

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

**Savannah Hilton DeSoto
Savannah, Georgia**

March 6, 2014

SUMMARY MINUTES

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Dr. Wilson Laney

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Jessica McCawley

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Observers/Participants:

Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Phil Steele

Dr. Jack McGovern
Doug Boyd
Pres Pate

Additional Observers Attached

The Data Collection Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Madison Ballroom of the Savannah Hilton DeSoto, March 6, 2014, and was called to order at 2:00 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Mel Bell.

MR. BELL: I am going to call to order the Data Collection Committee. Obviously we're starting earlier than scheduled, but when we finish we'll make up the rest of the day, go into Full Council and cover things that can be covered at this time. We should have plenty of time to do what we need to do.

The first item would be approval of the agenda. I have one item that we'll add to other business, but are there any other changes or anything that needs to be adjusted in the agenda? Seeing none; the agenda stands approved. Next would be approval of the December 2013 minutes. Are there any changes or edits to the minutes that need to be made? Seeing none; then the 2013 December minutes stand approved. That brings us to our first actual agenda item, which will be the Joint Gulf and South Atlantic Council Generic Dealer Amendment. That will be Jack.

DR. McGOVERN: Mr. Chairman, I'll go ahead and talk about the status of all three amendments there. The first one is the Joint Gulf and South Atlantic Council Generic Dealer Amendment. This amendment would implement a generic dealer permit and require weekly electronic dealer reporting. The Notice of Availability for the amendment published on December 19, and the comment period ended on February 18.

The proposed rule published on January 2 and the comment period ended on February 3. The final rule package is under review in the region. The Joint Gulf and South Atlantic Generic For-Hire Reporting Amendment for the South Atlantic; the final rule for that has been published and regulations were effective on January 27. This amendment requires electronic weekly reporting for headboats in the South Atlantic.

Then the Gulf Framework Amendment for For-Hire Reporting, the final rule for that published on January 3 and regulations became effective on March 5. This amendment requires electronic weekly reporting for headboats in the Gulf of Mexico.

MR. BELL: Are there any questions for Jack about any of those? We'll move to Agenda Item Number 4, which would also be Attachment 4B. Anna is going to take us through some background. I think since we do have some new folks on board; when did CE-BA 3 start? It has been a while, so I think some review of just sort of where we are and how we got here would be helpful.

MS. MARTIN: CE-BA 3; these are Attachments 4A and 4B in the briefing materials. CE-BA 3 started – the scoping meetings were held in January of 2012. But just to give the committee a little bit of background before Monica given an update on her report; the only remaining item in CE-BA 3 is an action for bycatch reporting.

At one point in time the amendment included actions for VMS, commercial and for-hire reporting; and it also included the actions for the Coral HAPCs that subsequently became Coral Amendment 8. At the December meeting in 2012, the council advised staff to revise the document and bring it back to the council at the March 2013 meeting for final review and approval at that time.

At the March 2013 meeting last year, the council reviewed and made changes to the document. The changes were based on recommendations from the IPT to clarify the wording of the purpose and need and also to revise the language of Alternatives 2 and 3 and bring it back to the committee last March for final approval with those changes.

Also at the March meeting last year, NOAA GC offered to prepare an analysis of how the council is currently meeting the bycatch requirements under the Magnuson Act. The council at that time voted to postpone further consideration of CE-BA 3 until after NOAA GC was able to provide this analysis to the council.

That was originally scheduled for the September meeting last year and was subsequently postponed until the December meeting and then delayed until the March meeting here this week. Monica can elaborate on those, but a lot of it had to do with the federal government shutdown and some other work issues. What we wanted to do was proceed with Monica updating the committee on the analysis for the bycatch analysis. Then we will look to the committee for guidance on CE-BA 3.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Anna, that was a good kind of recap of where we are. As you all are familiar, the Magnuson Act has certain requirements for bycatch. National Standard 9 states that conservation and management measures shall to the extent practicable minimize bycatch; and to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch.

Then the Act also requires that for any fishery management plan which a council prepares the council shall establish a standardized reporting methodology in the FMP to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery and include conservation and management measures that, to the extent practicable and in the following priority, minimize bycatch and minimize the mortality of bycatch which cannot be avoided.

As Anna has mentioned, the various iterations of CE-BA 3 has whittled down now to looking at really adopting I think the ACCSP standards for bycatch. When you look at the table that is the amendment, at least four of the FMPs that are covered in this amendment, which are Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Dolphin Wahoo and Golden Crab; it has what the table – I think it is Table 1 has what the ACCSP requirement standards are and what their current reporting requirements are.

Then it gives also another table in there or column with the level of coverage. Really, what is left for many of the FMPs is the one thing that ACCSP requires or one of the things that are not in the FMP is mandatory observer coverage. That is really what CE-BA 3 is focused on is mandatory observer coverage.

It discusses in the amendment the necessity of having that observer coverage to get necessary bycatch data. What the alternatives in the document don't discuss really, and they are really kind of silent as to who is paying for the observer costs; but in reading the economic analysis, it becomes clear that the costs are expected to be covered by the service and not by the fishermen.

For example, the economic analysis in Section 4 states the alternatives under Action 1 are not expected to have significant negative economic impacts to the fisherman unless the methods

used to implement bycatch and discard reporting resulted in something other than minimal time commitments.

Then for the administrative effects analysis, it states an observer program would have a significant administrative burden on the agency associated with the structure of the program, training and debriefing observers, education and outreach to the fishermen, and data analyses and costs.

Then there is a breakdown in the amendment or there is a table really, which lists – there are two different estimations of what it would cost for observers per day – I think it is almost per fishery – and then what a total cost would be. Within the last year, I would say within 2013, the Fisheries Service has disapproved several proposed measures in two to three different New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery management plan amendments that would have required the Fisheries Service to be responsible for the at-sea observer cost into future years.

The measures were disapproved because they were inconsistent with the Anti-Deficiency Act and other appropriations, laws, and policies that prohibit federal agencies from obligating or using funds that have not yet been appropriated or authorized. When I look at this amendment compared to some of the actions that were disapproved, I think that if you were to submit this amendment now, it would likely get disapproved under similar kinds of rationale; Anti-Deficiency Act and other types of funding.

The good thing is that in the Northeast Region they have an Omnibus Bycatch Amendment, so to speak; I'll just call it that. The Fisheries Service is working with the two councils to develop a shared-cost program for observers that meet all of the legal requirements, Magnuson, Anti-Deficiency Act and any other kind of budgetary acts.

There is an act called the Miscellaneous Receipts Act. I've learned a lot about some of these budget things, and there are all kind of acts. It is complicated but it is not impossible to figure out. I would recommend that you not take action now, that you monitor what is going on, and I can report back to you on how this process is proceeding in the northeast, and let them work out how to get this kind of program implemented in a legal way; and then come back and take a look at your observer requirements that you want to put into effect.

It is clear to me that you want to go with some sort of mandatory observer coverage; so to get there, I think that we should delay right now taking final action; look at what New England is doing; and then come back and readdress some of those things. Perhaps you might need some new alternatives in this amendment, but at least we would be able to get something that would be approvable and get what you want, which is better bycatch information probably through observers.

While we're doing that, I would also kind of urge you or maybe the staff to take a harder look at the standardized bycatch reporting methodology in place for each one of your FMPs, because I think that needs to be tightened up and made more clear to the public exactly what your methodology is and what is in place under each different fishery management plan.

MR. BELL: Thanks. Monica; that sounds like solid advice. Bob, did you want to add something?

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, I would like to second what Monica is saying. This was discussed some up at the CCC meeting recently. I didn't get involved in the discussion then because it seemed very complicated. After the meeting, I called Tom Neis, who is Executive Director up at the New England Council, so I could get a better understanding of what was going on up there in relation to how it would affect us in what we were trying to do.

Like Monica said, they went through a number of amendment types and some were disapproved. I think they were actually under a court order based on a lawsuit to move this direction. There are a number of things going on. When I talked to Tom, they spent a lot of time and energy to develop these things. Right now they are kind of hanging in limbo until they can figure out the legal way to move ahead and get these requirements in place.

I second what Monica said that we need to wait until this is all figured out; and then we can move ahead and we'll know we've got clear sailing and we're not going to run into anything that is going to be disapproved by the Secretary and something will be acceptable relative to what we need to do under the Magnuson Act.

