on the water; and that is ballparking seven to nine hundred dollars a day. Then there is just NMFS managing the program and digesting the data and analyzing the data and storing the data and running training and things like that. Let's say you have 5,000 observer days that are spread among the fishery.

For each one of those days, the at-sea portion is ballparking \$800; then the NMFS, for every one of those days, it costs them three to five hundred to kind of just manage and manage the program, manage the data, clean the data and things like that. It is kind of the average per day costs, at sea and then on the land for NMFS.

MR. BELL: And I don't know if that would apply in our region as well or observer coverage would cost more in other regions or whatever. What I'd be curious to know is the 400 to 800 ratio things – of course, the 400 is based on what NMFS has to pay for I gather is where that came from, but what would that look like in our region. I guess it might be same proportion sort of I guess in terms of what NMFS has to pay for versus what they don't have to pay for.

MR. DIDDEN: And out on the west coast there has been at least some suggestions that it is cheaper out there; but my sense is when you get to real apples to apples comparison, some of the costs that we're including, they weren't including.

When you kind of really you're trying to include all the costs; I'm guessing you'd be in that same ballpark of three to five hundred for the NMFS side of things and seven to nine hundred for

the at-sea costs of things. Again, we're trying to pin that down right now; so that's my personal ballparking before we get the numbers.

DR. CRABTREE: So the industry cost of this; how does that industry money – how is it collected and how does it then get to the observer program and pay for it? I don't know a pathway of where the industry money actually goes to the agency; so how does it logistically work?

MR. DIDDEN: I think the way that it would work is they'd have to be directly contracting with the observer providers. There was one bullet I had in there of some observer provider requirements. The observers would have to be kind of approved by NMFS; and then if you happen – there may be some SBRM coverage in NMFS.

You would find out I'm going fishing and my trip happens to be covered through the SBRM day; I'm going to have a free day; and NMFS is directly contracting with the observers to do that. But when the industry is on their own, I think they would have to be directly contracting with the observer; and the money would be going from the vessel or entity to the observer provider.

DR. CRABTREE: So it is going to require some level of organization by the industry to be able to set that up and make that happen, I guess.

MR. DIDDEN: Yes; there are some observer providers that exist; and I think if there is more business out there, it will probably take those observer providers a while or new ones to get approved; but I think if there is a demand there, the supply will come into being.

MR. WAUGH: Jason, one thing to clarify in my mind; the SBRM has been submitted. That calls for a certain level of coverage; and the expectation is that will be funded by the agency. It is the additional coverage levels that you might want to see – that you're pursuing this other amendment that may have some industry cost-sharing to bump up the level of coverage; is that correct?

MR. DIDDEN: SBRM will have a standardized target and a standardized way to triage when we can't meet that target. We don't know from year to year the coverage levels we're going to get; but we're going to cut out funding for certain species' modes in a standardized way. We will get what we get.

Yes; the industry funding is a total separate amendment to try to get to some coverage levels in certain fisheries that are higher than what we would have gotten otherwise through SBRM. You'll find out from year to year kind of what you're getting with SBRM as that prioritization process kind of works. There are all kinds of matrices and formulas for how that works out. I kind of gave a rough sketch.

DR. CRABTREE: So this doesn't assure that any level of coverage will actually be met in a given year. Congress could say we're not appropriating any money for observers this year; and so NMFS wouldn't have any; but it is about taking the money we do have and how it is then allocated among the fisheries to do the best we can do towards achieving the targets, even though

we may not be able to get there. Then the industry part of this is to try and go above and beyond that to try and achieve better levels of coverage; is that close to right?

MR. DIDDEN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: So then just to help me clarify; so then if this amendment is approved, it lays out targets, but it doesn't require the agency to achieve any targets. It is then whether Congress appropriates funds to go towards bycatch observers; and then you sort of drop that funding in the top of the funnel and it goes through the standardized process and tells you what your sampling levels are?

MR. DIDDEN: Yes, I think that's about right.

DR. DUVAL: It would at least inform you which of those area mode combinations are going to receive observer coverage for that year.

MR. DIDDEN: Yes; you should know which ones are predicted to meet your 30 percent CV target and which ones you'll be short on. Of course, in any given year the CVs that are calculated depend on the level of coverage and the nature of that data. If it is real spread out, it is going to be kind of consistent. If it is real patchy data, those CVs are going to bound around and you're really not going to predict it as well as you think you are; but, yes, you will have a prediction of which fisheries you're meet it on and which you're not.

DR. DUVAL: And so the Industry-Funded Omnibus Amendment is sort of the council's way to try to maybe address some of those priorities that are being lost through the implementation of the standardized methodology; would that be an appropriate characterization?

MR. DIDDEN: Yes; and the industry, through a previous amendment, they did express some willingness to contribute; and that was \$325 a day. It is a different question. Yes, this would be a way through utilizing industry funding to get higher observer coverage levels. SBRM is essentially a done deal, presuming it doesn't get a lawsuit again for some reason. We're kind of in a midrange stage of the Industry-Funding Observer Program; about a year in; a year to go, roughly.

DR. CRABTREE: So in the setting of the CVs, let's say we're talking about – I'll use one of our fisheries – the golden tilefish fishery, longline fishery, okay; so we decide we want to achieve a CV of some percent for discards in that fishery. Is that just discards of golden tilefish alone that we're trying to achieve that CV on; and how did you handle – I mean, we have fisheries that have turtle takes, for example; and so you're not to be able to achieve the same CV on the turtle takes because it is a really rare event that you would be able to achieve on the discards of the target of the fishery.

Did you have to go in and set a whole suite of different CVs for each fishery that corresponds with the animals that you're concerned about? I know turtles are included in the SBRM because they're considered fish under the Magnuson Act; whereas, I think marine mammals aren't

included under this because they're no considered fish under the Magnuson Act. I'm not positive I'm right on that; but could you comment on that?

MR. DIDDEN: The turtles work into the SBRM. In general what SBRM is trying to do is it is looking at the federally managed fisheries, say golden tilefish, trying to get a level of precision on discard estimates of that in every fishery that encounters it. Like longfin squid, one of the fisheries I coordinate, it has a list of a hundred species that it discards.

It is not looking at trying to get good discard estimates on that list of hundred species that longfin squid fishery interacts with. It is more of the flip. It is for the federally managed fisheries like longfin squid, making sure the discards of that are acceptable across all the fisheries that interact with it.

Now, most of the fisheries the longfin squid discards are also federally managed species; so they're getting looked at, also. However, something like river herring are not; and that's kind of a potential gap there. It is not saying we want to know all the discards in the longfin squid fishery. We want to know all the discards of longfin squid across all the fisheries. That may be a gap; it may be something – it is a potential gap and I don't know if or how it will ever be addressed, but it's an issue.

MR. BELL: When we talk about the industry part of this and there is a spectrum of fisheries you're dealing with when we say "the industry"; are they fairly well organized in your region in terms of reaching out to them. I had mentioned as part of our snapper grouper fishery alone and part of our visioning process as we move forward, we're obviously going to be talking to folks; but I wouldn't necessarily classify some of our fisheries as well organized and heavily capitalized, that sort of thing, but that may be a little different from where you – or how do you reach out to them?

MR. DIDDEN: Okay, that is another hour presentation right there. There is a lot of variety among fisheries. For Atlantic mackerel and Atlantic herring, there is probably 15 to 25 vessels that are catching 95 percent of the landings of those two species; so they are pretty well organized and it is pretty easy to reach out to them. But when you get to some of our other fisheries, we're in the same place of you have a lot more entities to deal with. Among the two that we're looking at in this industry-funding one, it is a pretty small group that are well organized, pretty large ships, but it varies across fisheries.

MR. BELL: Right, and then, of course, given the nature of the fishery, the observers, the coverage, that is all custom fit to the particular gear types and methodologies you employ; so we would need to custom fit that to our spectrum of fisheries; and we're talking about a number of plans and a number of fisheries. Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: You're mentioning that those better organized fisheries, they're larger boats, so they're likely higher-value fisheries. Are those guys responsible for paying their portion out that day, let's say, or is there some kind of organized monthly subscription fee that they're going to potentially organize into so the entire fishery is paying into it and they're not taking that out of

their kind of profits of that day when they leave and they get stuck with the observer. Has there been some discussion about the practical way forward for them?

MR. DIDDEN: Atlantic mackerel have just about disappeared and no one knows where they've gone. There are very low revenues related to Atlantic mackerel. Atlantic herring has had more consistent revenues. I would have to dig through the amendment. I think it would be left to the participants who want to go on a fishing trip to contract with the observer providers.

There probably is some flexibility for them to do that in a way that suits them as long as they have been kind of certified and approved by NMFS. It is kind of a good question that I think I'll go back to our plan development team and think if we need to address that in some greater detail. Also, I'll follow with the committee. I'm pretty sure that a couple of the other technical folks from this team are listening in. Since I do tend to take a higher level approach to this, if I've misspoke in any way, I will follow up with the committee. They'll let me know in about ten or fifteen minutes.

DR. CRABTREE: Sorry for so many questions; but it is awfully complicated. How did you handle recreational fisheries? MRIP reports discards, but did you deal with – and putting observers on recreational vessels is probably not practical in most cases; but did you deal with that in any way or did you just accept the MRIP Program as adequate?

MR. DIDDEN: I'll have to follow up. I think on some headboats there are some observers; but I'm not sure if that is coming out of SBRM or not. In general the SBRM is just looking at the commercial discards. I'll have to follow up; but I don't think that SBRM really gets into the recreational question.

MR. BELL: Yes, I was thinking it was supposed to, but that is a real good question. Keep in mind we certainly have robust recreational fisheries up their way, but down our way it is major.

DR. LANEY: Going back to Roy's question; I think I understand the point about the species and looking at a species across all the fisheries. Were protected species treated the same way; so for the sea turtles that you specifically asked about, the SBRM looks at sea turtle encounters over all the different fisheries in which they are encountered; is that the way that works; and it plugs a protected species just like it was target for a fishery? Is that how you generate a CV for the sea turtle takes?

MR. DIDDEN: I know I've seen the sea turtles in some of those charts where they're chopping off which fishery they're going to triage out. The answer may be yes, but I'm going to have to follow up on that to get a real clear picture of both – because I know there are sea days that are driven by marine mammals and turtles specifically through the ESA stuff and in other mechanisms, MMPA. I am going to have to follow up to answer that question accurately.

