



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

**SG Private Angler Advisory Panel Meeting
Review of Amendment 46
November 2024**



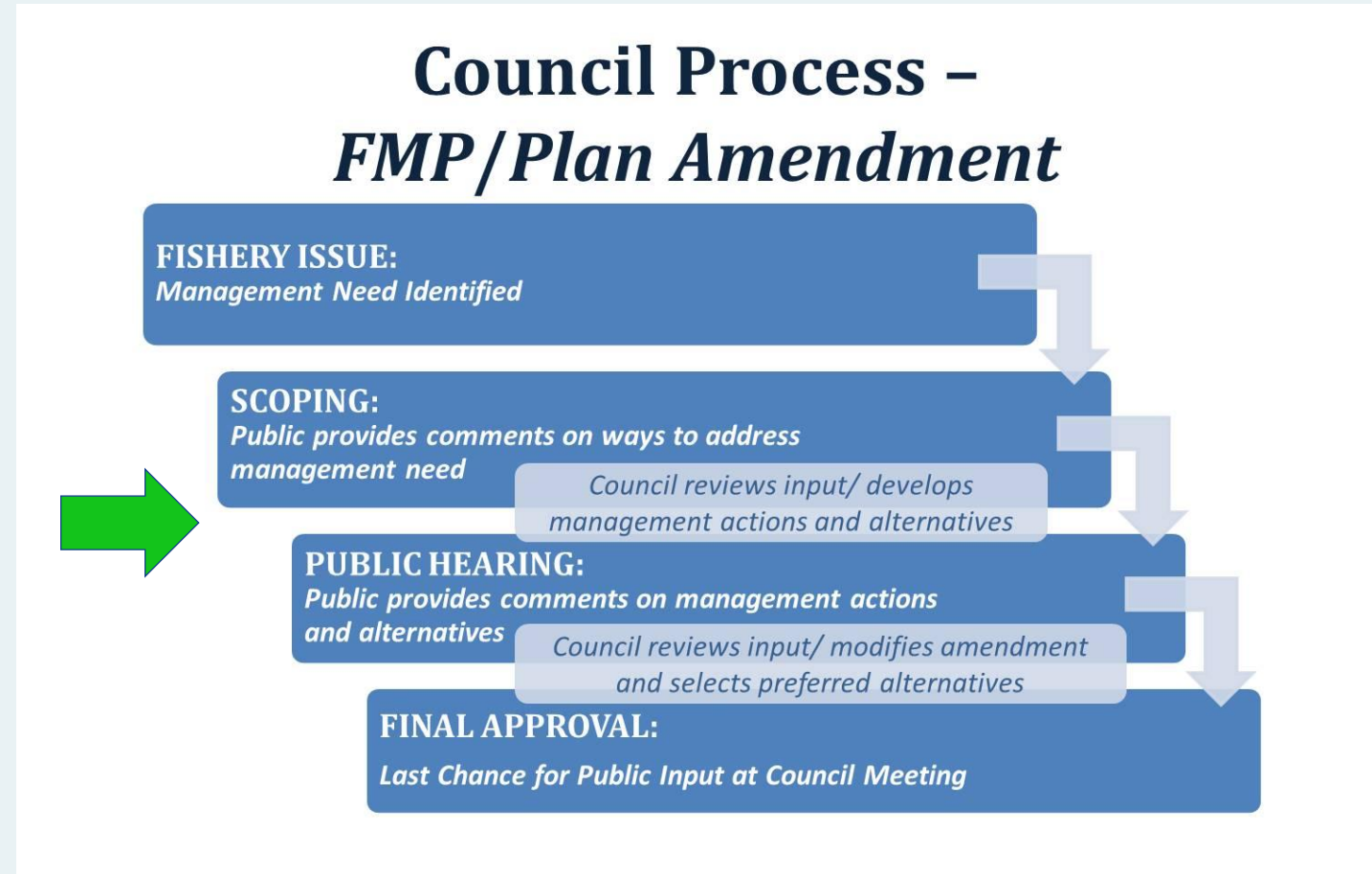
Objectives for this Meeting



- Provide a refresher of Amendment 46 and recommendations from the last AP meeting.
 - Purpose of a permit, perceptions, and messaging
 - Action 1 (Establish a permit)
 - Action 2 (Specify the species covered by the permit)
- Gather the AP's feedback on the remaining actions
 - Actions 3 and 4 (the education requirement)
 - Action 5 (Exemption from the federal permit and education requirement for states that have developed an equivalent permit and education requirement)

Where is Amendment 46 in the development process?

