

**SUMMARY REPORT
EXECUTIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
STUART, FLORIDA
JUNE 13, 2013**

The Executive Finance Committee met on June 13, 2013 in Stuart, Florida. The minutes from the March 2013 Executive Finance Committee were approved. The Committee received presentations on the following agenda items:

1. Status of Federal FY 2013 funding

Bob Mahood provided an overview of our FY2013 funding. He directed the members to page 8 of the power point presentation in Attachment 1. He related that at the May Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) meeting the Councils received a presentation from Gary Risner indicating the funding levels they would receive in 2013. The Councils were told they would receive approximately a 10% reduction from the 2012 funding level. Bob indicated that we would be able to weather this budget reduction using funds we have carried forward from earlier grant years. He reminded the committee that we have been conserving funds critical to the Council's future operations, as we braced for these anticipated budget cuts.

2. CY2013 Council budget expenditures

Mr. Mahood briefed the committee on the Council's expenditures for CY2013. He noted that although we do not have our absolute final funding level for CY2013, we have been operating under a budget that will accomplish our goals for the year. He explained how the budget would be funded with this year's allocation and carry over funds from 2012. It was noted we are in good shape for this year as spending is slightly lower than anticipated when the budget was developed.

3. Update on the Joint Committee on South Florida Management Issues

Chairman Cupka briefed the Committee on the Joint Goliath Grouper Committee activities and the issues the joint committee has addressed. An update on the activities of the Joint Committee on South Florida Management Issues was also provided. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has taken the lead in establishing a series of public workshops to gather input on various issues. The dates and locations of the workshops are listed in Attachment 3. At our September meeting more time will be allocated to address the goliath grouper and other south Florida issues. In the interim, the workshops will be held and the Gulf Council will address the goliath grouper issues and provide their recommendations.

4. Address Council "Follow-up" and priorities

Bob Mahood provided the Committee with background as to how the Council/NMFS Regional Operating Agreement (Follow-Up) evolved. Gregg Waugh briefed the committee on documents provided for their consideration, the Follow-Up, which includes an action priority form. He explained how the Follow-Up is developed and the interactions between the Council and the SERO staff in completing the operations document. Gregg reviewed where the Council stood on meeting the priorities for the current ongoing amendments and other actions that were established at the March 2013 Council meeting. He pointed out the schedule has been very full, however, a number of the top priorities have already been accomplished. He indicated that six actions (if approved) would be going out to public hearing in August. It was noted that members should contact Gregg if they plan on attending any of the hearings. Gregg then went over the priorities spread sheet. Chairman Cupka asked the Committee Chairmen to review the list to make sure they agree with the priorities. The committee voted to recommend approval of the Follow-Up and revised priority table.

5. Florida tarpon issue

Chairman Cupka briefed the committee on the letter he received from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) indicating they were considering management changes in the tarpon fishery, including extending state regulations into adjacent federal waters. The letter indicated that tarpon are managed in state waters by the FWC in Chapter 68B-32, Florida Administrative Code, and there are currently no regulations pertaining to tarpon in adjacent federal waters. Martha Bademan also briefed the committee on the most recent FWC actions. The Committee discussed the letter and agreed the Council has no intention of managing tarpon in federal waters. The committee voted to recommend sending a letter to Florida indicating that the council has no intent to manage tarpon.

6. Sustainable Certification discussion

Chairman Cupka briefed the committee on the sustainable certification issue and the actions that have been taken by the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils. These Councils have recommended adding to the list of reauthorization priorities the need for a sustainable certification program for our domestic seafood industry. Their intent would be to authorize NMFS to provide the U.S. industry with a sustainable certification program and certification mark, which would provide the industry with the ability to promote and sell its seafood products, in both domestic and export markets, as sustainable based upon the requirements of the Act. This was also mentioned at the MONF3 conference and in testimony we have received before the Council. The committee discussed the issue and there was some resistance to recommending a program that would increase government involvement, however, it was determined a program such as envisioned would be beneficial to our seafood industry. The committee voted to recommend that the Council add to the list of reauthorization priorities the need for a sustainable certification program.

7. Other Business

Chairman Cupka briefed the committee on the assessment peer review process proposed by the SSC. He indicated this would be a “living” document and it would be subject to change as appropriate as time went on. The committee indicated they thought the SSC did an excellent job crafting the document. However, NOAA GC had a problem with Section 4.1.b. and Monica explained why the sentence was not appropriate. It was agreed by the committee to remove Section 4.1.b (which was one sentence). The committee then voted to recommend approval of the SSC provided peer review process with the exception of Section 4.1.b. (and re-letter accordingly)

Motions for full Council:

**MOTION #1: APPROVE THE FOLLOW-UP AND REVISED PRIORITY TABLE
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #2: SEND A LETTER TO FLORIDA INDICATING THAT THE COUNCIL
HAS NO INTENT TO MANAGE TARPON
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #3: THE COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO ADD TO THE LIST OF
REAUTHORIZATION PRIORITIES THE NEED FOR A SUSTAINABLE
CERTIFICATION THAT WOULD AUTHORIZE NMFS TO PROVIDE THE U.S.
INDUSTRY WITH A SUSTAINABLE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM AND
CERTIFICATION MARK, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE INDUSTRY WITH THE
ABILITY TO PROMOTE AND SELL ITS SEAFOOD PRODUCTS, IN BOTH**

**DOMESTIC AND EXPORT MARKETS, AS SUSTAINABLE BASED UPON THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #4: APPROVE SSC PROVIDED PEER REVIEW PROCESS DOCUMENT
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SECTION 4.1.b
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**