DR. LANEY: Okay, and I'd be interested and I think certain state directors would be interested, too, in knowing how Atlantic sturgeon factors into that along with sea turtles.

MR. DIDDEN: As soon as I ran into you in the elevator this morning, I knew that was going to come up; but I'm not sure about sturgeon either.

MR. BROWN: When you're talking about the lack of funding and everything; does any of these proposals ever get put to the ACCSP?

MR. DIDDEN: I know we have run some grants through the commission and maybe ACCSP for getting some higher level of coverage in some of our fisheries; but they're here, so I'll let them.

MR. CAHALL: We have paid for some trawl surveys; but I don't think we've – and I do think we're currently paying for plus-ups in the observer coverage through the commission. I just want to make a quick comment to the process that you have outlined in prioritizing your fisheries. It is fairly similar to the process that we use to prioritize how we allocate funding for biological sampling and for bycatch observers as well.

MR. BELL: Are there any other questions for Jason right now? Are you going to be here today?

MR. DIDDEN: Yes; I'm around for the day; so I'll try to get a few answers to those questions in general; but if folks have questions, just grab me.

MR. BELL: Yes, obviously, we could go way down into the weeds and pick his brain; but perhaps in terms of moving forward and the process we're following right now, are there any other steps we might want to take right now. Has anybody got any ideas here?

MR. WAUGH: Just to clarify sort of how we have planned thus far to approach this and the guidance we've gotten from you thus far, we talked about going out to scoping early in the year. Based on the discussions yesterday at Executive Finance, I'm not quite sure what form that would take, but we conduct some scoping.

If you remember, we suggested that the bulk of the detail work to address this would take place in 2016. Part of the idea there was to allow you to deal with this as you go through your visioning; because the minute you talk about any cost-sharing, obviously then that depends on the industry's ability to be able to share some cost. The idea was to give you all a chance to work through your vision for the snapper grouper fishery and how that might change; how then your vision of this new fishery, would they then be able to participate in cost-sharing.

It would give us also time for the SBRM to work its way through the review process so we'd have that, assuming it is approved, as an approved methodology. Mike makes a good point; it is very similar to how the biological sampling is allocated in ACCSP. Once that is approved and if there are no legal challenges to it; then that would give us an idea on the detailed methodology. We'd have our scoping comments, the output from visioning during 2015, and then you'd be ready to sort of roll up your sleeves and tackle the details in late 2015 and going into 2016.

MR. BELL: And there is logic to that as we've mentioned in terms of progressing in a way that – you know, keep in mind that this is industry cooperation and industry participation is going to

be essential in this. The visioning is focused on snapper grouper fisheries, which aren't all of our fisheries, but it is a major portion of what we do and a major portion of what we spend our time managing.

I think as we kind of conclude that process, it does make good sense to engage them specifically in this area about what enhanced observer might look like, what is necessary to meet the standards, what may be required of them at some point; so that is all very logical I think. In addition to that I would just ask is there anything else we can do in terms of understanding some of the costs and things.

For instance, Jason mentioned the 400/800 thing; so what would that look like for our spectrum of fisheries in our region specifically? Are there any other data we can kind of pull together for the council and also to share with industry? Are there other areas of information we can kind of start pulling facts together where we've got a better understanding of how this might work out?

In other words, we're not going to commit to any specific level right now based on performance standards; but kind of what are we dealing with here as far as potential costs and the spectrum of fisheries and observer coverage? What would that look like; and I don't know if that has been necessarily captured; and maybe it was to some degree in the text of CE-BA 3 already.

It just might be ignorance on my part, but just kind of having some of those facts under our belt as we move forward; is there any other additional data gathering we might can do as kind of fleshing-out options? Is that something we want to look at or have we already done that, I guess, through CE-BA 3?

MR. WAUGH: We did in CE-BA 3, but the goal of CE-BA 3 was basically to implement the ACCSP bycatch standards. As I understand it, that was tried in the northeast and that was deemed not sufficient; so one would presume we have to go beyond what we were looking at in CE-BA 3. But, yes, some of that information is in there, observer costs, and my recollection is it is roughly the same.

DR. CRABTREE: I think the big piece that we've never talked about really is the prioritization. The other thing I think we need to think about; I think we're going to need to have a discussion about doing this as a joint plan with the Gulf; because it seems to me part of the prioritization is going to be prioritizing among all the fisheries in the southeast. If we don't address that aspect of it, I think it leaves us vulnerable in terms of, well, where is the standardized process you have for deciding how much goes to the two areas.

It gets very complicated and I think it is going to be a lot of work; but I at least think we need to think through the possibility of doing this jointly with the Gulf. Obviously for lobster and mackerel and some of the fisheries, we would have to, anyway, but it may make sense that the whole process needs to be one joint kind of omnibus amendment that addresses the overall pot of money that comes down and how that then is prioritized among the various fisheries.

MR. BELL: Yes; and logically since we are required to do this for all the fisheries and some of the fisheries are joint, I follow your logic there. I'm not sure what that would do process-wise or how we'd begin that discussion.

MR. WAUGH: It wouldn't be 2016; that's for sure.

MR. BELL: That is what I was afraid of.

MR. WAUGH: 2017 or '18; it certainly would make it more complex; and then you have the Caribbean issue, too, or could we deal with that separately? There are some issues and these are some things that assuming we stay on track and go out to scoping, these are some of the higher-level discussions and decisions that can be made during 2015 to give us some guidance; so that when we hit the ground running in 2016, we know at least which direction we're running in.

MR. CAHALL: I could comment that it is a lot of work to come up with your prioritization standards; and truthfully the committees that we have on the ACCSP that do this work meet more often than probably most of our other committees combined because of the complexity of the decision-making process.

Some basic questions were still unanswered when we started what fishery constitutes what and having to come to consensus with those sorts of things. I can also comment that it has been very well worth it because the funding decisions that we make for these areas are very well justified. We have acres and acres of records on how we came to make these conclusions that we do; and so I think that the decisions are defensible. Once the prioritization is determined and is transparent, then it is obvious how decision-making gets made.

MR. BELL: Obviously, this is not a simple process. It is one that is going to take a lot of effort and it is going to be challenging; but I think we really just need to keep pressing forward. I'll ask the committee this and the council in terms of our way of moving forward at this point; is there anything else that we should be doing right now that we're not doing in terms of timing and all? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Mr. Chairman, maybe not should be doing that we're not doing, but I was just going strongly recommend – and I'm sure Gregg is already on this, but to use as a starting point what the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils have come up with. Obviously, it is not meeting all the councils' needs in terms of their priorities, but it is meeting the letter of the law in terms of having a standardized approach; and so taking that as a starting point I think for our fisheries here in the southeast and the Gulf it sounds like is one way to move forward or least should be included in the mix of things as we're moving forward.

MR. BELL: Any other comments along those lines or any other ideas or any other questions, concerns? Okay, we have a plan and we have a way forward here. Again, I think I've got to do a little homework myself and just kind of getting into what may exist in terms of what is already established within the context of CE-BA 3.

I would advise new folks to do that as well just to make sure we know where we are right now. It is an important task and we will get there. I really appreciate, Jason, you coming down and helping us; and I think we can learn a lot from others that have gone down the road a little farther in front of us here.

MR. DIDDEN: And I will definitely put the staff in touch with all the contacts up in New England who kind of know the nitty-gritty nuts and bolts; because I think they, having gone through it in excruciating detail, will probably have some other advice on things that helped and caused roadblocks in the process.

MR. BELL: If nothing else, then we will move to the next agenda item, which will be the status of implementation plan for commercial logbook electronic reporting. Gregg, are you going to provide some background on that first?

MR. WAUGH: Yes; if you look at your overview on Page 4, in March you expressed an interest in discussing an opportunity for fishermen to provide logbooks electronically in addition to paper. We discussed this at our June meeting. You approved a motion to direct staff to work with ACCSP in developing a commercial logbook electronic data entry form. The NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center would provide the data elements, which they've done -- Dave Gloeckner provided that -- and proceed in development.

To participate in development, NMFS Southeast Regional Office would participate and provide the linkage to the permits' database. We've got a team; I represent council staff; Mike Cahall, ACCSP staff; Dave Gloeckner and Steve Turner, the Center. I believe Andy Strelcheck from the region would be the point of contact for that; and Phil is saying yes; and Monica.

One of the issues that we will have to sort out after your discussions here and any future guidance is how we work with getting access to the permits' database. Assuming we can resolve that, the feeling is that this system could be up and running in January. One other issue that we've had some discussions with Monica and Phil about is we don't feel that this requires any regulatory change; because what this would do is give commercial fishermen the opportunity what they're providing on a paper logbook now electronically.

That is within the scope of what the Center can change without any additional regulatory authority. It would be a voluntary system. Fishermen could continue to provide paper logbooks as well. This would reduce data entry costs to the Center, save time and certainly reduce the burden on our fishermen; and this is something we heard consistently through visioning as well.

Where we are right now is Mike Cahall and Francine Karp from ACCSP are going to give us a demonstration on their system up there; and then we'll get your guidance on how you want us to move forward. Related to this is that Brett Pierce will give us an update on where we are with the electronic logbook program that is in a pilot stage now. We don't feel there is any conflict with this because once that electronic logbook pilot is sorted out, we'll need to do some changes down the road, but that is at least two to three years down the road; so we're looking at this as an interim solution. With that introduction; I think we're all set.

MR. BELL: I think Mike is going to go first; and we appreciate Mike and Francine being here.

MR. CAHALL: Just to give you a little bit of background and then I'm going to let Francine drive the demonstration. Francine is one of our contractors with Heroic Software who developed this hand-held tool for us. As most of you know, there are a number of different modules to the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information Systems, SAFIS.

One of them is eTRIPS, which is an online web-based trip-reporting program. It is available in both a commercial reporting and for-hire reporting version; but it is essentially the same system since the data elements are very similar. It has been deployed in a number of states in the northeast and the Mid-Atlantic with pretty good success.

There are some obvious advantages to having electronic reporting that I think is fairly well understood as well as pitfalls that are also fairly well understood. One of the advantages of the SAFIS System, the way that it is designed right now, is that the regional centers all have immediate access to the database and are able to pull back information in real time if they need it and so do most of the states.

It is relatively straightforward for folks to get their information right then and there. I know there is an ongoing push also for integrated reporting; and the suite of reporting tools that are built into SAFIS are integrated and can fulfill that need over the longer term. For example, the eTRIPS System knows who the dealers are and can know what the recent activity of the dealers are and vice-versa.