- Has gone through scoping and initial development.
- Up for approval of public hearings in early to mid 2025.
- Potential final approval in late 2025.



Overview of the previous Private Angler AP Meeting



- The first meeting of the AP took place via webinar on May 7, 2024.
- Included an orientation and introduction to Amendment 46.
- The AP provided initial feedback on the purpose, perceptions, and messaging for a permit as well as Actions 1 and 2.
 - Also a few points made that are relevant to Action 5.
 - Other actions not covered due to time constraints.

Previous AP Feedback: purpose of a permit



- It is important to make sure that anglers understand the purpose of the permit and how it will be used.
- The Council should keep in mind what the vision for the future is after the permit is established.
 - Will there be a subsequent amendment geared towards data collection and reporting? If so, that will influence decisions made in this amendment.

Previous AP Feedback: perceptions and messaging



- Many anglers have lost trust in the Council and NMFS.
 - Anglers may be willing to get a permit, but not as willing to provide additional data.
 - This permit is an opportunity to rebuild some of that trust. It is important to communicate how this permit could improve recreational fishing data and management.
- The permit is going to be viewed by some as an additional constraint on fishing.
 - Would be helpful to note that the Council is not currently considering reporting.
 - Clarify to the fishing public that this will be an open access permit.
 - Creation of a permit is in pursuit of better recreational effort and catch estimates that will hopefully contribute to the prevention of future access restrictions.
 - If there are not better estimates provided, the Council will be left with fewer options and may have to consider alternatives that include access restrictions.

Action 1. Establish a private recreational permit for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region



- A vessel-based permit would be a better option than an angler-based permit.
 - If there is an angler-based permit, it may deter some people from participating.
- Anglers may not be as experienced in fishing and fish ID as vessel owners.
 - A vessel-based permit would improve any subsequent sampling or data collection.
 - A vessel-based permit makes more sense if there is not a reporting requirement.
- A vessel-based permit would be easier to enforce on the water or at the boat ramp.
 - There would be only one permit to check versus multiple permits if angler-based.
- Satisfying the permit requirements should be the responsibility of the vessel operator.
 - It is preferable if the captain of the vessel is responsible for the education requirement and can better direct anglers onboard.



Rental and boat club vessel topic

- Boat club vessels are not likely a major concern.
 - Boat club vessel operators must be certified and there are often restrictions on how far offshore they can go.
 - Not accountable for a notable portion of participation in the snapper grouper fishery off North Carolina, South Carolina, or Northern Florida.
- There are more and more rental boat companies out there and some have boats that are fishing for snapper grouper species in federal and state waters.
 - In some scenarios it may be unclear who is responsible for getting the permit.



Action 2. Specify the species that would be covered by a private recreational snapper grouper permit

- It is an unnecessary burden on anglers to have to identify a subset of species that are covered by the permit.
 - Also if reporting eventually follows, it would be preferable to have the permit cover all species to facilitate reporting.
- The number of species covered is likely to affect estimates of participation.
 - The species covered could influence the universe of anglers and how well they represent actual participants in the fishery.
 - If the Council stays with all 55 snapper grouper species, consider implications for the Florida Reef Fish Survey.
 - Would Florida have to expand their program to cover all 55 species to allow the state to opt out of the federal permit requirement?



Action 2. Specify the species that would be covered by a private recreational snapper grouper permit

- Including all snapper grouper species is a big ask.
 - Many in the recreational fishing community may be skeptical.
 - Perceive NOAA and the Council as picking away at species that can no longer be harvested or that have severe restrictions on harvest.
- A concern with including all SG species is that some species may be caught incidentally (“over-subscription” of the permit).
 - Example: Greater Amberjack are caught at times when trolling for highly migratory species.
 - May be requiring people to get a permit that do not participate in the snapper grouper fishery but incidentally interact with some of the species.
 - May affect your ability to measure the “true” number of participants in the fishery.
 - What is the Council’s goal? Is it to count the number of people who are *targeting* snapper grouper species or people who are *catching* the species.
 - Also is the intent to eventually require people to report?



Questions so far?

- Up next in the meeting:
 - Move to the discussion document.
 - Gather the AP's feedback on the education-related actions (Actions 3 and 4) and an exemption from the federal permit and education requirement (Action 5).