

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

**Doubletree by Hilton Oceanfront Hotel
Atlantic Beach, North Carolina**

DECEMBER 11, 2015

SUMMARY MINUTES

Council Members:

Dr. Michelle Duval, Chair
Mel Bell
Dr. Roy Crabtree
Jessica McCawley
Chris Conklin
Doug Haymans
Dr. Wilson Laney

Charlie Phillips, Vice-Chair
Jack Cox
Anna Beckwith
Ben Hartig
Chester Brewer
Mark Brown
Zack Bowen

Council Staff:

Bob Mahood
Mike Collins
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin
Kim Iverson
Julie O'Dell
Roger Pugliese
Myra Brouwer

Gregg Waugh
John Carmichael
Chip Collier
Dr. Mike Errigo
Dr. Brian Cheuvront
Amber Von Harten

Observers/Participants:

Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Scott Sandorf
Erika Burgess

Kevin Anson
Tracy Dunn
Dr. Jack McGovern
Dr. Louis Daniel

Additional Observers Attached

The Full Council Session of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Doubletree by Hilton Oceanfront Hotel, Monday morning, December 11, 2015, and was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m. by Chairmen Michelle Duval.

DR. DUVAL: I want to call this meeting to order. The first item is adoption of the agenda. I would just ask that you all give me latitude to move things around on the agenda, which we are going to do a little bit this morning; any other modifications to the agenda? Seeing none; the agenda stands approved.

Are there any modifications to the minutes from the September, 2015 Council Session? Seeing none; the minutes stand approved. The next item on our agenda is to announce the new Executive Director of the South Atlantic Council. As I think most folks are aware, an icon and pillar of the fishery management community, Bob Mahood is going to be retiring after – how many years is it, Bob – almost exactly 30 years?

Bob was just a young pup when he came to the council, and I think it is fitting that his last council meeting is here in North Carolina; where he had some of his breaking-in years. I think, as my boss put it, where he learned to put on his big boy pants. Bob, we owe you a huge debt of gratitude for everything that you've done; not only for this council but just in the broader council community as a whole.

I think a lot of folks don't necessarily know of or appreciate Bob's skill in navigating the council process at some of the higher levels in working with the other councils and their leadership, and development of some of the operational guidelines and policies that are the model for how council's and the Fisheries Service work together in the different regions. We owe Bob a huge debt of gratitude. We're going to miss you and don't be a stranger.

MR. MAHOOD: Well, I don't know, I might not attend quite as many meetings as I have in the past, but I appreciate the kind words, Michelle. It has been a great 30 years. I'm not sure where it went so fast. But I went back and counted. As near as I can figure I did 130 council meetings as the Executive Director, and then that's not counting the previous time when I was a council member. I didn't even add those in there. That was a lot of fun back in those days.

It has been quite an experience. You can't believe all of the different folks I've met. You'll find that 99.9 percent of the folks involved in fisheries are either fishermen or scientists or managers at all levels; they're just really good people. We have our differences sometimes, and we don't always agree on the way things should be; but I think in the end the one really blessing of this council has been that when we get up from this table, disagreeing or not, we walk away as friends and keep a mutual respect for each other. Some of the other councils aren't like that I can tell you that there is a lot of animosity that carries on well beyond the council meeting itself. We're very fortunate.

I attribute it to our southern hospitality and how we try to get along down here. But it has been a great ride, I've enjoyed it, and I've really enjoyed the people I've met. That is the part I'll miss probably the most. Sometimes the issues we have to deal with just aren't fun. But they are what we're charged to do. I wish you all the best of luck.

You are fortunate you are blessed with a couple good leaders here into the future. The one thing I noticed about Michelle, though, she really lacks on the schedule and the time. I've tried to tell her that you know you need to hold people to a tighter time schedule, Michelle. No, I've really enjoyed it and I appreciate it, guys.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Bob. It gives me great pleasure to announce the person who is going to be filling Bob's shoes and following in his footsteps; Gregg Waugh, the Deputy Executive Director, come on up here, Gregg. When Bob announced that he was going to be retiring in June, I think it was, we were like, oh, my gosh, this is a very tight time schedule to conduct a search and find someone.

I have to give a huge shout out to Jessica, our Personnel Committee Chair and search director. Jessica took this on and worked with Mike Collins to outline the process, hold us all to our timeline and tasks and did an excellent job in doing so. We had many well qualified candidates. It was definitely a difficult process, but in the end we narrowed it down to three.

I am very pleased to congratulate Gregg Waugh on being the new Executive Director. Gregg, we have no doubt that you'll follow well in Bob's footsteps, and carry on as the keeper of the culture here in the South Atlantic. We're very excited to work with you in this new role. I know it is a great opportunity and you're looking forward to it. Congratulations!

MR. WAUGH: Thank you very much, Michelle. It is quite an honor to have the opportunity to move up in this role. I certainly need to thank Bob for all his help over the years; he has been quite a mentor to me; and has helped a lot as I've grown into this position. Thank all the council members, you know you look back. There are things I've learned from each council member that has been on the council and continue to learn from you all.

In terms of fisheries management, there is no better place to be. You are not writing articles and they go on a shelf somewhere. It is an awesome responsibility. We write plans and amendments, and they affect people's lives immediately and that is very exciting. I look forward to the opportunity to work with you all, with the Region and with the Center.

It is a team process with the IPTs. There is a lot of our staff and the Regional and the Center's staffs that aren't here. We need their work to continue to move forward. I really look forward to the opportunity. I would like to thank my wife, Lisa, who is in the audience. Without her love and support I wouldn't be here doing what I am. Thank you!

MR. MAHOOD: I understand he's kind of a newbie to this organization. No, I think Gregg will do a great job; he's been here 35 years. He knows a little bit about the process, a little bit about the science. I don't think things will really skip a beat at all. I think if anything, under Gregg's leadership he's probably got all kinds of good ideas that I just didn't see. I think that we'll do nothing but improve under Gregg's leadership, and I wish him the best of luck.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you very much, Gregg. We're really looking forward to working with you in the future. All right, back to our regularly scheduled agenda items. The first thing we're going to do is we're going to switch things up. Instead of going into Snapper Grouper, we're actually going to circle around to the Dolphin Wahoo Committee report. Brian actually needs to

get on the road, so I'm going to ask him to come up here and ask him and Anna to take us through the committee report.

MS. BECKWITH: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll let Brian get ready and set up. The Dolphin Wahoo Committee met on December 10, 2015. We considered Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 1. We originally discussed the purpose and need and approved that motion, and then we actually asked them to go back and reconsider some additional wording. I'm assuming that I need to go ahead and move that motion on behalf of the committee, and then we will reconsider the new verbiage. Is that procedurally correct?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, I don't know that you need to do the original motion. I think you probably need to have some discussion about the new need. Since the report went out, I went ahead and added the purpose back into this report just to make sure that if anybody wanted to look at the whole thing it would be there; but if you want to jump to the need and consider that at this time.

MS. BECKWITH: Sure. The language for the purpose has not changed, but if we can look at the language for the need. The need for this amendment, the new verbiage that Brian and Monica worked on is as follows: The need for this amendment is to maintain a dolphin fishery that lasts throughout the year, in order to reduce the severity of social impacts caused by an early closure of the commercial dolphin fishery. Is that to everyone's satisfaction? Okay, if that is the case, then I would like a motion to approve the purpose and need as amended.

MR. CONKLIN: I'll make a motion to approve the new wording in the purpose and need as amended.

MS. BECKWITH: Great, and a second? Chester. Is there any discussion on that motion? Is there any opposition to that motion? Seeing none; that motion carries. The next motion was to accept the language.

DR. CHEUVRON: I'm caught up with you. I can fix this now.

MS. BECKWITH: The next motion was to accept the language of the Action 1 as stated with editorial license to modify the no action alternative. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion on this motion? Any opposition? Seeing none; that motion carries. The next motion was to select Alternative 4, Subalternative 4D as the preferred. This was the option that looked at a 75 percent step down and a 4,000 pound trip limit. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any opposition? Seeing none; that motion carries. Now we have two new motions that need to be made. The first would be to approve the Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 1 for formal Secretarial Review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give the staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document and codified text, and give the council chair authority to approve the revisions and redeem the codified text. Is there anyone that would like to make that motion?

MR. HAYMANS: Madam Chair, I so move.

MS. BECKWITH: **Is there a second? Chris. Is there any discussion on that motion? Any opposition? Seeing none; that motion carries.**

DR. DUVAL: Point of order. Because this is a final approval it is actually a **roll call vote**.

MS. BECKWITH: Okay.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Conklin; somehow I got a hold of an old sheet. There are people on here that haven't been here in a couple of years. Mr. Cox.

MR. COX: Yes.

MR. CONKLIN: I didn't vote, yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Oh, I'm sorry. Mr. Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. McCawley.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Chairman Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Chairman Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: The motion passes unanimously.

DR. CHEUVRON: Oh, it didn't call for Roy.

MR. MAHOOD: He's not even on the list. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: It's interesting; Mr. McGovern's name is on the list.

DR. CRABTREE: Maybe that means something.

MS. BECKWITH: All right, so the last motion is we need a timing and task motion. There is a draft motion up on the screen, which reads; **Direct staff to complete Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 1 for Secretarial Review, and prepare additional information to bring it back to the council in March for further consideration of Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10. Is there anyone willing to make that motion? Jessica. Is there a second? Mel. Is there any discussion on this motion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none; that motion carries** and I adjourn.

DR. DUVAL: We will now move into the Snapper Grouper Committee report, which should have been sent around to you all this morning. We'll give Myra time to get up here. All right, the Snapper Grouper Committee met on December 8th and 9th here in Atlantic Beach, and we received our update on the status of landings for quota-managed species.

Then we also received updates on the status of amendments approved for secretarial review, namely Amendment 33, Amendment 34, Amendment 35, and then Amendment 32 Emergency Rule Request, which was denied. The reasons for that denial were provided to us. We next had a discussion about red snapper management, namely Amendment 43.

The committee discussed general management options, which we provided to council staff for the work and consideration. Next, we received a report from our Scientific and Statistical Committee Chair, Dr. Luis Barbieri. Mainly, the SSC had a number of requests regarding landings. They provided a recommendation regarding specifying ACLs in numbers of fish for the recreational sector. They provided some recommendations on our spawning SMZs, Amendment 36; considered revised projections for hogfish in Amendment 37; reconsidered the ORCS methodology applicable to the Georgia/North Carolina stock, and also provided recommendations regarding alternate methods to estimate recreational landings of rare event species and a recommendation on a benchmark assessment for blueline tilefish.

We also heard from Mr. Jim Attack, our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Chair; and he discussed recommendations pertaining to the various amendments that we discussed. He did

note that there was poor attendance at the Advisory Panel meeting, and that some of the recommendations from the panel may have been affected by this.

Next, we launched into Regulatory Amendment 16, which is the black sea bass pot closure; and Brian Cheuvront led us through that. **The first motion under this amendment was to accept modifications to the wording for Preferred Alternatives 11 and Alternative 12, and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion; any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

We next discussed transit provisions for black sea bass pots through closed areas and made the following **motion to accept the revised transit provisions for Action 1; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

I think it is important to note that by consensus the committee decided not to review the preliminary biological opinion based on the interest of getting this amendment into effect by November of 2016. The next **motion was to approve Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 16 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate.**

Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document codified text and give the council chair authority to approve the revisions and redeem the codified text; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Mr. Mahood, I'll turn it over to you.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. McCawley.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Cox.

MR. COX: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Chair Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: **Motion passes unanimously.**

DR. DUVAL: Yes, lots of cheering around the table. The next item that we discussed is Amendment 37 for hogfish. Myra Brouwer; council staff gave an overview of the amendment and led us through the following motions: **The first motion was to accept the IPTs suggested edits for Action 4; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

The next motion was to select Subalternative 2A as a preferred. We then had a substitute motion to select Subalternative 2B as the preferred. That substitute motion passed and became the main motion; and on behalf of the committee, I so move that main motion. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to accept the IPTs suggested edits for Action 5; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to accept the IPTs suggested edits for Action 6; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to change the preferred for Action 6 to

Subalternative 2B; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to change the preferred for Action 8 to Subalternative 2B; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to select Alternative 3, Subalternative 3B as a preferred under Action 9.

We then had a substitute motion to select Subalternative 3A as a preferred under Action 9. That substitute motion passed and became the main motion; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to add Subalternatives 2E and 3F to Alternatives 2 and 3 under Action 9 for no commercial trip limit; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to select Subalternative 2E under Action 9 as a preferred.

We had a substitute motion to select Subalternative 2C under Action 9 as a preferred. That substitute passed and became the main motion; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to remove Alternatives 4 and 5 from Action 10 and add to new Action 11; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to select Subalternatives 2A and 3B under Action 10 as preferreds. We had a substitute motion to select Subalternatives 2A and 3C under Action 10 as preferreds. That substitute motion passed and became the main motion; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to move Alternative 2 under Action 11 to the considered but rejected appendix; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to add Subalternative 3C, July through September, under Action 11; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to select Subalternative 3C under Action 11 as a preferred; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to add Alternative 5 to Action 12; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

Before we get to the next motion, which is to approve Amendment 37 for public hearings. The one thing that I did want to bring up, which we really didn't have much discussion about during the committee meeting was really the SSCs recommendation for calculating ACLs in numbers of fish versus pounds. They did provide some recommendations on that.

If you look back at the committee minutes from September, I believe it is Pages 85 through 89 is where we discussed that. Mike Errigo gave a very informative presentation about beginning the calculations in numbers of fish and applying our allocation formula in numbers of fish, because of the fact that recreational harvest comes in numbers of fish, commercial harvest comes in pounds.

Instead of converting recreational from numbers to pounds, converting commercial from pounds to numbers, apply the allocation formula and then back calculate the commercial into pounds. This is specifically for species for which we have a recreational ACL that is in numbers of fish. If you recall, the discussion was we had some concerns about being seen as cherry picking a particular species in order to apply this approach.

We wanted the SSC to review it. The SSC came back. We saw some of their concerns about just making sure that if we are going to use this approach, that it is not a substitute for continuing to collect better information. After the SSC made that recommendation, staff came to me and requested guidance on which way to move forward.

Going back and looking at the committee minutes and consulting with my co-Chair, we were of the mindset that if we were going to move down the road of starting that calculation from the basis of numbers of fish, that we needed to be consistent in doing it. We needed to do it for all of our species for which we actually have recreational ACLs in numbers of fish; so namely, snowy grouper, I think don't we do wreckfish in numbers of fish, golden tilefish and this.

Because the basis from which you apply the ACL or the allocation formula does impact those allocations, whether you're starting in pounds or starting in numbers of fish. We wanted to make sure that we were consistent in the way that we were doing it, and that we did it for all those species at once. I failed to bring this up during the committee meeting, and I apologize for that. But I did just want to address it before we approve this for public hearings.

This is the fun thing about being chair, and I'm being facetious when I say that. I just wanted to make sure folks knew about that and see if there were any questions. Okay. I didn't know if there was anything else. Ben, did you want to bring up any of your concerns about hogfish before we move on and approve this for public hearing?

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Madam Chairman for asking that. I think I'll hold it until after the public hearings. But I do have some real concerns about the hogfish in particular deviates from what we had said as stable landings over that timeframe. I'll hold it for now.

DR. DUVAL: The final motion on Amendment 37 was to approve Amendment 37 for public hearings; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. We next had a presentation on the genetic structure of the blueline tilefish population from Dr. Tanya Darden with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

The study used samples from off of Virginia as well as the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. At this point the study did not support the hypothesis of the existence of any distinct population segments or a population break; although the findings did indicate that the population seems to

have experienced a genetic bottleneck in recent times, which is likely consistent with the stock status of undergoing overfishing.

Then we jumped into Regulatory Amendment 11, dealing with blueline tilefish, black sea bass and yellowtail snapper. Myra reviewed the summary of public comments for us and the committee made the following motions. **The first of which was to accept the IPTs suggested edits to Action 1 and Alternatives, and on behalf of the committee I so move.**

Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to select Alternative 7 under Action 1 as a preferred; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Discussion, Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: Sure, I'm not going to make a substitute motion or anything; but I just want to note that we have chosen a very conservative 78 percent of our ACL, 78 percent of our ABC while we are dealing with one stock and there are not restrictions to stop harvest north of our area.

We are constraining the catch, because we are likely doing the right thing and are being very conservative for a stock that needs another stock assessment here shortly. But we are doing that for a species that is one stock, and north of our region the catch is not going to be constrained by an ABC. We will likely hear some of that from the public.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was a substitute motion to select Alternative 5 under Action 1 as a preferred and that motion failed. The next motion was to accept the IPTs recommended edits to Alternatives 1 through 3 under Action 2; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Discussion, Anna.**

MS. BECKWITH: Would this be the appropriate place to add in an additional alternative under that action?

DR. DUVAL: Perhaps after we would approve this motion, just dealing with the edits. Then if you wanted to add another alternative, I might suggest it then. **Any other discussion on this motion? Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to add an alternative for a 400 pound trip limit to Action 2, and that failed for lack of a second.** Anna, did you want to add something?

MS. BECKWITH: Yes, I move we add an Alternative 4 under Action 2 that would consider a 100 pound trip limit from January 1st through May 31st, and go up to a 400 pound trip limit for the rest of the season.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Anna to add an alternative under Action 2 to consider a 100 pound trip limit from January 1.

MS. BECKWITH: To May 31st, this would get us through the peak spawning.

DR. DUVAL: To May 31st.

MS. BECKWITH: Then 400 pounds for the remainder of the season.

DR. CRABTREE: Point of order.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

DR. CRABTREE: Didn't the council just approve the preferred alternative for a trip limit?

DR. DUVAL: No, we have not gotten to that motion.

DR. CRABTREE: Okay, never mind.

DR. DUVAL: The motion reads; add alternative under Action 2 to consider a hundred pound trip limit from January 1 to May 31, and 400 pounds for the remainder of the season. Is there a second to that motion? Seconded by Jack. Discussion?

MS. BECKWITH: I can explain some of the reasons for that. For this particular option we had some discussion but we did not have the information we needed to make a decision on this alternative. Nick Farmer was then able to run the analysis of potential closure dates, and he did send that around to us.

His analysis was that there would be no potential closure, except under the Scenario 4, which is sort of the most likely scenario to have a closure. But under all the other scenarios, there would be no closure. Some of the reasons I like this particular combination is it does allow an incidental catch through the peak season of spawning.

For our particular area in Hatteras, that 400 pound trip limit, when paired with a snowy grouper trip limit, would better allow for a profitable trip in an area of our management range that does not have a lot of options. It would sort of tip our hat over to our idea of visioning and consideration of regional differences and needs.

