

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

**King and Prince Hotel
St. Simons Island, GA**

March 6, 2015

SUMMARY MINUTES

Council Members:

Ben Hartig, Chair
Mel Bell
Dr. Roy Crabtree
Jessica McCawley
Chris Conklin
Doug Haymans
Dr. Wilson Laney
Lt. Morgan Fowler

Dr. Michelle Duval, Vice-Chair
Jack Cox
Anna Beckwith
Charlie Phillips
Chester Brewer
Mark Brown
Zack Bowen

Council Staff:

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

Gregg Waugh
John Carmichael
Chip Collier
Dr. Mike Errigo
Myra Brouwer
Amber Von Harten

Observers/Participants:

Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Pres Pate
Roy Williams
Duane Harris
Sp. Agt. Tracey Woodruff
Rusty Hudson

Robert Boyles
Spud Woodward
Dr. Jack McGovern
Erika Burgess
Iris Lowery
Guy DuBeck

Additional Observers Attached

MOTIONS

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The Full Council Session of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Sidney Lanier Ballroom of the King and Price Hotel, St. Simons Island, Georgia, March 6, 2015, and was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Ben Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: We'll call to order the South Atlantic Council Session for March. The first item of business is the adoption of the agenda. There are a few changes. One is we're going to have a presentation right after we've finished these first two items of business that we don't have scheduled. Any other changes to the agenda? We may move some committee reports around.

Are there any other changes to the agenda other than those that I've highlighted? Seeing none; is there any opposition to approving the agenda? Seeing none; the agenda is approved. That brings us down to the approval of the December 2014 Minutes. Are there any corrections, deletions or changes to the minutes? Is there any objection to approving the minutes? Seeing none; the minutes are approved. That brings us to Robert. I would like you to come up here, if you would. Robert has got a presentation for someone we all know and love and is very dear to us.

MR. BOYLES: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Council. First of all, I want to say I'm joined up here with Spud Woodward, who is no stranger to this council. Before I get started with the presentation, I would just like to take the advantage to say thank you for welcoming me back. I walked in the room yesterday and saw a lot of friendly faces and was very warmly welcomed. I'm grateful for that. I miss all of you so it is nice to come back.

What I would like to do is ask Executive Director Bob Mahood to join us up here. Mr. Chairman, my name is Robert Boyles. I am with the Department of Natural Resources in South Carolina; but I'm wearing a hat as vice-chair of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. We're coming today bearing gifts of appreciation in token of our esteem for Bob Mahood, who is one of the plank owners of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, having been involved with that program since the beginning.

Bob has served in that leadership role since the beginning and has decided to pass the reins so that he could pay attention to issues that are going on here in the South Atlantic. I'd like to read, if I could, Mr. Chairman, a letter on behalf of the ACCSP: "Dear Bob: On behalf of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, its Executive Committee and Coordinating Council, I want to offer you a personal and heartfelt thanks for your many years of stalwart support and leadership of ACCSP.

"The achievements of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program in the past 20 years were made possible in large part due to the hard work and dedication of the many individuals who participate in it. As a founding member of the Coordinating Council, you have been a steady leader right from the very beginning. Your contributions to the ACCSP have had a lasting impact on your ability to move forward with our mission.

"In recognition of sharing the successes of ACCSP with not only our constituencies in the southeast but also leaders in the executive and legislative branches all along the Atlantic Coast, we are pleased to present this token of our esteem to you on behalf of all those involved with the program. The successes of the program are the direct result of participants like you.

“Your dedication serves as a vital link in the chain that drives this effort. Thanks to you we are much closer to succeeding in our mission to produce dependable and timely marine fisheries statistics for Atlantic Coast fisheries that are collected, processed and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all program partners.

“Bob, it is an honor to work with professionals of your caliber and vision. It is this level of commitment that allows us to produce the products that the entire Atlantic Coast has needed for many years. Again, thank you for your hard work, selflessness, dedication and leadership. We hope you will always look upon this gift as a symbol of our appreciation and that it will serve as a continual reminder of your achievements. Thank you for your contributions to the ACCSP. You are and always will be a valuable member of the program.” It is signed by Cherie Patterson, Chair of the ACCSP. (Applause)

MR. MAHOOD: Ben, that person it is being passed on to is sitting in this room; and that’s John Carmichael, who also has a long history with the ACCSP and the ASMFC.

DR. CRABTREE: I’m probably going to leave some time later this morning before the end. Probably everyone is aware of this, but we’ve had some retirements in the regional office. Phil Steele, who all of you know, has retired. I wanted to make sure everybody is aware that Dr. McGovern has been promoted to replace Phil as the Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries.

That means we’re going to have an opening now for the South Atlantic Branch Chief, which will have to go through and fill that position. Also, Miles Croom, who was the Deputy Regional Administrator, retired at the end of the year. We selected Andy Strelcheck to be the new Deputy Regional Administrator, who I think all of you know and has worked with the council on and off over the years. We’re real happy to get those folks on board and I wanted to make sure everybody was aware of that.

MR. HARTIG: And we’re real happy as well. Those are absolutely two quality individuals that you have moved up in the ranks. I’m sure they appreciate the promotion and we appreciate working with them. That brings us to the Snapper Grouper Committee.

DR. DUVAL: The Snapper Grouper Committee met on March 2nd and 3rd in St. Simons Island, Georgia. We ran through some of our usual pro forma items; status of landings for quota-managed snapper grouper species. We received reports on the status of amendments approved for secretarial review. Then we jumped into our first amendment where we have motions, which was Amendment 37. With regard to Amendment 37, the committee made the following motions:

The first motion is to approve the hogfish projection criteria in addition to constant F projection that rebuilds in seven years. 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 Subalternatives B and C from Action 1, Alternative 2, to the considered but rejected appendix. On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion was analyze Action 1, Alternatives 1, 2 (Georgia through North Carolina), and 3 in Amendment 37. On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

Next we had direction to staff to establish a consistent nomenclature for the three stocks and to discuss these hogfish actions with the Gulf Council during the council session in June in Key West. **The next motion was to analyze Action 2 and its 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 analyze Action 3, Alternatives 1 and 2, in Amendment 37; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

We also had some additional direction to staff to use the current allocation formula established in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment and apply to the ACL subalternatives to determine sector ACLs. **The next motion was analyze Action 4, Alternatives 1 and 2, in Amendment 37; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

Again, we had similar direction to staff with regard to use of the current allocation formula established in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment to apply to those subalternatives as well. **The next motion was to direct staff to develop alternatives for recreational ACTs for each stock of hogfish; 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 direct staff to add an action to Amendment 37 to examine alternatives to disaggregate the Jacks Complex; 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 direct staff to add an action to Amendment 37 to examine a commercial trip limit for almaco jack; 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 an action to remove minimum size limits for deepwater species (silk snapper, queen snapper and blackfin snapper); 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 an action to modify the spawning closure for shallow water grouper throughout the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Jurisdiction; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

The next motion is to add an action to examine size limit increases for red grouper; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there discussion? Jessica.

MS. McCRAWLEY: Based on the input that we got from Mel; do we want to remove this action from the document, Mel?

MR. BELL: I'm okay with leaving that in. What I had misunderstood was that was all we were going to do and we weren't considering the – and that's why I had to double-check with Gregg; so that is fine to leave that in there. Red grouper will be covered under examining seasons for the whole complex; so we're good.

