

(From the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Report – October 2011)

Note: **Highlighted** items may be more appropriate for I&E Committee consideration.

Improvements to Communication -- The AP discussed ways to improve communication between Council and stakeholders and how the process can be improved in general:

- Incorporate video monitoring and anecdotal information from fishermen
- Marine reserve system to protect stocks that need protection and allow year-round fishing on other species elsewhere
- List of recommendations provided by R. Harris (pages 10-11 of this report)
- AP members also have the responsibility to reach out to their community and keep them informed of changes in fishery management
- **Have workshops (aside from the Q&A sessions at Council meetings) to get fishermen and Council members to communicate**
- **Evaluate whether the newsletter and other outreach materials are reaching the appropriate audience**
- **WHAT IS THE COUNCIL'S VISION?**
- AP members should make an effort to attend SEDAR and SSC workshops
- **Develop a "matrix" to show which fisheries are open and which are closed over time**
- Consider "keep what you catch" in management approaches?
- Consider state-by-state quotas. Make this a high priority.
- AP members (and Council members) would benefit from joint meetings earlier in the week of a Council meeting
- Annual AP report and AP meeting reports
- Council should re-evaluate sector allocations and reconsider sale of recreationally-caught fish so landings can be tracked better as the recreational sector continues to grow
- Data tracking system needs to be improved
- Lottery system for the recreational sector (this could also be used to improve estimates of recreational catch)
- Council should work to make timelines for management more realistic to minimize economic impacts
- Council should consider giving some fish back to fishermen. Consider changing seasons or make other adjustments to make this happen
- AP requests feedback from the Council on their recommendations, particularly when the Council chooses to deviate from them
- Council should consider implementing endorsements on licenses to improve universe of fishermen

**Communication Improvement  
Council to Stakeholder  
Submitted by Rob Harris, Snapper Grouper AP member  
October 2011**

*(Continued)*

### **Simplify the Terms/Actions being discussed**

- Explain in “layman’s” language
- Give examples based on Current Regulations and what difference “New” Regulations will have.
  - o IE: Lifting the 240’ Ban does not mean that anglers will suddenly be able to harvest Snowy Grouper.
- **Consider that you are addressing the “Silent Majority”**
  - o The Recreational Sector had no understanding of how the ACL Amend would affect their fishing habits, nor had input on the Allocations.
  - o IE: Snowy Grouper 97% Commercial 3% Recreational
    - Commercial ACL is measured in pounds
    - Recreational in numbers of actual fish

### **Form Advocacy Members from APs to attend hearings**

- AP members are considered by public as being representatives of the overall Stakeholder Users, various Sectors (Rec, Comm, For-Hire)
- Currently there is rampant mistrust by the General Public (fishermen) based on perceived misrepresentation by their advocate.
- Council focuses information being disseminated on factual data and will at times include “AP Recommendations/Preferred” or “Council Preferred” in public hearings.
  - o Include Vote counts (AP Voted 8 For and 5 Against)
  - o Include “Who” voted which way and have ready if asked
- In instances when the vote was close, have an AP advocate from each side of the argument available to present, or at a minimum, have a statement prepared by the “For” and “Against” members that will better reflect the process that was used in decision making.

### **Engage the APs**

- Use the APs to solicit input from the Public
- Provide Questionnaires for AP members to distribute and collect
- Use an “Online” survey service

### **Be Prepared to Use Public Input**

- Public is tired of being heard without being listened to.
- Impression is that special interest groups are either running or hold too much sway in regulations.

### **Get the Word Out**

- Newspaper
- Radio

- Engage the multitude of Fishing shows
- Social Media
  - Facebook, Gulf Council has a FB Page
  - Phone App for Regulations, Gulf Council has an App
- On-Line Fishing Forums
  - Multitude of Regional and National Forums in place
    - Gulf Council already participates

### **List Council and AP Members Affiliations**

- Commercial
  - Wholesale, Catch Shares, Fisherman, Sector Separation, etc..
- Recreational
  - For-Hire, Sector Separation, Retail, Comm Permits
- Science
  - SSC, Enviro, Corporate Rep, etc...
- Multiple AP participation
  - Member: Snapper/Grouper AP, Mackerel AP, etc...

### **Data Collection**

- Most either do not understand how data is collected/used or they doubt the information based on how it is gathered.
- Improve Data Collection

Will have to do better at Regional Regulations

- A Stakeholder living in Key West knows the fishery is different than what it is in North Carolina.
- Stakeholders tired of being treated as if they all fish in the same water.