For example, if a commercial catch is landed, the dealer reporting system could know that boat landed at thus and thus such a port on such a day and was under this permit. It can automatically create the cross-references that folks need. It is one of the things we hope occurs as we move forward.

The eTRIPS Mobile System came about initially as a project proposal from the state of Rhode Island and from the Rhode Island Charter/Headboat Captains Association. We worked with them to widen out the scope a little bit so that it could have wider applicability and potentially be useful coastwide.

This system has been designed to meet the ACCSP commercial and for-hire reporting standards. Essentially the way that it works is that it will deploy on any of the three main tablet reporting systems; so it will work in Windows, currently 8.1. It will work in Android and in Apple IOS. They essentially look the same throughout all the platforms and work in essentially the same way.

There has been a lot of collaboration with the charter/headboat captains who served as our sounding board and pilot testers. I think Francine can talk to that a little bit more. She was actually on the ground to do that. The system is now in production in Rhode Island in a small grouper of charter/headboat captains; I think about 30, right?

MS. KARP: Right now it was supposed to be ten and we've gained seven, so seventeen.

MR. CAHALL: Okay, so we're at seventeen, which is a nice number to use to shake out the bugs. So far we haven't had any significant problems. The way this is going to work; it is connected at times to the main SAFIS database at the beginning of a trip so that it could download any updates of cross-reference and codes, species, and things like that, reference points, who the dealers are, and that sort of thing.

Then it operates autonomously when you're underway or at sea. Because of the resources that are available to most of these tablets, it is readily able to record date, time and lat/long and when events occur so that when, for example, you initiate an effort or a tow or whatever you want to call it, it knows where you are and can record that.

When you record a catch, it can do the same sort of thing. It meets a number of different requirements, using the technology as much as possible. We're trying to leverage it as much as we can, the technology as much as we can to absolutely minimize the number of key strokes that have to be entered into the system.

We have used large and bright displays; so that it is readily visible in daylight and in the evening in this rather fluorescent green, which is the color that the captains chose. We expect to be rolling this tool out in the very near future in the charter/headboat fishery in North Carolina, which as most of you are probably aware is one of the largest for-hire fisheries in state-managed fisheries.

We're working very closely with the folks in North Carolina, and most specifically Doug Mumford, to make minor modifications to the tool so that it will meet North Carolina's requirements. We expect to have that accomplished probably within the next month. Their target date to roll is January 1. The tool is designed to be flexible.

We shouldn't have any difficulty making modifications to it to add additional data fields. We can change the nomenclatures if we need to in order to make more familiar terms available to people. Then again, because it does directly upload into the SAFIS databases, which regions already have access to, getting the data transferred to them should be relatively straightforward.

We are in the middle right now of hashing out the details for GARFO and we expect to have the system data certified as accepted from the northeast in the near future, and then we'll work with whomever wants to use the system, to roll it out and it be able to fulfill those state and federal reporting requirements simultaneously.

I think we're on track for that, although frankly we're a little bit – our main concern is the level of response that we've had; and we have to be careful not to overpromise the resources I have available within the program; and at the same time we would like to give this table available to everybody who really wants to use it. One other point I'd like to make is that the codes that we used to generate the software is available to anyone who wants to use it.

From our standpoint, the only pieces that are really important are the data elements that they collect, the way they're validated and how they're transmitted to us. So if a third party vender wants to take the software and add additional pieces to it, they're welcome, and we made that

really clear as part of our contract effort. If anybody has any questions? Okay, I will turn it over to Francine.

MS. KARP: Again, my name is Francine Karp with Harbor Light Software. I worked with the captains on the ground and kind of acted as liaison between the captains and the programmer. I'm going to go through a few slides here before we actually do the live presentation. One of the first things we did was we sat down with the captains. We wanted them to fill out a quick questionnaire. We wanted it to be one page, five questions.

We worked with Rhode Island DEM and came up with the following questions. What we wanted to do with the first one is see what do they use regularly. Do they have home internet; do they have internet at the dock; do they have internet on their boat? We kind of wanted to see what they were using. Do they use laptops, smart phone, tablet computers?

If they do, what systems do they use; Apple, Droid, Windows? That was the first question. Then we asked them how proficient they were. We had some that were at the ones and twos and some that rated themselves at the four and fives. Who is the primary user? Some of these captains would do that themselves. We had two captains that actually had their mates doing it and one that had a spouse or significant other that actually filled out the reports for them.

Most of them have used SAFIS applications in the past, whether it be eTRIPS or eLOGBOOK. Then the last question we asked them to do was just describe their boat; was it an open cabin; did they have any problems with electricity, anything like that? What we really wanted to do was determine their comfort level; how comfortable were they in using this equipment and platforms were they using?

The pilot project started off with ten charterboats. That is what the RFP called for. Quickly it became kind of a tool that the other fishermen wanted to hop on. I finished up with seventeen participants. Many of them that go out there own electronic tablets and all of their things onto the boat. Of the seventeen captains, every one had internet available to them; and four had it actually through air cards on their boat.

The average boat length that we did this with was 39 feet. That is a little skewed because we had a headboat that was 100 feet. Fourteen boats had closed cabins; three of them were open. Obviously this posed a little bit of a problem putting electronics on some of those boats. Three of them had no power sources for charging the tablets. Since then those three have made modifications where they can charge the tablets.

On average they rated themselves a three out of five on their technical ability; so right kind of in the middle. The captains were a good mix of Windows, iPads, iPhones and Droid users. They were kind of a mix across the board. Four of the captains had not previously used a tablet. That was interesting to me because I really wanted to see how they pick up the pieces of electronics and how they be able to do that. I wanted to speak just a moment about some of the different things that we found as we went along.

Yes, there is a tablet computer as part of the electronics of it, but there are other things that we saw were very important to the fishermen. One of them was mounting options; how would they take this piece of equipment and mount it on to their boats? What we did is we gave them a choice of three mounts; a 22-inch, a 10-inch swivel arm; and then for the open boats a center helm.

As you can see in this picture here, this is one of the fishermen that sent me this picture. He actually decided he was going to do two. He had his own Ipad and he also had a Microsoft Tablet. He wanted to demonstrate two, so he actually took it out everyday and did two of the operating systems.

The mounting systems, we had no complaints. It was the first time that I've ever used the Arcon Mounting Systems. Before we had done Ram Mounting Systems, which is also a good system, much pricier. These had good reviews. The average amount was about seventy-five dollars. The captains had absolutely no complaints. They said they held up all season without any issues.

One of the other things I did want to talk about real quick was screen protectors. Some of the higher-end iPads, the retina displays were kind of hard for the captains to see while they were out on the boats. We ended up getting them screen protectors with glare protection. We also got some of these – they're simple enough. They're silicon covers.

The ports on these can be pretty big on the bottom; so what the guys did is they took these silicon covers, put some duct tape in here, put it back on and it worked. They said we just want to make sure we're not getting any debris on this. Those are the small things that as we went along in the project we didn't see initially; but as we went through, the little minor things were big to them, so we kind of figured out all those.

The input of the captains; I wanted to spend just a little bit of time because I believe that this was the most important part of the project. I had sat down with the ten and then seventeen at the end of the captains and said tell me about what you've done in the past, what did you like about any technology, what did you not like about it?

What they all came to say through different means was we need something that we build; we need something that we can use on our boat that is easy for us and that is not designed by somebody sitting behind a desk. That became our main focus. We've done this in the past where we roll out software and we do it in such a way where we get the software out into the hands of the captains.

What we did not want in this project was to spend three months building it, to put it out there for them to review and for them to say you've got it all wrong and for us to start from the beginning. We did this a little bit differently where we put out what we call our baby. We threw that baby out there and they told us this is ugly, your baby has big ears, whatever it was.

Fishermen do not have a problem telling you what they feel; and I like that about them. You know where you stand at all times. What we did is we sat down with them and they built it. They said make this button bigger, make this button a different color. At one point you will see

probably the largest button I have ever seen on a program. To be honest with you, we did it as – I would say the programmer just got fed up with how big button was going to be and he threw this out there and they loved it; so we have big buttons. It is different building something behind a desk than it is on a boat.

Part of this project, what we did is we went out on the boats with the captains; and we truly got to see what an open helm was like, how the difficulty was with that; what it was when literally the iPads is going like this on the water and someone is trying to hit that button. Both the designer and I have learned that we don't have sea legs and you'll never see us on the water. We've learned that really quick.

But what we wanted to do was make sure that they got what they wanted. We felt that although our person that we were writing this for was the ACCSP, I truly felt that it was the captains that we were making this for; so we got that constant feedback. We continued to develop it throughout the season and midseason we actually changed everything.

We kind of were going with one design. It wasn't working for us so midseason we kind of changed it all, got it back together and put it out there. It really seemed to be what the captains wanted; so everything from the color to the size of the buttons is what they picked. Our equipment costs for the ten boats in the project came down to about \$4,400; and that included the tablet cases, the power supplies, the mounts, the silicon covers, the glare protections and the tablets themselves.

MR. HAYMANS: For all ten units?

MS. KARP: Yes; we brought just about ten units. It was pretty cost-effective. Some brought their own, but, yes, that was it. The feedback from the captains – and I took these two comments from the two guys that had e-mailed me in the past week and half. One of them was from Steve Anderson. He is with Bare Bone Charters; and he gave me the comment of I think 80 percent or 90 percent of the fishermen would use this. I was happy to hear that.

Steve was one that from the beginning wanted to try this out. I can't say that he was skeptical, but it was one of those things where he said I want to be involved with it. He was and he liked the end results. The other person that we got a comment from was Lin Safford. He was from the Cherry Pepper.

He was I don't want to say one of our oldest member; but he was the one that – I don't think he had used a tablet before he came into this; so I was kind of interested to see what he would say. He said, "No problems at all; even an old man like me can do this." Again, I'm happy to hear that comment. We wanted to make this as easy as possible on them.

There is more to do. We learned along the way many different things that we can take into the next project; some that we never thought about. This application has room to grow. It definitely can be modified; it can be put into different situations. The base is there; the foundation for it is there; and whatever it becomes, it becomes. Does anybody have any questions on that before I do the demonstration?

Okay, this is what we call the home screen. All of your trips will be in this screen. You can see the little cloud next to each trip. That is a trip that has actually been uploaded into the SAFIS Warehouse; so that you can see quickly on your home screen what needs to be put up to the SAFIS Warehouse and what is already there. Again, you'll see the big buttons. They have a choice of either doing a commercial or for-hire.