DR. DUVAL: 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 actions to modify the fishing year for the commercial golden tilefish hook-and-line sector (include alternatives for start dates March 1 through May 1); and, two, to modify the recreational bag limit for black sea bass (include alternatives of six to ten fish). In 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 22, which was the recreational harvest tag program. **The motion there was to suspend development of Amendment 22 until further notice; 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 request a presentation from MRIP staff at the June Council Meeting addressing approaches to track harvest of rarely intercepted recreational species; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

Next we received a report from the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team Meeting; and then we moved into Regulatory Amendment 16, which is the black sea bass pot closure. **The first motion was accept the IPT's recommended changes to the purpose and need; and on behalf of the committee I so move.** I believe we may have some discussion here, Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: If you recall during the committee discussion, we went around and around about the purpose and need. The committee accepted the purpose and need that was recommended by the IPT. However, there was some discussion that there was going to be further development on the purpose and need, which happened in the background involving several council members. We had Monica review it.

I think the general consensus by that group at this point is that the purpose and need has been improved. There is an alternate version that is being offered for you now that is projected up on the screen; and it was e-mailed to you this morning with the latest change in it. I guess I'll go ahead and read it into the record and then maybe you might want to talk about it

Purpose for the Action: "The purpose of Regulatory Amendment 16 is to reconsider the annual November 1 through April 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot gear and to restore the black sea bass commercial sector fishery closer to the balance between pot and other gear components that existed prior to changes in management caused by early season closures due to

the commercial ACL being met. The amendment will enhance buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots required by the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan to help identify black sea bass pot gear.”

Need for Action: “The need for the amendment is to reverse adverse socioeconomic impact to the black sea bass pot endorsement holders created by the existing closure implemented through Regulatory Amendment 19 and encourage the use of pot gear, which is more selective for legal size black sea bass and results in fewer dead discards of black sea bass while continuing to afford protection ESA-listed whales in the South Atlantic Region.”

DR. DUVAL: Discussion from the committee regarding these proposed edits to the purpose and need. Jack.

MR. COX: Yes; where it is purpose for action, at the very bottom, the very last little bit of a sentence there where it says “black sea bass pot gear”; should it say “in the South Atlantic”?

DR. DUVAL: We can certainly add some verbiage to clarify that it would be black sea bass pot gear in the South Atlantic. Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: I’ll raise a couple of concerns that it gives me although I doubt we can deal with them all today. When I read that part of the purpose of this has to do with the allocation of fishery between the pot holders and the hook-and-line guys within the sector, it causes me to question whether we have a reasonable range of alternatives.

If that is really the purpose, why aren’t we setting sub-quotas, one for the pot endorsement and one for the hook-and-line guys? We’ve done that in many, many other fisheries; golden tile being a great example when we had similar concerns about the allocation and that is how we approached it. To me, if that is our purpose, why aren’t we considering that here; and that’s a NEPA concern.

I do think you need to focus on the social side of this. I’m not convinced you can show any adverse economic impacts. I think when you look at the level of the quotas and how much they’ve gone up now; that the pot endorsement holders are making more money now and the revenue per vessel now is probably the highest – maybe the highest it has ever been, but certainly the highest it has been in many, many years.

That to me makes it difficult to talk about adverse economic impacts. Maybe you can get around that; but when you have a fishery that has had their quota doubled and their revenues are much higher than they’ve been in recent years it seems to me, so I think that is something, Brian, you really need to look at if this is where we’re going to go.

MR. HAYMANS: Brian, can you demonstrate what catch would have been had we not had the closure; is it possible to go back and hindcast that?

DR. CHEUVRONT: The only thing that we could do would be able to use what had been done in the past and just project it out forward. We really don’t have any way of saying this is exactly

what would have been caught by each of the sectors. We do know that prior to the closures, I believe that somewhere around the range of about 28 percent of the landings were hook and line, and the remaining 72 percent, roughly, was pots.

That number has almost reversed now under the current situation. It is not quite that bad, and I can't give you the exact numbers for that. That's why we didn't put in specific information into this about trying to restore a specific percent balance between the two, but we could certainly look historically and see.

Remember the fishery pretty much stayed open non-stop to about May of 2009 and then there was a two-week closure. Every year since then there has been – well, until we got this really big ACL, there has been a commercial sector closure. If we really wanted to estimate, we would have to go back to that 2008/2009 season. We really couldn't use any season subsequent to that to figure out what the percentage would be.

MR. COX: Roy, I've heard you say this before and something I think that you're missing in this is the amount of effort that we have to put in per trip to get those numbers to what you're looking it. Just for an example; we'll make three or four trips a week to catch the number of fish that would have taken us two trips with our bass gear. We have so much more effort. The wear and tear, the fuel, the expenses, the trips to sea and back is something that I think is missing in this.

DR. CRABTREE: Do you mean when you're fishing with hook-and-line gear as opposed to traps?

MR. COX: When we're going out hook-and-line fishing, correct; how many trips we have to make hook-and-line fishing to what we could have made with our trap gear.

DR. CRABTREE: Right; I get that, I think. My real issue here is if the real purpose of this is to adjust the allocation between these two gear types, there are lots of things we could do to do that; and yet the only one we're looking at here is the closure. I don't see how that is, frankly, a reasonable range of alternatives if that is really the purpose of what we're getting at.

It seems to me we ought to have an action that looks at sub-allocations. You brought up raising the hook-and-line trip limit. Well, that seems to me – I think in committee, it seems that would head it the other way and make the problem worse. If that is our purpose and what we're about, there are probably a number of other actions that ought to be in here that could address this other than the one we have now. I think we need to be really careful with this one; and we need to make sure we have a reasonable range of alternatives and we can defend what we're doing. I can assure this is going to really be scrutinized by a lot of people.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for point out those concerns, Roy. I definitely appreciate that and I think the rest of the committee does as well. We need to be absolutely certain under NEPA that our purpose and need is matched to the actions that are contained within the document. Jack.

MR. COX: Just keep in mind we're trying not to create anything new. We're just trying to go back to where we were when we were hook-and-line fishing at the same time we were bass

fishing, anyway. We're just trying to get back to where we were bass potting. It's not like we're trying to – we were already interacting with the hook-and-line sector before.

MR. PHILLIPS: As far as the economics, I know that Jimmie Hull has told me that it is much more productive for him to be working in the winter than having to scrap in the summer. Again, there is a lot gear-and-trip costs trying to work in the summer versus the winter.

MS. McCAWLEY: On the language that was just added about “in the South Atlantic”; the way it reads now or the way I read it makes it look like if you were in Maine; that you couldn't identify gear. I think if we put the words “South Atlantic” in front of “identify South Atlantic black sea bass pot gear” or something, if we feel that is needed; but the ultimate goal is if a whale were to get entangled by a black sea bass trap line, that you could identify that anywhere, even outside the South Atlantic Region if the whale were to be found outside the South Atlantic Region.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: To that point, if you wanted to put the word “used” between “gear” and “in”, then it would be “to help identify black sea bass pot gear used in the South Atlantic”.

DR. DUVAL: Does that address your concern?

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes.