DR. DUVAL: I am disappointed, but I am not surprised because we have been dealing with this at the ASMFC level. I chaired the Shad and River Herring Board for the past two years while both Amendments 5 and 14 were under development in the New England and Mid-Atlantic Council Region. A big impetus for those was to minimize bycatch of shad and river herring species in the Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel fisheries.

We've been getting updates on this. It was a long process to get those amendments developed and through the public hearing process and to try to coordinate the approaches because these fisheries are very closely linked. I think it was very disappointing to everybody involved in that process that pieces of those amendments were disapproved for the reasons that Monica outlined.

I disappointedly agree with Monica's advice to wait and see how things shake out in New England, because I think we want to have a high probability of success of whatever we submit. If we submit something now and then it just gets turned back to us, it seems like we're just wasting staff time and resources. Like I said, I am disappointed but I am I guess realistic about what is going on and what may happen up in New England that would affect our efforts down here.

MR. BELL: Yes, I would concur with that. I think this is important and we need to do it right. We want to make sure we've got a chance of success. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: I echo what Michelle said with regard to the efforts by New England and Mid-Atlantic to address river herring bycatch and shad bycatch as well in those Mid-Atlantic and New England fisheries. Just to add to what she said, if I remember correctly. Michelle, one of our assessments; I guess the Atlantic croaker assessment was not accepted for management advice, because we couldn't resolve uncertainties related to the discard estimates from maybe the shrimp fishery in that case. Until we get decent estimates of bycatch, I think it is going to continue to maybe affect the quality of the assessments that we can generate as well. The sooner we can address it, the better.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I don't think this is going to be a long drug-out process up there in the sense that they are just waiting around to figure out what to do. I've talked with the attorneys in our office who were up there, and they are actively working on a way to figure out how to get this done.

I have a PowerPoint where they presented a couple of options to the councils at their last meeting. Then they have an IPT formed where they are meeting regularly to flesh this out and figure out where to go and how to get it funded and all those sorts of things. I would think that we should have an answer on how to structure our amendments. It is not going to be another year, anyway. It may be a meeting or two or something like that. I would be glad to come back at the June meeting and give you an update as to where they are in relation to maybe where we should be at the same time.

MR. BELL: I think, for sure, if you could do that in June for us; that would be great. It is unfortunate what is going on up north, but if we can learn from this and somehow improve our product and then it has a better chance of success when we finally do submit it; that in a way I guess is good for us.

The other thing, as Monica said, we can have a little time to flesh out maybe some of the standardized methodologies or whatever if we need to do that as well as make any tweaks. Originally we were planning on following through in terms of kind of being almost finished with this, but at this point I think in terms of delaying final action on it; would that require a motion on our part or just direction to staff or how would we do that?

DR. DUVAL: I guess I would think direction to staff that we want to get an update on what is going on in the northeast at the June meeting; and perhaps taking into account Monica's suggestion to I guess tighten up some of the ACCSP bycatch module characterization, and description of what we have in the document right now and bring it back in June. Unless staff wants a motion, it seems like that would be okay.

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, I think direction to staff. Monica has already said she will keep in touch with the attorneys and I'll keep in touch with the EDs up there. We've got people that are involved at the ASMFC level. I think when we come back in June, we'll have it on the agenda and see where we are.

MR. BELL: Gregg, do you feel like you've now got what you need?

MR. WAUGH: Yes; so we'll beef up those sections of the document and include it for the June briefing book along with a status update of where we are.

MR. BELL: That sounds good. Any other comments on that; questions or anything else? That takes us to the next item on the agenda was Joint South Atlantic and Gulf Council Generic Commercial Logbook Reporting. That was going to be a report.

MR. WAUGH: Yes; that is Attachment 5 in your briefing book.

DR. PONWITH: Yes, Attachment 5, just a really brief update on where we are on the Commercial Electronic Logbook Reporting Pilot Study. Again, we're working on data

standards; and part of starting something new that really is influential in its success is to set those data standards and do really good planning at the onset.

We're working very closely with the Northeast Region to get lessons learned from work that they've done to make sure we've got compatibility with work that is being done already; and then also look at the requirements we have in our region. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center were looking at modifying this Fisheries Landings Data Reporting System and using this system for our work here in the Southeast Region.

We are at the same time compiling lists of fishers who are interested in electronic reporting to work on this pilot. Just as a way of updating, the Gulf Fishermen's Alliance have been working with us as well; and they've adopted a particular system for their IFQ Bank and Electronic Log Reporting; and those preliminary standards are provided by the project again.

The current activities that we're working on are developing the support tables. These are kind of the data base structure. Finalizing the documentation of the data standards that we have been working on and compiling this list of fishers and going into the future, it will be to take the standards we've been working on developing and get them to vendors to get proposed software solutions.

We don't tell them what to do; we say this is what we want, and then they create designs that can deliver what we need based on those requirements; use the results of that to build the tables and the translation codes to be able to get the data into a common format, to contact our pilot participants and go ahead and begin the testing of the pilot system. That is the progress to date; any questions?

MR. WAUGH: More a question for the committee; when we were working on this and when we had this as a part of CE-BA 3; the idea was to allow fishermen to be able to report their information electronically instead of submitting the paper logbook. This effort now is looking at an on-board electronic logbook, which after going through the public hearing process for VMS and looking at the cost for VMS; it would be minimal relative to the cost for an electronic on-board logbook in terms of the cost to the fisherman.

The fact that the completion of this pilot and any likely implementation are years down the road; what is the committee's interest in looking back at creating a way for fishermen to provide their information electronically now, rather than submitting the paper logbook?

MR. BELL: Yes; and to that point, we did hear that in the South Carolina Snapper Grouper Meetings that we had, port meetings, there is a lot of interest – not quite enthusiasm, but there is interest I think in doing that. We heard that over and over again. The fewer steps, the simpler the reporting can be, they seem all on board with that. If we can make it simpler – and I was catching a little grief in terms of still – because South Carolina still does paper reports; I was catching some grief at some of these meetings.

I think there is interest in that and we'll talk about this later; but both Michelle and I picked up on the fact that in discussing electronic technologies for reporting and monitoring; that is probably the one thing that we have got really good interest in and support for from the industries and folks here. What do you all think about that?

MR. COX: I was just going to say the way we're reporting right now on the commercial side is very hard. A lot of the times you don't know if the logbook got submitted, if they received it, because there is no confirmation on any of that stuff. A lot of times you go to renew your permit and you find out then three months ago they didn't get some information. As far as logbook reporting, it is just great to have some kind of confirmation knowing that information has been received at the science center. I'm ready to move forward with it.

DR. PONWITH: This is interesting – they are related but different things – the on-board reporting versus taking the logbook that they report on paper right now; and instead of doing that, convert that to something electronic. I think this is a good discussion to have. They are two different products.

My question is as you think about that and as we hear from people in the industry, if we weren't able to do those simultaneously, what is the premium? Are they more eager to be able to report that logbook electronically now than converting to a trip-by-trip system? I'm not saying we can't do both right now. It helps us to be able to gauge the question and kind of gear up for being responsive once you've had a chance to contemplate.

MR. BELL: That might be something as we go through the additional port meetings – particularly that North Carolina is up next – that Amber and the folks involved in that can try to extract some information or opinions out of people on some of these things. I think we'll probably hear a lot about it up there. Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I think just from our fishermen in North Carolina that I've talked to, particularly those who have both northeast permits and southeast permits and HMS permits – you know, that is three different sets of reports that they have to submit – I think it depends on which fisheries you're fishing in, because a lot of those guys are required to have VMS on their vessels, anyway, because of HMS.

If they are going to be required to carry a certain type of hardware on board the vessel, then I think they would just as soon have a product for reporting that could be on that piece of equipment as opposed to having to invest in another piece of equipment. I'm sure that is part of the conversation that Bonnie's staff has been having.

Then some of those same folks, they would rather report on their iPad and have something that they are carrying with them where they can do that. I'm thinking of the electronic reporting system that just went into place for the headboat sector. You can use your phone, you can use your iPhone, you can use a tablet or you can actually physically go and log in on a computer, which you have to do anyway to kind of set up your account and who is allowed to report and that sort of thing. You have three options for submitting that information. Obviously, I don't know the technical details of how all those fold together; but it is my understanding that Bluefin Data developed the software for at least the phone and tablet application, and I'm assuming the site where you log in on the computer to develop that.