I'm going to the sections of the favorites. What we've found with them and one of the major complaints of a fisherman was they wanted what they called a "once-and-done" button; so that they would fill the information in once and be done with it. On the paper VTRs they said, "We're constantly writing the same thing down day after day after day."

If we could do it once and have that auto-populate, that's what they wanted; so we call this the "once-and-done" page. Every species is in here so that they can actually go down and see what they wanted. They click on it to add it to a favorite. As you'll see, the screen will turn yellow and the selection will be made on anything that they want as a favorite.

They can do that for their gear, their waters fished, their dispositions; everything like that is all there. They do it once and it in. Their licenses; we figured that we would have two types of licenses, a for-hire and a commercial. We quickly learned that was not the proper thinking; that there are many, many types of licenses.

Therefore, we gave the captains the ability to put in different licenses; so if they wanted to add a license, they can, but they have three, four, six, seven licenses here; and then when a trip comes up which license they want to fish under. The same thing with the vessels; you can add vessels and you can also set them as favorites.

If you didn't want this to show up when you pulled up a trip, you take it off of the favorites. To have it show, you put it on. It is as simple as that. The dealers, you can have multiple dealers, you can add dealers as you go along; again shutting them off and turning them on as favorites as needed. That is set up the first time they set the program up.

They go in and set up their favorites. After that they can go in and change them as needed. We're going to do a for-hire trip. The captains tell me that they normally do this before the people get on their boat; that they set this up. They kind of do this where they will put the name. We've had a lot of people put the name of the trip that they wanted to put in. That way they could pick it up easy.

As you can see, fishing mode, it is going to come up and default to the last trip that you did; so anything that you did previous; that's going to come up as your default. You can change it to what you wanted. Your licenses, the same thing; if you wanted to do the commercial, you do the commercial; I'm going to take my for-hire license.

Angler count you can change. I'm going to keep that at six and my crew at two. Notes; they asked for a note section so that they could go back just for their own reference and put notes in. The notes I've seen are different things. If they want to put winds out of the east that day, they have that.

Again their port; they can pick different ports as favorites. The default will be what they picked the last time. It goes to the efforts; here you have your effort's page; and again they can change the gear quantity to four; pick any of the gear type that they want; all that is in there; again, notes for your effort on this side.

They hit save; and this is where the big button comes into play. Again, this was a joke. They wanted a big button that said "start trip"; so when the programmer put this out, they all jumped up and down and said, "Perfect"! It was kind of a joke, but it stuck. What they do is they say that they have this screen out as their going out, bam, they hit "start trip", and it starts recording then and gives them what they termed their "working screen".

This is the screen that they stay on for most of the day. As you can see on the left-hand side over here, it shows that they have no catches yet. I'm going to do a four-hour trip in two minutes; so bear with me. We're going to go out and we're going to start and we're going to get some fluke. This is the for-hire. The commercial side just shows up in pounds; so you don't have the quantity in length; just pounds for the commercial side.

So could say, yep, I caught two of those fluke; they were 15 inches; I had to release them. Right now Rhode Island has no catch as they're released alive. They're in the process of kind of changing some of those things, but that is what they have for now. Okay, I'm going to save that. I go along and, oops, I've got one more that was a good one. It was 19 inches; that is yummy; I'm going to keep that for food.

Okay, we're going to go on and we're going to do some bluefish and I'm going to catch two of those at 23 inches. I'm going to keep some of those for food. Then I've got an offshore trip that I need some bait for; so I'm going to catch three more of them; and I'm going to keep those for bait for that trip. Boom; that's in there.

If I make a mistake and say, oops, I didn't catch three of those bluefish for bait; I caught four. You can go back into the catch screen and you can go like this; and say, no, instead of three, I caught four and save it. We wanted that to be quick and simple for them to be able to go back and change things.

If by chance they say I caught two fluke and they were 142 inches; it is going to come back and say, "Are you sure; it sounds like a pretty big fish." You want to check that; so you can cancel that out and, geez, nope, they were 14. I didn't keep those because they were too small; so I sent those back.

My day is done. I feel pretty good about my catch for the day; and I'm going to go back in and I'm going to end my trip. Just to make sure they don't press that button by accident; it is going to ask them again do you want to end the trip. You're going to see that green bar at the top of the screen go to red that is going to make them know that trip has been ended.

They can go in and change anything, but that has been ended for now. As they come in, they can do their dispositions. On a for-hire trip in Rhode Island, you're not allowed to sell anything; so

you click on “all of it”; “no sale retained”; save. Again the fishermen wanted the least amount of buttons as possible to push and getting everything that they needed to do done.

They come and they say, okay, I want to send this report. I click on reports; I click on SAFIS. You’ll notice on the left-hand side that all of your information is going to be here; your catches for the people. I’m going to say the over-40 crowd because I’m there now. For the over-40 crowd we made it so that you can actually make this as big as you want. Something happens at 40; you wake up and you realize you’re blind.

So things like this, the captains, they’ve said, yes, make it so that we can see what we have. They can go down there and check everything; oops, I forgot my VTR number; so let’s do this. Let’s go home – a major part of this – go into “trip details”. I hope that in the future that the VTR numbers will be automatic for these guys, automatically uploaded so that they don’t have to put the VTR number in there; that it will auto-populate.

So you go, you press in your VTR number; then you can go back to your reports. That is going to save automatically and you can see the VTR number will show up right underneath the Martin trip and time. I’m going to upload that report. I come over here, come back in, I’m going to put my password in.

We have a report verification that they had to click and read to certify that it’s true; and then they submit. You’re going to login; it tells me that my login; and it is uploading the trip reports. It will tell me that the trip reports have been uploaded successfully and it will automatically log me out.

In asking the fishermen would they use this; unequivocally, the answer has been yes, which is great for us. That means that we’ve built a product that they want. I was talking with Captain Anderson last week and said to him which to you prefer, the paper or the electronic, which is more timely, which is more accurate?

He said I could share this with you guys. He said, “I’ll be honest with you; in the past how would I fill out my VTR?” He said, “After I got a letter telling me that I was a bad boy and I didn’t fill out my VTRs.” He said, “So on a Saturday evening, I’m trying to get these VTRs done and in the mail for Monday.”

He said, “Three or four beers into it, I’m looking through my notes trying to put down what I remember that trip was about.” He said, “Is that accurate? It is accurate to the best of my ability for that time.” He said, “Having this on my boat, I don’t have to worry about it anymore. I come in, it is done, I send it and never have to go to the post office again.” He would love that.

So for those reasons I think it is a great application. It helps them an awful lot. If they didn’t have to do the paper, there is not one person that told me they would be sad over that. It seems to work, but this is truly something that they built. It can be modified. We can do different things with it, but this is kind of what they came up with. Any questions?

MR. BELL: First let me commend you for doing it that way. What is critical to this – and we’re talked about this before – is engaging the customer or the people that you’re working with and it has got to work for them. If you have the ability to customize that for whoever you’re dealing with, that’s just fantastic. You did this the right way.

I love big buttons; I love simplicity. It is just an intuitive nature and how it flows and all, I think that’s great; so, yes, I’m sure we’ve got some questions. Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: Thank for the presentation. For folks that are not going to be wanting to have this on the boat with them but will be willing to use the application when they get home; how is it going to work? I see where it has got the GPS coordinates kind of automatically going and the time where they’re putting stuff in.

My husband, being one of them, would fill this out but he’ll do it when he gets home. He won’t a tablet on his boat. He just won’t do it. We’ve got a little boat; so is that going to make any impacts to the way the data is dealt with when you have the same GPS all the time and everything is being caught at eight o’clock at night?

MR. CAHALL: Well, you can override the entry; but if someone is actually doing all the reporting from home, we’d encourage them to use the online tool instead. The online tool is a little bit more cumbersome; but there is not a problem. I think that the system can also record fishing area.

MS. KARP: It does.

MR. CAHALL: The time stamp lat-long is dependent on first of all the tablet’s ability to use GPS, because not all of them do; and then, secondly, obviously, for wherever you are; but it is recording the fishing area, which for most of the states that we deal with have now divided it down to a very small subarea; so we have fishing area; fishing subarea and then local fishing areas, which typically are quite small.

MS. KARP: Right; so I drilled down to the actually fishery; and Rhode Island has got maybe 20 or 30 different fishing areas that they can pick from. We’ve put the top four into this. These are our favorites’ category. Again, you can put as many favorites as you want; but your fishing area is already in the program itself.

MS. BECKWITH: But they won’t have to go through and override the time; because then that will make even this cumbersome. I’ve heard the same thing about the online version, that it is cumbersome and it doesn’t self-populate. I can see this being a more attractive feature; and the guys that are not necessarily on board being willing to potentially fill this out; but not be fixing the times or that sort of stuff.

If we could get the online version to self-populate like this, that would be a benefit, I think, but I can see this being the reality that you guys will have folks filling this out once they get home, but not worrying about putting in the fishing area, but not worrying about the time, and they’re not going to go through and pretend that they remember what time they caught each fish. They’re

going to be putting in totals for the day of each species. I also noticed a feedback button under the favorites; so can you tell me a little about that?

MS. KARP: They can send to us – and actually it is the ACCSP – any reports, any concerns, questions that they have. They can send those to them by hitting the feedback button and e-mailing that information over to them.

DR. DUVAL: One of my questions was – and maybe I missed it because I am over 40; so when you went back to enter the VTR number; do you have that same sort of little error message that was popping up when you entered like a 115-inch fluke and then it says are you really sure about this; is the opportunity for a similar kind of error message when you're getting ready to submit your report and you realize you haven't submitted your VTR number?

MS. KARP: Yes; and as a matter of fact, those are the small things when I said there is improvement to be made. I believe the system will kick it back if you don't have a VTR number. If you put it in without a VTR number, it will kick it back and say, "Hey, you did not have a VTR number." What would be the next step from there is when they start the trip, if there is no VTR number, maybe to say, "Hey, you forgot it." Some of the guys like you mentioned come back – they'll do this out there and they won't put a VTR number on it until they get back. They'll grab their logbook and then they'll enter that VTR number in.

MR. CAHALL: And to comment, not all the jurisdictions issue you a book; and so the system generates a VTR number when it uploads the data automatically. Honestly, in terms of the cross-references, we ignore whatever anybody assigns. We track it but we don't use that to hang things together. They're all internally generated numbers. That is a feature that we can turn off and on in the program.