DR. DUVAL: Well, we're clearly not going to wordsmith this to perfection here today. I think Roy has raised some valid concerns that need to be addressed within the language of the purpose and need. We now have another purpose and need that is being recommended. Will we simply entertain a substitute motion to accept the revised purpose and need? Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: Madam Chair, I would like to make a substitute motion to accept the revised purpose and need statements:

Purpose for Action

The purpose of Regulatory Amendment 16 is to reconsider the annual November 1 through April 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot gear and to restore the black sea bass commercial sector fishery closer to the balance between pot and other gear components that existed prior to changes in management caused by early season closures due to the commercial ACL being met. The amendment will enhance buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots required by the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, to help identify black sea bass pot gear used in the South Atlantic.

Need for Action

The need for the amendment is to reverse adverse socioeconomic impacts to black sea bass pot endorsement holders created by the existing closure implemented through Regulatory Amendment 19 and encourage the use of pot gear, which is more selective for legal sized black sea bass and results in fewer dead discards of black sea bass, while continuing to afford protection to ESA-listed whales in the South Atlantic Region.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; seconded by Doug. Further discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. The substitute motion now becomes the main motion. Any other discussion on the main motion? Any objection to the main motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

Under Action 1, we initially had direction to staff to make sure that the language changes to the document are consistent with the 25 meter analysis done for Alternative 7 and Subalternative 7A, 7B and 7C. **The next motion was to accept the IPT's recommended language changes to the alternatives for Action 1; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Any other discussion on this motion? Any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

We do have a note asking council if we want to consider a motion to change the title of Action 1 from "modify the annual November 1 through April 30 prohibition on the black sea bass pot gear" to "reduce the scope of the annual November 1 through April 30 prohibition on the black sea bass post gear." Is there a desire on the part of the committee to change the title of the action?

I'm not seeing any takers at this point; we will move on. **Right above that we have a very important motion which is to select Alternative 9, Subalternative 9A, as the preferred alternative for Action 1; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? The motion passes with two objections.**

Now for Action 2. **The next motion is to accept the IPT and staff wording for Action 2 and develop subalternatives that would have gear marked seasonally versus year round; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

Again, if you scroll down in the committee report, we have a little highlighted yellow piece asking us if the council would like to consider a motion to change the title of Action 2 from "modify the existing buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots" to "enhance the existing buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots". I think that one might be more valid given that this body does not have ability to change any buoy line rope marking or weak line gear requirements that come from the Large Whale Take Reduction Team, but we do have the ability to enhance that.

MR. COX: I will make that motion.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jack; second by Anna. The motion reads, "Change the title of Action 2 to "enhance the existing buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots". Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Can we back up to 9 just one brief second, please; Alternative 9, our preferred, and the Action 1. I'm sorry; I just caught it before we moved out of this amendment. I had mentioned the fact that it was misnumbered; and I know we discussed that. Because it is

our preferred, I wanted to make sure that we caught it here that it was Points 1 through 28 rather than 1 through 18. I just wanted to make sure that was caught.

DR. DUVAL: Right; there is a note to staff directly above that motion to check and make sure that the numbering in the waypoint tables if accurate for the numbering on the maps. We want to make sure that's clear. Thank you. Okay, moving on, the next amendment the committee discussed is Amendment 36, spawning SMZs.

The first motion we had was to approve the spawning SMZ alternatives as modified for the first round of public hearings; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

Included in that is direction to staff to modify the North Carolina SMZs and one of the Georgia SMZs and to ensure that our transit and anchoring provisions are as consistent as possible in Action 8 and to conduct a workshop in conjunction with the Snapper Grouper AP on April 13. We'll also get the AP and SSC input in April and conduct webinar public hearings in April and May. The next item on the agenda was the System Management Plan for the Deepwater MPAs. We received an update on that from Gregg Waugh. There were no motions.

The next amendment is Amendment 35, which is removal of species and golden tilefish endorsements. **The first motion we had under that was to approve the IPT's suggested edits to wording of Action 2; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Jessica.

MS McCRAWLEY: I would like to have some more discussion on this particular item. I think one thing that I would like to see is that Alternative 4 that was removed and put to the back of the document – I think I would like to see Alternative 4 for Action 2 come back into the document so that we can get more comments on that. I would like to make a motion to add Alternative 4 back to the main document under Action 2.

DR. DUVAL: If you recall, Alternative 4 was the one that would allow for the longline endorsement holders to fish on both the 75 percent of the ACL that is allocated to the longline fishery as well as the 25 percent of the ACL that is allocated to the hook-and-line fishery. **There is a motion by Jessica to bring back Alternative 4 into the document for consideration under Action 2. Is there a second to that; second by Doug. Discussion. Myra.**

MS. BROUWER: I just wanted to remind you that the rationale for removing that alternative is because it didn't match the purpose and need. If we bring it back, then I think we're going to have to make some revisions to the purpose and need to make it applicable.

DR. DUVAL: This has already been out for public comment; hasn't it? Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: Well, I'm not going to support his motion because I feel like North Carolina did not receive any of those endorsements and this assures that our guys have access to that fishery. For those reasons, I won't support this.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes; when we did this the first time, we had an awful lot of public comment. I don't think anything has changed. Just kind of doing some math on the back of the envelope, if you take 20 people and they're catching 500 pounds a day, it is going to turn this into a derby fishery. It is not a derby fishery now, but it is going to turn into a derby fishery. There are ways for those guys to make more money out of their fish. There are some things they could do; and there are some things we could probably help them do. I don't want to beat this dead horse again; and I definitely don't want to start a derby fishery. I'm not going to support it.

MR. HARTIG: We had a lot of discussion at the public hearing about the fairness and equity of this. Clearly, it depended, as I said before, on where you were. If you were a hook-and-line fisherman, I didn't hear any hook-and-line fishermen that wanted to allow longliners to participate, but there are a number of longliners that want to participate in the fishery.

In fairness and balance, we have given these fishermen – well, I'm not going to say we have given them. They earned their endorsements to fish in this fishery, but we gave them, based on their hard work to earn that endorsement, an ability to harvest 75 percent of the quota. To me the rest of the permit holders in the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Fishery; this is something that gives them access to try and help them through other parts of fisheries that we're closing. It gives them a way to make some money in periods when their major fisheries are closed. It allows additionally a product on the market for a much longer time.

You help your permit holders that hadn't had access to this before. You help the public by allowing access over a longer period to the fish. This is my personal opinion. To me it is black and white. I don't think that the longline fishermen should participate in the hook-and-line allocation because I think it is a fairness and equity problem. We gave them that opportunity to catch those animals at 75 percent and 25 percent hook and line. I don't think it is fair.

MR. BELL: I was going to say the equitability thing, you have a relatively small number of people that have 75 percent of the available fish; and that sounds pretty equitable. I think Ben is right is you've got a whole bunch of other folks that could benefit and derive benefit over a longer period of time from being able to retain. I think equitability is not an issue in terms of an argument for changing that. If you decide to allow them into that fishery as well, what is the point of having two separate sort of sub-sectors, if you will.

DR. DUVAL: I just wanted to remind folks a little bit of the history. We approved Amendment 18B to set up the endorsement program. I think it was my first time chairing the Snapper Grouper Committee in September of 2012, and that was an awful meeting. That amendment was not effective until late in 2013; so it was after the golden tilefish commercial ACL had already been caught. The endorsement program in effect did not actually come on line until 2014.