That is maybe not a very clear answer to Bonnie's question, but I think it depends on which fisheries you are participating in. That said, the broad synopsis is that people are interested in being able to report their information electronically; but don't make me buy three different laptops.

MR. WAUGH: In terms of getting some input from people; I know the first question they are going to ask is, well, how much is that electronic logbook going to cost me? Again, going back to our recent VMS experience, we were talking about giving them the equipment for free. Now they would have to pay installation, and they would have to pay any future replacement, but it was the ongoing operating costs even that were a problem. Do we have any idea when we get to the end of the project where there is going to be some sort of electronic logbook that is going to go on the vessel; what approximate cost that would be?

DR. PONWITH: Establishing the pilot to look at what the software requirements are, what the hardware requirements are; the pilot is going to be a really important step in understanding that very question. Right now we're not certain how much it is going to cost to implement this, both on punching the buttons and transmitting the data side, and also on what it is going to take to maintain the system to receive those data.

The pilot will help us scale that. This is valuable because right now there isn't a funding line for funding this; but a really important step in figuring out how to pay for it is knowing what it is going to cost. This will give us empirical data on what the costs are, what potential cost savings in terms of other data collection systems this will actually augment would be, and kind of do that math. We don't have the answer to that question yet, but I think the pilot is the tool to get us the answer.

MR. HAYMANS: Although I wholeheartedly support electronic reporting, and I'm happy to see us moving there, I have in the very recent past encountered individuals who do not own computers or Smartphones, refuse to report their information to us that way and want paper. We need to keep at least for some foreseeable future an option out there for them.

MR. BELL: Trust me, not everybody is in favor of it. It depends on the fishery; even within the fishery, it depends on your vessel. It is a lot of things. We still have a lot of people in South Carolina that like the paper, because the paper is what they have always dealt with in terms of reporting and stuff. Again, we are going to talk about this a good bit later.

We've got a whole section to talk about electronic technologies and things. One of the things that was made clear I think out at the meeting we went to is that whatever you do, you need to make sure you have a very clear understanding of the purpose, the goals, what you are trying to accomplish; and consider you have to go into it with your eyes open, understanding all the costs, and it is going to rub some people wrong, obviously. It may be that not one size fits all in terms of what you come up with. There may be different options available. In general, things are just going that way in terms of reporting.

The folks that do want it, what I've heard is they are looking for efficiency, they are looking for particularly non-redundancy, if they can avoid redundancy in reporting, timeliness. A lot of the guys are really on board, obviously, with timely reporting and understanding why timely reporting is such a big deal, because it has to do with potentially closing fisheries at times.

MR. MAHOOD: I might point out also, Doug, it wasn't too many years ago that the council members wanted paper in front of them and nobody had a computer in front of them. As time goes by, things do change. I know what you're talking about in the fisheries, though. I talk to folks all the time that – can I get paper, can I get paper, please send me the paper.

You do have some folks that are going to change very slowly, but you have others, like Mel said, that are very progressive and know that it is going to be a much easier way for them to do business. It won't be a mess, you won't have stuff laying around that you have to worry about and this type of thing.

I think over time we will see everybody. Maybe one day they will have a chip in their head and they can just tell us what they caught and it will just go out on the airwaves. Take your iPhone and ask Seri to transport it back to the Regional Center or the Southeast Center. There are all kind of things going to happen in the future.

I tell my kids this all the time; can you imagine in ten years in your life what you're going to see in electronics and communication and this type of thing? It is just amazing what we have seen in our life just in the last ten years. Even though I understand where you are coming from with the paper, it is going to change.

MR. COX: I've got a couple of fishermen that come to me a lot of times when we're buying fish from boats. Just last week there was a guy, he was seven trips out, which was probably about four months; it went all the way back into October. We were able to sit there with our state trip ticket program and help him get everything lined up and get it back in.

But if we can just go ahead and get a system in place that people that voluntarily want to go ahead and start the process; it will make it so easy, because it is very cumbersome to carry all that paperwork and stuff around; and the guys when they come in from fishing, the dealers can actually help them do it right there as we're doing it.

MR. BELL: Yes; the dealers have been dealing with this for a while. That is a good resource up on the Hill. You can kind of deal with things.

MR. CONKLIN: Mr. Chairman, I am not on your committee, but I tend to agree somewhat with Jack. I think as dealers we have to report electronically and with paper. If we could get maybe Mr. Peterson with Bluefin Data Program or someone to come in and give us a presentation on what it would take, or somebody else even on what it would take and show us where the data goes; because I know as a dealer I report for snapper grouper and HMS and everything on one report. But the data sometimes gets lost; there are bottlenecks and blocks and technology.

It is not a perfect system by any means; but if we could go ahead and get the wheels turning, there is no reason why – especially at the fish houses or something dealers would be willing to in some way have an extra program or something. It doesn't cost us anything that I know of directly – but, you know, to go ahead and get the ball rolling on this and start getting some fishermen familiar with it. It is has been a few years and dealers are still getting used to it. If we don't start now, then we're just kicking ourselves and stepping on our own feet. Thank you.

DR. PONWITH: To that point; if it is to give a presentation on how the system is working for the headboat program, which is using that approach, I think that would be fine. If what we're talking about is the pilot is looking at reporting from a vessel, which is something completely different than what I'm hearing now; that is we have a piece of paper, a logbook that has to go in, is there a way that we can submit that electronically instead of transmitting it on paper.

That is a completely different thing. We'll look into that; but what I would like to do is not jump ahead straight to a vendor; don't go straight to the solution. Let's talk about the requirements of that first and understand what I'm hearing is that we would want it to be optional so that people who don't have computers can still submit theirs by paper.

I think that is an important part of the discussion. If it is optional, we basically have to have two systems; one to manage paper. By system I mean end-to-end; I don't mean it is the end-to-end process; so an end-to-end process that would handle the paper and end-to-end process that would handle electronic submission of those logbooks; and figure out what kind of steps it would take to put that in place and what the gains on that would be.

Because, you know, handling paper is expensive. My view is it is worth exploring this as an alternative, because we could actually experience not only efficiency savings by allowing people if they so chose to submit those logbooks electronically, but we could potentially be saving some money as well.

MR. BELL: I think as Bob was saying progress happens and things change. The state gave me this cool Smartphone a while ago. I had to get my teenage daughter to show me how to use it. I guess I am part of the generation that is struggling a little bit with transitioning to modern technologies or whatever.

I'm still very upset as an underwater photographer that they decided to do away with film. I have all these Nikonos cameras and I knew how to use them, and I hate digital underwater. That is just kind of the way things progress and you've got to work with people. We've dealt with this some even when we were going to the dealer reporting.

It wasn't necessarily easy and some of our guys took to it and some of them didn't. Some of them just said, "Nope, that's it, I'm out. I'm not doing this anymore." But eventually what you want at the end of all of this is you want an improved process, and that can be efficiency and timeliness and quality control. Ultimately that is again why goals are very important in all this is you want to have a sense that you've gone through this and now you are better for it. It will have some bumps and hiccups along the way.

DR. DUVAL: Just a quick question for Bonnie on I guess the second slide; what is FACTS?

DR. PONWITH: I had that acronym up and I have just lost it. Let me double check on that again. It is an acronym. I had it up on my screen and I've lost it, so let me circle back and get that to you.

MR. BELL: Anything else, other questions, comments, observations? Let's go ahead and move on to the next item; and, Bonnie, you can come get back with Michele whenever you find that. Acronyms can be challenging. The next item is Joint South Atlantic and Gulf Council Generic Charterboat Reporting Amendment. I think Gregg is going to talk to us a little bit about that first.

MR. WAUGH: Yes; the letter that was sent out is included as Attachment 6. We've received appointments from everyone except ACCSP and HMS. We will follow up with them; but John Carmichael is our staff representative on that. Mike Errigo is going to provide some support, but

John will be our lead on that. John Froeschke from the Gulf Council is their staff person. Dr. Andy Strelcheck from the Southeast Regional Office is their representative.

Ken Brennan and Vivian Matter are the Southeast Fisheries Science Center representatives. This will be in the committee report that you will get. Dr. Katie Drew is the ASMFC representative; and Dr. Ron Salz is the MRIP representative. We've got all but two appointments. The Gulf Council discussed this issue, both the letter and the issue of electronic reporting for charterboats quite a bit at their meeting.