DR. DUVAL: Because for us, North Carolina looking at using this tool, obviously this is going to be used for our states waters recreational for-hire fishermen that our guys who are operating that are not going to have VTR numbers; and that was one of the biggest things that we heard when we did our survey was like we want the one button. And for folks who have both northeast for-hire permits and southeast for-hire permits, they didn't want to have to submit things to two different systems. I really appreciate this demonstration. This is great.

MR. BELL: To that point?

MS. BECKWITH: My question I guess partly to Michelle, you're right, our for-hire guys aren't going to have VTR numbers; so how are going to deal with that so it is not constantly getting kicked back?

MR. CAHALL: The system is intelligent enough. It is not currently programmed to do this but can easily be programmed to do this; to know, oh, I'm in North Carolina; I have this kind of permit; I don't need a serial number, I don't need a manually entered serial number. The data checking requirements are all stored – I don't want to glaze people over; but they're all stored and the procedures are relatively easy to modify.

We do an on-the-fly validation once the data are put into the system; and then we provide immediately feedback. We can either program the tool itself to say, hey, North Carolina, inshore, for hire, no VTR or we have the system, when it's uploaded and validates, to ask the same question and respond back.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on your committee, but I appreciate the opportunity to comment. As they talked, I had more questions pop into mine. First of all, this system could easily replace the online system and you could just do away with what is there now. That is the future I was on. Why tablets? It's the easiest to start with?

MR. CAHALL: Too much data.

MR. HAYMANS: Well, you and I had a very brief discussion that no one is else is privy to before this started. The direction I have been thinking and discussing and talking is what is on every fishermen's dashboard already; and it's no more expensive than that. Assuming we're looking long range; this same sort of program is capable in a Magellan or a Simrad or any of the other computers. Did you talk to any of those guys?

MR. CAHALL: The issue here is universality. I don't know what the operating systems of those tools is; but each one of them will require our custom software solution developed by them.

MR. HAYMANS: Natronics makes that software for every manufacturer except Garmin; and if everybody else has got it, Garmin will come in line.

MR. CAHALL: We did not look for a proprietary solution. The goal here was to make it universally available across all the different tablet platforms.

MR. HAYMANS: My only reason for asking the question is, again, like Anna's open cockpit, okay, so that's a \$400 laptop or tablet with all of its accessories, but that is not waterproofed yet. That is the main concern with taking a table on the water is just waterproof it when every unit that is out there built by one of these other companies is waterproofed.

MS. KARP: Exactly, there are certain cases that you can put on. I was in the Verizon Store this week; and, geez, they had like five or six – I was surprised – five or six waterproof tablets on display. What we have seen in just the past 24 months – of what a tablet was 24 months ago as to what it is now is just leaps and bounds better. The batteries are better. The performance is better. The touchscreens are better. Put that out another 12 months, 24 months, they're going to be solid, rugged products.

MR. HAYMANS: And final question; this is being used in Rhode Island or tested in Rhode Island, I guess; how are they going to validate the data that is coming in? Are they going to do at-sea observers or what they going to do there?

MR. CAHALL: They have dockside; they're doing dockside surveys.

MR. HAYMANS: How long are they going to do that?

MR. CAHALL: I think indefinitely. I'll take this comment just a little bit further. In the for-hire fishery, especially, validating the data has always been a problem. North Carolina is going to be working jointly with us, assuming MRIP funds the project, to develop a methodology to do precisely that and have it approved through the MRIP Process. We're looking ahead for that as well.

MR. HAYMANS: Can we make the assumption that as more states come on line with this and it is validated, that at some point we can stop validating or do less frequent validation?

MR. CAHALL: I think that will depend on what we find as we validate; don't you? MRIP is very concerned about making sure that we understand what that gap is for the non-compliant reporting.

DR. DUVAL: Doug, just to that point, what we heard from captains during our survey was they wanted to make sure that those port agents were still out doing intercepts. I think from our perspective, we see them as a really critical piece of this program not only for validation but also that's our customer service out there as well.

MR. BROWN: I own a headboat; and so I participated in the pilot studies and everything. Now we have a requirement for the online headboat survey for the southeast. We currently have an eLOG. I guess I'm trying to rationalize what is the difference between this and what we're already doing; and what is the necessity of creating something different when we already have something that is in place that works. I do double-reporting.

I have to report paper logs for the state; and then I also follow it back up with the electronic. Then I also get hit by Quantech, which this year I got hit more times by Quantech than ever before. I finally got frustrated and I called them; and I found out it is funded program through MRIP. I got hit three weeks in row.

I called and asked why and they said, well, that was just a lucky draw of the cards. And a lot of the information that I saw comparing the two structures of information, a lot of it was the same. I couldn't understand why it was so redundant while we continue to input from these different entities, you know a lot of information being the same and why it can't be consolidated. Now I see that you're proposing to build another structure of another input base when we already have one that is in place that to my knowledge is working. I haven't heard any complaints about it.

MR. CAHALL: I can speak to a couple of the issues. The Beaufort Survey is a long-standing project; and it has evolved to what it is over time. The data that was collected for a number of years frankly didn't meet ACCSP standards; and even as they're moving forward, the technology that they're using is a little bit different from how we're doing it.

The headboat survey itself doesn't have really good applicability up and down the Atlantic Coast. Our goal is to create something that is universally available that will work in almost any

of the situations that we encounter. The technology that currently the headboat survey system uses is a flat-file transfer technology that doesn't allow for on-the-fly validation.

We aren't working in a vacuum either. We've been talking to them. Our long-term goal is absolutely to have each captain touch once; you report that fish once and you don't have to do it again. Once we have the data transmission protocols in line with both of the regions, we may be able to work through MRIP and get an accepted method to validate that data and then you probably won't get called.

I can't promise that, but it certainly is one of the long-term goals and actually maybe not that long-term, two or three years maybe, to get MRIP accept these systems as the data reporting system of choice for MRIP. That is what the problem really is. The MRIP data for for-hire fisheries continues to be the survey; so they're not using the logbooks to get their catch data.

What we would like to see over the long-term is for that to gradually move in the jurisdictions that do have universal mandatory for-hire reporting; for MRIP to work with us to develop a method to accept that so that you would only have to report once; and it wouldn't matter whether you used the headboat system or you used this system or you used the pilot system the southeast is working on; or, you know, you built your own and you got them to accept the data. It shouldn't make any difference which tool you use to report; you'd only have to report once.

MR. BELL: And, Mark, to your question; the ultimate long-term goal would obviously be, as Mike mentioned, touching the fishermen once. I mean, simplicity but accomplishing improving data timeliness, data accuracy; and this is all about kind of discussing options and thing. We've heard from fishermen at the council here, whether it is through the visioning process or the council meetings, that there is a desire, whether it is commercial or charterboat, to be able to perhaps utilize some of these new technologies and all; and so that's what this is, an examination of something that is going on right now, which would be applied – these types of technologies could be applied towards charterboat or for commercial.

Yes, eventually this will all work out into a system that is simple and is less intrusive in terms of the different things you might have to do. We'd love to get rid of paper eventually. That would be a goal; but at this time there are people that still prefer paper. There are still people that might prefer doing it on the boat, on the Hill; that sort of thing. It is kind of about looking at options right now. If you want to comment on that, Michelle, that's fine.

DR. DUVAL: Mark, in North Carolina what we're looking at is that folks who – because of the legislative change that occurred last year mandating the January 1, 2015, roll out of mandatory for-hire reporting; we have many licensed headboats in North Carolina; and because they are already using the tool that has been developed by the science center, they're being exempted from this requirement to report through any other kind of electronic tool for now. I'm sure as this evolution goes on; that as tools in both areas improve, that may change; but for now they're not being required to report through multiple technologies; but that is just in North Carolina.

MR. BOWEN: Mr. Chair, I'm not on your committee either; but to Mark's point, I know in Georgia we have – I'm recalling from memory, but I think 34 active for-hire snapper grouper

permits. Of those 34, I think we have three headboats and those are the only ones that are required to report; so we are missing some reporting up and down the coast.

Thanks for your presentation; I really enjoyed it. I have a couple of questions. As you giving the presentation, in my mind I was thinking about what I would do on my boat and what I do now. I guess the question is like I carry my iPhone with me offshore, but I turn it to airplane mode; so my camera still works and my music still works; so I can interact with the customers using that. Does that work in airplane mode? How long are these trips that these guys are taking? My trips are ten hours, twelve hours, so they're long days. Battery life; can you just go into that a little bit?

MS. KARP: That's actually an excellent question. The boats had power. The ones that did not put power in; some of the older tablets from about two years ago would make it through the first trip. Actually it was one tablet and we weren't sure whether it was the tablet itself or how he was powering it. It would not make it through. He was doing doubles.

If you're talking 12, 14 hours out on the water, it would make it through on most of it; but as he had it on, it was actually using more power than it was giving. That was one of the issues that we had with the power. To put it into the airplane mode, we did not actually think of that; but he really wanted the GPS coordinates.

In fact, he had gone out and purchased the tablet, a new one that did not have GPS coordinates and brought it back. For this particular fisherman, he wanted that information while he was out there. He wanted to see where he was catching his fish. I think it is just up to them, but the battery life has significantly improved. Personally, the iPad is a great battery life. The Microsoft tablets are coming up to them; Droids are pretty good. It depends on each individual tablet itself.

MR. BOWEN: The distance offshore, with not having 3G or LTE or whatever or 4G; would that still work and it being in an airplane mode, do you see what I'm saying, to protect the battery life.

MS. KARP: Correct; it is actually coming off of GPS; so your 3G, 4G, it is pinging off of the GPS; so even if you don't have air card – like if you don't have mobile phone reception, it is not using that technology, it is using the technology from the GPS, chip set inside, if that makes sense.

MR. BOWEN: It does.

MS. KARP: Did that answer the question?

MR. BOWEN: Yes, thank you.

MR. BELL: And you see what is going on here. I mean you guys are operators; you're thinking how does this kind of work here? That is what would have to occur in the implementation in any of this type of technology in our region. There would have to be a lot of interaction with folks

like you who would be ones who understand the way you operate, where you operate, the boats are completely different perhaps; but all that would have to worked out in a technical nature.

That's maybe getting down in the weeds here a little bit, but we really appreciate the opportunity to have this discussion because it is perfect. You're pointing out the types of things that would need to occur in terms of the questions that would have to be asked and all. I'm going to try to keep us roughly on schedule. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Yes; just a comment to Doug's points and then a question of guidance for us. Okay, the issue of validation and dockside, you always need that dockside because we need to get biological samples, too; so there always needs to be some presence. In electronics, I'd turn it around now.