This is really just the second year of the endorsement program. I tend to agree, after talking with some of the fishermen, there are other things that we could to ensure that the longline sector quota is available for a longer period of time. I think the fishermen have offered up some creative solutions that we simply have not taken advantage of. Personally I wouldn't mind seeing us explore an action like that if we're going to look at also changing the start date of the

golden tilefish hook-and-line fishing year. I just want to remind everybody that this endorsement has really only been operational for two years. Jessica.

MS. McCRAWLEY: I agree with that. I'm also going to say again I personally don't have an issue with the people that are fishing with the endorsement fishing on the hook-and-line quota. I don't have an issue with it. I agree that was not our original intent, but I also don't have issue with it. I also agree and like the idea of considering these other alternatives, some of which the fishermen offered up.

I'm wondering if we should go back and add those into the amendment that we already covered this morning in the Snapper Grouper Committee Report where we are talking about making modifications to I believe the hook-and-line fishing year. I'm wondering if we should add some other alternatives into that particular amendment where we're starting more actions on golden tilefish.

DR. DUVAL: I think we'll get into timing and amendments in Executive Finance as well. I don't have a problem with that. As I've been thinking about this, it seems to me that it might almost be more efficient, rather than loading up Amendment 37 with one more action, would be to take that golden tilefish action that we already have in there to move the start date of the hook-and-line sector and place it into a regulatory amendment along with perhaps another action that would consider alternatives for expanding the time frame of the longline fishery.

MS. McCRAWLEY: Yes; I actually like that idea better than going back and adding back to the amendment. I like the idea of pulling that out. I know we have a motion on the table; and I don't know when you want to talk about that. After we dispense with this motion, maybe we can talk about that a little bit more.

MR. CONKLIN: I just want to express my opinion on the hook and line versus the longline. I think if a guy goes to the trouble to take his spool off and abide by the rules and steps down and change his gear type, I don't have an issue with him fishing on a 500-pound trip limit with a bandit if they do hold an endorsement.

We heard about some guys that have tried to do the right thing, sort of, and get another permit and trying to change it over on the same boat. They're just hitting wall after wall. It's kind of like there is a whole different breed of fishermen and it is something that is in their portfolio. They did earn their endorsement, but I can support them being able to fish with the bandits.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion on this motion? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: And to that point, if somebody buys a separate – and I heard it, too. A fisherman had bought another snapper grouper permit and he wanted to fish his longline boat. I mean, if you're going to spend enough money for another permit, you should be able to fish it hook and line somehow.

I can't crunch the numbers in my head where that actually works, but obviously they think it does. That is some of the things that we could talk about and address in another amendment of

how to help them, but I'm opposed to giving a small group of fishermen 75 percent and then letting them catch more of the 25 percent. I will stop there.

MS. McCAWLEY: I agree with the two comments that were just said, but the way that the alternatives are listed in that action it wouldn't even allow that. It wouldn't allow this person because it has got it tied to the vessel; so even if they transferred it off – so, even trying to allow that, the alternatives are not worded that way to do that. I think that alternatives would need to be modified to even allow that to happen.

DR. DUVAL: Right; that is correct; what we heard – it is the beauty of endorsements, I guess – with landings being tied to your permit, but the way the action is worded it is the endorsement being tied to the vessel; so it doesn't allow for that. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I think, Jessica, we could take that up in that regulatory amendment that we've been talking about. We'll put that in as something we could actually think about as well; but you actually get rid of it if you want to let those people fish under the longline endorsement. To me I think we'll have a vote and see where this goes, but the real question is do we revisit this in this regulatory amendment or not?

Do we revisit that portion that Josh was talking about, which I don't have a problem with addressing that part and how you would configure the boat, the longline vessel as he fishes? You'd have to have some regulations. To me I'd pull the spool off, just talking out loud, but that is something I think we could address. And then like you had mentioned before, their concerns about two weeks and two weeks off, however long we want to extend their season, I think we could do those as well.

MS. McCAWLEY: To that point, I agree with everything you're saying. I'm just concerned about we've got this amendment open right now; and we've got people out there that have already made this investment and bought this other snapper grouper permit. If we move forward with this in Amendment 35, the way it is, and then say we're going to take it up in another amendment, we're looking at 2016 or 2017 before that is fixed. Do you see what I mean?

I'm agreeing with what you're saying in that I think that there are ways that we could modify the wording of this a little bit so people that bought this additional snapper grouper permit could then make modifications to the vessel; and this could all happen sooner rather than later, especially since these people have already made this big investment right now.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; and I understand that. The problem is when we addressed the problem we had with people; it was a very narrow focus to deal with that particular issue. Since that time we have had other issues outside of that issue come up; and so in the process that I envision we look at those in a regulatory amendment. \

Yes; it may take a little longer to do it, but I think we can address what Josh is doing. If someone wants to make that investment, as Charlie has said, that is a substantial investment. I don't think that is going to happen a lot. I don't have a problem with doing that. I just don't

think we should try and fix it here where we were trying to really narrow the focus of what we were trying to fix in that amendment.

DR. DUVAL: And I think, also, I'm not sure this would even be an issue if the longline season was lasting longer. I think if we could find some creative ways to address that, then people wouldn't feel forced to go out and make such a huge capital investment without clearly understanding what the regulatory restrictions are on that.

Okay, we've had some healthy debate about. Is everyone ready to take a vote? **Could I please see a show of hands of those in favor of the motion, which is to bring back Alternative 4 into the document for consideration under Action 2; I count four in favor. Those opposed; six opposed. The motion fails.** That said, I think we've had a lot of discussion about it and this idea of looking at the possibility of people making an investment such as this and the way things are tied to the vessel with what we've tried to do here.

MS. McCAWLEY: Are you looking for a motion now when we're talking about snapper grouper and when we're still having this discussion to start another amendment, pull out that action that we already spoke about earlier that was under, I believe it is 37; are you looking for a motion for that right now or what?

DR. DUVAL: Yes; we might as well go ahead and do that now. I think it follows the discussion and we could just get a motion to pull the action from Amendment 37 relating to modification to the golden tilefish hook-and-line fishing year and place that into another regulatory amendment along with another action to address measures to lengthen the golden tilefish longline sector season.

MS. McCAWLEY: I would like to make that motion.

DR. DUVAL: Seconded by Charlie. Myra, I think we would also want to add some language to in addition add an action to explore alternatives to lengthen the golden tilefish longline sector season. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: Would we also want to add to this the ability to allow these people who have purchased two snapper grouper permits to fish both quotas?

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, there is going to be several issues in there. One; do we want to keep this stuff tied to the vessel or to the permit? Do we want to figure out a way for people that bought endorsements to actually be able to use the history, which they didn't get? There are several issues and I'm not sure how to wordsmith, but there are several issues to deal with, if we're going to deal with it.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes; I agree. The other thing that I was going to talk about, not in this motion, was that I thought that there should be some direction to staff to come back with information about why we chose to tie the landings to the snapper grouper permit and not to go with the endorsement. That is another thing that I wanted to hear more about. We heard that two different nights this week. I certainly can't remember why we did it; and we talked about

maybe getting some more information on that. That's another thing that I'd like to see. I don't necessarily know that it needs to be in the motion itself, though.

MR. COX: Jessica, when I look at this, just to give you an idea, so a corporate snapper grouper permit sales; they're selling on the market for about \$50,000. If you buy two permits to make one, they're going to be a little bit cheaper, maybe about \$20,000 apiece; so at the low end it would be about \$40,000.