They passed a motion to develop a joint framework action to establish electronic reporting or other approved methods within the federally permitted reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics charter fishery. They are interested in moving forward. That is what you all have identified as our goal is to get a weekly electronic reporting for the charterboat section as well.

We've asked the technical committee to look at the issues surrounding that. The Gulf's question, as Carrie has explained it to me, is they are interested in moving forward. In our letter we sort of indicated, and your intent expressed thus far is for that technical subcommittee to work and present results to us in December. The Gulf is asking if that can happen a little sooner.

They would like to see results by the end of the summer. It seems to me this is going to be a new item, a new workload on all the individuals on this. It is not going to be an easy issue to deal with; and Pres may want to elaborate on this some. The letter, which I will attach to our committee report, also from MRIP lays out some of their rationale for keeping charterboats in.

This is an issue that was discussed early on with ACCSP, and there was an attempt to have the charterboats put under a logbook program. That argument was lost at that stage. Our plan is John and I will get together after the meeting and sort of flesh out a timeline; and then he would contact all these individuals and see what the schedule is.

But I don't think it is feasible to try and get them to have that completed by the end of the summer. I don't know if John wants to elaborate on that; but he's got a lot on his plate as do all the individuals that are going to be appointed to this. I would like some guidance to provide back to the Gulf in terms of what our timing is.

MR. BELL: Our original timing as it was in the letter was December. I tend to agree with you. I can't imagine it – and I think, John, you seem to indicate December would be good if it just happened by December, I guess. Are they hard over on that; are they negotiable?

MR. WAUGH: I think she was just expressing that their council discussed this a lot and expressed an interest in moving forward more quickly; could we and what sort of timing? I am not hearing anybody thinking that summer is feasible. When I talk with her and Doug, we'll explain what our timing is and why.

MR. BELL: Yes, there is a lot going on and people are already sort of overtaxed. I was thinking December would actually be – if we could do it by then, that would be fortunate. If that is okay to communicate that back, that is what we will do. Is there anything else on that; any questions or further discussion?

MR. WAUGH: One issue that we could discuss with them and the councils could begin to work on are some of the details of a Charterboat Electronic Reporting Program. What we've asked the technical group to do is to look at the mechanics and impacts associated with removing charterboats from MRIP.

The other side of it is if we're interested in moving forward with similar requirements that we have imposed on headboats, the same thing on charterboats; then there is stuff that the councils could do; and that may address the Gulf's interest in moving forward and certainly ours as well. There may be an opportunity for some work laying out some of the details of the program at the same time that technical group is working.

MR. BELL: Right; that would just kind of speed things along a little bit better. That makes sense. That has already been kind of thought through, I would think. Is there any other discussion on that? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I'm glad to see that we're taking steps, albeit small steps, to move forward on this. Everybody can't do everything all at once; and that is clear. There are a lot of other competing priorities as well. I think we've got a committee now, great! I'm really excited.

MR. BELL: That is what I was thinking; progress is progress; take it and move with it. Well, we can go on to the next item then. The next item would be Electronic Technology Workshop and Implementation Plan. This would be Attachments 7 through 11 in your briefing book. If you would like, we can put those up on the screen.

We can put them up one at a time; and if you have any questions or anything you want to comment on specifically, we can do that. It is just a series of different summaries of things. The first one is Attachment 7, which is a summary of the workshop prepared by George Lapointe; and you remember George briefed us on this whole thing when it was started.

I am assuming you've had a chance to look at it. If there is anything striking in there – and I had some comments later, but I thought George did a nice job of summing things up, anyway. Keep in mind George has a timeline, George has a task and he will be working with us. That is the other thing is that there is going to be a lot of interaction between the councils and George putting this together regionally.

Some of us I guess will be hearing a lot more from George or talking a lot more with George about this as we move along. Of course, the idea is each council area is going to be a little different in terms of how their regional plan might look; but ultimately there will be this national plan. Does anybody have anything specifically about anything in George's comments there that stood out that you want to ask about or comment on or agree/disagree with?

DR. DUVAL: I am sure we'll get into this as Mel and I provide sort of our perspectives on the workshop. It was great; it was very well organized and very well run. It was very information-dense. I guess just in George's summary I would just note that he uses the phrase "electronic monitoring" as a catchall, but it is electronic monitoring and electronic reporting and it is really electronic technologies; and I think we need to be very clear about that.

The interest in our region is electronic reporting; that piece of it. That is the only comment I would make on his summary is people are going to read this and think electronic monitoring and cameras on vessels. There was certainly a lot of information about that and a lot of information about VMS, but I think Mel and I were pretty clear in what our interest was in attending. I would just make note of that sort of nomenclature kind of thing.

MR. BELL: Yes; that is a real good point. I made that clear out there several times; because when they would use the term “electronic monitoring”; well, I thought that was more generic. They were in a lot of little breakout sessions and things and when they are talking about electronic monitoring, it was actually monitoring-type things like cameras and things like that or VMS or something.

A better word to use would be just discussing an electronics technologies plan or something; and then that can be subdivided into monitoring and reporting. We both had the same thing. I also mentioned Robert Johnson was out there from the Snapper Grouper AP as well. Robert was in there. What we tried to do out there was we pretty much weren’t in the same breakout sessions, so we tried to cover a number of different areas to see what all was going on.

The workshop itself was very West Coast/Northeast heavy. I will call them big fisheries, fisheries that have television shows and a lot of money and where electronic systems and things were no big deal for them. Being from the southeast, we were slightly – I’ll not say like a duck out of water, we were just a little bit in a different place than they were.

That is probably the best way to put it; but it was a good workshop. They covered a lot of stuff. If you would like, we don’t have to put the attachments up there. The next attachment was Attachment 8 in your briefing book, which is just suggested ideas, things written down by council area. This came out of the workshop.

You can see where these are just things that they captured that they have put down. You will see there are things in there under Southeast Region, General. These are things that came out in the discussions and all, sort of a summary. Then there is a South Atlantic Council area, some things that they tried to capture.

You might pay particular attention to those, which would be on Page 2 and 3 of that particular document, Attachment 8. No big surprises. It was interesting. I got an opportunity to describe the snapper grouper fishery throughout our region to them. It was very different from some of the fisheries where a lot of electronic technology is used right now in some of the big fisheries, big boat fisheries; New England or Alaska or the Pacific Northwest area. Just a whole different world – I mean, if you think about the snapper grouper fishery where we have everything from skiffs down in the Florida Keys to maybe 50-foot boats up towards North Carolina; that is just a real wide range of vessels in your fishery. We have learned this going through the discussions of VMS.

A piece of electronics isn’t supported as well on a skiff as it is on a 55-foot boat. We were a little unique perhaps in that particular fishery compared to some of the big fisheries that were really invested in this technology already. That is covered in Attachment 8 if you get a chance to look at that. There are just things that were sort of highlighted that were pulled out of the meeting.

Then Attachment 9 is a draft regional electronic technology implementation plan contents; again just summary type stuff. It has the goal, kind of what they are hoping to do here to track along. The overall goal is to establish operational EMER systems in each region and also with Atlantic HMS.

Again, the idea is each region is going to kind of do something a little differently, obviously, because we all have a different suite of fisheries and folks to deal with. Michelle pointed this out in her comment, the objective of monitoring regime. We have got to make sure – as she said, we keep saying reporting. That doesn't mean that monitoring at some point is totally – some aspects of monitoring is off the table.

I think our region in the southeast, there is a lot more interest in and acceptance of electronic reporting right now, which is what we just talked about in the few previous items. That is where terminology is very important. You have to make sure folks are clear with that and that we might want to stay away from that overall electronic monitoring and trying to summarize everything that is going on. We just need to be very clear. Particularly in our region I think what we'll find is an acceptance of the reporting aspect.

The recommendations on regionally specific means to resolve technical, scientific, budgetary process; so this is just again a summary of the things coming out of the meeting. Then Attachment 10 is just a summary. Again, these all came out of the meeting. Cross-regional issues identified as part of the NMFS ET initiative – there are some things that apply region to region and will be common to each region.

Maybe some of the things; it might be simpler to just tell you a few things that stood out to me, and then Michelle can say a few things just so you know because we were in different breakout sessions. I was in one breakout session, which was dealing with legal issues associated with data and stuff. It was a session primarily with law enforcement and attorneys, which was interesting.