I have spoken with Monica and Jack, and there would have to be some additional economic analysis that would be needed for this document to move forward, but the expectation is not that this would have to come back to another meeting or anything. Monica can speak more specifically to what additional needs with this. We've chosen a fairly conservative ACL and I just feel that this is something that the fishermen in that area of North Carolina have asked for. I would like to be able to offer that to them, since they are the portion of our region that has been most impacted by blueline tilefish.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: My concern is that you don't have the economic analysis before you that would show you the effects of this particular proposal in the document. You have some biological information, I think, that Nick provided, but you don't have the economics. The social effects - you know, I read the document again.

This was put together with light speed, and they're pretty qualitative. I understand why the social effects have to be that way; given the information before you. In the document when it talks about - and I'm talking about the main amendment - the large amendment, not the decision

document, when it talks about discussing the effects of the trip limits and then it discusses how many additional trips and the pounds remaining for the different alternative.

You've got that information before you. It does say in here that it cannot be predicted how many trips would be made into the future that would land blueline tilefish, as it is likely only to be a bycatch species, regardless of the commercial sector ACL changes in Action 1. However, the lower the trip limit the more likely the commercial ACL would not be met.

I know Anna talked to that. I guess Nick ran some analyses and I guess it wouldn't be. For economics, though, say, Alternative 3, which is the 300 pound trip limit, is likely to have the least direct economic effect followed by Alternative 2, which is 200 pounds and then Alternative 1, no action, which is 100 pounds.

I don't know what this proposal does to that information. I would assume that catching less fish from January through May would have more direct economic effects on the fishermen. I don't know. I don't know and you don't know, because you don't have the analysis before you. That does concern me.

MR. BOWEN: Wasn't Dr. Farmer's analysis of this - didn't it have a step down going back to 100 pounds at some point or no?

DR. DUVAL: No, but his analysis was for a 100 pound trip limit from January through May, and then a 400 pound trip limit June through December.

MR. COX: Anna, I've left my glasses in my truck; but would you read that motion again that you just put up, please?

MS. BECKWITH: Sure. Add Alternative under Action 2 to consider a 100 pound trip limit from January 1st to May 31st, and 400 pounds for the remainder of the season.

MR. COX: You wouldn't want to have a step down after a certain percentage of that 400 pound trip has been caught. Would it make sense to drop back to 100? My concern here is, so the ACL for snowys is going to be about 125,000 pounds going into this coming season. Yes, I am very sensitive to the discard.

That is the unknown factor; we don't know what is going to happen, right? You said, I think, our blueline tile ACL is going to be about 78,000 pounds. Anyway, I'm just making that to be a concern of mine, because we don't really know what is going to happen and how much effort there is going to be in that bandit fishery for the tilefish. But I certainly support the motion, because it is what we've talked about. I just want to be sensitive to that.

DR. CRABTREE: I guess I'm concerned that we don't have the economic analysis; as Monica said. It is just too last minute to do this. My worry is that if we choose this as a preferred now, and then the economic analysis is done afterwards and it shows this is economically not good, it is going to have adverse impacts.

It could seem arbitrary and capricious at that point, because the analysis doesn't support the decision. Then if we ended up disapproving the trip limit, that would kick us back to the old trip

limit, which nobody wants. I think there is some risk with doing this without the analysis at this stage of the game.

MR. PHILLIPS: Roy, would it be a problem just to put it in and not pick it as a preferred so that it could go out to public hearing?

DR. CRABTREE: We're taking final action today. That's the problem.

MR. PHILLIPS: This is going out to public hearing. Okay, well then I agree with you.

DR. CRABTREE: If you want to wait until the next meeting, then I have no problem with putting it in there.

MR. CONKLIN: I share Jack's concerns there that the blueline tile and the snowy are sort of caught together. When you go up to a 400 pound trip limit, the snowys could already be caught up. It might become a directed fishery. Then we'll have a lot of snowy discards. Then also, I spoke late yesterday evening about that we're patching stuff up and plugging tires here.

That is what we're doing here, and we need to move this thing along so we can have some sort of a better fishery this year. I think this is going to hold us up and I can't support it at this time. But after we get a stock assessment, maybe we can do a real well thought through amendment and stuff, then maybe I would; but at this time, no.

DR. DUVAL: Anybody else? All right let's go ahead and vote. **The motion reads; add alternative under Action 2 to consider 100 pound trip limit from January 1 to May 31, and 400 pounds for the remainder of the season. Could I please see a show of hands of those in favor of the motion? One. Could I please see a show of hands of those opposed to the motion? Eight opposed. Abstentions? One abstention, the motion fails.**

The next motion was to add an alternative for a 400 pound trip limit to Action 2. That motion failed for lack of a second. The next motion was to select Alternative 3 as a preferred under Action 2, and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to accept the IPTs suggested edits to Action 3 and the alternatives, and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to select Alternative 6 under Action 3 as a preferred; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to accept the IPTs suggested edits to Action 4 and the alternatives; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to select Alternative 3 under Action 4 as a preferred; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? One objection. The motion passes with one objection. The next motion was a substitute to select Alternative 6 as a preferred; that motion failed.

The next motion was to accept the IPTs suggested edits to Action 5, alternatives and inclusion of Subalternatives 2D and 3D; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to select Subalternatives 2C and 3C under Action 5 as preferreds; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to remove Action 6 from Regulatory Amendment 25, and modify the purpose statement accordingly; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to approve sending Regulatory Amendment 25 for formal review.

Give the Council Chair and staff editorial license to make modifications to the amendment as necessary, deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate and give the Council Chair and staff editorial license to make modifications and redeem as necessary; and on behalf of the committee, I so move, and I'll turn it over to Mr. Mahood.

MR. MAHOOD: We'll start again with Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: No.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. McCawley.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Cox.

MR. COX: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Chair Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: **The motion passes with one negative vote.**

DR. DUVAL: The next item of discussion was Amendment 41, dealing with mutton snapper and Jessica McCawley gave us a presentation regarding management options for mutton snapper in Florida State waters and the FWCs efforts to gather public input. In early 2016 we'll have the workshops in conjunction with South Atlantic Council public meetings, and the intent here is to implement consistent regulations for mutton snapper in state and federal waters.

The first motion we had was to approve inclusion of Action 1 in Amendment 41 and approve the range of alternatives under Action 1 for detailed analysis; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

We did have direction to staff to give the IPT editorial license to modify the wording of the no action alternatives throughout the document as needed, just to make sure they are consistent for NEPA purposes. **The next motion was to improve inclusion of Action 2 in Amendment 41 and approve the range of alternatives under Action 2 for detailed analysis; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to approve inclusion of Action 3 in Amendment 41, and approve the range of alternatives under Action 3 for detailed analysis; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

The next motion was to approve inclusion of Action 4 in Amendment 41, and approve the range of alternatives under Action 4 for detailed analysis; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to approve inclusion of Action 5 as modified in Amendment 41, and approve the range of alternatives under Action 5 for detailed analysis, council staff to coordinate with FWC staff regarding spawning season options; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. I think this is where we have some modifications to these actions, Myra? We asked Jessica and Erica to work with Myra to provide edits to these actions and the alternatives, so Myra is going to bring up this additional language.

MS. BROWER: What we did was basically just reorganized the alternatives a little bit, so that Alternative 2 pertains to actions that would be applicable during the months that mutton snapper are spawning. We had left that blank; because we need to go back and look at the literature and see what the information is out there that is available to determine that.

Then you would have subalternatives for the various bag limits. Then Alternative 3 pertains to vessel limits, and one of the alternatives is a per-person limit, and this is during the regular season; or maybe it is the other way around. It is the other way around. Alternative 2 is what would be applicable during the regular season, meaning the months when mutton snapper are not spawning.

Then Alternative 3 would pertain to the spawning months. There is a range of alternatives that corresponds to what the FWC is interested in gathering input on. Then Alternative 4 is an alternative that would allow a change in the bag limit that would be applicable year round. This was just an easier way to present the alternatives; and I think it captures what the FWC was trying to get input on.

MS. McCRAWLEY: I just wanted to note. I had noted that Myra said that they would look at the literature to determine the spawning season months. When we discussed this with the Commission, there is some unpublished literature out there that John Hunt and his folks are getting, also, it appears that in different parts of the Keys, say, at Riley's Hump in the Tortugas versus other areas of the Keys that the spawning months might be different.

That is why we were looking at different months and ranges. Just relying on the published literature at this point, I don't think is going to be adequate. I would like to come back and address that. I know we're going to discuss it at the workshops, but I think we need to talk about that more as this amendment moves forward.

DR. DUVAL: Monica, did you want to provide any input regarding the structure of the alternative at this point? No. Recall in committee we originally discussed having an additional action that would specify the months during which these various bag and/or trip limits would apply, based on the spawning season. I think currently in regulations it just simply states that the 10 fish per person per day trip limit occurs during the months of May and June.

I don't know if it specifically references it as a spawning period or not. But in order to have some range of two to three months, it seems like we would need to either add an action to specify the months of the regular season versus the spawning season or not. I guess I would just put that out there. I mean we're just approving this for scoping, but something that the IPT should probably be thinking about; as it sounds like we're going to have to come back to it after scoping.

MS. McCAWLEY: I agree with that. That is exactly what I was saying, that yes, I know that right now it is listed as May and June; but there has been debate that July is even more important than May and June. Then there is debate that maybe July is only more important in some parts of the Keys than other parts of the Keys. I think we need an additional action that is going to decide what the months are.

MR. HARTIG: That was my concern. As long as May, June and July are in there as options, I'm fine. I'm fine.

DR. DUVAL: I think Myra is copying and pasting the new stuff in there. I don't know did we look at the revised language for Action 6? My bad; no revised language.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I guess I have some concern, and I know this is just an options paper and I'm fine with it. I have a little concern that the council is going to be making the scientific decisions of when mutton spawns. I heard what Jessica said, and I understand that it may be different in different areas.

But I can't recall another action that you've ever had when you have an action that may determine what the spawning season is. I think that you can structure your management measures on the different months they spawn, and those sorts of things. You can take this out and let it go. I just have some concern about some of the discussion I've heard; in terms of your decisions.

I want to make sure you're not making scientific decisions on when mutton spawns. You can make plenty of management decisions on various months in spawning seasons and that sort of thing. It is just food for thought at this point. We can address it as it goes along; it is just an options paper, so I'm okay.

DR. DUVAL: I don't think the intent is to determine the spawning season, it is to align our management actions to coincide with the spawning season; and based on what Jessica has said, there is some uncertainty over what the season for the spawn is. I guess the question I have for you is, how are things discussed and structured for our existing four month shallow water grouper spawning season closure?

I mean, we call that a spawning season closure, but it doesn't necessarily cover all the months of the spawn for all of those critters that are included in that particular closure.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I agree to your previous point. That is not what you're trying to decide. I just want to make it clear to the public that is not what you're trying to decide. I would have to go back and look. I believe that in the discussion of that document that put in that spawning season closure –

I don't have a problem if you say a spawning season closure. I just want to make sure the public doesn't think that you're trying to say when the spawning occurs and all that; make the determination of when spawning occurs. I'm just a little sensitive to the language, and I can work on that with you all as we go down the road.

DR. DUVAL: I would hope that is something that the IPT could figure out how to structure an action like that to indicate that these are management measures that would be in place during the spawn or during these particular months.

DR. McCAWLEY: Yes, I agree with what you said that it is determining management actions that would occur during particular spawning months.

MR. CONKLIN: To Monica's point. We have another amendment on the table, Amendment 36 where we're making decisions determining where fish are spawning. We had a presentation this week, and some of the sites that are up for us to pick to close down don't have any spawning information in there.

To that point as well, there are some that we do have information on and I would just ask people to be considerate when making decisions that if we don't have information on areas, it is not our job to decide where we think fish spawn; because we're not scientists.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I would just say in response, we're not making decisions about where they're spawning; we're just trying to figure out how we want to constrain harvest during the months that they are spawning that's all.

MS. BROUWER: Just to clarify for me. We're going to substitute then the previous language with what I just projected, because it basically captures the same thing that was there except with less words. The motion as it reads still contains wording that would prompt us to work with the FWC to come up with another action for the spawning months. I think we're okay if we just go ahead and approve it the way it is.

DR. DUVAL: All right, any other discussion on this motion? Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to improve inclusion of Action 6 as modified in Amendment 41 and approve the range of alternatives under Action 6 for detailed analysis; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Discussion.

MS. BROUWER: Here for this on, I see that we still have some wording in the alternatives that refers to a regular season and a spawning season. Perhaps, if you give us guidance, editorial license to make the language of this action consistent with the language of Action 5, then that would probably be okay.

DR. DUVAL: I guess that is what I was referring to in the document that you had earlier. It looked like modified language under Action 6. Other discussion? Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to approve Amendment 41 as modified for scoping; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next item on our agenda was Amendment 36, Spawning SMZs, and Dr. Nick Farmer gave a presentation regarding information on bottom topography of the proposed spawning SMZs, as well as instances the species collected that were histologically demonstrated to be in spawning condition. We reviewed the document. We reviewed the purpose and need, and we clarified that the council's intent was that modifying spawning SMZs includes removing the sunset provision.

The first motion we had was to change the preferred alternative for Action 6, Alternative 2 to Subalternative 2C; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was a substitute motion to change the preferred alternative for Action 6, Alternative 2 to Subalternative 2A; that was not approved.

The next motion was to select Preferred Alternative 3, Subalternative 3B as a preferred for Action 8; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The next motion was to accept the procedure outlined and select Alternative 2, Subalternative 2B as a preferred for Action 9; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Discussion.

MR. BROWN: Yes, I would like to make a substitute motion to change the 10-year sunset to 7 years.

DR. DUVAL: There is a substitute motion by Mark to change the 10 year sunset to 7 years; is there a second to that motion? Seconded by Chris. Discussion.

MS. McCAWLEY: I'm going to say it again. I don't think 7 years is a long enough time period in order for someone to go apply for a grant, receive the grant and do multi-years worth of research needed to get where we need to be. We are getting updates throughout this ten year process, but I feel strongly that 10 years is the timeframe that is needed.

MR. BROWN: The rationale is the reason I want to make those changes, to ensure that the work gets done sooner. This will help to reestablish the public's trust with the council by showing that the monitoring and the research will be done.

MR. CONKLIN: The original reason why I brought this up, and I think we need to have it in here is so we can hold Agency and other partners accountable for what we're doing. Seven years is, I think sufficient time, to get stuff done. In just a short amount of time science has demonstrated some spawning going on in some of these areas, with money.

I mean, it moved right along. In one case I believe, one of the fisherman that went out needed to get a permit pretty quick; maybe it was Jack's boat over here. They went out and did some exploring, put Dr. Haymans on, riding around. They called up the Regional Office and got a permit pretty quick. No? Okay.

DR. DUVAL: They got a letter of authorization from MARMAP.

MR. CONKLIN: All we're talking about here is getting on a boat, going fishing, pulling fish out and sending them to a lab and seeing if there are eggs in them. That is what we've done, so far. If I'm wrong please correct me, but I think seven years; I mean kids get potty trained in seven years. We have seven year olds graduating high school right now. This can be done, especially somebody with a doctorate.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, the only way I could support this motion is if it were tied specifically to the collection of the data or the research to be conducted. I always thought all along that if the

research plan hadn't been submitted at least five years prior, then I'm not willing to support these. We have MPAs now that have not had any kind of research done to them.

The MPA off St. Lucie Humps and the East Hump in the Keys, neither one of those has had any kind – they are skipped by the research cruises that are being done now. To me, I think it is critical to tie this to the data. I don't want to tie it to whether or not spawning fish are seen within five years or seven years, which Mark has proposed; I would tie it to whether or not there is a research plan submitted within seven years to address that MPA or SMZ, excuse me.

DR. PONWITH: I don't disagree with Mark's logic at all, the notion of making it seven to try and pressurize the system, and really force people to be attentive to gathering data. However, an SMZ may cause fish to spring forth from the ocean, but not necessarily money to spring forth to collect those data.

I think that the council's intent of making this a high priority and making that clear in their research priorities enables me to make it clear in my priorities that I put out in our grant calls for proposals. That is one way to be able to get the resources. The human side of the system is something you can pressurize.

The biotic side of the system is something you can't. The one thing we all know; and you guys know better than anybody who are out there fishing, is that these systems are dynamic. It takes time for the system to be able to adjust to a change in fisheries management strategies, and then be able to see that change manifest itself in a way that is scientifically detectable takes time.

My concern with shortening that amount of time is that you could end up getting a false negative that change is happening but it is not happening at a level that is high enough or consistent enough that the measurements we're doing can see it. I would hate to actually take what could be an innovative and constructive management measure and not give it a fair shot at success, because we're not capable of measuring at that short of a timeframe.

DR. DUVAL: Before I get to Jessica, Mark and Doug, I just want to remind folks that one of the remaining items from the committee is to have Chip come up here and provide an overview of the system management plan, so that we can see what changes have been made. We will need to approve that.

MS. McCAWLEY: I agree with what Bonnie is saying. I think that the sunset provision, I would say at 10 years, is what is helping to reestablish the public trust. I think if you don't understand how grant cycles work, even our own agency's grant cycles are two years out from now. We've already established those priorities. You are talking about for, say, a state granting cycle, it is like turning an aircraft carrier.

You would really be down to five or four years worth of available time period to get this done, because the priorities have already been determined for state grant cycles sometimes two years out from now. I think it just takes longer to get the money to do this, and that is why I think ten years gives us a better shot at success. Just like Bonnie is saying, not getting a false negative here just because we couldn't get the money in time to get the research done.

MR. BROWN: Well, this provision is already tied to the data, so the data will be already included as we pass this. But like I said again, we're already going to be struggling with the public's trust on this. From my understanding, this is something that we really need to look at hard and to think about, as far as being able to move through this process with these public hearings and everything and get positive feedback.

I just see changing this, and also, I've talked to different people on the staff about this. It wouldn't be that big of a problem to be able to renew this. It can be reviewed and it can be renewed. I don't see any sense in establishing something that is long if it can also be looked at in a shorter period of time; kind of push the system along a little bit so that we do get the research that's needed.

MR. HAYMANS: Mark, I was just looking at the steps for evaluation. When you look at Number 6 and 7, it basically talks about the fact that if we're not satisfied at Year 4, which is the first time we would see this; that we can start a regulatory amendment then. Although it is discussing the fact that if we're not satisfied with the sufficient level of spawning, I would say that if there hasn't been anything done, and we're not satisfied, we could do the same sort of thing through regulatory action.

I'm okay with ten years, because I'm going to get to see it at four, and I'm going to get to see it at seven; and I may get to end it then based on what we've seen here.