I question why would somebody spend 40 or \$50,000 to access a fishery where they could have a 500-pound trip limit on an ex-vessel price of a fish that is \$3.35 a pound? To me it just doesn't make sense, the numbers. If I look at it from my business standpoint, why would I do that? I certainly support a different start date than what the endorsement guys are because it increases the value to the hook-and-line guys when they're fishing a different start date than the endorsement longline tile fishermen. Would you agree with that, Charlie?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes; and I'm pretty decent at math sometimes, but he has already got a snapper grouper that can do everything but catch that 500 pounds; so you're going to spend 40 grand so you can catch 500 pounds of golden tile when your other boat already can do this? The math doesn't add up unless he really got a really good deal on a permit or something. Yes; we can flesh all this stuff out with staff and see where we need to go and where we don't.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I hesitate to try to add too much to a draft motion. I think the direction to staff to kind of bring back some of that historical discussion that we had when we were setting up the sea bass endorsement as to tying the landings to the permit versus the endorsement and why that? I would like to ask Gregg to comment.

MR. WAUGH: Yes; I was just going to ask if you could give a little bit of flexibility such that when we get back -- I had some preliminary discussions with Jack and Myra. If we pull this out and have a whole separate regulatory amendment; that requires a separate IPT and more work on that document versus leaving it in the amendment. If you have a specific reason you want it done as a stand-alone regulatory amendment, that is fine. If not, if you could just give us the latitude to get back to you on that as to which vehicle we would use.

DR. DUVAL: I'm certainly happy to give staff that latitude and I think we can modify the motion to reflect that. I think it was just the thinking that if we loaded Amendment 37 up with too much stuff, it would actually just make it more difficult for you guys. We certainly aren't trying to add more work although this is more work; but I think to make sure there is an efficient process for both amendments; so, absolutely, I think latitude to allow staff to decide what the most efficient vehicle is to deal with both of these issues. Jessica.

MS. McCRAWLEY: Would like me to read the motion? I think Myra just modified it. **Okay, the motion is to move action addressing the golden tilefish hook-and-line fishing year start date from amendment 37 into a separate regulatory amendment, if appropriate. In addition, add an action to explore alternatives to lengthen the commercial golden tilefish longline season.**

MR. HAYMANS: Madam Chair, I'm sorry, I got confused somewhere and I just want to make sure I know what we're doing so I can vote correctly. We had added the golden tilefish fishing year to 37; so we're going to move that. The considered but rejected alternative that you wanted to pull back would have been pulled back into 35 and that got voted down. Are we leaving the clarification of regulations for golden tilefish in 35 or are we pulling that out of 35? What is the deal here?

DR. DUVAL: No, we're leaving the clarification of golden tilefish regulations in 35. We're actually scheduled to approve that for formal review at our June meeting. We've already been out to public hearing for that. I guess it would be my recommendation that we move forward and finish that process.

MR. HAYMANS: So if our preferred goes through, we're not going to allow the longline guys to hook-and-line fish; but what we do in 37 may wind up lengthening the longline fishery; and they still won't be able to hook-and-line fish, but they can continue to fish a longer season.

DR. DUVAL: That's correct. The second was by Charlie. Okay, other discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** We do have direction to staff below to look for the rationale behind the catch history being tied to the snapper grouper permit instead of the endorsement and to bring that back to the council in June.

Okay, are we ready to move on? The next item on our agenda was blue-line tilefish. **We have a motion, and that was to direct that the SSC determine at its April 2015 meeting the geographic range covered by the SEDAR 32 assessment. If warranted, request emergency action to extend regulations proposed in Amendment 32, once the amendment is approved, to the areas that the SSC considers are represented by the stock assessment. On behalf of the committee I so move.**

Does this require a roll call vote, because included in here is a request for emergency action? I will turn things over to Bob. While Bob is getting ready, I will just note that there was direction to staff to extend an invitation to the Mid-Atlantic Council SSC Chair to invite Mid-Atlantic Council SSC members as appropriate.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Abstain.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Cox.

MR. COX: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: No.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. McCawley.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Chairman Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Dr. Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: The motion passes with one opposition and one abstention.

DR. DUVAL: Now we come to the timing and task motion. I would entertain a motion to approve the task and timing items as noted:

Initiate development of Amendment 37 for review at the June Council meeting.

Suspend development of Amendment 22 until further notice.

Request a presentation from MRIP staff for the June 2015 Council meeting focusing on approaches to track harvest of rarely encountered species.

Conduct a workshop in conjunction with the Snapper Grouper AP on April 13, 2015, to obtain input on Amendment 36 (spawning SMZs).

Direct the SSC, at their April 2015 meeting, to discuss stock structure of blueline tilefish and determine the geographic extent to which the SEDAR 32 stock assessment applies.

If warranted, request that NMFS take emergency action to extend the Amendment 32 regulations that pertain to blueline tilefish to the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Extend an invitation to the Mid-Atlantic Council's SSC Chair to invite Mid-Atlantic SSC members, as appropriate, to participate in the April 2015 South Atlantic SSC meeting.

Look for rationale behind catch history being tied to the snapper grouper permit instead of the endorsement. Bring this information to the council in June 2015.

MR. HARTIG: So moved.

DR. DUVAL: Seconded by Mel. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? We have concluded our business, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HARTIG: That takes us to the King Mackerel Committee. The Mackerel Committee met yesterday morning. Under Amendment 26, King Mackerel ACLs and stock boundaries, the council staff reviewed the decision document for 26 and the committee approved language for actions and alternatives to include in the amendment.

The committee approved the following motions. **Motion Number 1, under Action 1 add Alternatives 1 through 3 into the document; 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 we had under that amendment was to add Action 2 in Coastal Migratory Pelagic Amendment 26 and add language for MSY, MSST, MFMT and OFL. On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

The next motion under Action 2-1 was to approve Alternatives 1 and 2 for inclusion in the document. 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 direct the SSC to look into the specifics of a rumble strip or trigger mechanism where appropriate. 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 range of alternatives for Action 2-2; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

The next motion to include Action 3 and the alternatives in the document; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? The motion passes with two objections.

The next motion was add an action to retain the Florida East Coast Sub-Zone; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

There was direction to the IPT at the June 2015 meeting to provide options for the Florida East Coast sub-quota catch levels in that zone and AP input on the boundaries. **The next motion was to allow staff and the IPT to reorganize the document and actions as necessary. On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.**

On Amendment 28, separate FMPs and permits, the motion was to discontinue work on Amendment 28. On behalf of the committee I so move. Discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. That brings us down to the timing and task motion. I would just need a motion from someone on the council to make the draft timing and task motion. Jack.

MR. COX: Motion to adopt the timing and task items as presented: Prepare Draft Amendment 26 for review in June 2015; prepare a summary document of pros and cons for each CMP species if there were separate FMPs for the June 2015 meeting; SSC review of rumble strip or trigger mechanism for stocks, where appropriate.

MR. HARTIG: Second by Anna. Discussion? Objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. Is there any other business to come before the Mackerel Committee? Seeing none; we're moving on. Let's do SEDAR. The committee received reports on SEDAR projects, the headboat data evaluation and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center Assessment Program Review.