What I got out of that was that there are a lot of considerations. We can use technology to collect a lot of data, and we can collect a lot of data fairly rapidly. Well, now you have these data. Well, you have to store the data. If you are talking about observers, you can use human observers on boats, and human observers are on a boat and they fill out a report or observation forms or however they do that. You could also then perhaps use a camera-type observer.

Well, you still have to convert what the camera sees into some type of report and then those data have to be stored. The videos have to be analyzed. In some respects you might be able to save some money, but in some respects electronic monitoring or reporting; there are a lot of costs, let me put it that way. Particularly with the monitoring stuff – and this came out in the legal session – so now you have video.

You have video of things taking place on the deck of a boat with various people. Depending on what kind of boat it is, if it is people for-hire or it is people that are just employees of the boat; so you see things on that video. What can that video actually be used for in terms of legal actions or things like that?

There were a lot of detailed discussions from a number of attorneys about that sort of thing, what you could and couldn't use data for, a lot of sensitivity to the confidentiality of those data, and

maintaining the confidentiality of those data. Then if something were to somehow be used because of violation of something that was seen; then there is chain of custody.

It is rather interesting. Electronic means of collecting data like that can simplify things, but they can also make things even more complex, too. Then keep in mind you have to also have an infrastructure to support all of that. You've got to have a whole bunch more IT type people. It can be very expensive; but you just have to go into this realizing that with your eyes wide open, understanding that technology is great, but it is not always cheap necessarily or not a lot of work.

In Attachment 11 are some comments I made. You can look at those, but that was my quick assessment of some of the other attachments. I will say this and then I will shut up and let Michelle say a few things. Over and over again – and Sam Rauch made this clear -- what is critical in this is understanding what the goals and what the objectives are.

It is really cool that we have this technology. We can do great things with it; but what you don't want to do is just do it because you can do it. You have to go into it with a really clear understanding of your goals and objectives. You have to have that in place before you proceed. You have also got to have appropriate regulatory action and authority policy in place to implement stuff.

People have to be on board with it – and that is part of what we talked about earlier; not everybody is necessarily going to be happy about it or on board with it; but you've got to educate them properly and give them an opportunity to accept it. Communication is going to be real critical in this whole process and making sure the public understands what we're talking about, why it is important, why it is valuable, and why it is of interest; clear terminology, as Michelle said.

You want to make sure, again like I said earlier, on the end of this that you have somehow improved efficiency and there are benefits from doing it. You want to be better off than you were before. Any system you put in place has to be efficient. It has to be scalable to your fishery. Remember one size isn't going to necessarily fit all in the snapper grouper fishery related to certain things from that 17-foot skiff all the way up to a 55-foot offshore boat.

You have got to have flexibility built in. You want to avoid redundancy in stuff. This was I think important is using off-the-shelf technology. There is a lot of off-the-shelf technology that is out there that can be employed without having to like reinvent an entirely new system or something. Once you commit to it, you have got to be prepared to stick with it and all the costs associated with it. Michelle, do you have any overall summary comments from the meeting?

DR. DUVAL: I think one of the things that I took away is that electronic technologies are a shiny new bauble; and just because it is a new bauble it doesn't mean we should jump all over it. Mel touched on all of the really important planning pieces. I went to a workshop on pilot studies and there were several elements of success kind of things.

The managers need to know their needs. The industry needs to outline their operational needs. You need to have realistic needs for your research. As Mel already mentioned, enforcement and IT need to be at the table early. I think that was one of the big things is in some situations, the IT folks were not at the table and having that framework and infrastructure is really important.

There were folks there from the EU, from Australia, from Canada; where they have implemented a lot of these technologies in their fisheries. One interesting thing I found was that there were quite a few folks there who did not consider VMS to be electronic monitoring. That was a third technology.

There was electronic reporting, electronic monitoring and VMS was a third technology; so that was kind of odd. It was like I don't know how that would play out down here. I think one of the other things, especially from folks in Australia and Canada, was the agency should not feel like they have to build everything.

Set the standards for your system and allow private enterprise to go out and provide the products. You just have to clarify what are your standards for the data that you want to collect. I think from the pilot program workshop was you know your first couple years are really going to be the most expensive, because that is when you are taking your step-wise approach to implementation.

It was interesting to hear some of those folks from other countries say how in the U.S. most pilot projects have been relatively unsuccessful because they haven't had implementation as one of their goals. A lot of them have been proof of concept kind of things, which is great. You need that proof of concept to make sure it works; but you have to have that as one of your goals.

I think the only other thing I would say also with regard to a pilot is you can't really confuse the cost of a pilot with the cost of full implementation. Bonnie alluded to that earlier. The true costs really aren't going to be known. You actually have to project those out. The cost of your pilot is not going to be the same thing. I think that is about it. I think we should look towards private enterprise as well in terms of moving forward. It shouldn't be incumbent upon the management agency to build everything I guess is what I'm saying.

MR. BELL: Just following up on that; that is another thing, too. It seemed particularly with the Pacific Northwest, Alaska and New England Fisheries, which are a little bit bigger, a little more money; industry was certainly involved in or helped and funding wasn't quite as much an issue as it might be down in our region, perhaps, but this is bigger industries, this is bigger fisheries; a little more capital to use. That is why we were a little different than the other regions. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: For you or Michelle, either one, I was interested in hearing a little bit of elaboration about what the gist of the discussion was on the Number 9 Item you have listed on Attachment 10 there, which is the information and confidentiality issue. Was the issue mostly about how to maintain confidentiality?

Did anybody express the opinion that since it is a public trust resource that information, at least the landings information or the harvest information ought to be public; was there any discussion of the issues that maintaining confidentiality causes for the scientists in trying to do their assessment work?

MR. BELL: Most of the discussion about confidentiality that I was in on had more to do with the video monitoring. As I was saying earlier, now you have this huge collection of video with people doing various things and stuff; and there are people in there that could be doing anything. It had more to do with that sort of stuff not being used inappropriately and maintaining confidentiality.

Of course, there is always confidentiality associated with data, reports or landing or whatever. But a lot of the discussions – and that was where it hit me when I realized that when I was saying electronic monitoring, I was still at that point thinking big picture; and they meant very specifically, no, it was more of the video type monitoring and all.

As Michelle said; no, VMS is not monitoring, which was different. It was more of that I think. Then in terms of if something were to somehow – I’m certainly not an attorney. I don’t know what you could or couldn’t actually use in prosecuting a case related to things that you see on video; but that is what a lot of the confidentiality discussion was about in the session I was in. They went back and forth over that a lot. It wasn’t so much the reporting aspect, I guess.

DR. DUVAL: I guess one of the things sort of “in the weeds” type thing that I would mention is that another lesson learned was if an agency is developing the data standards and they are considering third party providers in developing an electronic reporting or monitoring program; that those third party providers need to be at the table from the development.

You can’t just have your agency IT staff, your managers, and your fishermen and then just think you are going to contact those folks after you have already developed something. You have got to have them at the table as well. It was really informative. I got a lot out of it.

MR. BELL: That is a real good point. I think in building anything like that, all the people, as best you can, the stakeholders, the folks that are involved that are going to be invested in this; they need to be there from the beginning in the planning for this to work out best. You don’t want to have somebody missing; and then they get brought in later and it doesn’t work for them or their issues. They stressed that I think over and over again in terms of having all the proper folks at the table from the start. That would apply in anything you are doing, really; reporting, monitoring and any aspect of it. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: In George’s presentation to us, it was clear that industry cost sharing is going to be a part of this. Did that come across at the meeting and was that discussed and what was the reaction of industry representatives there?

MR. BELL: Again because a lot of the industry folks that were there were, I will just call them bigger fisheries; they were folks that were sort of used to this; so it didn’t seem – I think from what I detected that didn’t seem to bother them as much. When you are talking about some of these big fisheries in Alaska, yes, it was just kind of I think the cost of doing business a little bit. They also looked at it as partners and how it could help them do their job or maintain their industry in a more efficient or effective manner. That is what I was saying, so you scale that down to a smaller fishery, maybe backed with less financial capability, and you might not get that same reaction. I think with particularly the northwestern guys, it didn’t seem to faze them that much.

MR. COX: What could you bring back from that meeting to this industry that might be able to help us sometime down the road?