MR. CONKLIN: I think part of my concern is we don't want to have to walk back in a couple years and get a review; oh well, we haven't got to this yet and we haven't got to that. Have the people that really have been pushing to get this done, not put money into fund ongoing research to prove what's going on? In just a matter of a couple of years we've managed to get some pretty good data, and money has come right up.

I'm not talking about state budgets; I'm not talking about federal budgets. In our little citizen science, one of the things we should do is identify outside sources of funding. There is plenty of money floating around – well maybe – that can be used. What I have seen is this collaboration and all this stuff, these big newspaper articles. Everything that is selling this thing that we're trying to do, I want to see people's feet held to the fire, and if they can't prove it, it shouldn't be up to states and Agency to have to get all the money. We need to prove that spawning is going on and if it's not, then open them back up.

MR. BELL: I think that the value in the sunset really goes back to trying to ensure some public trust in this, and that we are serious about what we said we were going to do. That is the only reason to have it in there is, either we're going to produce or these are going away. I think Doug's point, which I didn't think of before _

I mean, you could look at this at the four year mark, or whatever year mark, or there is the plan and if we haven't produced or we haven't even gotten the money or we haven't even done the work by the time we get to certain checkpoints. If we can come back and basically, if I understood that correctly, basically just kill the whole thing. That is, perhaps, even more powerful than the sunset, in terms of pressure. That is where we have some other things that we haven't followed through on and evaluated.

That is why we have this in there was to try to ensure to the public, we're going to do this. But if for whatever reason we get to a particular year and we haven't even started; or the money is not there; or we're just not doing it, we could kill the whole thing through an amendment, which, to me, is more powerful than the sunset.

But I understand. I think what Mark and Chris are getting at is we just need to really, really hold ourselves accountable for this, and that is the way to do it in their mind.

MR. COX: These are long lived species, and we've got some species in trouble; and we acknowledge that. I'm very sensitive to the red grouper situation in North Carolina. I certainly don't want to see that fishery closed, and we've got problems there. We know we've got problems with Warsaws; we know we have problems with other species.

It takes a long time. I would like to see the Warsaws get back to a level, Chris, that we could harvest them again. I certainly saw how long it took to get the benefit from the snowy closure; and we're reaping benefits from that. I'm looking long term on this, and I just support the ten year. We're getting ready to embark on the citizen science, and that is where work is going to be done.

I think it is going to take ten years. It is like Jessica said, ten years is not really ten years by the time all the stuff goes in place. Mark, I understand what you're saying about making sure that we hold somebody's feet to the fire. But I think, as fishermen, we're going to put our own money into this.

In my business, I use my own money and I go out and I do things. I figure out what's working and what's not working. I'm not just looking for other people to put money in this, I'm going to put my own money into it and make sure that these things are being done the way they should be.

MR. HARTIG: Gregg, can you come up to the microphone for a minute? Is there money available next year to look at each one of the proposed spawning SMZs?

MR. WAUGH: Yes.

MR. BREWER: Because Warsaw has been fished down to the extent that they have been. I believe Nick said we only had one instance where it was proven that there was a Warsaw that was spawning, out of everything that was looked at. It is going to take a while. Therefore, I would favor the ten year.

But, I agree with Chris 100 percent that the folks that are spending the money to sue us could certainly put some grant money up there to help with doing the research on this, because really that law suit is what pushed us to where we are with this. I think that they can come in on the back side of this thing and certainly help pay for the research that's involved in accomplishing the goal that they wanted accomplished.

DR. DUVAL: I don't think representatives of either of those groups are here right now.

MR. CONKLIN: To Chester's point, and what I was going to say is we've been threatened with law suits. Law suits, I've got e-mails and various other things that say if you don't do this, we

could go back to the 240 Closure or something else like that. This is our only defense as a council to threaten other groups' back that if you want this done, please invest in the research in the area.

I'm not saying I don't want this thing to go through because they're not going to do the research, and we can open it back up. But if we're going through all this trouble and we're coming up with a plan to monitor it and everything, we need to make sure it gets done.

Time and time again I've said, this is something that we're not mandated to do, it is not necessary. This is just a good thing to do. We don't have a whole lot of data. Let's get some more. That is what I want to see is people to keep putting money into collaborative research if we're going to do this.

DR. DUVAL: Very quick, Jack.

MR. COX: Chris, I think we ought to start our own fund as fishermen and not count on other people to do it. I'll write a check for \$5,000.00 to start the program. I'm willing to invest in my fishery.

DR. DUVAL: All right, so I would like to come back to the motion. All right everybody, let's cut the sidebars. I would like to come back to the substitute motion. **Mark, just as a procedural point, if you're okay with this your motion was to change a ten year sunset to seven years. That is actually Alternative 3, and I'm assuming Subalternative 3B, which would be apply the sunset provision to all spawning SMZs except Area 51 and Area 53.**

MR. BROWN: That is correct.

DR. DUVAL: I'm assuming that that language is okay with the seconder. Chris, you were the seconder. That is the actual subalternative that is in our document. Okay. **Could I please see a show of hands of those in favor of this motion? Three in favor. Those opposed. Seven opposed; the substitute motion fails.**

We are back to the main motion, which is accept the procedure outlined and select Alternative 2, Subalternative 2B as a preferred for Action 9. Is there any objection to this motion? Motion passes with one objection. I've been informed that we need to actually go back and approve the purpose and need; that we did this in committee but have not offered that on behalf of the council; so if I could get a motion from the council to approve the purpose and need.

MR. HARTIG: I move that we approve the purpose and need for Amendment 36.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Ben, is there a second? **Second by Jessica.** Discussion. **Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** The next thing was we agreed by consensus to modify the target species. I will let Myra scroll down to that. We made a few changes to the target species. I think if you scroll down just a little bit more, Myra, there is some in capital. Those are ones that we added.

I just wanted to show that to folks, and then at this time I was going to ask Chip if he could please just outline the System Management Plan. We have a draft system management plan for the spawning SMZs, and we have a draft system management plan for the Amendment 14 MPAs. We did not get to these discussion items on our agenda, so we're slated to take final action on Amendment 36 in March.

These two system management plans are reflective of one another. The types of deliverables and the plans are very much the same. Chip is just going to run through this. If there are modifications or questions that folks have, we don't have to spend a lot of time on it here, but if you would get those to Chip so that we can review sort of the final version in March. But I just want to turn things over to Chip to run through that.

MR. COLLIER: The SMZs are Appendix N for Amendment 36, and also there is the Amendment 14 SMP. Those two documents are very similar, they are both provided to you. We've taken out both documents to the SSC, the I & E Committee, and also the IPT has reviewed them as well. They provided comments.

They've all been adjusted. The goals and objectives are the same as you guys saw in the previous versions; that was in September. If you have any suggestions or changes for the goals and objectives, please let us know. In addition to that you guys just changed the focal species list for the SMZ document; you added greater amberjack, conies, rock hind, graysby, and black fin snapper into that.

That document will be changed to address those issues. In addition to that it has also been populated with information on site characteristics. That has been done more in the Amendment 14 document, because I thought that was coming final for this one. If you look in, I believe it is Chapter 5, that has all the site characteristics and the sampling that has been done by the National Marine Fisheries ROV survey, as well as the Southeast Reef Fish Survey.

It includes information on the focal species and other species of interest. In addition to that in some of the comments the SSC suggested ranking the priorities and the objectives, especially for the science side. The IPT went through and ranked the objectives, and if you guys have any comments on the objective rankings, please look through the document and find those and get back with us. Since it isn't going final until March, we can make those adjustments in March, but it would be nice to have your recommended changes in the document for you to consider.

DR. DUVAL: I just had a couple questions and I think this applies to both this appendix as well as the Amendment 14 MPA document that I think we'll talk about next. There is a priority ranking, and then there is also a priority as to whether or not something is high, medium or low.

I noticed that the priority rankings kind of went back and forth between having a number as a ranking versus having a high or medium or low as a ranking, so I had a question about that. Then also in terms of the ones that are numbered, is one high or is five high? I was just wondering which end of the scale is which; so I didn't know if you could address that.

MR. COLLIER: The priority ranking, I ranked basically the first five or the first four, the first four for the Deepwater MPA and the first five for the Spawning SMZs; I believe is how it worked out. After you get past the first five they become kind of jumbled on what the priorities

were, so instead of actually ranking them I kind of went to a more qualitative. The first priority definitely fell out as Number 1 priority to the IPT. You guys can change that. This is your document to do with what you want. That was just the recommended ranking by the IPT.

DR. DUVAL: Are there other questions?

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes, I had the same question that you have. For example, under the resource monitoring section Priority Ranking 1 that is considered high, then under Action 2 it gets a Priority Ranking 4, and that is considered high. It is just confusing. I wish that there was a consistent way throughout the whole document.

DR. DUVAL: I think there are things that are high priority or maybe instead of priority it might be level of importance or something. I understand what you're trying to get to; that some things are very important, some things are of medium importance and some things are lower in importance. But just because something is very important doesn't always mean that it is going to get a priority ranking that is super high. I agree with Jessica. Maybe there is a way to clarify that; because I think that is going to be a little bit confusing to the public.

MR. COLLIER: Yes and the SMZ document is definitely the more rough draft. I think that is what is being looked at a lot more. The Deepwater MPA, it only has one ranking as far as not in the top and not in the bottom. The bottom was the original that was put together for the IPT as we were developing it, and then the second part the one that was at the top after the objective. That one came from the IPTs ranking. That will be cleaned up and I will address your concerns with that.

DR. DUVAL: Then we'll just see that again in March.

MR. COLLIER: Yes and it is also very difficult when you're dealing with several different IPTs, not several different IPTs but advisory panels and IPTs and different groups within that on how you want to do the ranking. Within the science it is difficult, because there is a monitoring there is an assessment, there is socioeconomic and that kind of all falls into the science side.

Whereas, if you're looking at just the information or just the outreach side all the information within the outreach that is in priority ranking that is actually done in the list. The highest priority is the first item. However in science, because you do have like four different sections within that you can't say the first thing is what we want done. That is where it becomes difficult.

DR. DUVAL: We'll just run right over into the Amendment 14 MPA document. Question, Wilson?

DR. LANEY: No Ma'am, just a comment to let everyone know that the documents were presented to the Habitat AP as well, so they've had a chance to look at them also.

DR. DUVAL: Great, thank you. One of the last few items on our agenda from committee was to review the System Management Plan for the Amendment 14 MPAs; again, very similar to the SMZ. Are you looking for approval of that document?

MR. COLLIER: Since we didn't really get a good chance to go over it, I would say let's just wait until March and we can get approval in March.

DR. DUVAL: Great, thank you. The last thing on the agenda before we get to timing and task was I wanted to ask John Carmichael if he would come up here. John just has, I think, four or five slides that he wanted to run through regarding approaches for monitoring recreational harvest of some of our rare event species.

The SSC received a couple different presentations at their October meeting, which are included in your briefing book; I think they were Attachments 11A and 11B if you went through those. John is not going to go through those, he is just going to sort of synthesize what was presented to the SSC, and just get a little bit of direction from the council regarding moving forward. Then we'll do our timing and task motion and then we can take a short break and move into mackerel after that; just giving you a heads up.

MR. CONKLIN: I had one thing under other business when we get to the end.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Since we've been talking about this for a while, I wanted to just give you a few slides to give you a flavor of what's happened. What has happened so far is the council has given us direction to look at ways of exploring the MRIP estimates, with attention toward the deepwater species where the precision, the PSEs, have tended to be kind of high.

There is a lot of uncertainty. They are interested if there are ways of getting better estimates for those species so we can have more confidence when we're monitoring these fisheries. There were discussions with our staff, with SERO, with folks up at MRIP to come up with some approaches; had a number of conference calls, and then you guys saw some general approaches from - I think Dave Van Voorhees presented them to you in June.

Then they came back with more detail with those approaches applied to the SSC in October. I want to just show you a little bit about what it is that they are doing. They came up with a list of approaches, and the first few that are on this table; are straight out of the detailed presentation that was at the SSC meeting.

They do things like increasing sample sizes. Well, increasing sample sizes means you're going to have more samples. You're going to put more effort into it. You're going to have more cost. Optimizing existing sample allocation that would mean you potentially shift some samples that are being done now from some areas of coverage, some cells as they call them, some waves, modes into ones that would target more of the deepwater species. Now that could have offsetting consequences for things like the nearshore species, which are currently well sampled that could relate to less precision for some of those other species.

That is not a very good tradeoff really. They could modify the existing survey designs. That is another way of shifting the effort of trying to get more samples, more information for these rare species, these rare events that we're seeing with our deepwater species. One thing I always bring up to keep in mind is, when you look at the MRIP data over a number of years, it is only about 10 percent of the overall amount of effort that goes beyond three miles.

Invariably, the bulk of the trips that they encounter, the folks that they encounter, the effort that is going on within the fisheries along the South Atlantic Coast tend to be within the state waters within the three miles; all those estuaries, bays, sounds and all of that stuff. It really is a surprisingly small proportion.

But when we're dealing with the snapper grouper species and stuff, you know our estimates are coming out of that proportion. It shouldn't really be a surprise at times that this is not necessarily a best sample component. It is kind of like the number of people who hunt versus the number of people who turkey hunt.

There are a lot of people who hunt across the board for water fowl and squirrels and rabbits and deer and big game and everything, but then there are certain hunting things that are very specialized. Deepwater snapper grouper fishing, to me, is more like the small number of people who go and moose hunt, as opposed to maybe the vast numbers of people who might deer hunt.

If you keep that sort of thing in mind and you can start to understand some of the challenges we're facing in these. They look at specialized - design a specialized program. That would be taking, maybe making a special branch of MRIP that focused on these deepwater species. One of the things something like that requires would be, you have a specialized program you're probably thinking of some specialized way that you get at the people that fish for snapper grouper.

Whether it was an endorsement on an existing state license that said, here is a check box, or a stamp of some type. In that case, the analogy to me is you have a general hunting license that allows you to do things and you have to get an additional, essentially an endorsement to hunt big game, to hunt waterfowl, to hunt turkeys.

These things all exist but they have some way of finding out. Who are the people that do that and what do they do with those things in the game management things? Well, in the case of, say, waterfowl you have to enter in a HIP program, tell them who you are and they come back at you and they ask you, well did you actually hunt last year; which is very important, because we know we could have say, like HIP, a free thing where you register I might want to fish for snapper grouper; but maybe you never actually do it.

Maybe you go once versus maybe another guy goes 40 times. It is those sort of gross statistics that waterfowl management gets out of things like the HIP program. They don't get really accurate estimates of what is being killed, and that is not how they manage those resources. But they do get some sort of ground truthing and know how many people that got this actually even participated? To me, in terms of snapper grouper, it could be very interesting to us to know how many people checked a box that said I might do it and never did, and how many went once or twice.

How many go out and it's the primary way in which they fish; because right now, we don't know any of those kind of demographics about our people who fish for snapper grouper? That is a huge impediment to better monitoring, to better sampling those people. Then the next one and I'll show you some estimates for this.

This is the custom estimation. This is taking the data that they have, not doing any of these above things; not getting a better sampling frame; not shifting any effort. This is taking what they have and coming up with a different way of tabulating the data, analyzing the data, doing things across multiple years as opposed to doing a single year type estimate, a single wave estimate.

If you have sort of poor sampling, one of the ways you get around that is we pool. You bring in more information across a number of years to try and get a better estimate. Moving averages and things of that nature are what they're talking about there. Now, the beauty of this is, this can actually be tested by looking back in the past. We can't do any of the top ones by looking back in the past, because we didn't have any of those changes in place.

But we can look at different ways of analyzing what we have in hand and see how they perform. A lot of the results that the SSC saw in the performance are based on this custom estimation process. Here is just a figurative example of what some of the custom estimation things did to the measures of precision.

What the bars are here are a variety of different custom estimation things that they applied, so when it goes back from 2004 here over to 2014, any bars that are below this horizontal line here are places where the estimation process they came up with gave them better precision. This is on the negative side so it means they reduced the measure of uncertainty. It is actually a more precise estimate.

What we can see here is that some of these made as much as a 60, maybe 70 percent improvement in the precision, which means they reduced the uncertainty substantially. The quick answer for what this chart shows is, there is a lot of ways of pooling that data and pooling then the data that we have in the future to get a better estimate; a less imprecise estimate for what is going on with many of these species. It is an encouraging result.

This next one here shows just in terms of what the actual landings estimates are. This example is for blueline tilefish from the charter mode, South Atlantic, annual landings by different estimation methods. They have an MRIP cumulative across the year versus the standard now is to use a wave.

They have a two year estimate where they look at effort trends over two years to get a better estimate of the scalar for effort that goes into the estimates. They did a one year effort scalar; they did a three year moving average. As you can see, some of these methods are pretty different. Like here, we have the one year cumulative showing a much higher catch rate, say, than some of these which are like the effort scalars.

We know sampling has gotten better in recent years. It is encouraging that these methods all perform fairly similar in terms of the estimates of landings. But remember, our goal here is not necessarily the estimated landings. This is the outcome.

Our goal is to have better precision. What really matters is that these methods are all pretty good. They all improve precision. In some cases they give us a very similar answer, in terms of catch. Well, that tends to give us some confidence, if I look at something multiple ways. It is more robust, I have more confidence in it, because I'm not getting this huge range of outcomes.

There are some things going on here that we may not fully understand what was going on with the data, but it probably has something to do with effort trends that were going on at that time; you know, that is 2006, 2007, 2008. There were things happening in those years that could; effort wasn't as stable, it was on a declining trend.

The bottom line is they have methods. They can do it, and we have things that we can do with the data we have in hand, which don't require, say, additional survey effort or shifting of surveys; which then brings us then, of course, to so what do we do with this? What do we do now? Well, I think we've done what the council charged, which was look into different ways of estimating recreational catch.

MRIP folks have identified that there are things they can do with the data they have in hand, which would reduce the uncertainty. The question now is, how do we get this into practice? MRIP is a national program run by the Agency, so it is not necessarily up to the council to say which method is best, because we don't have the expertise; our scientists don't have the expertise. Our SSC doesn't necessarily have the expertise to fully evaluate that.

There are also concerns with other regions. We don't want to have a whole bunch of different ways that we go about estimating these species, because that leads us to challenges and problems and issues with not being consistent and not being able to compare values. But other regions are interested in dealing with this issue as well, because the Mid-Atlantic recently asked for a similar analysis to be applied to the blueline tilefish in their area.

The Gulf has species with high PSEs that they would be interested in looking at. I've been talking some with Dave Van Voorhees about what we do with the next steps. What we really think is to address these questions about. who is going to generate these estimates, how will these estimates be applied across species and across regions is that we need to have, dare I say it, another one of these gathering of the minds from across the region and across the different entities, so that we can get together and hash out these questions.