The first motion was move to appoint Mark Brown as council observer to SEDAR 41. On behalf of the committee I so move. Discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

The next motion was to appoint Chris Conklin to replace Jack Cox as SEDAR 41 council appointee. On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

Under timing and tasks, we need a motion to approve that as stated: Add to the annual research plan stock ID studies prior to benchmark assessments and a section devoted to cooperative research priorities; schedule discussion of cooperative research priorities at the next meeting. Motion by Doug; second by Michelle. Any discussion? Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved. That concludes my report. All right, SSC selection.

DR. DUVAL: The SSC Selection Committee discussed the revised SSC Policies and Appointment Process. We had several motions. **The first motion was to adopt the changes to the SSC Policy as presented; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

The next motion was to change under termination of membership “will” to “may” in the first sentence; 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 a new number four under terms of members to state “that non-SSC members of the SEP will serve five-year terms”; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

Now I just need a motion to approve the timing and task as directed: Advertise for SSC and SEP positions and to require submission of applications and NOAA COI forms by April 8, 2015; update the SSC SOOP appendix and job description as approved here. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I’ll make that motion, Madam Chairman.

DR. DUVAL: A motion by Ben to approve timing and task; seconded by Jessica. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

MR. HARTIG: That takes us to visioning.

DR. DUVAL: We’re going to the Visioning Workshop. There are never any motions from this, but we had several items that we discussed. We reviewed and discussed the gap analysis where staff went through and did a point by point on input from the port meetings versus where that is in the Draft Vision Blueprint.

We then reviewed and discussed the strategic draft goals of science and governance. We made a number of suggestions about potential reorganization or efficiencies on how those documents are laid out and suggestions for actions to be added under Governance Objective 3. We reviewed and discussed revisions to the strategic goals for management and communication, which we had gone through at our December meeting and received some guidance on the revised versions of the two documents and had a discussion under Objective 1 addressing stakeholder support for different quota-based management options.

We also added a variety of associated actions to address recreational fishing opportunities and fishing trip satisfaction; and we will see those when we meet again in June and review them. Staff provided a review of snapper grouper summary statistics regarding potential average landings by vessel, value of prices per pound. This was updated from tables in Snapper Grouper Amendment 13C and were extended out to 2013.

We had some discussion and provided staff direction for additional analyses such as summary statistics for the for-hire sector, if that was helpful; average trip costs for permit holders; and looking at potentially expanding those summary statistics by vessel size and states, as well as if we could forensically determine looking at the difference between corporate versus individual snapper grouper permits as well as like a portfolio analysis.

We reviewed the planning for next steps, particularly strategies for collecting public input. Everyone was in agreement that a sort of three-pronged approach of separate webinars for each strategic goal as long as listening stations where staff would be at the headquarter's office in Charleston and council members would work with members of the community to find stations that allow constituents to provide input but without the expense of having staff there in person; and finally in-person meetings that could be associated with our pre-scheduled public hearings.

The next step is to develop draft public input documents for review in June of 2015; so we will provide approval on taking the complete Draft Vision Blueprint Documents out to the public. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

MR. HARTIG: That brings us to Joint Habitat and Environmental Protection Committee and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee Report.

MR. HAYMANS: The committees met on March 2, 2015, and received a status report on Coral Amendment 8; a briefing on the redrafted EFH Policy Statement on Beach Dredge and Fill and Beach Renourishment and Large-Scale Coastal Engineering and participated in the South Atlantic Ecosystem Session on the move to Ecosystem-Based Management.

There was one motion and that was to approve the Council EFH Policy Statement (Beach Dredge and Fill, Beach Renourishment and Large-Scale Coastal Engineering. On behalf of the committee I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

There were a couple of timing and tasks and if there is a motion to accept those timing and tasks: Staff finalize EFH Policy Statement, distribute to council members, Habitat Advisory Panel and regional partners and post to the Habitat Section of the website by April 1, 2015. Staff post all presentations to the Habitat Section of the website by April 2, 2015. Jessica, thank you; second from Charlie. Any discussion? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I just had a question. We had some awesome presentations that obviously are feeding into the work of the FEP and the timeline. Roger, I know that you added some additional briefs looking at climate and food web dynamics. I wasn't sure if in June it might be possible or do you have a final list of the workgroups for those two additional topics or do you think that will be finalized by June and I think any other developments like – I know we talked about policy statements for those couple of groups, and I was just curious if that might be something we'd be able to review in June.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; I think that was the plan is to have kind of updated the whole process of where we're going, because it has been kind of a strategic move forward. There would be a little

delay in between the issues, but getting kind of the core habitat, the species, moving forward. The food web and connectivity has actually been initiated. Climate is shortly coming.

Yes, the intent is to have an update on the progress on all of those different ones moving forward in drafting and collaborating as well as where we may begin to look at policy. Some of those things may be also facilitated by discussion at the upcoming Habitat Advisory Panel to give some guidance to the process for that. Yes, that is the intent is to kind of have a bigger picture of where we're going on those as well as related things such as the modeling efforts and different things, too.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I would definitely be excited to hear about the results from the Modeling Workshop as well.

MR. HAYMANS: Any additional discussion or questions? **Seeing none; is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion on the timing and task is approved.** Mr. Chairman, I believe the exact phrasing is that is the end of my report.

MR. HARTIG: Protected Resources Committee Report; Dr. Wilson Laney.

DR. LANEY: We didn't have any motions or required actions. The committee met on March 3rd. We had an update from the Southeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division by Jennifer Lee. We had comments on advanced notice of rulemaking and request for information on corals and an update by staff.

We had a discussion of the Endangered Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Act Integration Agreement. We took a look at that and staff is going to work with the Southeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division staff to develop a draft document for our review at a subsequent meeting. We discussed proposed modifications to the North Atlantic Large Whale Critical Habitat.

We had a presentation by Barb Zoodsma from the Protected Resources Division. We had a discussion of the Marine Mammal Authorization Program. Monica provided a response to a question that came up during the Habitat Committee discussions about how the National Marine Fisheries Service issues incidental harassment permits to federal agencies but not to individual commercial fishermen or commercial fishing operations.

Those fall under the Marine Mammal Authorization Program under which the black sea bass pot fishery is listed as a Category 2 fishery; and marine mammal takes are managed through the MMAP. Lastly, I updated the committee on the status of the American Eel Status Review, and hopefully something will be coming out in the Federal Register well before the September 30, 2015, required deadline. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

MR. HARTIG: All right, Executive Finance. The first thing that Bob discussed at the committee level was the status of the Calendar Year 2015 budget and budget expenditures. The next item of business under that committee was the council follow-up and priorities. Gregg took us through the list of priorities, noting some changes. **The first motion we had was to approve**

the revised priority list; and on behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion?
Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Gregg, the priority list, this is all of our amendments that we have sort of on tap for this year and for 2016 and down the road. This is a little bit of cart before the horse, but we're going to be getting to the Spiny Lobster Committee; and I know we had a discussion and passed a motion there to initiate a regulatory amendment that would modify the recreational bag limit. When we get to that committee, I'm actually going to suggest, based on the conversations I've had with Bill Mansfield, who is on the Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel, and his concerns about the motion that was passed there, to actually remove that from consideration, so that might assist you with your priorities. I know it is a little bit out of order, but I just wanted to make note of it here while we are talking about priorities.