This system was developed with open software; so if I was an electronics company with a piece of equipment I wanted to sell that fishermen have, I'd take the opportunity to add that ability into that unit and make my unit more marketable. I think that opportunity is there; but I think the better way to do it is I've developed on an open system and then let the private sector take it and enhance it by folding it into their electronic equipment.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes; just think, we need to let them know that it is there. The thing about validation really comes down to cost. Are we going to continue the funding stream that is currently there for dockside interviews when an electronic system has been fully implemented?

MR. WAUGH: And then in terms of guidance; this presentation, the idea here was this can be modified and adapted to allow our commercial fishermen to provide their logbook information electronically. Having seen now, is it your direction to us to continue to work with the center, the region and NOAA GC to bring back a more detailed plan in December on how this would work?

MR. CAHALL: I just want to make one general comment. The solution is not really a technical problem. The technology readily exists to make this work. It readily exists to allow the captains to use a variety of tools to provide this reporting; whether it is this tool or it is the Beaufort tool or if it is something that is integrated into a piece of software that is on board the vessel. In my opinion the regions are going in the right direction by saying this is what we want; you give it to us; we don't care how you do it; and we'll be glad to take it.

I think that the long-term solution here isn't really a technical problem. It is more an integration problem in the back, making sure that everybody understands that let's just say hypothetically North Carolina goes we'll take this one report from you; we don't care how you do it. They have to be able to get that data immediately because they use it for quota and compliance monitoring.

But right now the technology doesn't exist for that level of integration in the back end; and so that really is the challenge. Building these tools is relatively easy; and, frankly, programmers and me and my staff, we love building tools; it is a lot of fun. But always the more complicated piece is in the back to make sure the data integration happens; to make sure the second that report is uploaded, whoever needs to know that report is there, to tick off that thing, yes, you

reported today or knock it up against the quota; they have that right as soon as they need it. That's really the challenge in doing this job.

MR. BELL: All right, back to Gregg's point, we directed staff at the June meeting to follow this course of action and engage with ACCSP and NMFS and all to kind of move towards this development of a commercial logbook electronic system with the idea being that we received a report in December or try to have something actually in place by January was the goal. Is that still realistic and what further guidance would you need, I guess, beyond what we've already provided?

MR. WAUGH: Well, I think just reiterate that, yes, you want us to continue down this road, because I think Mike has laid out the data integration. I've talked some with Phil. We'd have to resolve the issue of linking with the permits database and then –

MR. CAHALL: We do have access to all of the permits at this time.

MR. WAUGH: Okay, so then that is solved. Then it comes down to is there anything of a Paperwork Reduction Act that we have to work out; and that's something that we can talk with Monica and the region and sort those details out. It sounds like if you all are still interested in having this system ready to go in January so our commercial fishermen can provide their logbook information electronic; it seems feasible. If it is, yes, continue, then we'll get those last remaining bugs sorted out and come back to you in December.

MR. BELL: Right; so to the committee then I would ask are we on the right path; is everybody comfortable with this; keeping in mind what we just received was a presentation as an application for charterboats, but the idea would be to tool this for commercial. Does that make sense; are we on the right track? Heads nodding; okay. So, no additional guidance; I would carry on and head in that direction; and if we can achieve the January goal, that would be fantastic. This is really cool! Any other comments on kind of the road forward with this? Okay, any other questions about this?

Yes, I would encourage you to take advantage of getting into the technical weeds, the guys that want to get into the technical weeks a little bit on this for what we can and can't do. The technology is there and we can make this happen. It is kind of exciting, I think. Any other questions or comments on this right now?

Okay, we've got a couple more things we need to do. We have a little bit of slack in the time; but I don't want to eat up all the spare time. Let's go ahead into the next agenda item; and I believe that was going to be a presentation. This is going to an update on the commercial logbook pilot study.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Mel, why don't I fill in the time by answering your question? If you have a federal dealer permit, you need to report all fish received; and that would include penaeid shrimp if that's the fish you received. You don't need a federal dealer permit necessarily to buy penaeid shrimp because that was exempted; but if you have a federal dealer permit, it is clear from the rule that you need to report all fish received, including shrimp.

MR. BELL: So if you are a federally permitted shrimper harvesting in both state and federal waters, then you would be required to go through one of these federally permitted dealers for the reporting?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, I think it depends what kind of shrimp you're catching, right?

MR. BELL: Well, for us it would be primarily white, penaeid white and brown shrimp.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: So if you're catching penaeid shrimp, I don't think you need to sell to a federally permitted dealer, because they exempted out –

MR. BELL: Right, and that was my question, okay, because we did exempt that; so they would be exempt from the way that's worded. It is just a little unclear to me, perhaps.

MR. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Okay, and I'm sure we could always clarify things; but then if you are a federally permitted dealer who happens to also get penaeid shrimp, then you would be required to report all the fish, including the penaeids. That is for the dealer.

MR. BELL: Okay, that is a little different from how I had originally – Michelle, do you want to comment?

DR. DUVAL: In the committee discussion, when we were developing the Dealer Reporting Amendment, we were pretty clear about dealers reporting only federally managed species; so they're not having to report all state-managed species; just the federally managed species.

MR. SMIT-BRUNELLO: So the way I read the rule, it says "all fish"; and if that's incorrect, we can go back and look up minutes and see if we need to do anything else to – I'll look at the amendment. I'll be glad to look at the amendment and what is in the amendment and then what is in the rule and compare those; but I'm just telling you what the rule says.

DR. DUVAL: So that's not how we've been communicating it to our dealers; that they need to report the federally managed species; and that's not the discussion that we had in the committee. I specifically went back and looked at those minutes; so I will be happy to talk to you more about it.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Okay, let's talk and then I'll look at the amendment as well.

MR. BELL: Yes; we may need to do that; and, Kevin, did you want to say something?

MR. ANSON: We had a similar issue come up here recently with reporting requirements since it was implemented or became fully operational in August in the Gulf. Specifically, there are two states in the Gulf that have some major issues; and we have been in communication with Southeast Fisheries Science Center and I believe some legal counsel in the regional office to at least try to make some headway in its interpretation of the rule, interpretation of some of the conversations or discussions that were had at Gulf Council.

That was our understanding, too, as Michelle stated, that this would not pertain to those species that have any reporting requirement or federal permit system. We have some issues on that relative to the rule and then some of the technical aspects that are related to it for dealers and for trying to modify the reporting program for those species now that not necessarily need to be reported but now have to be reporting according to the interpretation.

I don't know if Dr. Ponwith wants to comment to it; but we're to have further discussions with the state counsel and NOAA's counsel to try to better understand where this gray area is; and if need be, I guess we need to come back and further clarify it or come back with a different framework action potentially to clean it up.

MR. BELL: Right; and that is when I mentioned that this morning particularly related to penaeid shrimp. That's when I brought that up; so obviously we need to have some more discussion about that at some point but maybe not right now. Bonnie, did you have anything to add to that?

DR. PONWITH: Yes; I just see it as a two-step process. The first step is to get the legal interpretation of what the rule actually says. Then once we have that, then we can pick it up and discuss is this what we wanted or is it not what we wanted and revisit the amendment.

MR. BELL: We'll do that. Okay, moving along right now, Brett Pierce is going to give us a presentation on the commercial logbook pilot study. Dave.

MR. GLOECKNER: Brett will give the presentation. This is Brett Pierce. He works for me. He is our outreach person for this project. I also expected to have Brian Stevenson show up from Electronic Edge to give you another flavor on electronic logbook software. Unfortunately, he missed his flight in British Columbia, so he wasn't able to show up; so this will probably be a shorter presentation than we expected. I'll let Brett go ahead and tell you where we're at with our project and we can take any questions after that.

MR. PIERCE: Okay, so continuing with the theme of electronic reporting, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is gearing up to create an on-board electronic logbook program that can accommodate vessels participating in multiple federal fisheries and across regional boundaries. We believe that reporting electronically will improve several aspects of management and data collection, including making timely corrections to fishery-independent data streams, monitoring the southeast and highly migratory species fisheries, and improving the quality of data used for stock assessments.

Now, I'm going to be spending a little bit of time on each of the objectives as we go through the presentation; but generally speaking, the objective of this pilot program will be set up volunteer fishers to test electronic logbooks, optimize existing logbook software and to develop the IT infrastructure at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center that will be able to accept, receive and to store the data.

To give you a little bit of background, the demand for high-quality data to ensure sustainable harvest of marine resources is increasing. One of the best types of data that we have is the catch-per-unit effort; and with this in mind, over the last two and a half decades the Southeast Fisheries

Science Center has implemented a series of commercial vessel logbooks, beginning in 1986 with Highly Migratory Species Pelagic Longline and then going into the Gulf of Mexico in 1990 with fish under the Reef Fish Management Plan; the Atlantic Grouper and Snapper Fishery in 1992; in 1993 with the federally managed shark species; and then most recently the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries in 1998.

However, we are facing a requirement and a need to collect data that is at a finer spatial and temporal resolution. By collecting data at a higher resolution, we will be able to improve single-specie stock assessment, including the estimates of discards, the indices of abundance and how they relate to hotspots and recent fishing effects and also age composition, both in and away from those hotspots.

This is not to mention help us to determine environmental effects that are assigned to each catch effort observation. Further, by collecting data at a higher resolution, we will be able to improve our ability to assess both the social and the economic components of fisheries, including the profitability of fisheries and determining the effects of fishers and what choices they choose to make like which fishery they choose to participate in or some of the other options.

Another aspect of this, by collecting data at a higher temporal resolution, we will be able to support a greater variety of management approaches. However, the current logbooks are limited in what they can provide to us. They are limited in their ability to provide the spatially explicit data or reduce errors in variables recorded by fishermen.

To give you an example, coastal fisheries logbooks only collect data at a trip limit and require additional forms for collecting discard data. Pelagic logbooks require more sheets and indeed multiple sheets to collect data at a set level. By reporting electronically, we believe this would be timelier with fewer errors especially in the machine-generated variables such as time, date and location that will be auto-recorded.

To go back to the coastal fisheries, instead of fishermen going out and filling out one form for landings and another one for discards, one single file will be able to be sent to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. This will be timelier and we also believe that this will include fewer errors. We believe it will reduce errors by allowing only valid entries based on look-up tables, using a standardized code system.