MR. BELL: You mean in terms of what would be something we could implement here or use?

MR. COX: Where we're talking about the observation program and things like that where we wouldn't have to put somebody on the boat; would anything like that work for us?

MR. BELL: It could perhaps for some fisheries. We've played around with it. We've seen different folks that have done little test projects and things. Where it seemed to me where the camera-type monitoring works best – and then a lot of these were net fisheries. These were big drag-type fisheries.

We watched a lot of the product. You've got cameras placed on the deck when they're hauling back, and you can see exactly what is coming in and that sort of thing. Cameras work real well for those. I was trying to imagine – and some folks have played with this, so now you are going to say maybe apply that in snapper grouper to a bandit boat or something, and you've got various rigs here; so now you might have to have multiple cameras to cover six stations or something with everything that is going on on deck.

It might actually cost you a little more to do that in terms of the amount of camera video hours you have got observing that versus just watching kind of what is coming back over the deck. It certainly could be used and then why are you using it, so it could be useful in documenting what is caught.

Then like with us with snapper grouper you get into issues of species identification; is the quality of the video good enough to identify between the different grouper species or snapper or whatever; also documentation of the status of the catch or discards or whatever? It might have some application, but where I saw it particularly useful was in net-type fisheries where you necessarily wouldn't need a lot of cameras, and you could cover what was going on on-deck with maybe one or two cameras or something. That is the monitoring piece of it.

Again, I think the best utility for us in terms of immediate application or near-term application of the technology is probably on the reporting end of thing; that is easy. Again, looking at our full suite of fisheries – and, you know, we have a shrimp fishery. That is in our purview, so perhaps that might be useful in some of the net-type fisheries. Michelle, do you have anything else to add to that?

DR. DUVAL: Yes; and this isn't really about observing. This is more about the reporting piece of it. I think this was the one session where Mel and I overlap. There was a guy who was talking about different types of electronic reporting; you know, whether it is real-time electronic reporting or not, having a single data set that you're collecting in isolation of another system; like dealer electronic reporting and fishermen electronic reporting, and having common sets of attributes so that you can link those data bases.

Obviously, the best thing is to develop them in tandem with one another so that you have common codes for things like water bodies and things like that. He provided a great example of how you can provide some incentivizing flexibility to an electronic reporting system, and he gave the example of a reporting system that was in use for crabbers.

They were late in their reports and forgetting to report; and because it was something that was in use on either a Smartphone or a tablet, they were able to text these guys just automatically all 24 hours in advance to remind them to report; and compliance increased significantly. I thought

that kind of thing was interesting; like making sure that you have that kind of flexibility just because people are busy and they are out on the water.

Like I said, most of my contribution is sort of some of the “in the weeds” type of details; but I have pages and pages of very tiny notes that I took that I would happy to scan and send to anybody. They are pretty tiny, though, so you might need a magnifying glass.

DR. LANEY: One more question on the video, aside from the confidentiality issues, so that type of monitoring yields – and I think Bonnie has discussed this before relative to the camera trap video, the same sort of issue. You get terabytes of data; so how are they dealing with that issue? I’ll just mention, because it might be of interest to some of you, the folks who are now starting to use sound to monitor terrestrial ecosystems are running into the same issue.

You can put all these receivers out there within a forest and monitor all sorts of things, bats, insects, birds; but then you wind up with tremendous data sets. That poses a challenge in analyzing it and throwing it into any useful; so how are they dealing with that aspect of it?

MR. BELL: I’m not sure I can tell you how. I know that was the thing that really floored me in terms of the cost of that type. Yes, it is great, but holy cow!

DR. LANEY: To that point; it almost makes me wonder if a human observer doesn’t offer some advantages in terms of condensing the amount of information you get and turning it into something more useful much more rapidly than having to wade through all those terabytes of electronic data.

MR. BELL: Yes; that is what struck me; I mentioned that earlier. The camera just becomes an observer, but then some human has to interact with those data, enter it somehow into a data base and note the observations. You’ve got that step, so there are still people involved in that. Then like you said you’ve got a tremendous amount of data to store and you store it for how long?

Then that gets into the who holds those data and who protects those data. Then if for some reason there is discussion of using some of those data for legal purposes dealing with a violation or something; then that takes on a whole special category. That struck me it is not necessarily cheaper perhaps than humans. You could certainly cover more territory with putting GoPros or whatever you’re using out; but you still have to bring it all back and then analyze it. Bonnie, did you want to say something to that?

DR. PONWITH: I think this is a great discussion, because you are really touching on some of the key aspects. There are so many people who see advance in technology in a sentence and it is like, oh, our problems are solved. I do think that advanced technologies, these electronic reporting and electronic monitoring are going to be the way to go.

It is just that we need to be realistic in terms of making that transition in a way that it ends up with a better system. You were talking about electronic monitoring. The observation that we’ve made in the use of electronic monitoring for monitoring bycatch is that it is the most effective regardless of what the setup of the boat is.

Whether it is a net or whether it is other types of gear, it is the most effective in 100 percent retention fishery, because in that scenario the thing you're asking of the camera is binary; did they keep everything they caught or did they cheat and throw something over? That is a much easier data point to collect than what you were alluding to; and that is how many fish did you keep, what did you throw back, what species did you throw back, how big were each of the animals within that species that you threw back?

That is very complex; it is very complex. In terms of automating image interpretation, that is something we're actually making some investments in on the science side of NOAA Fisheries, and that is we've got an Advanced Technology Working Group right now that is tackling this as a science problem at a national scale; and that is what kind of investments we can make in off-the-shelf technologies that can be adopted or adapted to automate the interpretation of these vast – these terabytes worth of data; so that we don't want to take one bottleneck and swap it for another one, which is having to hire thousands of people to sit in darkened rooms and look at video.

I think this is a great discussion. I think your grasp of some of the challenges are right there; but these discussions I think are our best way to catalyze solutions to some of those choke points in making major shifts in the way we collect and manage our data.

MR. BELL: One thing that is just kind of neat the way they did it in some of these trawl fisheries where the video monitoring was required; so the cameras were set up to as soon as you engaged the winch to haul back on your net, that triggered the camera. There kind of wasn't any cheating. I am doing some low-tech stuff with this jelly ball fishery that we've talked about experimenting where I am making them use GoPro cameras.

But we're not that sophisticated so we tell them to turn the camera on and turn the camera off; but they could choose to turn the camera on or turn the camera off. But some of these systems are just very effective in terms of monitoring what is going on, because they are wired into the boat itself. When the boat does something to haul back gear or something, the cameras come on immediately; so you get that 100 percent coverage of whatever it was you wanted to cover.

Let's kind of wrap this up. Sort of a deliverable for us at this point as a committee is we need to give some feedback to comments, a statement or something or position to NMFS on this. I guess what I wanted to make sure I did was capture from you guys at this point; so what we can do is we can draft a letter and it would be for the chairman's signature. Are there any particular points that we need to stress or make kind of where we are here with this whole concept right now, something we want to make sure we capture? I know Michelle and I have gone through great detail here, so we probably have got all kinds of stuff; but I want to make sure everybody has something. Michelle, do you want to lead off?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, I think the most important thing is terminology. I think we need to be clear that we really should be using the phrase "electronic technology" and not "electronic monitoring". They did define that at the workshop, but in this region our focus is on electronic reporting; so we need to be really clear about that.

MR. BELL: Anything that we've said or anything you've seen in the attachments; is there anything that scared you or anything that you want to make sure that we're clear on in terms of

our willingness to move forward with this? We'll be moving forward in some capacity. We want to make sure what we do – and these plans will be regionally based; but what we do is right for our region, right for our fisheries, right for our fishermen, and right for the resource; for us.

DR. LANEY: Given the issues that we discussed relative to the amount of data generated by video monitoring; I would be interested in seeing somebody at some point – and maybe Bonnie could tell us that they're already doing it; but do a comparison of what the cost is of using observers on the vessels versus applying the electronic technology to the vessel and then having to expend tremendous amounts of time analyzing and processing those data.

I don't know whether anybody has done that already or not, but it seems to me that would be a piece of information that would be very useful to anyone who is considering going to the electronic monitoring approach; again defining monitoring in this case as the video technology and not VMS, which apparently they don't consider monitoring.