Figure out which method is the best, whether or not there is a method that will work well enough across all species, or maybe across groupings of species to be applied; and if it can apply to multiple regions. Then importantly figure out who is going to apply those estimates, because MRIP is collecting the data.

Would it come to MRIP to apply these custom methods or would it come to, say, an individual region, a Science Center or something to put someone in there? All of those have implications for the resources that are necessary to get it done and in some cases potentially the timeliness. If we do something with a three year moving average and I need a full year of MRIP data, you are not going to have estimates necessarily in the current year coming out on a wave by wave basis.

You may have to wait until the entire year's data is in before they can then run that analysis and get you there. That is the kind of tradeoffs we need to think of. That is why when Dave and I talked about this, we need folks from the Science Centers, the regional Offices, the councils, probably some SSC representatives, probably you know they worked with a number of consultants at MRIP who are real experts in survey design; have them come in.

We need to hash out these issues and decide who is going to do it, what are we going to do and things all of that nature. I think trying to do that this year would be very good. I'm not sure how we get the ball rolling, but I think if the council supports that idea and recognizes the need to have a meeting of the minds, and bring folks in all around the Atlantic Coast to get this done, then we can probably start working with Dave and MRIP folks in the Science Center and Regional Office to pull it off.

DR. DUVAL: Make it so. Other questions or comments for John about this?

DR. LANEY: John, it is real exciting to see those improvements in the estimates for blueline. Would it be possible - when you're talking about a workshop you're talking about east coast primarily? But it occurs to me to ask the question, whether or not there enough rare species nationally to even come up with an alternate approach for species that are rarely encountered that could be applied nationwide.

DR. DUVAL: That's a great question, Wilson. I am certainly supportive of moving this type of approach forward. I think that there are enough rarely encountered species, or even if they're not so rarely encountered but we're only allowed to fish for them rarely, like red snapper. Having some of these approaches in hand is going to serve us well.

The general survey design just really was not meant for these types of species. I really commend the staff at MRIP for taking the time to dig into this and come back and provide the presentations that they did. I felt that they were very informative. It is a tradeoff, in terms of data timeliness, cost of an approach, distribution of sampling, et cetera.

MR. BOWEN: Thanks, John that was great. When you made the analogy about the moose and the deer, it kind of perked me up a good bit. Then you kind of went into knowing, trying to figure out who is fishing for the deepwater species. One thing I would like to add that I think is a good idea is, when this gets in place, when we structure it or whoever structures it. Let me just say it like this. If that license to go tag or stamp or whatever it is, is \$3.00 to go have the ability to do that; everybody is going to buy it.

But if that stamp or tag or license or whatever is \$150.00, the only ones that are really into it and really going to give that the effort are the ones that are going to purchase it. My point is, I feel like there should be some kind of substantial - and not that I am trying to take away from the fishermen or make them poor or whatever - but there should be some kind of substantial difference so that we would have a better idea of the concerted effort.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That's where I think the HIP program on the waterfowl is a good first step analogy. It is free. You get your number. Whatever states you hunt in, you get a number for that state. Then the next year when you want to do this again and you want to get your permit to do it, they ask you a few questions about what you did last year.

Did you actually do this? How many birds did you kill? Did you actually hunt in this area? They ask you general things like, ducks, geese. It is fairly simple, but at least it does sort of tease out avidity really, in a way. It is free, because the recognition is always that well, if it is free, then everybody is going to get it. Then if you do it free then you do have to follow up to say, okay, how much did you really do this?

DR. DUVAL: I'll just remind folks that if this is something that would be administered by the Agency, then it is not going to be free; because they will charge the cost of administering the program. Chris, and then I think we should move along and get to the timing and task so we can get to other business. No? John, do you need a motion from us?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think we do, and Myra has got one worked up here, some wording to put in the timing and tasks, which, I think, will take care of it.

DR. DUVAL: Okay great, so that is the next item is our draft timing and task motion; so we'll let Myra bring that back up.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I guess while she's doing that, I'll just put in a plug. You know MRIP, we hear, it is much maligned at times and there is a lot of criticism thrown at that program. But we look at the work that folks that like Dave and John Foster and the others have done up there. It has been a great effort, and the willingness of them to dive into these problems.

Folks that have been around and dealing with MRIP since the early days, it is not like it used to be under MRFSS when it was, these are the estimates go do what you will with them. It is like, this is what we do and this is what you get out of it. It is really that whole attitude has changed, and I just can't say enough nice things about how great they've been to work with, how supportive. It really is a different program than it used to be.

DR. DUVAL: I definitely appreciate their willingness to work with us on this one as well.

MR. HARTIG: You want the timing and task motion?

DR. DUVAL: I know that Chris had one item under other business, and if that is going to affect the timing and task motion, perhaps, we should take other business and then get to timing and task. No? Well, then let's go ahead with the timing and task, Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I would move to approve the following task and timing items; conduct public hearings on Amendment 37 in January/February 2016, conduct scoping on Amendment 41 in January/February 2016 in conjunction with the FWC Workshops, prepare Regulatory Amendment 25 for formal review. Prepare Regulatory Amendment 16 for formal review, revise Amendment 36 and file the DEIS and the comment period to end prior to the March, 2016 meeting. Prepare Amendment 36 for final approval at the March, 2016 meeting.

DR. DUVAL: And that final bullet up on the board.

MR. HARTIG: I can't see that.

DR. DUVAL: It reads; **coordinate with fisheries, agencies in the Southeast to conduct a workshop in 2016 to evaluate application of approaches to improve recreational estimates for rare event species.**

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Madam Chairman that is my motion.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Ben, is there a second; second by Jessica. Discussion, any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. That brings us to other business.

MR. CONKLIN: In the target species outlined for the System Management Plan of the SMZs. I think, under the groupers, we need to add in yellowedge grouper. It is a real long lived species of what; 85 years I think. We're lacking there and if we want to do it right and do a good job we should encompass that as well.

DR. DUVAL: Great suggestion. Chip, do you have that? He's nodding his head. Any other business to come before snapper grouper?

MR. HARTIG: You called off questions when we were doing John. But thank you, John. Thanks for your leadership on moving the needle forward on the rare species. The council made a motion at the last meeting to address this, and my gosh, look what has happened in one meeting cycle. I'm very impressed with what's been done. The SSC, MRIP, everybody involved; thank you!

MR. COX: Yes I just want to say, we do a lot of things here at the table that is hard in snapper grouper, and make a lot of hard decisions. I don't think we all agree on everything for sure. But I can tell you at the end of the day looking back; just over the amount of time I've been on the council we really made some accomplishments. It feels good to be able to do things like triggerfish and see fishermen getting fish back.

DR. DUVAL: Anything else? All right, then we are done with snapper grouper, and I'm going to suggest we take a ten minute break and then we're going to come back and do mackerel. We've got some work left to do on mackerel. But I think the remainder of the committee reports will go fairly quickly.

(Whereupon a recess was taken.)

DR. DUVAL: All right well, take us away.

MR. HARTIG: The committee met on the 12th. We had a briefing on the status of commercial and recreational landings by Jack McGovern; including the fact that the Atlantic stock of cobia Georgia to New York, are currently at 241 percent of the recreational ACL. The recreational accountability measure will apply to reduce the length of the following recreational season for the New York to Georgia stock of cobia. The committee discussed the concerns about the potential short recreational season of 2016, and may direct staff to work on a framework amendment to change the bag limit or other management measures. Under Amendment 26, king mackerel ACLs and stock boundary, **the first motion we had was to select Alternative 3 under Action 1 as a preferred alternative; and on behalf of the committee, I so move.**

Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved. The next motion was to select Alternative 2 as a preferred alternative under Action 2.1; and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any objection to that motion? Any discussion; is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

The next action was under Action 2.2, select Alternative 3 as a preferred; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. The next action was to select Alternative 3 under Action 3 as a preferred alternative; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Discussion? Go ahead, you've got something?

MR. BOWEN: Before we get too far away from it and it is just sticking in my mind. Maybe J.C. can help us with this answer, but Roy alluded yesterday or the day before that there was really nothing we were going to be able to do to get past the possibility of the cobia closure for next year.

Has any more thought, I know we're a little past it. Madam Chair, forgive me; if you'll just have some leeway with me. Is there anything we can do to get away from this possible closure for this year? Has there been talk or discussion? Have we come up with anything?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: If you're looking at me, and I think you are.

MR. BOWEN: Yes, Ma'am. I couldn't help myself.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: That's okay. I'll think about it. I mean we can look into it. I have nothing that has been asked of me to try to figure it out back at the Region, but we can sure talk about it and we can look into it. I don't know exactly what you have in mind, but you're looking for various alternatives and options that we could maybe bring forward; correct?

MR. BOWEN: Yes, Ma'am. I'm looking for anything besides a total closure.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Okay, I'll look.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, and thank you for the leeway.

MR. HARTIG: All right, that brings me to, I think **Motion Number 4 was to select Alternative 3 under Action 3 as a preferred alternative.**

DR. DUVAL: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe we approved Motion 4; that was sort of discussion.

MR. HARTIG: All right, discussion, is there any objection? Seeing none that motion is approved. The next motion was select – you're hard on my vertigo – select Alternative 2 as preferred under Action 6; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. The next motion was to approve the Gulf Council language changes to Alternatives 2 through 5, including Option C under Alternative 4 in Action 8; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

The next action was to select Alternative 3 as a preferred under Action 9; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. That was the last item, I believe, Kari, we were able to get to during our committee meeting. We have a couple of additional items that we did not in Amendment 36, and so Kari is going to move us along to where we are in that and I'll turn it over to Kari.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Okay, so I'm going back to the decision document; that is Attachment 3B. We're on Page 16 in that document under Action 4. This action would establish the commercial split seasons for Atlantic king mackerel in the southern zone. We reorganized these. They were two actions in September and you guys approved those and the Gulf approved them in October.

We have a no action alternative; there would just be one southern zone quota for the whole entire fishing year. Alternative 2 is based on the South Atlantic Mackerel AP recommendation. At their AP meeting in April they presented some ideas for management, and we took those and incorporated them into the different alternatives; and this one would align with the AP recommendation.

It would separate the southern zone quota into two quotas with 60 percent going to March 1st through September 30th, and 40 percent going to October 1st through February 28. Alternative 3 would set it up where Season 1 would be March 1st through October 31st, and it would be 60 percent and then 40 percent would go to Season 2, which would be November 1st through February 28.

Then Alternative 4 would create the split season quotas 50/50. Season 1 would be March 1st through October 31st and Season 2 would be November 1st through February 28. You have in Alternative 3 and 4 we have the October 31st highlighted, and that is because at the September meeting when the IPT rewrote these there was an error in it and it said March 1st through October 1st for each of these and so basically there was a break in there if that would have gone through.

That typo was caught at the Gulf meeting, so we'll just need you guys to approve that language update correction in Alternative 3. There is not supposed to be any kind of break in there, it is supposed to go all the way through the end of October and then Season 2 would start November 1st. We have Figure 5 in here, I showed you a version of this information in a graph last time and it was more spaghetti.

But what it shows is the king mackerel commercial landings in the southern zone by month. But what it shows is the king mackerel commercial landings in the southern zone by month since 1998/99 fishing season through the 2013/14 fishing season. The solid line shows the average pounds per month in the southern zone, and the gray shaded area includes pound per month with the CI at 95 percent. Instead of lots of spaghetti lines Ryan put this graph together for us. You can see generally how it works. There is an increase in the spring and then it kind of drops and then you have lower landings in the late fall, early winter and then it picks back up. When the AP made their recommendations for the split season they proposed Season 2 to start on October 1st, so that even whatever happened in the spring there would always be quota for that winter fishery. That is why they wanted to set up a split season quota.

I will let them talk a little more about possible things that can happen in March. The March landings, their preliminary that came in for the Florida East Coast Zone were 450,000 pounds, so they can have a really big year in March, and Ben had some comments about that for the trip limit action.

I have some tables in here that would show you under the different ACL and ABCs; how the Season 1 and 2 would work with the different proportions for each season. The South Atlantic AP, Alternative 2 would align with their AP recommendations, and the Gulf AP recommended Alternative 1 as the preferred, with trip limits to manage the rate of harvest.

I have a couple committee actions. We were going to kind of make sure, update some of the language mixture that clarifies your intent, where we're going to put in two split season quotas. I forgot about this part. Add split season quotas, so that it is very clear that we're using our split season, which we've used for other species.

Then when the quota is met for that season or expected to be met, it will close for the remainder of the season. We just want to take out that part and just clarify. If you guys are good with us, making those small editorial changes, we can just have a motion that can be combined with reviewing and approving the language that updates it so it says October 31st instead of 1st. One motion that accepts the IPT recommendations for Alternatives 2 through 4 would cover all of that if it is okay with you guys.

DR. DUVAL: I move that we accept the IPTs recommended changes for Alternatives 2 through 4 under Action 4.

MR. HARTIG: Second by Doug. Any discussion, any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. Now we have a preferred alternative offered up by the AP. If you would like to consider that as preferred at this time that would be good, if not we can go out to hearing without one.

DR. DUVAL: I move that we select Alternative 2 as a preferred for Action 4.

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle, seconded by Doug. Discussion, Is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Moving on to 5, Ben?

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: We had rewritten these, the IPT rewrote these in September and you guys reviewed and approved them. What Action 5 does is it establishes trip limits for the Florida East Coast Management Zone. We kind of changed this terminology to management zone, because it is not getting its own quota like it does now as a subzone in the Gulf management system. We just wanted to be able to define an area and attach management measures to it, and in this case it would be the trip limits. It is split into two subactions; Action 5-1 establishes the boundaries for this Florida East Coast Management Zone. We have the no action alternative. Alternative 2 establishes year-round boundaries. There are three options under each of these alternatives for boundaries.

The Flagler/Volusia County Line to the Dade/Monroe County Line, the Volusia/Brevard County Line to the Dade/Monroe County Line, and then Volusia/Brevard to the Council Jurisdictional Boundary as designated in Action 1, which would be the Dade/Monroe under your current preferred for Action 1.

Alternative 3 and 4 establish the boundaries for those seasons that would be set up under the split season in Action 4. Alternative 3 establishes the Florida East Coast Management Zone for Season 1, as designated in Action 4 with boundaries at those three different places. Option 3B would align with the South Atlantic AP recommendation.

What this does basically is it is the Volusia/Brevard to the Dade/Monroe County Line. Volusia would not be included in any trip limits that were specified for the Florida East Coast Management Zone. Alternative 4 establishes the Florida East Coast Management Zone for Action 2 with the boundaries at the Flagler/Volusia County Line to the Dade/Monroe County Line or Volusia/Brevard to the Dade/Monroe County Line.

Then Option 4C under your preferred would be the same at the Dade/Monroe County Line. Option 4A aligns with the South Atlantic AP recommendations and also the Gulf AP has recommended theirs as a preferred to support the South Atlantic APs recommendation. Alternative 3 and 4, what it originally was supposed to do was that Season 1 would not include Volusia, so they would be fishing under the current 3,500 pound trip limit between March and, either October or November; however the Season 1 is set.

But then in Season 2, which is the winter fishery, Volusia would be included in that. Those trip limits are usually 50 or 75 fish. It is very similar to the management that they have now working with those shifting boundaries, so part of the year they're South Atlantic and part of the year they're Gulf.

It is similar to their actual situation with their trip limits. That is what the AP was kind of trying to set up something similar for that. Then we have 5-2, which sets up the trip limit system for this designated Florida East Coast Management Zone. We have Alternative 1, no action; which would just keep whatever was in place under the South Atlantic.

Basically, what this would do is from November 1st through March 31st there would be no trip limit in place, because of the way the boundaries are going to change. Alternative 2 sets a year round trip limit of 75 fish for the management zone as designated with those boundaries. Alternative 3 sets it up with 75 fish for Season 1.

In April, this is part of the APs recommended management, and then they also recommended a step down for spawning during the summer; so we have three options for that, a step down to 50 fish. Alternative 4 is for Season 2, and it would establish the trip limit at 50 fish, and then there would be a possible step up, which is the same as the management that we have now actually aligns mostly with Option 4A, where you have different dates and then if a certain percentage of the quota has not been met then there is a step up. Just in those last months or two the folks who are fishing have an opportunity to try to reach the quota 100 percent. Now these are based on the APs overall proposal.

We added some more alternatives so we would have a range of alternatives. Then in November, the Gulf Mackerel AP, they recommended the options that the South Atlantic AP recommended but they did not support the split season, so they just wanted to specify that whatever we designate as Season 1 and Season 2 for the trips limits.

They didn't want a split season quota, but they would want to apply the same for those. I believe that Ben wants to chat about this and Mike Collins forwarded you an e-mail with some new language to possibly reorganize some of those. He forwarded that this morning; you guys should have got it. I'm going to pull it up.

MR. HARTIG: Kari gave you the history of what we had, and this is really what we've tried to rework since we had the meeting with the fishermen down in our area. You'll see it is considerably revised. I'll let her go through it.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Do you want me to run through the changes then, and then you can talk about why?

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Okay. Ben had asked me to draft what this action would look like if we made some changes where, first of all there were no different boundaries being considered, it was just going to be one year-round boundary and that was at the Flagler/Volusia County Line, so it would include Volusia County.

If you wanted to do that and you knew you didn't want to consider different boundaries, you just wanted to set up trip limits at the Flagler/Volusia line, then we could completely remove Action 5-1. If you scroll down to the next one, basically, it would make this action just about establishing the trip limits for the Southern Zone.

We would have the no action alternative and then Alternative 2 would specify in the Southern Zone the trip limit north of the Flagler/Volusia Line is 3,500 pounds. For the area south of the Flagler/Volusia County Line; and this would go under your preferred alternative to the Monroe/Dade Line; establish a year round trip limit of 75 fish.

Alternative 3 is similar in the Southern Zone the trip limits north of the Flagler/Volusia County Line is 3,500 pounds and for the area south of Flagler/Volusia, establish a trip limit of 50 fish from March 1st through March 31 and 75 fish for the remainder of Season 1. We have removed the step down for the spawning season. I'll let Ben explain that; and then added a couple options for possible step downs to slow the rate of harvest in Season 1.

Then Alternative 4 is specific for Season 2. North of the Flagler/Volusia Line, it is 3,500 pounds but then south of the Flagler/Volusia Line, the trip limit is 50 fish for Season 2. Then you could consider the step up to 75 fish if a certain proportion of the quota hadn't been met. I will turn it over to Ben to talk about that.