Another note is that recently highly migratory species fisheries have been asking for more and more access to report electronically. By this process, we believe that this will satisfy that requirement or that request by the highly migratory species fisheries. The pilot project is divided into two main stages.

The first stage will be to develop the data standards. This includes defining the formats, the fields, and the definitions of each field to be submitted. Now, the standards for each of these data fields will be a coordination between the Highly Migratory Species Logbook Program, the Southeast Logbook Program and the Northeast VTR Program.

Additionally in the first stage we will recruit software vendors and develop an interest in the product. We will then deliver the standards to them. Now, currently we are working and communicating with about three vendors to modify existing software and bring it up to the standards set forth by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

Just to kind of talk about some of the vendors; these are all the different vendors here that we have been communication with over the last several weeks and months. The second stage will be to recruit volunteer fishers to participate in the pilot project; and we will do this by utilizing council meetings and our contacts through the existing logbook programs.

The Southeast Center will develop the infrastructure that will be used to receive and store the data; and then we will develop the hardware to the pilot's fleet for study. Currently we have about ten laptops and three tablets that will be randomly assigned along with the software. Now, ideally we would like to have a pilot fleet that spans all regions throughout the southeast; five vessels from the Gulf; five from the South Atlantic; and then three from the highly migratory pelagic fisheries that would be stratified by gear.

During the pilot, we will spend several months getting data, making updates to software and then returning that information back to the vendors for modifications. Vessels will record trips and send data for one month and feedback will be gathered and turned to the vendors. We will update the software and then test it for one more additional month. Then any additional feedback will be gathered and sent to the vendor for final modifications.

The total data collection time is estimated to be around six months. In the final stage we will finalize the software and all modifications to the IT infrastructure. Ultimately we would like to have an outcome that is a process that reliably captures new records and updates old records and moves them into the database.

What is our progress and our timeline for implementation? Currently we have developed the standards and we have sent those standards to vendors. We are working with potential vendors to increase participation throughout the southeast. Now, it is important to note that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center will not be responsible for building or maintaining the software.

The Southeast Center will develop the IT infrastructure to receive the data and to also store the data. It is up to the vendors to be able to develop software that meets the standards set forth by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Our tentative start date is January 1, 2015, for the pilot program; and this is for the commercial e-LOG reporting by the pilot participants. Finalizing the infrastructure and software changes should be complete by August 1, 2015.

Now, we've heard a little bit about the ACCSP's e-TRIPS software; and I want to talk a little bit about how the eTRIPS software will be able to complement the Southeast Fisheries Science Center standards. One is ultimately the eTRIPS software will be an additional software and an additional option for fishermen to have at their disposal.

This includes the mobile version that you just saw that will permit entry at sea and transmission when in cell range; and this could be done on mobile devices such as Apple, Android or

Windows Tablet. Vessels that cannot report from sea can report online once returning to port; so once again, these are additional options for fishermen.

We believe this also will be kind of a lower-cost solution than some of the private sector vendors. There are also some benefits to using the ACCSP e-TRIPS software. ACCSP would house the data and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center would pick up that data, which would simplify the infrastructure for collecting eREPORTS.

Now, as it stands right now, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center will require data on a finer spatial and temporal scale, which will require some modifications to the current eTRIPS software, which we will get into. What are the post-pilot implementation plans? We work with the councils to determine implementation strategies, whether this be voluntary or mandatory throughout the southeast.

We also need to determine the scope if it is to be mandatory, including what kind of vessels are excluded from on-board data recording; and then how would those vessels that are excluded, how will they report, whether it be a paper form or an electronic form once you get back to shore. We also need to determine the specific type of geographic resolution that we would like to have in our dataset.

We also need to determine some kind of timeline for implementation. As I said, we expect or we hope that the pilot program will be completed by August 1, 2015. After that, we need to determine what kind of implementation going forward. The next step will be to work with our partners, the ACCSP, GulfFIN and the private vendors that we have contacted to deploy software solutions for electronic logbook reporting throughout the southeast. I believe that's it.

MR. BELL: You can see how those two things are supposed to mesh together with communication; but eventually where we're ultimately going with this, remember, we had discussion of a joint amendment with the Gulf to deal with commercial logbook reporting. That is where we hope to end up is with a joint amendment and actually operationalize this type of stuff. Right now any questions for Dave or Brett? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you for the presentation; I really appreciate it. I know that some of the questions and comments that we've gotten from our fishermen who are participating in the northeast-permitted fisheries, southeast-permitted fisheries and HMS fisheries is they have a VMS laptop that they're required to have on board the vessel.

I guess in working with fishermen to pilot this and targeting five from the Gulf and five from the South Atlantic and you may be able to get that HMS overlap with – I mean, I'm sure you can get it in both regions since you've got fishermen in both regions who are participating in HMS fisheries.

I guess my question is I'm assuming that you guys are taking into consideration that they are required to have these VMS laptops on board. The questions that I've gotten or the comments that I've gotten are that they'd like to have sort of just one piece of equipment on board; so if

they're required to carry VMS, they'd like any electronic reporting software to be accessible to that piece of equipment.

MR. GLOECKNER: Right; part of the requirement of working with these other vendors is a lot of them have already explored that possibility. I know Brian's software will work on a few of the VMS units; so there is that option. I don't know if ACCSP has gone to that stead yet. That's why I wanted to look at a lot of different vendors and see what different options there are for fishermen. If they only want one piece of equipment, that may satisfy that. If they want to do something and have something separate, they could do that, too.

DR. DUVAL: And just to follow up; I know that we have some fishermen who are pretty proficient in the use of tablets; and so some of them might prefer to just have a separate tablet that they can work from. These guys are covered in a covered wheelhouse; so they're not having to deal with some of the environmental elements that small-boat fishermen are.

DR. PONWITH: I appreciate the presentation, of course, since it is exciting stuff. I just think about some of the conversations we've had in the last half dozen council meetings. I can think of several instances where decisions have been hampered because the resolution of the data that we have in our hands just isn't fine-scaled enough.

It is binned up by very, very large cells; but the questions we're asking are finer scale, and we're having to interpolate. I just view this as a really exciting step forward to be able to have the spatial and temporal scale data that we need to be a little more precise and use that to be able to guide good decisions when you're looking for new approaches to solving these problems.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes; I see this as a – like you were saying in closing – another platform or another method; but ACCSP has already established the receiving and storage warehouse. Why create another? You were saying one of the next steps is to finish completion of that receiving mechanism. When it is already there for ACCSP, why not go through it?

MR. GLOECKNER: It is just a different option. Some fishermen may have different needs. If they want to have a piece of software that actually does a little business calculations for them, records their catches and allows them to analyze that data. Olrack is another piece of software that is a little more expensive.

It actually has a fee associated with it, but it has a lot of business software integrated with it, too. There are different options. Now, that doesn't mean that the data has to go to Olrack and then the science center. It can go to Olrack and straight to ACCSP and be integrated with all the rest of the electronic logbook data; and then those two centers can pull from there. I don't think we're doing anything too redundant. We still allowing ACCSP or GulfFIN, if you're in the Gulf, to receive the data and manage the data; and we would just pull it from there. But that way all the partners could have access to it.

MR. BELL: And as we move forward, ultimately the goal of all of this is better data and more timely data, a process that works for our fisheries. As Michelle pointed out, we have guys that aren't in a nice covered cabin; and we've got fishermen that are working in small boats. We've

got to custom fit this thing and build it to provide options for our fishermen across a wide spectrum of fisheries. In all of this close communication is obviously essential to working this out; and we need to make sure we keep that going. Any other questions for Dave or Brett at this point? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: So you're sort of entering into Phase 2 now, it sounds like, with like getting into recruitment of folks to participate in the pilot?

MR. PIERCE: Yes, actually we've already contacted a lot of vendors; so that is on kind of the back burner. We're still continuing to work with them. We are actively recruiting fishermen so we're going to like use the councils and then also use our existing contacts. One thing I do want to add is we are starting to experience a lot more interest in a project kind of independently – we haven't really put it out there – for many of our fishermen to join, but we do have people's interest, so we're taking names down and we're going to start reaching out for them pretty shortly. Actually they have already started.

MR. BELL: All right, anything else? Okay, we appreciate you for coming and presenting. We've kind of run overtime a little bit, but we had a little bit of spare time to work with. We can go ahead and get to the last item here, which is a discussion of the Joint South Atlantic and Gulf Council Charterboat Reporting Amendment. Gregg; you're going to start us out?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, Mike Errigo is going to come up and give just a brief run through that draft report. You've got that as Attachment 7 in your briefing book. This is the technical committee that was looking at aspects of how to get reporting from the charterboat sector. They've got a draft report. They're reviewing that and that final report will be available for the councils in December.

The Gulf Council, at their June 25<sup>th</sup> Data Collection Committee, went through the report in detail. They are in agreement with the vast number of recommendations. They going a little bit farther and they're interested in looking at things like VMS, hail-in and hail-out ways to improve compliance.

I think the bottom line is you've got both councils very interested in moving forward. Again, this is on our work plan for next year to continue working with the Gulf on this joint amendment to implement charterboat logbook reporting. Mike will go through what is in their draft report. Then again similar to what we talked about with the commercial logbook, if it is your interest in us just continuing to move forward as we've discussed before, then we will continue in that path.

DR. ERRIGO: The summary report finally came out. The last time I was talking about this, I was just giving you my interpretation of what happened at the meeting. This actually has the recommendations and thoughts from the committee and the group. This just takes all the recommendations from the summary report that you all have; and I have them listed out so I can go over it real quick. We haven't done anything since the meeting.

Those are just all the people that were there. I'm just going to jump right into the recommendations from the group. For a for-hire logbook program, the recommendation is to

have census and a procedure to adjust for non-reporting and misreporting; that it be mandatory rather than voluntary; that it be trip-level reports with weekly submission; that it include non-fishing trips reports; weekly submission but flexible enough to accommodate more frequent submissions if necessary.

It is very much like the way the dealer reports are right now and a lot like where the commercial logbooks are going. Multifaceted approaches for using the number platforms to come up with minimum standards for developing collaboration for everybody to work together, such as GulfFIN and ACCSP for collecting data and for developing the program.

It is going to be a lot of people working together. The data collection process; the logbook data would be collected through the web or some kind of app, just like you guys already saw, submitted it to some place like ACCSP. Then they would get all that data, put it all together, go through QA-QC to make sure everything is the way it is supposed to be and then send that back to whoever needs it.