DR. PONWITH: There are some fisheries that are outfitted with cameras in lieu of boots on a deck; and we could probably go to school on what they're learning. But again it is a simple question, but a lot of complex underpinnings to it. It is what are you asking of the camera and what kind of fishery; is it going to be 100 percent retention or do you want that camera to tell you species, size, disposition of the fish? Is it going to cack or is it going to survive?

The costs of those would be driven by what you are asking of the system, what the regulatory underpinning is. We don't have data in our hands right now to be able to answer that question, but I suspect we could do some probing and best practices of folks that are employing those tools; and by analogy maybe derive some rough order of magnitude costs.

DR. LANEY: Yes, Bonnie, that is an excellent point. What I guess I would be looking for would be an apples-to-apples comparison. I guess what you would have to define up front would be what information do we need and can we get it by observers and can we get it by electronic monitoring and then what's the cost of getting it by both methods with the same suite of variables or information of interest being the end product.

MR. COX: Well, I first saw this technology back about seven years ago; and we've certainly come a long way. I've got GoPros on my boat that cost me about \$150 apiece and have had very little trouble with them. We certainly see that we're headed down the road of accountability. I mean we're talking about observation programs here today already. Whether we like it or not, there are people asking for that kind of information.

I think about Amendment 16 and wanting to get the guys back to work. If we can prove to industry that we're not having interactions; I just think it is important to take note of these things and not just look at it as an electronic logbook type of something that you learned; but there may be some other things that you learned there that can help us as well.

MR. CONKLIN: To Wilson's point; North Carolina Sea Grant; Scott Baker, he did a pilot project with the cameras on my boat and also observer; so that might be a good place to start with him. It is an apples-to-apples comparison. The questions he asked the cameras I do not know, I am not that smart, be it might be a real valuable piece of information to get us started on finding out a comparison.

DR. DUVAL: Scott made a presentation to the Snapper Grouper AP I think November of last year, something like that, just providing the results of that research finally. I can't remember if it was – it wasn't this past November, maybe it was the November before, I think. It was the Snapper Grouper AP. It was very interesting.

Wilson, just to your point about the cost benefits analysis of an observer versus cameras on board; what the folks out there were saying is that cameras are never going to replace an actual observer in terms of collection of biological data. The cameras are really like an audit system. You randomly audit people.

Jack and I were on the same trip I think out to British Colombia, and Ben was there, too, I think; and they used those video data to randomly audit boats; and if they find something amiss with the observer report, then the vessel pays more to have more of their video footage audited. I think Scott Baker has indicated that out there they don't retain all of that video all the time; that it is the logbook that becomes the data of record, I guess you would call it.

MR. HARTIG: Jack, I'm interested in how are you utilizing the GoPros on your boat now?

MR. COX: Well, we're doing a lot of spearfishing, but we also set them on the dash; and when we're fishing and catching groupers and stuff. we would like to go back and play it in the retail market. Our ultimate goal is to be able to play it so the retail customer, while they are waiting for their fish to get filleted, to watch some of our fishing activities and just show what we do on the water and who we are. But that is what we are using the information for now. They've gotten so cheap; we're having a lot of fun with them.

MR. BELL: Anything else we need to capture in terms of concerns or the approach we should take? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I guess only recognition that these are plans for how we think we would like to move forward; and I kind of see that as a living document.

MR. BELL: Yes, it will evolve. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: We would pull this together in a draft letter and have it reviewed by you two and then over the Chair's signature. But as I understand, too, there is a regional plan going to be developed; you are our representative on that from the region. Do we know who from the Regional Office and who from the Center are going to be on that group?

DR. DUVAL: I'm pretty sure it is Andy from the Regional Office; I mean he is part of the Steering Committee.

DR. CRABTREE: I think Andy Strelcheck is on it.

MR. WAUGH: Is there anybody from the Center?

DR. PONWITH: Yes; from the Center it is Ken Brennan and Dave Gloeckner.

MR. BELL: There are a number of steps to this process as we move forward; and again it will be a regional focus for us; and then eventually this will be built into the national plan. I think weren't they shooting for December on the final product on the plan? I think it was December. Is there anything else we need to capture;, or if you think of something, m just let me know or let Michelle know or something; and we can make sure we include that. That takes us to other business, and I know Roy had an item he wanted to discuss related to MRIP; and I'll let him explain it.

DR. CRABTREE: Starting in March of 2013, MRIP made some changes to how dockside intercepts are conducted. It was changes made to how the sites are selected and how long you stay there and what time of the day dockside intercepts are conducted. One of the results of it, for example, is I think in the past most dockside intercepts occurred earlier than 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Now after the change, there are quite a few more that are done later in the day.

That went into effect starting in Wave 3 in 2013. We saw in the Gulf of Mexico some huge shifts in catch levels in Wave 3 in the Gulf, particularly with Gulf of Mexico red snapper. We saw some very big differences in the catches mainly off of Alabama and parts of the Panhandle of Florida. We saw, for example, the highest catches of red snapper we've ever recorded in a wave at that time.

We also saw the highest level of the EEZ effort ever in the history of the time series. There were a lot of questions about whether that change was real or it is a result of the new methodology. Now everyone who has reviewed this and looked at it believes that the new methodology is an improvement and should result in a better and less biased estimate; but what no one knows is were the previous estimates biased?

The question, for example, in the Gulf of Mexico with red snapper and several other species is have we been underestimating the catch historically? The jury is still out on that; but if we have been underestimating the catch historically, then our ACLs are kind of out of whack. The assessments are out of whack, and you've got to go through a process to try and bring all of that together.

We've had a lot of issues and have not so far used the Wave 3 estimates for 2013 for a number of species. It has created a lot of issues about how to calculate overruns and things like that. Now, it is not at all clear to me what effect this is having on the recreational catch estimates in the South Atlantic; but it is interesting to me that Wave 3 of 2013 EEZ off of the South Atlantic was the lowest level of effort in the entire time series; but interestingly it is the lowest effort, but the previous two years were also very low. I don't know if it is methodology or if it is just that effort is really low.

There has been a lot of time spent looking at this, more in the Gulf of Mexico, but I think it is a potential issue over here. It could be we have historically overestimated catches in the Atlantic Coast; I just don't know. But, we are planning to have a calibration workshop. I think it will occur in September of this year in Charlotte.

The goal of that is to come in and see if they are able to tease out how much of this may be due to methodology changes and how much of it is real; and then how would we go back in and make adjustments to the historical time series in that case. I think that is something you guys

need to be aware of and pay attention to; because depending on how this all comes out, there could be some calibrations applied to catches on the whole east coast.

We just don't know at this point. You can recall that we went through a similar exercise when we made the shift from MRFSS to the MRIP when that methodology changes. Having had a number of conversations with Gordon Colvin and the folks at MRIP, this is probably not the last of these drills that we're going to go through, because there are going to be some additional fundamental changes made to MRIP over the next couple of years.

To the extent those make significant differences in the landing estimates; we may have to go through another exercise like this. I don't know that there is anything we need to do right now, and we're continuing to try and look at how this is going to affect our ACLs and overages and things.

Most of the recreational catches in the South Atlantic are low right now, because EEZ effort in the South Atlantic has been low for the last couple of years. The trend and what I've seen in the South Atlantic is much less abrupt than what we saw in the Gulf of Mexico, which just was a huge doubling in the number of trips taking place in the EEZ.

Bonnie can probably answer your questions or make comments about the calibration workshop; and I don't know if the dates are finalized on that and who all is going to be there. I will let Bonnie comment on that; but I wanted to make all of you aware that this is going on and it is an issue we are going to have to deal with.

Then if you think about it, if we decide we're going to move towards some sort of electronic reporting in charterboats, for example, we're going to need to get that all put in place, and then we're going to need to run that simultaneously with the MRIP program for several years so we can see how different are the estimates. Then the question is going to be, well, which estimate is closest to the real number; and there might have to be adjustments and calibrations based on all that. I suspect this will be an issue that we're going to be dealing with over the next several years.

MR. BELL: That is important. I appreciate you pointing that out, because that will have some implications. I know any time you change methodologies in the way that you collect data – and I'm more familiar with if you're changing net size or boat or traps or those sorts of thing; there is some sort of calibration that has to occur; but in something like this it is even more complex, perhaps, I can only imagine. Bonnie, do you want to add to that?