MR. WAUGH: That's good; that will help. What we've done is Amendment 38 is sort of on hold pending the June council meeting. We've dropped Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 28 and Snapper Grouper Amendment 22. Amendment 37, we've got the list shown at the bottom of that.

This morning what you talked about was a separate snapper grouper regulatory amendment, which we'll look at whether that is done or a separate amendment in 37. If we do a snapper grouper regulatory amendment; that would deal with all the golden tile actions. It would take Action 3 that is listed under 37 and combine it with the other action you talked about this morning.

MR. HARTIG: That review is always helpful. Anymore discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.** The next item we talked about was the South Florida Workgroup. **Under the South Florida Workgroup, there was motion to approve the actions and alternatives in the Joint South Florida Amendment with the following changes:**

Action 1. Ensure note about implementation plan is included; provide clarification about minor modifications.

Action 3. Ensure note about implementation plan is included; provide clarification about minor modifications, and why delegating bag/trip limits (for future) and specifying bag/trip limits in this amendment.

Action 5. Provide clarification about duplication of bag limit actions and insert "within the aggregate snapper bag limit" at the start of Option 3c.

Action 6. Provide clarification about duplication of trip limit actions. Copy Options 3a & 3b under Alternative 5.

Action 7. Ensure note about implementation plan is included; provide clarification about minor modifications and duplication.

Action 9. Remove old staff note and change wording of Alternatives 3, 4, & 5 back to what the joint committees approved because this tracks what is in the SAFMC's Generic AM Amendment; also, change the options and sub-options under Alternative 5 back to what the joint committees approved because this will be clearer to the councils and the public.

Action 11. Change the options under alternative 3 back to what the joint committees approved because this will be clearer to the public. Clarify about duplication. Add discussion that could

include commercial changes and add a new alternative that would examine the same time period for closures for the commercial sector as is shown under Alternative 3.

Action 12 (circle hooks). Keep alternative 5 in the document.

Action 13 (harmonize the size and bag limits off Monroe County, Florida). Keep Alternatives 2 and 3 in the document and change the wording of the action back to what the joint committees approved.

On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved. We also discussed the CCC meeting. The staff health insurance; Bob will bring that back to us in June.

Under other business we had a motion to come to us to combine the Ecosystem-Based Management Committee with the Habitat and Environmental Protection Committee into one Ecosystem Habitat Protection Committee. On behalf of the committee I so move.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, if I may offer substitute motion, it was mentioned this morning that perhaps it should be the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee – just reverse the names.

MR. HARTIG: Is that a substitute motion?

MR. HAYMANS: Yes, sir.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, we have substitute motion by Doug which is seconded by Michelle. Any discussion on the substitute motion? **Is there objection to the substitute motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved. That becomes the main motion. Is there any discussion on the main motion? Is there any objection to the main motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved.**

Under other business we talked the proposed establishment of a workgroup to look into the possibility of creating a Citizen Science and Cooperative Research Advisory Panel. I think the first step is to create a workgroup or a workshop – I'm not sure which one. We will have to settle that as we go.

We have an organizing group currently that we're going to use to try and do this workshop. The workshop is an attempt to look at the process and product for using citizen science in the council; actually the way we do business. That is essentially what we need. We need a workgroup to discuss process and product for citizen science in the council; and I don't know how to word that last one, "within the South Atlantic Council" or –

MR. MAHOOD: Now, is the first group going to be all council members or are you going to pull some people from outside the council membership?

MR. HARTIG: The organization group – and I know termination matters here, Bob, and I know we need to get this right. The first attempt is we'll bring in a group of people, have it open to the

public, but it will be a fixed group of people. We will be having fishermen, academics, the science center, council members as part of this.

I think the intent is to have a core group of people that we have on this workgroup and then go ahead and have that discussion with the public invited about how to use citizen science in the future in the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's area of jurisdiction.

MR. MAHOOD: So the workgroup will develop the parameters of a workshop?

MR. HARTIG: Actually the organizational workgroup will look at the parameters that we do in the workshop. It is two things. We have an organizational committee – well, I don't know if you want to call it that – we have an organizational group that is going to give us the parameters that we're going to be discussing at the workshop.

There is going to be a workgroup done beforehand to focus the discussion at the workshop on citizen science and cooperative research, for that matter. Maybe John can put it more eloquently than I can. Go ahead, Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Mr. Chairman, did you want to add cooperative research in there, too? You mentioned that verbally, but I didn't know whether you wanted to put that in the motion as well.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, I think we can get ideas for what people would like to see the topics to be at the workshop. The way we normally do these; we convene a committee that comes up with the terms of reference and such for the workshop. As this progresses, it would come back for you guys to see much as we've done with a lot of these SEDAR Workshops and MRIP Workshops where the council and SSC get to see the terms of reference as they come together so you have an opportunity to make sure subject areas are included. I think that would be the kind of detail we would rather get at that level than here in a motion, certainly.

MR. BROWN: Ben, we talked about it a little bit last night, and I expressed my interest in participating in this; but also I wanted to ask if it is at all possible to try to have these workshops sometime outside of the seasonal time frame where we can participate more actively, like either the early spring, latter fall or during the winter months. I know the schedule is tight sometime; but if you can schedule those types of workshops in the time frame, that would be better.

MR. HARTIG: I'll just ask Bonnie to look at this motion and see if this incorporates what we were thinking and any suggestions for wordsmithing or anything. I am getting a nod. **I will read the motion: to convene a workshop to develop a South Atlantic Council Citizen Science Program and appoint an organizing committee for the workshop. We have got that motion. Is there any more discussion? Motion by Michelle; second by Mark.**

In discussion, we have some names for an organizational committee that we had discussed this morning at breakfast. Mark Brown, you have asked me and you wanted to go to that conference. We included Mark, Leda Dunmire, John Carmichael, Michelle Duval, myself and Bonnie Ponwith and Amber. Those people will be the organizational committee for the workshop. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Sorry if I missed this; but do you have any rough idea on when you want this workshop to happen?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think Mark gave us the best advice we could get on that, which was to do it outside of the season. Given it is March now, that probably means fall to winter.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Okay; and so do you know when this organizing committee would meet?

MR. CARMICHAEL: They would probably start meeting ASAP to put something together in that time frame.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; the timing we haven't nailed down yet; but what we want to do is start this as soon as possible and get all of this tied together as quickly as we can.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I haven't thought about this at all except just right now; and I want to make sure that we comply with – if there are any FACA considerations or anything; so if you keep me in the loop on this, I can let you know if there is any concerns and we might have to do to alleviate those kinds of concerns.

MR. HARTIG: Michelle was wondering how this would be different from the Visioning Workgroup that we had. That is the best thing we can do is to keep with you and make sure that we're legally proceeding down the correct path and that we have dotted our eyes and tees as far as the legal part. We will do that.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes; I think this is a great idea. I just want to make sure we dot our eyes – is that it – dot our eyes and cross our tees, whatever, yes.

MR. BROWN: Is there any way that we'd have time or be able to work it into the September meeting?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Certainly a progress report of what is going on; but whether or not we could – you mean like a workshop coincidental with that? I expect the workshop will take the better part of a week, potentially, so I don't know that it would really line up well. We won't have time within a council meeting to do this concurrently, most likely.

MR. BROWN: How about some time in August, maybe after SEDAR 41 or something?