The states will get all their state data; the feds will get all the data necessary to track ACLs and all that. That's how we envision that to work. For validation; validation is going to be very important; and you guys talked a little bit about that. Doug had asked earlier about is there any way that eventually there would be no validation.

I don't you'll ever get to the point where there would be on validation. The hope would be you'd get the point where you'd only have to validate enough so that you can just line it up with your biological sample collection so that you wouldn't have to put more money on top of the guys out there collecting samples from biological data for assessments and things like that.

I think that would be your minimum coverage, but I don't think validation would disappear completely. We recommend having MRIP-certified methodology for validations or working with MRIP. This we can go region-wide. Using the pilot study that was already done, you need dockside validation of catch and dockside validation of vessel activity just to validate if somebody said that they didn't go out; did they really not go out or did they go out; or if they said they were out, did they really go out, that kind of thing.

Additional elements recommended were observer coverage. It would be nice to have some observer coverage to look at discards and things like that; depths captured, areas fished, things like that, release mortalities. That's where those kinds of observer coverage come in handy. Things to consider – and I know Gregg just mentioned the Gulf is considering VMS and hail-in and hail-out.

Accountability measures were recommended similar to the commercial dealers where if you have delinquent reports; you can't go on a for-hire trip until your reports go in; but we recommend consulting with law enforcement and NOAA GC to see what is appropriate and what can actually be done and what can't be done and that kind of thing.

For calibration; it should run concurrently with the current survey for at least three years. We recommend not using the logbooks for management or tracking ACLs until the overlapped years

are finished and the data is looked at and calibration workshops have gone through and you've developed a calibration methodology to go forward with; because we're currently running into a lot of bumps and bruises with MRIP changing.

If we don't have concurrent running of the new and old survey; that's causing strife; and so we recommend running them concurrently and not using the new data until that is done. Recommend including all the state vessels, because there was a question about should it just be the federally permitted vessels since this is the council and we really only have jurisdiction over federally permitted vessels.

If you only require federally permitted vessels to report this way, you're actually going to miss a bulk of the for-hire fleet. Then the recommendation is to work together with ACCSP and GulfFIN, if you're in the Gulf, and all the other end users involved, MRIP, SERO, Science Center, HMS, state agencies to coordinate and develop the program. It has to be a joint effort.

It is not going to be the council develops something, makes an amendment and it happens. We're going to have to work together with a bunch of different agencies. There are a lot of budgetary considerations that we have to look at before we go in. There will be increases in funding.

There will be a larger increase temporarily in the beginning for implementation and roll out, education and outreach and the implementation of additional infrastructure and personnel required to run the program. Then there may be higher ongoing costs than the current survey uses, but we're not sure what the difference in costs are; so right off the bat we need to develop an estimate of cost in relation to the current survey.

Some additional points that the council can look at deciding on is having just the federally permitted vessels versus state; types of accountability measures that should go into place; shouldn't there be different reporting options at least in the beginning, meaning instead requiring 100 percent electronic reporting?

Should you leave options for paper reports to come in, how would that work? Would you phase it out over time? Would you put a penalty on people who report via paper reports to encourage electronic reporting, that kind of thing, how would you do that? The vision is 100 percent electronic reporting. It is much easier to track and validate reports that way.

One thing to consider is that some of the state regulations are currently incompatible with mandatory electronic reporting; so it would have to go through a state legislature for things to change; so timing will be an issue in that respect. If you want to include VMS, hail-in, hail-out or do you want to include the ability of the system to evolve in that direction or do you just want to not consider that at all. The last couple of slides is just an overview of what we envision the program looking like; and it is everything I just talked about; just consolidated into bullet points. That's it. If you have questions or anything, feel free to let me know or ask away.

DR. DUVAL: I tried to listen in on as much of the meeting that you guys had as possible; so remind me what the next step is from here in terms of the committee? Do you have plans to

meet again? Is there communication going on trying to address some of the various issues that you've laid out?

DR. ERRIGO: Well, the issues are very quickly growing past what the committee can handle at this point. I think what is going to happen is we'll probably talk again after this council meeting. There was a lot things going on leading up to now outside of this technical subcommittee; so now that we're getting through this council meeting, we will probably at least e-mail or call again and see what the next steps are.

But, really, the next things in the process are going to be the council developing probably a working group of people from these different places who can put together this program. I have heard and talked with people from like MRIP and whatnot; they've done pilot studies already moving towards logbook reporting for MRIP.

Then in the north, as you heard from Mike Cahall, they're already moving towards logbook reporting for the for-hire sector. It is going to require a group of people, including someone probably from ACCSP and someone from MRIP and representatives from the states because each of the states is going to have to implement the logbook program.

North Carolina is already implementing their own. South Carolina has a logbook program, but it doesn't match up with the vision of what this electronic logbook reporting is. There are certain changes, from I understand, that would need to be made in the legislature before it get to this point with weekly mandatory electronic reporting.

I believe South Carolina is on a monthly paper reporting; and that takes a legislative change, which is a lengthy process. In terms of where some of the other states are, Florida wants to move towards electronic reporting, but they're having issues with their state versus federal for-hire fleets. There needs to be a lot of discussion at those levels; so that's where this has to go.

Also, there has to be development of the validation methodologies, which Mike Cahall was discussing earlier that they're already trying to come up with a standardized validation methodology that would apply for for-hire logbooks. Actually, he was talking about for-hire logbooks as well as the commercial; so once that is developed, it could just be rolled out. They're roll it out in North Carolina first because they already electronic logbooks in place; and then that should be able to roll out to the rest of the South Atlantic once everyone else comes on board. It looks like it is going to be a very slow process.

MR. BELL: So, a lot of players and a lot moving parts, but we're making progress; and that's good. Doug, you had a question, I think.

MR. HAYMANS: I was completely on board with federal charterboats reporting and still am. State boats is a different bear or different animal or different all that. One of the partners that I didn't see on your list of technical committees – and it may help me in that – is anybody from the commission.

If this were a commission plan, then I'm under obligation to do it; and it makes it easier for me to move through the process. Has there been discussions for it to be a Atlantic coast-wide thing; the charter/headboat reporting?

DR. ERRIGO: This technical subcommittee hasn't been involved in discussions there. However, from what I've heard, it does look like other areas are all lining up for electronic reporting of their for-hire sectors. I think it is moving that way. I think ASMFC is probably a partner that should be involved. Other council jurisdictions are already moving that way. It seems it would be fair to include them in. That would help at least when it comes to the state charterboats.

MR. WAUGH: The technical committee's work will be done in December when they deliver their final report. Then it moves to the councils; and what we have been looking at is a joint amendment between the Gulf and the South Atlantic to take the headboat reporting and apply those same standards to the charterboats. That's what we have talked about thus far.

Now there are a lot more details in here to be worked out and the two councils would have to come together. There are some interesting points about ASMFC; but that broadens it I think beyond the scope of what we would want to look at initially. Certainly, I think with the work that is being done up in the northeast with e-TRIP reporting, ASMFC may want to do this on their own to fill in.

Thus far the discussions, unless you change the directions, have been to focus on Gulf and South Atlantic; and our primary interest would be our federal-permitted fishermen; but then how do you account for catches of federally managed species by other individuals? We will have to look at all of that, but all that detail will come out as we develop the joint amendment.

DR. PONWITH: I think that captures it really well. The bottom line is that we can't succeed in the transition that profound without working really closely with the states. My view is the best way to work with the states is certainly to have them collaborating as individuals but also to have them represented through the commissions.

I think that is a really streamlined way to make sure those views are represented in the process. I can easily imagine once we get past this stage, which is basically providing the two councils with feedback on their charge by December, based on the direction that the two councils are heading in; that would be absolutely advisable to have the commissions involved.

MR. BELL: Right; and Chairman Anson is here from the Gulf, but we'll have an opportunity certainly in June with a joint meeting to perhaps engage on some things. But as they've already had discussions on this and kind of have a vision for things that they wanted, as Mike mentioned, we may have some differences and we will have to flesh all those out just like we do with any other joint plan. Perhaps June would be a time for that. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Just to something Gregg said; so 75 percent of my charterboats aren't federally permitted; and we know that there are some that are out there fishing without a permit; so that's illegal fishing activity. I have them now mandatory reporting and they still don't buy

that federal license; they reporting illegal activity? Are they then open to Lacey Act violations or anything else of that nature? I mean it is basically incentive for them to get right, I guess.

DR. ERRIGO: Just related to this issue; if we get the basic systems set up the way we had envisioned, once the infrastructure is there what we should be able to do is – so, let's say we get all the federal vessels in line and on this system and then like let's say North Carolina comes on board and all their boats, all their charterboats, or all their entire for-hire fleet gets on this electronic reporting-like logbook system and they follow all the same standards, then we should be able to just take all their data; and therefore North Carolina would then be completely on the system.

And then as other states come fully on board, let's say, with all their state-permitted for-hire boats, then they can just get into the system; so you can eventually get all of them on board; but if it set up the right way, it doesn't have to happen all at once.

MR. BELL: Yes; and that's a real good point. I view this as a step-wise process and there are certain things that will logically come first. Having a logbook system in place for as long as we have, it is one logbook system. Ideally what we would want to move towards in South Carolina is one system where perhaps initially they have an option for electronic or paper, whatever, but we maybe evolve out that over time.

My thinking would be the end product eventually down the line would be one system that covers everybody, state and federal, which makes it simple. What we were trying to do here was provide a system for reporting and capturing these particular data for the for-hire sector and then you're going to have an overlap with MRIP for a while.

The idea would be to then sort of secede from MRIP, I guess, and then MRIP could put its full forces towards dealing with the private boat sector. That's down the line; but that's maybe what we're shooting for and I think that was our initial thinking was just like the commercial fishermen are responsible for those data.

These professional fishermen would be responsible for their data and simply our whole data-capture system. It is not going to happen overnight. As I mentioned, there are many moving parts and many players and a lot of steps in the process; but again we're moving in the right direction. I appreciate the efforts of the committee and I appreciate the report.

Any other questions for Mike right now on the work of the subcommittee? All right, we're moving in the right direction and everybody is satisfied with that? That was the last agenda item I had; so any questions or comments regarding the work of the committee at this point? Mr. Chairman, I've either eaten half an hour into snapper grouper or provided a half an hour for lunch, I'm not sure. If we have nothing else, then I will adjourn the Data Collection Committee.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 o'clock a.m., September 16, 2014.)

Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcribed By:  
Graham Transcriptions, Inc.  
October 13, 2014

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