MR. HARTIG: I think my concern through this whole thing has been the March 1st start date. In the wintertime fishery that is being conducted now, that was within their months. March was considered in a November through March time frame. But the Atlantic group starts on March 1st, so the fishermen have set up their split seasons based on March 1st as the start of the season, which is logical since the Atlantic group season starts then.

The problem with March is, and you will see there is a 50 fish trip limit in March, is that in the 2007/2008 season March was closed for 25 days. In the 2009/2010 season March was closed for

the entire month. In the 2010/2011 season March was closed for the entire month, and for the 2011 and 2012 season it was closed for 17 days.

Even though we have a lot of landings numbers for that time of the year, it does not include the potential landings that could occur in March. Now March is normally a rough month; however, we had 460 something thousand pounds of landings in March of last year. March can be a big month, and you just have to know that going up front that if you include March within that first season there is going to be more fish caught potentially in that timeframe.

There was also a closure in February in 2010 and February in 2011, so then in the second season you could have a few more fish caught in that timeframe as well. The reason for stepping it down to 50 is to try and constrain that somewhat in that timeframe. My concerns for this stock are these are smaller fish they're catching. They're still trying to move some of those smaller fish into the later ages and sizes of the stock over time.

If you have a more constrained trip limit, you are more able to do that. That is my explanation. Are there any questions in that? Okay. To me, I think Kari and one of the fishermen have said, we don't need that subzone. I think finally it went through my head that we really don't. We've been able to simplify this somewhat by just using a southern zone trip limit.

I think that makes a lot of sense. Based on what I have talked with you, Kari, we don't have an AP position on this. I mean we have a fishermen's position. Should we choose a preferred? I'm asking the committee based on –

DR. MacLAUHLIN: Right now, they are proposed changes. You have different alternatives. You would need to discuss - , you guys would need to make changes and then you could select a preferred. Also, just to let everyone know, we have our public hearing in Cocoa for this amendment schedule February 3rd.

We decided yesterday that we should also have an AP meeting; so that will be the same day as that hearing. We'll get the AP as a group; we'll be able to review all of these alternatives. They haven't seen this document since April of last year, so they will have a chance and you'll get official AP recommendations for March.

MR. HARTIG: I guess I would need a motion first to approve the changes. I keep trying to move the webinar, it doesn't work; and Action 5, Kari?

DR. MacLAUHLIN: I think you would probably need to remove Action 5-1.

MR. HARTIG: Okay.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: Then approve the changes in 5-2 and then we'll just change that to Action 5.

DR. DUVAL: I move that we remove Action 5-1.

MR. HARTIG: **Second, Doug. Discussion, is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.** The next motion, Kari, we would need would be to approve the language changes in 5-2.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: There are a lot of changes. We may need Monica. Can they just approve across the board the changes to Action 5-2 or do they need to talk about - like officially move the options that would be removed to the considered but rejected?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It's too bad Joe isn't here, for many reasons; because I'm not sure what the record looks like at this point, or whether we'll be able to adequately understand what the council is doing, right? I think it is probably better to briefly mention them and discuss them and move them that way.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: Really, the alternative that will be very different from its current form is Alternative 3, because you added this 50 fish for March 1st through March 31st, and then you would be removing these step downs for Options 3A through 3C and replacing them with new Option 3A and 3B. Then I think that for the other alternatives you would just need to approve the language changes, because all we did was strike any mention of a specific Florida management zone.

MR. HARTIG: I'm trying to get out of the webinar and go back to the document that you sent around. It won't let me do that either. Monica, you wanted us to go through and change this, basically moving it to considered but rejected. Is that how you wanted to do this? I don't know that I understood exactly what -

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Let's take a step back. What is it that you actually want to do right now with this action?

MR. HARTIG: Go ahead, Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Really, I think the changes that Kari has outlined are aimed at simplifying the action. Right now Action 5 has to subactions, 5-1, which would create boundaries for a Florida East Coast Management Zone for the Atlantic group. With the potential modifications to Action 5-2, this is establishment of a trip limit system.

Kari and the IPT have proposed changes just to action 5-2 that would effectively create a trip limit for the Florida East Coast, but without having to designate a particular zone. I think what we're trying to do here is simplify the action but still remain true to the spirit of what the Advisory Panel had put forward. Instead of establishing a specific Florida East Coast Subzone in Action 5-1, all we're doing is establishing a trip limit for the southern zone as a whole that is similar to how things are done now; by just specifying what the trip limit is north of the Flagler/Volusia Line versus south of the Flagler/Volusia Line. Because based on the decisions that the council has already made with regard to its Preferred Alternative 4, the council boundary designation for this species is already at the Dade/Monroe County Line.

We don't necessarily need to create a Florida East Coast Subzone. We can really do the same thing by just changing what the trip limits are north of the county line in Florida versus south of the county line in Florida for that southern zone that we already have. Does that make sense?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It does, thank you. There are no more two part actions, two different actions under Action 5, because Action 5-1 you voted to remove it from the document. There is just going to be an Action 5, right? All right, have the document you sent around with the new Action 5, establish a trip limit system for the southern zone; correct?

Have you discussed that on the record and is that in? I know you are going to move it into the document, but do you think you've adequately discussed it at the committee level? I'm just trying to make sure that the record is clear and when we look at the minutes that it will be clear as to what the new Action 5 is.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: I do know that to get to this new version of Action 5, you will need to remove the current Options 3A through 3C, which is a step down to 50 fish for some of the summer months, or late spring, early summer months. That was recommended as part of that AP recommendation. They put in a spawning season step down somewhere. When you remove those you will need to discuss why you are moving those to the considered but rejected.

Then you would want to add the new Option 3A and 3B, and you would want to discuss that. The rest of it is just striking some of it so where it will line up with the name of the action. I think that would just be accepting the IPT language recommendations for 1, 2 and 4. It is Alternative 3 that is actually substantially different in this new proposed Action 5.

MR. HARTIG: Well, at least mackerel is not difficult anyway.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, I just wanted to note, looking back at my notes from the Gulf meeting in October, we were talking about this. The majority of south Florida wasn't very happy with Alternative 4 in this action. Just want to put that on the record.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: It is just similar to the current situation or the current management that they use.

MR. HARTIG: What I would do, Kari, is set us on the task; because I don't think I was clear on exactly what we were going to have to do. One by one bring, us through what motions we need to make through this so we are able to move forward.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, and then after that I would just read Action 5 as it is going to exist going forward. I would just read it into the record when you're done with that so it is very clear; because there is a lot of back and forth here so then we're very clear on what the new Action 5 is.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: I would recommend first a motion to move under Action 5-2, Options 3A through 3C to the considered but rejected appendix and then explain why. Those were the spawning season step down that the AP originally recommended, and Ben can speak a little bit about the folks that he's talked to about that step down, but maybe first a motion.

DR. DUVAL: I move that under Action 5-2 we remove Options 3A through 3C to the considered but rejected appendix.

MR. HAYMANS: When we removed 5-1 above, we went to 5, so everything is just a 5 now, not a 5-2.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: It's okay. Then at least Joe and on the record it will be clear that it is that second part, the trip limit action.

MR. HARTIG: Okay second, second by Jessica. All right, the discussion. The spawning zone that was brought up by a number of fishermen in the northern zone of where they're fishing, the fishermen we had the discussions, we had back and forth about the spawning zone and why we think we need to keep it at 75.

The problem is that the environmental conditions in that area have changed so dramatically that we have very few days when we can actually catch 75 fish. If it was a question of like we did in the old days, go out and catch 75 fish for two or three weeks in a row that would be different. But there are so few days when we have access; and the full time fishermen are on the water every day.

We're going to have access to when that happens. When that happens the next day the rest of the fleet comes out and normally, I mean by then, it is normally a one or two day event out of a week when we have access to 75 fish. That is why there was very little support at the meeting we had in Salerno for the drop down to 75 fish at that time.

MR. HARTIG: Any further discussion? Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: It's not pertaining to that. I was wrong about the Alternative 4. That was for a previous action. I just wanted to correct myself.

MR. HARTIG: Thanks for that clarification. Further discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none that motion is approved.** The next one.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: The next one, I would say, would be to add new options 3A and 3B under Alternative 3 in Action 5-2. These are a possible step down, either starting August 1st, if 75 percent of the Season 1 quota has been taken, then their step down will go to 50 fish; or at any time during Season 1 if 75 percent of the Season 1 quota has been met, then it will step down to 50 fish.

That would just be to slow the rate of harvest in the later months of Season 1. I think we will have analysis for the public hearing document that will be able to provide information about, based on past landings, how those two possible step downs would work, and at what point they could occur. I think people will be able to make a good decision about if they want to have that date that triggers the step down if the 75 percent of the quota has been met, or if they want to let it happen any time during the season. That will just take analysis of at what point would you estimate you would be at 75 percent; because if it is June or July, in some years would the fishermen be okay with that, or would they want to set it just can't happen until after August 1st? Anyway, so you would need a motion to add new Option 3A and 3B to this action.

DR. DUVAL: I move that we add new Options 3A and 3B to Alternative 3 under Action 5.

MR. HARTIG: Second by Doug. The discussion on this was with a March opening, the fishermen in the lower part of Florida were concerned about a possible closure during that time, so they just want to ensure that if a lot of that portion of that quota is taken with a March 1 opening, they want to make sure that they can have a step down to continue the season at some level. **Any more discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.**

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: I think the other very different thing with Alternative 3 is what Ben was just talking about with this little bit right here that says the trip limit is 50 fish from March 1st through March 31st. That is an addition to Alternative 3 that changes it a little bit. I think that probably, I would just like a motion to approve new Alternative 3.

DR. DUVAL: Maybe a motion to approve the modified Alternative 3, because we've added the two new options and then the rest of this is just a little bit of word smithing and modification to it. I don't think it is an entirely new alternative. **I would make that motion to approve modified Alternative 3 under Action 5.**

MR. HARTIG: Second by Zack. Further discussion? Go ahead, Kari.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Just to be clear for everybody, this one, what is different is this part about the 50 fish in March, a 50 fish trip limit in March. That is what makes it a little bit different from what you've seen before; just so everybody knows that.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, I've given some discussion on why that should be in there. **Any further discussion; is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none that motion is approved.**

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: I'm going to read what this action would look like with the small editorial changes that would come in the other alternatives, and then we could have a motion that approves new Action 5. Will that work, Monica?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, I think that would be great, since you're going to read it all in the record. Alternative 1 is no action. I don't think that changed. I don't know that you need to read that. But Alternatives 2 and so on, if you want to read Alternative 1 straight through, be my guess, but then it will have the whole Action 5 and everybody will be clear on what that is.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Okay, sure. This will be now new Action 5. Establish a trip limit system for the southern zone, and we have Alternative 1, no action, Alternative 2, in the southern zone the trip limit north of the Flagler/Volusia Line is 3,500 pounds. For the area south of the Flagler/Volusia Line establish a year round trip limit of 75 fish for Atlantic king mackerel. In the southern zone the trip limit north of the Flagler/Volusia Line is 3,500 pounds. For the area south of the Flagler/Volusia Line establish a trip limit of 50 fish from March 1st through March 31st, and 75 fish for the remainder of Season 1 as designated in Action 4.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: That was Alternative 3, right?

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Alternative 3.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: If you'll just state which alternative it is. Go ahead.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Option 3A; beginning on August 1st and continuing through the end of Season 1, if 75 percent of the Season 1 quota has been taken the trip limit will be 50 fish. Option 3B, at any time during Season 1 if 75 percent of the Season 1 quota has been taken, the trip limit will be 50 fish.

Alternative 4; in the southern zone the trip limit north of the Flagler/Volusia Line is 3,500 pounds. For the area south of the Flagler/Volusia Line, establish a trip limit of 50 fish for Atlantic king mackerel for Season 2, as designated in Action 4. Option 4A; beginning on February 1st and continuing to the end of February, if 70 percent or more of the Season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 50 fish.

If less than 70 percent of the Season 2 quota has been take, the trip limit is 75 fish. Option 4B, beginning on January 1st and continuing to the end of February, if 70 percent or more of the Season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 50 fish. If less than the 70 percent of the Season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 75 fish.

Option 4C; beginning on February 1st and continuing through the end of February, if 80 percent or more of the Season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 50 fish. If less than 80 percent of the Season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 75 fish. We would need a motion to approve Action 5 as was read into the record.

MR. HARTIG: Sorry Michelle, I'm lost in my own world over here.

DR. DUVAL: That's okay; I hope it is a better place. **I move that we approve modified Action 5 as Kari has read into the record.**

MR. HARTIG: Second by Doug. Discussion, is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: The tentative timeline for this amendment would be to approve it for public hearing at this meeting, and then hold the public hearings in late January, early February. We would need a motion to approve Amendment 26 for public hearing.

DR. DUVAL: I move that we approve Amendment 26 for public hearings.

MR. HARTIG: Second by Chris. Discussion, is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. There is one thing, I think, I would like to circle back around to and that was the AP and the fishermen's concern. I can't remember if the SSC wanted this or not, but within a period of time that they wanted to see the projections rerun from the last assessment. Possibly, a motion would be a stronger way to do that in that we have a motion that would rerun the projections after the 2016/2017 fishing season. Yes, and I'll explain why. The fish that came into the fishery last year were new recruits.

The fish that will be in the fishery this year will become the cohorts; and it doesn't always match. What we need to see is if the recruitment that we're seeing is scientifically valid as well. We also need to see if these fish have turned into cohorts in this next fishing year. You'll have two years of fishing under that new recruitment that has entered the fishery.

Looking at Peter's information, he has looked at all the trip intercepts in that area. A large majority of the fish were these small fish. What we think we're seeing, which needs to be scientifically validated, is a good year class; but like I say, you need at least another year to see if they are cohorts, 2016 after this season I think we should have an idea if they're moving through the fishery to some degree.

DR. PONWITH: What I would ask is, the way this is worded, typically when projections are rerun they substitute actual landings for assumed landings; and that is the basis of the projections. What it sounds like you're asking here is to update an index as opposed to rerun projections.

Just for the sake of clarity, I would, rather than changing the motion, perhaps, ask that council staff work with the Chair in crafting a tasking letter that actually is pretty clear on exactly what is being requested, and maybe have staff touch bases with the Science Center staff informally to agree on some of that language. That would help having a misstep in the assignment.

MR. HARTIG: I very much appreciate that; because that is critical to moving forward with this.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: I wrote out the motion but no one officially made that motion, so we could add this under the task and timing.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, whatever is the committee's discretion. As long as we make sure that this is done, we have a consensus from the committee to write that letter to the Center. I'm fine with that as long as everybody concurs. There isn't any objection to that. Okay, I don't see any major problems with that. We'll do that. Is there any other business to come before the Mackerel Committee?

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Hold on just a minute. Let me make sure I have this, because you still have a task and timing motion here up on your screen, under which is adopt the timing and task items as presented; Number 1, prepare the draft Amendment 26 for public hearing.

Then council staff works with the committee chair and Science Center staff to request updated information on the Atlantic king mackerel projections. Is this clear enough for everyone, and especially what else we discussed on the record; what exactly Ben is looking for, or do we need more information than that in Number 2?

MR. HARTIG: I think if you put the projections in there, you would have the idea. I don't think you need to include any more than that for now, because we'll write a letter and we'll work with Southeast Fishery Science staff on exactly what they think needs to be done. Then I think that will be fine.

DR. DUVAL: I move that we accept the Task and Timing motion as presented.

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle, seconded by Doug. Any discussion on that motion, is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved. Is there any other business to come before the Mackerel Committee? Seeing none; I am going to turn it back over to you. But I will say one thing. I would like to apologize. I thought we had all the ducks

in a row, and it took us longer than I thought. I keep trying to make sure that we do, but there seems to be a wrinkle in mackerel from time to time, so I'm sorry for that.

MR. COX: Yes, I just had a quick comment on mackerel. In North Carolina back in September and October, we were getting like \$1.50 a pound, so it is interesting. When we line these seasons up and if there is ever any way that we can figure out how to start and stop seasons from the Gulf to the east coast. Starting late November through December our price went up 0.53 a pound. I mean 53 percent. It went up from \$1.50 to \$3.25 a pound because of the closures in the Gulf. It is interesting how the economics play in a lot of these decisions we make.

MR. HARTIG: You're right. They changed that on the Gulf Coast, the opening of that Panama City area opening. That is going to be in competition with your fishery. We tried to get some of that changed. That one was one we didn't. That will remain a competitive problem.

DR. DUVAL: All right, if that is it for Mackerel then the next report is the Visioning Workshop report. I'm going to let Amber get up here. All right, so staff gave a review of the Vision Blueprint Document in the appendices and we offered a few minor edits. Then we discussed the evaluation plan for the vision blueprint and made a few recommendations regarding moving that plan, which is currently an appendix into the main body, and then also some suggestions on the biennial review regarding a combination of written comments, webinars and comment stations.

We then talked about applying the vision blueprint and staff reviewed approaches and different example ideas. We had four different example approaches and six different example ideas for an amendment. Staff sent around a Survey Monkey survey for us to rank those different approaches; then the council made several recommendations for staff analysis, prioritizing amendment ideas and collecting public input.

Some of those included the update of the fishery growth potential paper and tables that were presented at our October workshop as well as discussed at this meeting. Look at doing a summary analysis of the current seasons, bag limits, trip limits and ACLs of snapper grouper species using the ACL summary spreadsheet that is produced by staff in order to help us determine approaches for changes in these types of management tools under sub regional approaches.

We already talked about the survey, and then we discussed approaches for collecting public input on which amendment ideas should be implemented in 2016 and 2017, and these included a web based survey of stakeholders, a mail survey sent to a random sample of snapper grouper permit holders and anglers. We discussed the types of information that we would want to collect in that survey and ensure that there are no duplicate responses. At this point, I would actually like to get a motion from the council to adopt the vision blueprint for the snapper grouper fishery.

MS. BECKWITH: I move that we adopt the Vision Blueprint.

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second; second by Doug. Any discussion?

MR. HAYMANS: Congratulations to you, Madam Chairman, for a well led plan, or well orchestrated.

DR. DUVAL: I appreciate the congratulations, but I really think it goes to all of you and to staff. There is no way that one person does something like this alone. It takes everybody's support and everybody's efforts; especially the efforts of staff to support what we're trying to do. It was a tremendous amount of time and effort on everybody's part.

I hope that, if nothing else, people have learned a little bit from this and we can apply some of the lessons in some of our other fisheries. But I'm certainly looking forward to applying some of the things that we've learned about, and suggestions from our stakeholders moving forward. It is not just the management approaches.