DR. PONWITH: Yes; I think Roy did a really good job of explaining the circumstance. I think one of the number one take-home points is that these changes were done to improve the quality of the estimate; and all the examinations right now of these data are that in the 2006 review by the National Research Council they said there are possibilities that there are biases in the way you are collecting the data.

You need to investigate and determine if it is possible; and if so, identify the magnitude of those potential biases. One of the things that were raised was the way the dockside intercepts were being conducted. That was the change that was put in place beginning in March; and right now

just looking at the data, we are seeing those differences in the data, but we do believe these estimates are much stronger.

The Calibration Workshop is going to happen in Charlotte, and it will be the 8th through the 10th of September. Again, the purpose of this will be to look at the old method under MRIP that we were using, the old dockside intercept method versus this method, and come up with a way to make adjustments to the new methodology so that ACLs that were set based on the old methodology are in the same units as landings now that are being estimated using the new methodology. I'll stop there and see if there are questions.

MR. BOWEN: Dr. Crabtree or Dr. Ponwith; you mentioned Wave 3; have you noticed any other waves that are, for lack of a better term, out of whack comparatively speaking to the previous years?

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I think there have been additional high estimates in the Gulf for some species like vermilion snapper. With red snapper in the Gulf, which is the main one we saw, the fishery only occurred in Wave 1. It is hard to say. Like I said, in the South Atlantic we're continuing to see that the catches are low.

It is a bizarre coincidence to me that this happened; the Gulf estimates were the highest ever and the South Atlantic were the lowest ever. Your immediate thought is it has got to be methodology; but then when you go in and look at the South Atlantic estimates, they didn't just pop down there. They were heading down there before the change in methodology happened.

All I can figure is everyone that used to go fishing in the South Atlantic went to the Gulf and fished over there. We are seeing some trends and things on other species, but it's not clear to me what affect, if any, this is having over in the South Atlantic. The more abrupt shifts I've seen have been in the Gulf.

MR. BOWEN: I'm witnessing the effort just plummet. I guess that coincides with what the South Atlantic MRIP is seeing. My trips are down; my calls are down.

DR. CRABTREE: I think that is right because –

MR. BOWN: The boats I'm seeing offshore are down.

DR. CRABTREE: – we saw that drop off occurring. What we've seen in the Gulf is when the economy went in to a tailspin, EEZ effort fell way off, too, but it started coming up some. Then when we got to Wave 3 of this year, it shot up hugely.

MR. WAUGH: What do the headboat data show for the same species in the same time?

DR. CRABTREE: For red snapper, we didn't see a corresponding big jump in the headboat data; but a lot of the headboats are in Texas and other places, and most of this big shift in it was in Alabama and the Panhandle. It is not something that is easy to look at and tease out.

MR. BELL: To that point, Bonnie:

DR. PONWITH: It is to that point; and we're talking about effort now, so remember that the big change that was instituted in March was on the landings, the dockside intercepts. The dockside intercept determines what was landed on vessels that went fishing. The effort estimates are done completely separately.

What is happening is the way the dockside intercepts are being structured influences what percentage of the vessels they intercept that fished in states water versus federal waters. For example, they lengthened the sampling day and statistically partitioned their effort over the course of that sampling day to avoid oversampling earlier in the day and potentially missing trips that were coming back from longer distances; also known as the EEZ.

Even though it is the dockside sampling that was changed; that relationship between when in the day you're sampling, it is turning out have a strong influence on the likelihood you're going to intercept a vessel coming from the EEZ. When we talk about effort, this change is not influencing the raw number of vessels that are out there, but the breakdown of which percentage of them were inside versus outside. That is how it is influencing the catch.

MR BELL: For us, that is the difference between intercepting a red drum fisherman and a guy that just came in from one of the reefs offshore. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I guess my only question in all of this is when we had recalibration for MRIP versus MRFSS, we weighted I guess three or plus years. We were talking about the charterboat survey; if we moved that out of MRIP, we're talking three years. Now all of a sudden we're doing a recalibration based on the Gulf estimate from one wave. I don't understand how you can do that; how you can't wait at least two or three years to do your recalibration.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, one of the big drivers in the Gulf right now is they're getting ready to do an updated red snapper assessment in the fall; and we need to figure out what do we do with these extraordinarily high red snapper landings. That is a partial driver of the need in the Gulf.

MR. BOWEN: Dr. Ponwith, you speak of effort and you say that the dockside surveys don't affect that; but the lady that calls me for my effort still calls. That methodology to my knowledge hasn't changed, and yet we still see a huge reduction of effort. Is that correct?

DR. PONWITH: It is differentiating how we do the effort estimate and then differentiating that from how we observe the landings. The other thing we have to be careful about is the methodology for how headboats and how charterboats' effort are completely different than how we do the effort for the private vessels. We may be saying the same thing but thinking about different parts of the fleet.

MR. BOWEN: Yes, I agree, thank you.

MR. PATE: MRIP is doing a pilot study at this time about changing the effort survey from the phone survey to mail survey; and that will have the same impact on landings – well, similar impacts on landings as the age study is required and will require yet probably another calibration workshop to work on that problem.

MR. BELL: Any time you change methodologies with anything, any type of sampling or data collection; that is what you run into. That makes me a little more sensitive now in discussions of going to any type of new electronic-based system. That is a change in how you do things and you just have to be sensitive to that.

DR. CRABTREE: You do; and you need to be careful about it. That is why as we move to electronic reporting, we need to be very careful before we say “and we want to discontinue MRIP”, because we are going to need to do both of those. After we’ve looked at how both of them perform, then we’ll be in a position to talk about, okay, do we need to continue MRIP and see how that goes.

You know, to Ben’s point about waiting and all; it may well be three years before we get all this straightened out; but it is going to sure create some issues because the changes are so abrupt. Part of the timing to not do this before September of next year was to try to get as many waves of data as we could in order to have some better ability to detect what is happening. I think to fully figure out how to correct for this, the MRIP folks have told me it probably will take three years worth of data.

MR. BELL: Bonnie mentioned this, but, of course, all of this is done to try to improve the system, improve the data, and make improvements and benefits. It is all done for a good reason; it is just that in that transitional moment there can be some challenges. Anything else related to this topic? Roy, I really appreciate you bringing that up. Is there any other business to come before the committee? All right, seeing no other business, then we will adjourn the Data Collection Committee.

(Whereupon. the meeting was adjourned at 5 o’clock p.m., March 6, 2014.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

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March 27, 2014

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council March 2014 Meeting – Savannah, GA

Data Collection Committee Meeting: Thursday, March 6, 2014

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MARCH MTC DAY 4

80	L, I	captaindrifter@bellsouth...	424 min
76	klostermann, joe	grkifk@comcast.net	378 min
67	O'Shaughnessy, Pat...	patrick.oshaughnessy@noaa...	88 min
65	DeHart, Hayley	hayley.mills.dehart@gmail...	415 min
64	MacLauchlin, Bill	billmac@adtrends.com	468 min
64	Mealey, Christophe...	cmealey13@gmail.com	165 min
63	Fey, Kasey	info@keyskeeper.org	225 min
52	Lamberte, Tony	tony.lamberte@noaa.gov	525 min
49	Frede, Robin	rifrede@gmail.com	177 min
49	Mehta, Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov	476 min
45	burton, michael	michael.burton@noaa.gov	316 min
44	Gerhart, Susan	susan.gerhart@noaa.gov	457 min
42	Lapointe, George	georgelapointe@gmail.com	74 min
41	holiman, stephen	stephen.holiman@noaa.gov	417 min
41	rindone, ryan	ryan.rindone@gulfcouncil...	400 min
40	Michie, Kate	kate.michie@noaa.gov	433 min
39	Brogan, Gib	gbrogan@oceana.org	0 min
38	DeVictor, Rick	rick.devictor@noaa.gov	444 min
38	Raine, Karen	karen.raine@noaa.gov	698 min
36	E, A	annemarie.eich@noaa.gov	660 min
36	Brennan, Ken	kenneth.brennan@noaa.gov	62 min
35	AUSTIN, Tony	redress@ec.rr.com	456 min
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26	Abeels, Holly	habeels@ufl.edu	509 min
26	Baker, Scott	bakers@uncw.edu	384 min
24	Martin, Gretchen	martin1639@ec.rr.com	134 min
20	Giguere, Cate	cathleen.a.giguere@uscg.m...	1 min