This is communication; this is governance and some ideas for improving our science. I appreciate everyone's efforts; any other discussion other than my own leaking mouth? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** The next report is the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee; Mr. Haymans and Dr. Laney. I don't know which one of you cares to do that. Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: The committee met on December 8th, 2015 and addressed the following: a report on the November 17, 18 Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory Panel meeting, including a redrafted EFH policy on energy exploration and development, a status report on FEP2 development and regional ecosystem coordination and a presentation on a Lenfest Fisheries Ecosystem Task Force Activities.

The committee reviewed, edited and finalized the redrafted policy statement for council consideration. **There was one motion made; that was to approve the redrafted South Atlantic Fishery Management Council EFH Policy on Energy Exploration and Development; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none; that motion carries.**

There was one item in timing and task and that was to distribute the EFH Policy Statement as widely as possible. Do I need a motion for that? That is just distribution through council, the Panel, partners and website. For safety sake, since Joe is not here, would someone be willing to offer a motion for timing and task. **I see Michelle offering that motion, is there a second? I see Jessica offering a second. Is there any discussion? Any opposition. Seeing none; that motion carries;** and Mrs. Chairman that concludes my remarks.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Doug. I think you had Chris with a question.

MR. HAYMANS: I'm sorry Chris, I didn't see you.

MR. CONKLIN: As much as I don't like presentations, I was interested in the public comment we got from a young lady about the effects of sonic air guns on fish. I was wondering if I could request a presentation so we can learn more about the effects of that on fish.

MR. HAYMANS: Sure. I guess we would put that as an amendment to our timing and task motion. I guess that is an extra motion since we just approved the one, so if you would like to go ahead and make that motion again.

MR. CONKLIN: I would like to make a motion requesting a presentation on what is known of the effects of air guns in energy exploration on fish and habitat.

MR. HAYMANS: Is there a second? Ben. Any additional discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none; that motion carries. Any additional?

DR. LANEY: Well, just to note that the person who made the comments Chris is referring to is Ingrid from Oceana, and she did provide that notebook to Roger. I think we can ask Roger to arrange a presentation. You were talking about a presentation of the Full Council, Chris, or to the Habitat Committee at the next council meeting?

MR. CONKLIN: Well, I'm not sure. I guess the Habitat Committee would be fine. She mentioned that her notebook was just full of opposition, people that opposed it. But she also said that she could do a presentation or help us learn more about the effects of energy exploration.

MR. PUGLIESE: Madam Chairman, what we can do is I'll contact her as well as - one of the things she is citing is other people that have done the work. We had had some of those discussions with BOEM representatives earlier on, so what we'll do is make sure we have some representation to have that specific presentation at least at the next Habitat and Ecosystem Committee, not at the council session. But we'll coordinate on what the best avenue and the appropriate individuals to provide that.

DR. LANEY: Just a follow up to that too. We've gotten very mixed information about the impacts of seismic testing on the bottom and organisms, partially depending on the depth of the water. Jessica Coakley has been working very closely with us; she's a Mid-Atlantic Council Habitat person now and is also on the Habitat AP and has been working closely with Roger, as we try and assess what the impacts are of that testing process. We'll try and make sure that we have at least some sort of range of information available during a presentation.

MR. BOWEN: That is kind of the point that I was going to try to get across is, the presentation by whoever it may be, I would just like to see some neutral presentation and make sure it is just factual. I don't know the lady that gave the comment the other day, but it seemed like she may have had a tendency or leaning more to the negative side. I just would like for that presentation from whoever we get it from to be factual and neutral, so we can make the decisions that need to be made.

MR. HAYMANS: Anyone else?

DR. LANEY: Maybe you mean objective, Zack, as opposed to neutral. I mean, if the weight of the data falls on the impact side of things, I think we would want to know that, as well. We've gotten some anecdotal information; again from Jessica Coakley at the Mid-Atlantic Council that indicated that some of the deep sea scallop fishermen in New England had observed what they interpreted as a lot of dead sea scallops in the wake of seismic testing; now whether those were directly correlated observations or not, we don't know. But at least I'm with you. I would like to hear some subjective presentation of all the data on both sides of the issue.

MR. BOWEN: Yes sir, I can take out the word neutral and just leave the word factual in that statement that I made.

MR. HAYMANS: Madam Chair that concludes our report.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I would just ask that you - Roger mentioned having a presentation at least for the Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel, Committee or Advisory Panel?

MR. PUGLIESE: We can have it at both. I mean, we're going to be discussing - we do have a representative from BOEM on the AP now, so we do have some direct contact. We had opened up this discussion and had preliminary work, and a lot of that went into the discussion on revising the present policy statement. There was that entire coordination with the BOEM GNG group that had done that previously. Whatever the best method to do it, we'll be scheduling the AP meeting in April, probably for this year, so in advance of the June council meeting.

DR. DUVAL: I just want folks to be conscious of timing and making sure that we have time on the schedule for it. Chris, it didn't sound like you had a date certain on your request, so I think if you can let staff maybe work out between the March and the June council meetings might be appropriate, that would be great. Okay thank you, Roger. The next committee report is Protected Resources; Dr. Laney.

DR. LANEY: The Protected Resources Committee met on December the 10th, 2015. We heard reports from the South Atlantic Protected Resources Division; Jenny Lee gave us that report on the actions that they are currently working on; which include Nassau grouper, Atlantic sturgeon, North Atlantic Right Whale critical habitat, green sea turtle, DPS rule, Marine Mammal Protection act and the Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team and the Large Whale Take Reduction Team.

We also heard a presentation from Jenny on the compliance policy for turtle excluder devices and had a good bit of discussion on that. We also had a presentation from Chip, an update on the ESA/MSA integration agreement; and bottom line there is General Counsel requested additional time to review the document, so we will postpone further discussion of that until March of 2016. But in the interim if any committee members or council members have any comments on that document, they need to get that to Chip for his information and incorporation into the draft.

I provided a very brief update on American eel, Atlantic sturgeon, nothing new on red knot. Then under other business we had a discussion about a new appointee for the Large Whale Take Reduction Team, and council member, Jack Cox has agreed to take that under consideration; depending on the timing of those meetings for 2016. The committee did not make any motions. **If you want a timing and task motion a voting member can make that.** I can read it, but I can't make it. The committee recommended staff revise the integration agreement and work with the Southeast Regional Office Protected Resources staff to further develop the document and present the document at the March council meeting. Do we need a motion? I see Doug is making a motion.

MR. HAYMANS: **I so move.**

DR. LANEY: **Jessica seconded it.** You have to ask if there is any objection, or can I do that? I am not a voting member.

DR. DUVAL: I actually don't know, but I'm happy to ask. **Are there any objections? Seeing none; the motion stands approved.**

DR. LANEY: Thank you, Madam Chairman. That concludes my report, unless Chip has a word I think.

MR. COLLIER: There was a question on how many HMS permits for the pelagic longline fishery were out there. In 2014 there were 246 permits for the pelagic longline fishery. In 2015 there were 280. In 2014 there were 110 that actually reported fishing, and that information was provided by Jenny Lee.

MR. HAYMANS: I'm sorry, Chip. One more time, please.

MR. COLLIER: In 2014 there were 110 vessels that reported fishing. There were 246 that had permits. In 2015 there have been 280 permits. There is not a report on how many people have reported fishing in 2015, because it is not done yet; HMS Pelagic Longline Permits.

MR. BREWER: Chip, I've always been told over the past five years or so that there are only 64 actual boats that are active. Is that just for the swordfish? I don't know how their permits work. Are those permits that are for the boats that reported catches? Would that be a larger set, or would it just be the swordfish guys, if you know?

MR. COLLIER: I'm not positive, but I imagine it is for the entire pelagic longline fishery, not just the swordfish fishery.

DR. DUVAL: Just one item that we had that was outstanding was a Take Reduction Team representative from the council. I did just receive some information regarding - you know we talked about how frequently and when the team meets. The information received was that given that the team meetings may decrease somewhat, since the final version of the vertical line rule is in place - just went into place after the modifications that occurred to state proposals earlier this year.

But Kate Swale, I think is out right now, so we may not have an answer until later on in the month as to when the next meeting might occur. But we did receive information regarding the operating protocols for the Take Reduction Team and what is expected of members and criteria. I can ask Mike Collins to pass that around to all council members, and take a look at that and we'll come to a decision at a later time. All right, so the next report is the SEDAR Committee meeting and that's me. We'll let John get up here. The committee received reports on SEDAR projects, the Steering Committee meeting and the NMFS Stock Assessment Prioritization Plan. We were briefed on the assessment schedule and developments with bluefin tilefish, particularly the additional genetic study that has been sponsored by the Science Center.

That will be available in May. A discussion of stock ID by the SSC will be delayed until that can be considered. Staff is looking at a multijurisdictional workshop to include representatives from South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic SSCs and staff, both Northeast and Southeast Fishery Science Centers and both Southeast and Greater Atlantic Regional Offices along with life history researchers.

He might typically attend a SEDAR Stock ID Workshop, so looking forward to that. A clarification was provided on assessment revisions necessary to address MRIP data updates. A newsletter story would be developed to explain the purpose for and approach used for those revision assessments. No motions were made. Are there any further comments or questions or discussion? Seeing none; that concludes that report.

Then the next report is Executive Finance. We'll, I think, let Gregg come up here. You should all have received via e-mail last night, an updated version of the Excel Spreadsheet that we were looking at in terms of staff slots and priorities. I'll run through the committee report first, and then perhaps, we can have a little bit of discussion about the priorities for 2016 and 2017.

The Executive Finance Committee met on December 10th, and minutes from June, 2014 were approved. We discussed the council year 2015 budget expenditures. Mike Collins briefed the committee on the council's expenditures and noted that we're in good shape because of savings in the health insurance plan and other cost savings related to webinars. We don't really know what 2016 holds yet until we have an idea of what level funding the councils will receive.

Bob Mahood reviewed the council's activities and accomplishments in 2015, of which there were many, including 30 major actions being addressed, 6 amendments implemented by the Secretary of Commerce, 6 additional amendments approved by the council undergoing review, and 18 actions currently under development.

Bob also pointed out the visioning workshop that was conducted this year that took up a significant amount of time. Ben Hartig also discussed the Citizen Science Initiative being undertaken by the council and the progress to date. I am going to skip Item 3, since we're going to come back to that.

Item 4, we discussed participation in webinar meeting, and Bob briefed us on the intent of staff to start drafting policies and procedures relative to participation in council webinars and NOAA General Counsel volunteered to help us with that. Then we also discussed representation of the eight regional fishery management councils in Washington, D.C. and the intent is really that we would enter into a contract with Dave Whaley as part of the overall council's efforts to have representation in Washington, D.C. Again, councils are not allowed to lobby.

This is not for lobbying purposes. This is to allow us to be kept informed and up-to-date on any legislative efforts that are going on with regard to Magnuson-Stevens reauthorization and providing us with summaries there. Now, I would like to get into the priorities. Gregg had provided a short overview on the council's follow up document, and then turned our attention to Attachment 3B, which was the priority amendment slot table, and we had quite a discussion about different priorities.

We discussed some options for how to fill in the slots and be mindful of not overfilling them. I had discussed some options for looking at a fishery seasonality retention amendment that would be one of our priorities coming out of visioning. Just a few things, so this was the top priority that came out of the little visioning survey that folks took.

Recall we also discussed in visioning reaching out to stakeholders in the form of an online survey or some other such type of survey to get some of their input on how we should prioritize

items coming out of visioning. Those were our priorities. We could certainly take those five amendment options that we reviewed and prioritized out to the public in a survey format to inform our choices alternatively.

Fishery seasonality, we could look at taking out for some input the different items that would be included within that amendment. That is pretty much equivalent to scoping or online scoping. You'll see in the notes on this revised spreadsheet that items that could be included in a fishery seasonality and retention amendment include the golden tilefish hook and line fishing year, seasonal options for red porgy, jacks trip limit, shallow water spawning season closure.

That was one of the top items that we heard about under visioning. I'm very conscious of the comment that Anna made yesterday, which was that this doesn't include anything that addresses the needs of the recreational fishery. I would suggest that we consider something with regard to aggregate bag limits that is a retention issue, and it could be a seasonality issue.

We've heard from constituents about simplifying regulations, including things like increasing our use of aggregate bag limits. We have an aggregate 20 fish bag limit. We might want to look at the composition of the species within that aggregate; 20 fish may be too much. We may want to expand the use of that 20 fish aggregate.

We have a 10 snapper aggregate bag limit, and then we have our 3 grouper aggregate. Then within the 3 grouper aggregate, we have sort of a hodge podge of different restrictions. We also have individual bag limits for black sea bass and vermilion snapper, I believe. I think those might be the only two.

I would encourage the committee to also consider any recreationally focused items to be included in that amendment. I think it's important to address multiple stakeholder groups with what we might be trying to do. You can see up here the options for priorities based on our discussion yesterday; an allocation amendment looking at temporary allocation shifts.

A cobia framework, looking at bag limit there, fishery seasonality and retention amendment that would start in the last half of 2016; we've shifted coral and shrimp based on conversation. The rock shrimp folks are definitely still interested in looking at modification of those lines, but it makes sense to keep this lumped together with consideration of golden crab fishing zones. We don't have all that information together yet with regard to those areas. I think the suggestion has been made to keep it together but shift it south a little bit, in terms of timing. Then a slot for modifications needed as a result of golden tilefish or gray triggerfish; looking at just using our rapid method of updating the ACLs as a result of those assessments. Zack, I saw you had your hand up.

MR. BOWEN: I was reading e-mails. Can you just back up and repeat what you were saying about the recreational aggregate bag limits, if you don't mind.

DR. DUVAL: I was just commenting on when we did our prioritization of those six different possible amendment approaches where we took the Survey Monkey survey, looking at things coming out of visioning; what fell out on top when we prioritized these was a fishery seasonality retention amendment.

The items that we discussed yesterday were all really pretty much focused on the commercial sector. Anna had made the comment that we really didn't have anything in there with regard to addressing the needs of recreational stakeholders, and so one of my suggestions was consideration of aggregate bag limits. That is a tool that we could use to address retention, seasonality. It can also be something that would potentially minimize discards, impact discards.

One of the things that we heard from stakeholders during visioning, from our recreational stakeholders, that there are too many different bag limit retention regulations. If there was some way to look at those and perhaps simplify them that would be good. Now, obviously, the spawning season closure is something that affects both commercial and recreational stakeholders. But I just throw that out there for the council's consideration.

Gregg, I want you to speak up and reign us in, in terms of staff time. We've had a lot of discussion here about workload issues, not just for you but for us as well, for the Regional Office staff. What is a more manageable pace, compared with what are items that actually need to be addressed?

MR. WAUGH: I think what we've laid out here is doable. I think this will be a reasonable workload for us and the Region and you all, and to deal with it at each of these meetings. I would just mention that I did modify under Roger as well, to show his EFH ecosystem responsibilities. That continues.

But if you just look at 2016, we've got that mapped out pretty well. Once we give me a chance to sort out who is coming in and my opening to pick up some of that work; we can flesh that out a little more. The two things that I see that are sort of missing from this, Snapper Grouper Amendment 38 Blueline Tilefish.

But we've got some space in 2017 and we won't know what is happening with the stock ID until later in the year, so perhaps that could wait. But the other was a Yellowtail Snapper Amendment. Yes, we can address the allocation shift under the allocation amendment, but there were other issues there, as well. That seems to be the one that we want to look and see where you might want that placed here.

MS. McCAWLEY: I did talk to Martha about this. To her, it is still unclear what the movement of this amendment is. She thinks that they'll know more after the January meeting. That is about as good an answer I can get right now.

MR. WAUGH: That may work, because I don't know what your intention is. You know, we've got 2016 pretty well mapped out. It may be good to come back and revisit this at the March meeting. We'll know on yellowtail. We'll have our staffing issue should be pretty clear by then, and see how you might want to fill in the rest of 2016 and 2017.

MR. BELL: Jack and I were talking a little bit. You remember we brought up, I think it was last year a year ago, we brought up the situation with red grouper. It was in a downward trend in terms of the fishery dependent and the fishery independent data. Then we got a presentation at some point. We only hit like 19 percent of the ACL or something.

I just worry about it. I guess folks thought I was a worry wart last year, and I know we just have so much going on, I hesitate to even bring it up. But it is a concern. Maybe eventually, the only mechanism is we get to Regulatory Amendment 23, 24 or something. I don't know where it might possibly fit in. But I'm just worried about red grouper.

I haven't checked the fishery independent data from MARMAP yet, but if you recall, I put together a little table last year and it just looked bleak from both perspectives. We talked about perhaps an adjustment to the season or something. But I've just got a bad feeling about it. I know we're already swamped here, so I hesitate to bring it up. I think it is worth putting somewhere or just make a note. We might find ourselves at some point where we've kind of waited too long, I don't know, just a bad feeling, sorry.

DR. DUVAL: One of the things that we have heard was from fishermen up in this neck of the woods last year was that really we're missing a good chunk of the spawn by not having something in May. If we include shallow water spawning season closure, consideration of that and this fishery seasonality retention regulatory amendment, which in my mind might be either the combination of 23 and 24. It is going to have to have a number. We can call it whatever we want but it is going to have to have a number. We would potentially be able to take some action there in terms of adjusting the spawning season. I share your concerns.

MR. WAUGH: Remember too, we've sited a spawning SMZ targeting red grouper. That is going to provide some additional protection, as well. But as Michelle said, we can adjust that spawning season closure and that could be adjusted to address red grouper.

I can't remember, maybe John can help us, when the next assessment is coming up. If you've got catch limits there that aren't being met, and you adjust a spawning season closure to provide some more protection, then we really do need to wait until we get an assessment to see what the changes need to be.

DR. DUVAL: I think my recollection is that late 2016 was slated for red grouper for an update; because remember at the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting, we had some conversation about we really needed to maintain red grouper in that slot due to concerns that were happening. Red grouper has not been shifted or changed, as far as I know on the SEDAR schedule.

That update would occur second half of next year some time. Now seasonality retention, retention is things like bag limits and trip limits. We don't have a trip limit for red grouper. That is something else that you might consider.

MS. BECKWITH: Not to add something to the list, but Jack, we had talked about the retention of the recreational bag limits when the commercial season is closed. Is that something that is not on the sort of priority list? It had shaken out pretty good at one time.

MR. COX: Yes, I mean it should be there and it is something that we've talked about for a long time and had industry support to do away with the recreational retention of bag limits.

DR. DUVAL: You mean the commercial retention?

MR. COX: Yes, I mean the commercial, it's been a long week -I'm sorry, the commercial retention of the recreational bag limit.

DR. DUVAL: Since we're not going to be able to start on a fishery seasonality retention regulatory amendment until the second half of 2016, I am wondering if this is where we might take an opportunity to go out to our stakeholders with like an online survey of sorts and saying, here is what fell out in terms of priorities from visioning.

Fishery seasonality retention amendment approach was one that came out somewhat on top. Here is a suite of possible items that could be included in that amendment, and we've got half a dozen there. Ask for folks to take a survey to prioritize those. I mean that could be one approach.

Given where this is in the timing, Gregg, we would have time to do something like that, and we don't have to make a hard and fast decision right now about what the final items that would be included in that. I think it's pretty clear a spawning season closure, jacks are a priority and adjustment of red porgy. But how much is realistic for us to do versus not do, and not overload this amendment so that it takes so long to get through?

MR. CONKLIN: I disagree with going back out to the public and asking them what they want. We did it for two years and this is what we got out of it. Now it's time for us to make decisions. I don't think we should.

DR. DUVAL: Okay.

MR. COX: I agree, Chris that is a good point. It is time to move forward.

MR. BOWEN: If we do, it is one survey per person.

DR. DUVAL: Well, I think Amber has already addressed how you can set up surveys such that it is one IP address; that sort of thing. Here is what I'm getting out of this that we're going to come back in March and see where the Gulf is on the yellowtail snapper amendment, so we have some sense of where we would move forward.

It sounds like folks are okay with beginning an allocation amendment to look at this, an allocation tool that would allow for a shift from one sector to another; a cobia framework looking at a change in the bag limit, which presumably would be fairly straightforward. Then starting the second half of next year with the Fishery Seasonality Retention Amendment. At some point we're going to have to make some decisions about what is the suite of stuff that goes in there; and we need to prioritize that. Maybe it is a survey to us to make some decisions about what we can see again in March. How do folks feel about that? Okay, so I'll work with staff to get the list together, and we can send out a Survey Monkey to everybody to fill out and we'll see where things fall out from there. Is that okay, Gregg?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, I think that will be fine, because as you say we do have some time to work on that.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just a thought, when you do the Survey Monkey and the surveys and all that. If you would announce what the results were when you are in the public meeting for any kinds of surveys you do; I think that would be a great idea.

DR. DUVAL: We did that yesterday when we were discussing the survey that we took, and also Amber has included that in the final report from visioning; so that folks could see how that fell out. Absolutely, we will do that. Gregg, do you need any more input from us on this?

MR. WAUGH: I think for now with the direction that we've got filled in, the bulk of 2016; we'll get the additional input on yellowtail at March. The cobia framework will focus on the bag limit. We've added some items to the Fisheries Seasonality and Retention and we'll work to do a survey and have those results in March. Then we work on this some more in March. I think that will be fine. I think it would be helpful to have a motion to approve this as it is developed now.

DR. DUVAL: If I could get a motion from the council. Ben, you had your hand up? Well, if it is going to impact the chart that is on the table then no? Okay could I please get a motion from the committee to approve the priorities as modified?

MR. BELL: Madam Chair, I move that we approve the priorities as modified.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Mel, second by Charlie. Any further discussion on this motion? Any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, Gregg, yesterday during our discussion you discussed yellowtail and how working with the Gulf is going to take some more time. But on these other ones, I think it would be helpful to me to learn, like if you're going to adjust the golden tile hook and line fishing year, what is a different analysis between a red porgy split season? Are there differences in the timing it takes to analyze some of these things that we've put together?

MR. WAUGH: Yes. One of the things I've talked about with Jack that we're going to go back to do, is when we start on an amendment, we're going to agree on a dataset for that particular amendment. That will help. Sometimes we've gotten into situations where we're changing the data as we're working along on an amendment.

That results in extra work, having to redo calculations. But we can come back and provide you some guidance, even when we send out that survey, as to how long and how complex some of these various options are, so you can use that to help inform your ranking.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you very much.

DR. DUVAL: Yes, I think that would be extremely helpful. Well, that was the last thing under Executive Finance. Unless anybody has anything else, we'll move on to the next committee report. We already did Dolphin Wahoo. The next after that is Data Collection, so we'll let Gregg switch gears here.

MR. HAYMANS: Mel just walked out of the room.

MS. McCAWLEY: Want me to do Spiny Lobster?

DR. DUVAL: Absolutely. Let's give Kari a chance to get up here.

MS. McCAWLEY: Okay, the Spiny Lobster Committee met on December 7th. We adopted the agenda and approved the minutes. We discussed the status of spiny lobster catch versus the ACL, and talked about how the commercial landings are incomplete at this time. Then we reviewed the landings from the previous years and saw a presentation about this.

We talked about the Spiny Lobster Review Panel that met in February, 2015. The committee then discussed options for spiny lobster management that could reduce the level of harvest that could have contributed to reducing harvest in past years. Then we talked about how to reduce harvest in upcoming years.

We talked about how spiny lobster doesn't meet the requirements to be allowed an exemption from an annual catch limit under current language in the MSA. Dr. Crabtree inquired about a stock assessment. FWC said that they would look into that. FWC also mentioned considering additional management actions relative to the bully net fishery and noted that they recently reduced sizes and throats for stone crab traps that were being used to target lobster, and that should reduce the catchability of lobsters in the future.

We then discussed that the Gulf Council is coordinating a joint meeting of the Gulf and South Atlantic Spiny Lobster Advisory Panels for April, to get input and recommendation and then the Gulf Council will schedule the Spiny Lobster Review Panel. The committee did not make any motions; and that concludes my report. Do I need to ask if there is any other business? Is there any other business under spiny lobster? Okay, seeing none; that concludes my report.

DR. DUVAL: Let's go ahead and circle back to Data Collection, if that's okay.

MR. BELL: I apologize. I forgot we did Dolphin Wahoo already.

DR. DUVAL: We're sneaky like that so we'll let Gregg get back up here and get settled.

MR. BELL: The Data Collection Committee met December 10th; the agenda was adopted and approved, and minutes were approved. The first presentation was an update on commercial logbook pilot study by Dr. Ponwith. That is going well; had some good complements from Jack Cox, who is participating in that.

The next presentation was status of implementation plan for commercial logbook electronic reporting by Gregg Waugh; just basically an update of where we are with that. It is moving forward. Mike Cahill indicated they're working out data feed in the northeast right now. We'll get another update on that in March. Then John Carmichael gave us a briefing on the Citizen Science Workshop. One thing to note out of that was that the workgroup requested an additional \$5,000.00 to have a proceeding report prepared that would include a written report for the workshop and the committee agreed by consensus to contract for that report.

Then we spent the bulk of our time discussing the South Atlantic for-hire reporting amendment. There were, I believe, eight associated motions for that and we'll go through those. **Motion 1**

was to approve the modifications to Alternative 2 for Action 1 and select Alternative 2, Subalternative 2A as preferred; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion of that motion? Any opposition to the motion? Okay, that motion passes.

Motion 2 was to accept the edits and changes to Alternatives 1 and 3 for Action 1; on behalf of the committee I so move. Any discussion of that motion, any opposition to the motion? Seeing none; that motion passes. Motion Number 3 was to approve the modifications to Alternatives 1 through 3 for Action 2; on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion of the motion, any opposition to the motion? That motion passes.

Motion 4, make Alternative 2 our preferred for Action 2; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Any discussion of the motion, any opposition to the motion? Seeing none; Motion 4 passes. Motion Number 5 was to approve the modifications to Alternatives 1 and 2 in Action 3. Any discussion of that motion? Any opposition? Seeing none; that motion passes.

Motion Number 6 was to accept Alternative 2 as preferred for Action 3; on behalf of the committee I so move. Any discussion of that motion, any opposition to the motion? Seeing none; that motion passes. Motion 7 was to keep the existing wording for the purpose and need. Any discussion of that motion, any opposition? Seeing none; Motion 7 passes.

Motion 8 was to approve the for-hire amendment for public hearings. Any discussion of the motion? Any opposition? Seeing none; Motion 8 passes. Then we have one draft motion which I will read; I need to get someone to make. That was to approve the task and timing as presented. One, direct staff to continue working with ACCSP, Mike Cahall, on developing a commercial logbook electronic data entry form for voluntary use by commercial fishermen.

Two, direct staff to contract for a proceeding report from Citizen Science Workshop, conduct the workshop and report back at the March, 2016 meeting. Three, direct staff to work with the Interdisciplinary Planning Team to revise South Atlantic for-hire amendment to complete all necessary analyses, conduct public hearings in January and February, and to bring the document back at the March, 2016 meeting for review of public hearings, comments and approval of all actions.

Would someone care to make that motion? Madam Chair. Second? Charlie. Okay, any discussion of that motion? Yes, Ma'am.

DR. DUVAL: I just think as we go out for public hearings for the for-hire amendment. I think there is probably going to be a lot of questions from folks who don't tend to pay attention to what is going on. I'm sure there are a lot of folks who are unaware, despite scoping, despite everything that this effort is moving forward. I had a little bit of conversation with Bonnie yesterday, just noting that I'm sure we're going to get questions regarding well, what is it the commercial guys have to report?

I had asked Bonnie about that because I wanted to be clear myself with regard to what is the catch information that is required to report. We had a lot of discussion about vessels, carrying

the federal permit, whether fishing in state or federal waters, having to report, reporting and the discard reporting requirements, the catch reporting requirements.

I guess I would encourage the IPT to maybe think about a fact sheet or something. I know we're moving toward - we've got a lot of input from the I&E Advisory Panel with regard to simplifying these public hearing documents. But there might be a bulleted fact sheet or something regarding those reporting requirements right now.

The fact that there has been regulatory language that has existed for a long time that has required potentially lots of things of folks, including video monitoring and a whole suite of other things that I think a lot of people just aren't aware that the Science and Research Director has the authority to require. I just think, as part of the outreach, the sooner we could get some information out like that the better. Oh, I'm sorry. Mr. Chairman; this is your committee.

MR. BELL: No, Zack and then Chris, if you would like to weigh in on that.

MR. BOWEN: I think when we were talking about the requirements of the reporting yesterday and Dr. Crabtree, when I was discussing things on record with him and I brought up the idea about, well just don't renew their permit. He said something that hit me like a ton of bricks. He said, well it is open access.

We've talked about limited entry for the for-hire permits in the past. I think if for no other reason that reason right there is probably one of the best I've heard. If we're going to move forward with, and it looks like we are, and I'm in favor of it; move forward with this for-hire amendment and the electronic reporting.

Then if we were to move in the direction of having a limited entry for the for-hire, that would give us a tool of enforcement to make sure that these guys report instead of just threatening to take their permit. Because like Roy said yesterday, we could take their permit or Bonnie or whoever could take their permit, but all they've got to do is pay \$35.00 and get another one. I would ask the committee and the council to really start thinking about the limited entry aspect for the for-hire sector; and we did hear that in visioning as well.

MR. CONKLIN: I just wanted to request that a copy of the commercial trip ticket report be included in the next briefing book so that the council can see what we have to report. Then we can maybe make decisions on that. Because I know if we go commercial fishing and we don't catch anything on that sheet, we don't report.

MR. BELL: I think what Michelle had brought up is a really, really good idea. It is kind of something that we could have, a fact sheet to describe the system that exists; because keep in mind this is all about making things better. Particularly, and I get where Zack is coming from, but if we can emphasize how this could really improve things for people, I think that would help them to connect. Because it is real easy to say, well we've never done that don't want to do that. But we know that the public has told us over and over again, they want better data, better data. We get beat over the head about data. Well this is a way to get better data.

We just need to explain how these changes could potentially make things better. This isn't to hinder people or to make life more complicated; it is to improve the data. It is their opportunity

to help us improve the data. In the fact sheet kind of concept, I think if we can emphasize what we see as the positive benefits out of this, which are the benefits we've heard that the public wants. I think that would be good.

MS. BECKWITH: I just want to touch on Zack's point about pulling people's permits. We also heard a little bit of discussion from NOAA GC that it is very difficult to pull somebody's permit. You can have multiple violations on folks that before you pull their permit they also have the right to take it to court.

I don't think it is a very common thing to pull someone's permit, so while it is something that we have in the toolbox to enforce; it is not something that is commonly done and certainly would likely not be. I don't know how realistic it would be to pull people's permits for not doing logbooks. It would be interesting, but I don't think they have a lot of examples of that.

DR. PONWITH: Regardless of what the solution is, it is really nice to hear us discussing compliance and means of compelling compliance; because, again, just based on what we're learning for the electronic reporting for the headboat fishery. It is almost an intolerable amount of work to chase after late data. If the data are late and you have to spend time resolving that, it is a double whammy in the desire for making things better. Thinking about that and kind of having that in the back of our minds as we refine this, I think is a really smart thing.

MR. BELL: Sure, I think emphasizing importance of compliance – why is it important that you comply? Here's why.

MR. COX: I just want to follow up with Anna. In this country if you break the law and you are a habitual law breaker, you absolutely go to jail and you lose your privilege, whether it is a driver's license, a fishing license. I've read several times, Monica you correct me, with the lobster fishery where folks were breaking the law and things that have been happening that they have lost their privilege to lobster fish and they go to jail for it. Am I correct?

I read some of that in National Fishermen and things. It infuriates me to sit here and make rules and regulations and then to sit here and say, well, there are no consequences, because there are folks that continue to make a living doing things that they shouldn't do. I don't feel like it is right. They don't own that permit in such a way that it can't be taken, in my opinion. You tell me if I'm wrong.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: To that point. I'm not familiar with that article you read, but certainly there are cases in which fishermen have lost their permit because they have committed violations and been proved to found guilty from them. It depends on the severity of the violation. It depends on all those kinds of things that go into calculation when determining that. Some cases are taken criminally, some cases are taken civilly; and Tracy can speak to that. I know in the civil context under a Magnuson Act there are permit sanctions, including revoking someone's permit.

MR. HAYMANS: To that Monica, what I was looking for was they can also deny such permit if they get one revoked. The Secretary can deny a reissuance of a permit that has been pulled, the way I read that on Page 120.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think you can deny reissuance of a permit. If it is an open access permit you are not necessarily getting that same permit back, you're getting a different permit. If that has all been discussed that's fine. But that is a difference.

MR. BELL: I think we all agree compliance is important. We're not going to solve that right now. As an example, our state law, our permitting system for our charterboat, which is dealer reporting, if they fail to report then they cannot get a new permit the following fiscal year is the way it is set up. Until they square away with us, we won't issue them by law a new permit for the next year. That is one way to deal with that.

Okay so we have a motion on the table here. **Any further discussion of the motion, it is a timing and task motion, or any opposition to the timing and task motion? Then that motion carries and Madam Chair that concludes my brief.** Is there any other business to come before the committee? Oh, okay Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: I'll make this quick. Speaking about the recreational charter permits or whatever, I'm concerned on my side about the dealer permits. I go on the fisheries website here and there is a thing for dealer permits then there is open access permits, then there is limited access permits.

Is a dealer permit an open access permit? Is that not right? Anybody can become a federal dealer. In regard to the conversation with Roy yesterday, is that why we're not enforcing delinquent dealer reporting, because of what Roy said? Because I'm going to tell you I've about had it with delinquent dealer reporting.

Numbers have to be estimated and then put into systems, and we end up in situations where we are either blowing way over our ACL or coming in underneath it, and we're closing fisheries down. As a dealer that abides by the rules and does it the right way, I think everybody should be held to that standard and it needs to be enforced. If it is not enforced, then we need to figure out a way to punish or penalize those dealers, because it is hurting everybody else.

MR. BELL: Any further discussion on that? I concur. All right any other business? Then seeing no other business, Madam Chair that concludes my briefing and the business of the committee.

DR. DUVAL: We have just a couple more quick committee reports, SSC Selection, Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: The SSC Selection Committee met December 10th. The committee considered an SSC applicant and adding dedicated seats for social scientists and economists. The committee filled a vacant North Carolina DMF, South Carolina SSC seat. The committee discussed adding additional seats to the SSC dedicated to social scientists and economists, to address concerns with declining SSC representation of these two areas of expertise in recent years. An additional seat was added to the committee and three SSC seats were designated to these specialties. The committee also added an option to increase SSC membership by one in the future to address expertise needs or take advantage of possible strong applicant pools.

The motions: **There was a motion to move to appoint Laura Lee to the SSC; and I move this for the committee. Is there any discussion, any opposition? The motion passes. The**

other motion was a motion to move to add one seat to the SSC to designate one to an economist, one to a social scientist, and one as either a social scientist or an economist.

Allow the SSC Selection Committee to add one additional SSC seat as needed; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Any discussion, any opposition? Seeing none; that motion passes. I guess I'll ask if there was any other business to come before the SSC Selection Committee. Oh, okay. We have a timing and task, so we'll need somebody to make a motion. **Move to send an SSC appointment letter to Laura Lee and modify the SSC policy document to reflect the changes in committee composition. Michelle.**

DR. DUVAL: So moved.

MR. PHILLIPS: Do I have a second. Second by Ben. Is there any discussion on this motion, any opposition? The motion passes. That concludes the report.

DR. DUVAL: Up next is the Information and Education Committee report, Mr. Brown. Let's give Amber a chance to get up here.

MR. BROWN: The Information and Education Committee met on December the 10th. The committee received a report on the November 2015 Information and Education Advisory Panel meeting. Staff presented recommendations from the advisory panel concerning the draft system management plan for spawning special management zones, the communication goal from the vision blueprint for the snapper grouper fishery, and amendment summary for inclusion in council amendment documents.

The system management plan for spawning special management zones, the staff presented the advisory panel recommendations on the outreach action items in the plan, which includes tasks, justifications, deliverables, schedule budget, and potential partners for accomplishing each action item. The committee recommended considering additional partners for accomplishing outreach action items to include the natural history museums and aquaria in each state.

Additionally, the committee discussed the need to incorporate research and monitoring updates from the spawning special management zones, deepwater marine protected areas, and the Oculina Bank on the council's website and other outreach products. Research crews reports from SEFIS, MARMAP and Pisces.

The committee recommended exploring opportunities to showcase underwater video from SCD in our Areas 51 and 53 to help highlight how these demonstration project areas have been developed into important areas for fish habitat and spawning. The committee also noted that it was encouraging that the outreach action items in the system management plan overlap with many of the vision blueprint action items, and were encouraged that these actions were in alignment with outreach priorities for both. The communication goal of the vision blueprint, the staff presented recommendations from the advisory panel on the action items in the communication goal of the vision blueprint. Over all, the advisory panel was supportive of the items.

They made specific recommendations regarding support of expanding the marine resource education program into short courses available throughout the region, training materials for the

council's new advisory panel members upon appointment, and the use of the informal stakeholder polling and surveys.

Amendment summary for council technical documents, the staff discussed developing brief summaries, two pages or less, for amendment documents that would provide a short overview of the purpose, actions and comment opportunities for amendments developed by the council. The advisory panel made recommendations for developing a template for the summary and the use of visual tools to summarize the amendment information for the public.

The committee cautioned about the recommendation to use percentages instead of numbers in these summaries; and to consider which format is appropriate based upon what is being proposed in the amendment. No motions were made during this committee meeting and that is all I have.

DR. DUVAL: Anything else under Information and Education? I am not seeing anything. We're at lunch, but I'm operating under the assumption that folks would rather just plow on through and do the liaison report. We will start with Dr. McGovern with the Regional Office.

DR. MCGOVERN: I'll be brief. One major thing, I guess, in our office is that we have a lot of vacancies in sustainable fisheries, yes and you have one too. Kate Michie left the South Atlantic branch and there is a vacancy from my old position and Andy Strelcheck moved on and we have vacancies in the Caribbean branch.

We're missing a Regulation writer too, so we have like seven vacancies. Right now, there are opening for three branch chiefs, for my old position the South Atlantic Branch Chief, the Data Branch Chief, which is Andy's old position, and the Gulf Branch Chief, which is Steve Branstetter's position. He is retiring this summer.

That closes on the 14th of December, and then we're going to follow it up with backfilling all the biologist positions and Regulation writer position. That's all going to happen within the beginning of next year. Hopefully, by the March meeting we'll have a new South Atlantic Branch Chief and we'll also have a backfill for Kate Michie, who as a South Atlantic staff person. That concludes my report.

DR. DUVAL: Wow, thanks, Jack! If anybody is looking for a job, you know where to go. I believe there was an update that was sent around by Mike Collins a little bit earlier for Bonnie's update, so Dr. Ponwith.

DR. PONWITH: Just to reiterate, some of these things we've spoken about; but to walk through them again. We completed the inaugural deepwater longline survey in late October. I want to acknowledge again the assistance that we received from the Atlantic States Fisheries Commission in helping us to work with the vessels to get that survey up and running as quickly as we did. That was a very good partnership. The golden tilefish update assessment is well underway; and we're on track for having that completed on time and ready to go to the SSC for peer review at their spring meeting. We've got a management strategy evaluation underway and it is underway through another unique partnership, this is a university professor who is on sabbatical residing at the Beaufort Lab.

NOAA has augmented the resources for a sabbatical, doubled the duration of that so he'll be there for a year. He is going to be working on a management strategy evaluation that looks at how different approaches to collecting fishery dependent data influences the success of fisheries management; and doing that using a simulation approach.

The models that he's developing are going to be done in a way; the code will be written in a way that those models are flexible enough to be able to ask questions on future issues to look at fishery independent data collections as well. This is going to be a remarkable tool that he'll develop while he's there over the year, and leave it behind so it can be adjusted to answer different types of questions in a simulation approach.

Again, I mentioned the fact that there is a bi-national mackerel assessment possible. The proposal is going in to the Global Environment Facility this month. We'll know by the springtime whether that is funded. If it's funded, it will fund Mexico, and their ability to gather up their historic data on mackerel to be able to do some cross-calibrations with otoliths and other biological samples and pump those data for the first time into a stock assessment for mackerel, to give us a more comprehensive understanding of the true status of that stock.

Then finally, we are going to be holding an ecosystem program review this spring. Notice that we've had program reviews on data collections, on stock assessments, on protected species so this will be our fourth in a series. We'll be sending out a save the date notice very, very soon and invitations with a preliminary agenda soon thereafter. That is my report.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Bonnie about any of the items?

MR. HARTIG: Bonnie, do you know of any acoustic tagging studies that are possibly being done in the Gulf that deal with mackerel moving cross jurisdictionally?

DR. PONWITH: Not off the top of my head, but I can ask.

DR. DUVAL: Any other questions for Dr. Ponwith? Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: I was just looking for an update on the Florida Keys lionfish trap EFP they put in. We had it in our book last meeting and I wanted to get some clarification on the budget and stuff like that and see when they're going to start.

DR. PONWITH: I do not have information on that that I can give you right now, but maybe when we recess or adjourn I can touch bases and get a more specific question and then get a response back to you.

DR. DUVAL: Any other questions for Bonnie? All right, if not, we'll start working our way around the table. Ms. McCawley.

MS. McCAWLEY: I don't really have anything to report, but I will tell folks that we have our Snook Symposium coming up on January the 13th in Orlando.

DR. DUVAL: Excellent. Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: I was going to try to be brief, but I can't be that brief. Just of state interest, our spotted sea trout size increase goes into effect January 1st, which is controversial among some. But on top of that, our legislature goes into session early January, and DNRs primary objective is to increase license fees; and that has a lot of distraction.

I appreciate being able to give something to our guys in the form of an increased bag limit for black sea bass. The only other thing I'll say is I look forward to March, to our new Westin Hotel on Jekyll Island and a whole lot of features that if you haven't been there in the last couple of years, you will enjoy on Jekyll, so we'll see you in March.

DR. DUVAL: Question for Doug, Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I've got to put my hand up quick to ask a question, Jessica. I was just wondering about the Gulf program for the recreational Gulf reef fish. How is that progressing?

MS. McCAWLEY: Are you talking about the Gulf Reef Fish Survey, the data collection program? That's up and running, and I think I have a report on that that I could send around to folks if you're interested.

DR. DUVAL: Any question for Doug? All right, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, Mr. Dunn welcome.

MR. DUNN: I just wanted to report real quickly. Everybody knows we have a new director. He is making a whirlwind trip around the whole nation trying to get a better handle on us. He worked with us as General Counsel, but we're a little bit different when you dive deep. The big news is we have a new Deputy Director. Logan Gregory, the former Assistant Director of the Northeast has been selected as a permanent; so we finally have some positions being filled at the leadership level.

That will really help us out in the long run. He has got 22 years with us, worked as an enforcement officer in the southeast way back when and has worked his way up, some would say foolishly accepted the job, but we're hoping that he finds it beneficial. We're very happy with the selection and I'll leave it at that.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Tracy about any LOE stuff?

MR. HARTIG: Tracy, we had a presentation about changes within the reorganization of the officers. Are we going to be seeing uniformed officers in the area any time soon?

MR. DUNN: Yes. We're having a little bit of difficulty getting the announcement out. I'm supposed to have seven in the southeast; I only have really three at this point in time with one waiting credentially. But it is just the difficulty with getting an announcement out and then the added burden of our people being credentialed, so they have to go through a really extensive background check. Since we're handing them a weapon they want to make sure they're okay.

MR. HARTIG: And their duties will be somewhat different than the officers from previous encounters that we've run into?

MR. DUNN: Not really. The officers will be handling patrol and monitoring duties.

DR. DUVAL: Any other questions for Tracy? All right if not, from North Carolina I don't really have much to report from the changes that occurred at our September meeting, which are basically that we've changed agency names and moved some of our divisions out into a new Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Significant budget cuts again as a result of this legislative session; Merry Christmas! I guess the one thing at a state level; we've put the finishing touches on the information update to our Interjurisdictional Fishery Management Plan. This is actually because North Carolina state statute requires a development of fishery management plans for all commercially and recreationally significant species.

In order to meet that mandate, this is our policy instrument that we use to incorporate by reference the fishery management plans that are developed through the federal councils as well as the Atlantic States Commission, and that is in my job description, so I am really happy to have that monkey off my back. Any questions for me? Yes, Chris and then Zack.

MR. CONKLIN: I'm going to go fishing this weekend, hopefully, in your state, but it will be on a federally permitted commercial boat. Do I have to have a fishing license?

DR. DUVAL: No, you don't, because Jack does.

MR. CONKLIN: Okay, thanks.

DR. DUVAL: Because you're his crew, yes you're fine. Zack. You are good.

MR. BOWEN: I wanted it on record.

DR. DUVAL: Yes, if you are fishing with a licensed commercial fisherman as his crew, you are fine. If you guys were out on a recreational trip on someone's private boat, then you need your individual fishing license.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you for that clarification. What if we're on Jack's boat Sunday and Jack's not on? Does Jack have to be on the vessel, I guess, if the vessel is permitted?

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. PHILLIPS: Jack said he's not taking you.

MS. BECKWITH: Or you can get your recreational fishing license.

MR. BOWEN: No, we're fishing commercially.

DR. DUVAL: No, Jack doesn't have to be on the boat but his captain with a license has to be on the boat, so he's good.

MR. BOWEN: Chris and I can't just take his boat and go commercial fishing?

DR. DUVAL: No, because you guys don't have a commercial license in North Carolina. We can discuss this elsewhere. Moving around to Dr. Laney.

DR. LANEY: I don't have a whole lot either. The thing I'm working on the most right now is a cooperative winter tagging cruise; which will be coming up January the 7th or 8th roughly through the 18th or 19th. I am pleased to report that my co-PI Dr. Rulison finally figured out that we have enough funding to fund the full 10 days of actual fishing.

The vessel will leave Savannah on the 6th of January and be at Duke Marine Lab on about the 7th or 8th. Once again, we're getting significant in-kind contributions from all of our partners, especially the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, the ASMFC, Maryland DNR, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, as well.

I will be hopefully as usual sending out daily updates, and we'll include all of you on the distribution for those, so you can see to what we are up. The only other thing I'll mention is hopefully, we'll have another postdoc at NC State who is going to be doing some additional work on American eel.

A number of folks have collaborated together on our proposal that they're going to submit to SERDP, I always forget what that stands for; it is the Department of Defense organization here in the South Atlantic. They've apparently put out a request for proposals and want to look at phrenology and climate change in fisheries and things like that, so they are putting in one for American eel and hopefully that will get funded. If anybody has any questions for Fish and Wildlife Service, please feel free to ask.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Wilson? All right, moving on to Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: A couple things of interest to this group, MARMAPs primary research vessel, the Palmetto is in the yard right now getting new engines. We'll get a lot more use out of Palmetto. That will make everybody happy. We actually got her in the yard a little earlier than normal, so hopefully she'll get out a little earlier than normal.

You may recall that in October we had some record rainfalls, which we were a little concerned about impacting oysters, clams, crab, and shrimp. So far, it looks like we may have some mortality associated with oysters, and perhaps some clams, but the shrimp - up to that point, we had record, our fishery independent monitoring work related to our shrimp was like high numbers, so we were really looking forward to a huge shrimp crop.

Then it all kind of washed out to sea, but it didn't actually all wash out to sea, so we're still getting good landings of shrimp and that's fortunate, because we were really afraid that with all that water rushing out it just flushed everything. But apparently, they're more resilient than we thought. Also, our crab landings have been up a little bit, because I think a lot of the crabs got kind of flushed downstream. Things aren't as bad as they could have been, in case you were wondering; because we thought everything had been washed away there for a little bit. The other thing of interest, we talked about cobia a good bit.

We intend to introduce a bill changing our state cobia law such that we would go to a one fish per person bag limit, a three fish boat limit, and actually close cobia fishing in state waters for

the month of May, which corresponds to the peak spawning activity. This is south of basically Beaufort County.

It is south of, I think, Jeremy Inlet. There is a certain latitude. But in the southern part of the state where if you recall that distinct population segment comes in and spawns in the inshore waters of Calibogue, St. Helena and Port Royal Sound. We wanted to protect those fish. That is what we're going to introduce and hopefully that will be in place. In a perfect world that would be in place before May, 2016, but we'll see how that goes. That's all I have.

DR. DUVAL: Questions for Mel?

MR. BOWEN: Any change in the 33 inch fork length minimum size limit on your cobia?

MR. BELL: No, we're leaving that the same. I just figured that would be extra complication.

DR. DUVAL: Any other questions for Mel? Chairman Anson, thank you for joining us this week, by the way.

MR. ANSON: I apologize for stepping out as often as I did. I'm working on a project for back home. The Gulf Council update from the last meeting in October that was held in Galveston. Gag and Black Grouper Framework Action, the council took final action on a framework action then it considers changing the gag season and size limit and the black grouper size limit.

If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the framework action will increase the size limit for gag and black grouper to 24 inches total length and remove the December 3rd to 31st fixed closed season for gag. This will allow the gag season to remain open through the end of the year, or until the recreational annual catch limit is projected to be reached.

Regional Management of Recreational Red Snapper Reef Fish Amendment 39, the council continued discussions on Amendment 39, which looks at dividing the recreational red snapper quota among regions or states to allow for the creation of different management measures that better suit each area.

During this meeting the council changed its preferred alternative for Action 1 to Alternative 4, which would establish a regional management program whereby regions would develop management proposals and submit those proposals to a Technical Review Committee. The proposals would then either go back to the region for revision or be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service for final review.

Any region that chooses not to participate or that does not satisfy the conservation equivalency requirements would be subject to the default federal regulations for red snapper. We'll hold additional rounds of public hearings throughout the Gulf, or we did hold them. Final action is expected in early 2016 on 39. Coastal Migratory Pelagics Mackerel, the council reviewed two public hearing drafts for amendments that consider making some changes to king and Spanish mackerel management.

Amendment 26 considers making modifications to allocations, stock boundaries, and sale provisions of king mackerel. Amendment 28 for mackerel, which considers separating permits

for Gulf and Atlantic kind and Spanish mackerel, was also discussed; but the council decided to postpone work on the amendment until future date.

Shrimp, the council reviewed a public hearing draft of Amendment 17A that addresses the upcoming expiration of the shrimp permit moratorium. Public hearings on the amendment will be schedule in early January. Dates and locations will be posted on the council website in the coming weeks.

Shrimp Amendment 17B was also discussed. This amendment considers other shrimp permit issues such as setting a target number of Gulf shrimp vessel permits, and whether to create a Gulf shrimp vessel permit reserve pool, specification of optimum yield and issues about transiting in federal waters.

Data collection, the council reviewed a public hearing draft of a joint amendment between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, which considers modifying the frequency and method of reporting for charter and headboats fishing for reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics in the Gulf of Mexico, and snapper grouper, dolphin and wahoo and coastal migratory pelagics in the South Atlantic.

The council requested that the Technical Subcommittee of the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils on electronic logbook reporting guidelines. In coordination with GulfFIN, ACCSP, Southeast Fisheries Science Center and council staff to develop a reference document that describes specific catch and effort reporting elements, data standards and protocols of standardized implementation of southeast region wide electronic monitoring initiatives.

The council also chose a preferred alternative that would require federally permitted for-hire vessels to use a NMFS approved electronic device that automatically records vessel location at specified time intervals for later transmission in the Gulf for both headboats and charter vessels. Finally the last item, south Florida management, the Gulf Council, South Atlantic Council, and the state of Florida have been working on a fisheries management plan that aims to streamline regulations in south Florida; particularly off the Florida Keys.

The council reviewed an options paper that considers modifying the management structure and some management measures for yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, black grouper, and shallow water grouper to make fishing regulations less complicated for commercial and recreational fishing in the area. That concludes my report, Madam Chair, thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Kevin. Are there questions for Kevin?

MR. BREWER: Kevin, what's going on with Amendments 41 and 42?

MR. DUNN: They're moving along. They are just past options paper, or review and options paper stages, but they are moving along. There is a strong desire among many folks in the region to make those come to be.

DR. DUVAL: Any other questions for Kevin? If not that takes us to our final item, which I think is upcoming council meetings and other business.

MR. MAHOOD: Well, I don't have any upcoming council meeting. But, the rest of you will be getting together in March down at beautiful Jekyll Island, Georgia. The schedule, the calendars are in the briefing book under the last attachment, so I won't go into any other details. But there are a lot of activities scheduled right off the bat for the first of the year. I think you all have plenty to do.

DR. DUVAL: Is there any other business to come before the council? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, and I'll leave this up to your discretion. I would like to see at the next meeting some options that address the recreational AMs and the overages we've had. I know your frustration, Madam Chairman about yes; we just approved new AMs in the recreational fishery. But since that is going through the process we've had a number of fisheries that have had substantial overages, and is there a better way that we can avoid closures in looking at different AMS for the recreational fishery?

DR. DUVAL: I'll just point out that those AMs are not even on the books yet; that they're still under review at headquarters, but we'll certainly put that on the list. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Just one last thing. I've talked to Monica and maybe she can help update us on some definitions of OY and something Chester and I have been intimately interested in, so as we go through our managements we can kind of know exactly where we're going.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I would be happy to discuss that with you all at the next meeting.

DR. DUVAL: Any other business? Seeing none; the council meeting is adjourned. See you all in March and have safe, happy and healthy holidays; and I'll see some of you next week. Bye.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 o'clock p.m., December 11, 2015.)

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✓ Dr. Kari MacLauchlin
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Admin. Secretary /Travel Coordinator

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Purchasing & Grants

✓ Julie O'Dell
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VOTE

Date:

Meeting Location: ATLANTIC BEACH, NC

Issue: DOLPHIN WALK AMEND 1

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DUVAL	✓		
PHILLIPS	✓		
BELL	✓		
BECKWITH	✓		
BOWEN	✓		
MCCAULEY BURGESS	✓		
BREWER	✓		
BROWN	✓		
CONKLIN	✓		
COX	✓		
HARTIG	✓		
HAYMANS	✓		
CRABTREE MCGOVERN	✓		

VOTE

Date:

Meeting Location: ATLANTIC BEACH, NC

Issue: SNAPPER GROUPER AMEND 25

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DUVAL	✓		
PHILLIPS	✓		
BELL	✓		
BECKWITH	✓		
BOWEN	✓	✓	
MCCAULEY BURGESS	✓		
BREWER	✓		
BROWN	✓		
CONKLIN	✓		
COX	✓		
HARTIG	✓		
HAYMANS	✓		
CRABTREE MCGOVERN	✓		

VOTE

Date:

Meeting Location: ATLANTIC BEACH, NC

Issue: S/G AMEND 16

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DUVAL	✓		
PHILLIPS	✓		
BELL	✓		
BECKWITH	✓		
BOWEN	✓		
MCCAWLEY BURGESS	✓		
BREWER	✓		
BROWN	✓		
CONKLIN	✓		
COX	✓		
HARTIG	✓		
HAYMANS	✓		
DR. CRABTREE MCGOVERN	✓		



**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council –
December 2015 Council Meeting
Atlantic Beach, NC**

Date: Friday, December 11, 2015

Full Council

PLEASE SIGN IN -

In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Kellie Radston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Lora Clarke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Leza Dummie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
David Bush	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Gary Zurn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Deam Foster	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
Charleston, SC 29405**



**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council -
December 2015 Council Meeting
Atlantic Beach, NC**

Date: Friday, December 11, 2015

Full Council

PLEASE SIGN IN -

In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Andrew Rubin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Jan Martin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
Charleston, SC 29405**

COUNCIL Mtg Day 5

11 Dec 15

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