MR. HARTIG: Basically, we'll take your suggestions under advisement. You're on the organizational committee.

MR. BROWN: That is why I'm making the suggestions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HARTIG: Well, we can do those on the first call and straighten those out. Is there any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; this motion is approved.** I believe that concludes my committee report.

All right, Golden Crab Committee Report. We met on the 5th and the committee made the following motion. **The motion is to begin identifying data and habitat characterization to determine when a new Golden Crab Amendment should begin that will consider revisions to the Northern Golden Crab Allowable Fishing Zone to be discussed again by the council in June. On behalf of the committee I so move.** Is there any discussion of that motion?
Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I would like to offer a substitute motion. **The substitute motion would read begin identifying data and habitat characterization for evaluating a potential extension of the Northern Zone for Golden Crab to be discussed again by the council in June.**

MR. HARTIG: Second by Doug. Discussion? Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: My concerns are a couple of concerns. One of the concerns that I had was that the previous motion that is listed above that basically says that we're already going to start another amendment. It definitely says we're moving forward. I agree with the characterization and looking into this and doing all that.

I just didn't agree with the fact that we were going to automatically start this new Golden Crab Amendment. The reason for that is because, like I said yesterday, I felt like if we were going to initiate looking into this; that we should also look into the rock shrimp for the area that they had talked about.

We in no way, shape or form definitely agreed to start an amendment on that process. I just was trying to modify this and get a motion up there that says, hey, we're going to look into this, we're going to reconsider this in June, but we're not going to say one way or the other whether or not we're going to start a new amendment.

MR. HARTIG: And I appreciate that. I think it ties our hands to some degree and it states what we need to do in a better fashion. I'm going to support it, for sure. Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I'll support it. It sounds like Jessica's goal here is sort of parity between what was offered to the rock shrimp guys versus what is being offered to the golden crab industry.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes; I'm good with this; and then when we get around to looking at the rock shrimp guys, maybe we can do basically the same thing as needed.

MS. McCAWLEY: Also, I wasn't sure – I know we're still talking about this motion that is on the board; but I was prepared to offer a somewhat similar motion to do the same thing for rock shrimp just so it is clear that we are doing the same thing for both of those fisheries and we are not guaranteeing to start a new amendment for either one of these. We're just guaranteeing to look into it. I just wanted to voice my intent.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; and with what Gregg explained about what we will be presented in June, we have a lot of data coming before us on that rock shrimp item in particular; so we will be addressing that in June. We will be seeing all the data that we have to date on that particular issue.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes; to follow up on that, I just wanted to make sure that it was data that was about the specific area that the fishermen had come to us about that they were wanting opened. I just wanted to make sure that it was specific to their request.

MR. HARTIG: Roger can add the qualifiers to it. I'm sure that is exactly what we have. We will have some economic information that Mike has provided.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; and we're specifically updating all the VMS information to look at that northern extension area and that boundary edge. That is exactly what we're looking at. The other types of discussions come through the deliberations that occurred within the Oculina Evaluation. That was a totally different issue.

MS. McCAWLEY: I thought that part of what we discussed was looking at economic information and information like that. Is that also what we're looking at in June as part of this discussion because I thought we said we were going to get the information from the fishermen and look at the tracks and look at the historic landings? Are we also looking at all of that also?

MR. PUGLIESE: This is specific to the rock shrimp? On the VMS side we're looking at the updated information through 2014 was the directive on that. Also, the request was any of the economic information – now we had specifically requested information on individual tracks' associated catch. I'm not sure exactly what we have, but the intent of the motion was whatever we get provided from Mike or others; that we will have that in that discussion. It is kind of linking back to what we get provided will be what we can provide the council.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; and I think after Jessica's discussion and inquiry, we certainly need to get in touch with Mike sooner than later about any economic information they may have on this fishery. It was my thoughts, in talking with them, that they had some of this information.

If you follow up and make sure; this is their opportunity to provide that. We need to make sure that connection is made sooner than later to make sure that we can – if it is available. That is not an insignificant problem, because Mike has talked about different problems identifying tracks with specific vessels and trying to figure out economics of each track. Those things are not easy to do; but whatever economic information we have pertaining to that particular area would be helpful when the council looks at this. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, pulling back to the species of concern here, identifying data; the way I read both of those motions it really deals with what is in the potential northern zone. However, from the public comment that I heard last night specifically, we're doubling our effort to catch the same amount of crab.

That really sets off alarm bells. I heard Nuno last night talk about the fact that they were doubling their effort; and that really concerns me; i.e., overfishing of that northern zone as it exists now. I would love it if part of that data that is provided is some CPUE information, as much as we can get, on the zones as they exist now.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Doug, I don't understand what you mean by getting the same amount of crabs. They're only getting half of the ACL; so they want to go after more of the ACL. It is more effort, but the ACL is also larger. They have only been –

MR. HAYMANS: What I recorded Nuno as having said is they're putting out twice as much effort to catch the same amount of crab that they were catching. That is what I heard him say.

DR. LANEY: Yes; to tag on to what Doug just said; he also made the statement, Brian, about the fact that they were trying to give that area a rest, which also suggests that the CPUE has declined and that the crabs may or may not be reproducing as fast as we thought they might or as fast as the fishermen thought they might.

Like Doug said, that raises a little bit of a cautionary flag here relatively to production of the stock if they're already having to shift their gear to other places to try and give it a rest. The fishermen are going to know that better than anybody else. It raises a little concern and something we just need to look into, I think, as Doug has requested.

MR. HARTIG: So do you want to add another motion to look at the CPUEs of the golden crab fishery in the northern zone or throughout the area or –

MR. HAYMANS: My intent in that discussion was simply to broaden the identifying data and not for it just to be for the northern extension, but what is actually in the current zones.

MS. McCAWLEY: I'll accept a friendly amendment if you want to modify the motion. I think you were the seconder.

MR. HAYMANS: It is fine the way it is. I was just wanting to expound upon it.

MR. PHILLIPS: I can easily see where if you keep dropping the pots in the exact same place week after week after week, theoretically whether you're pot fishing, hook-and-line fishing or whatever, you're going to have to wait for crabs to migrate back to the edges. I don't see it being a stock issue. I think it is more of a how long does it take stuff to migrate in. I'm not really worried about a stock issue. We've closed so much area that is not ever going to be fishable. I don't think we're going to have a stock issue.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; and that is a good point. You really have to know how the fishery operates. Yes; you may let a region rest, but that may be part of the operational and how it works. You have to wait for crabs to migrate out of the habitat into the area where you fish; and that is how they do it. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Yes; it brings me back to a comment that I think I made a year or so ago and we had some discussion with Bonnie about it; but we really need a stock assessment for golden crabs. We have no idea at all what sort of population there is in all these areas that are closed to golden crab fishing.

I think it would be very useful to have that information; and how we get it, I don't know. Bonnie had indicated that there were a lot of folks at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center I think that have expertise in doing crustacean stock assessment; so perhaps some sort of conversation with them would be beneficial. Then maybe we could find an academic or some other entity here in the southeast that would be willing to tackle that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, Wilson, am I hearing that you would like to have an experimental research fishery in the closed area to see where the crabs are at?

DR. LANEY: I don't think that is what I said, Charlie. There are other ways to get the information on the presence of golden crabs aside from an experimental fishing permit. We have a lot of these ROVs and other types of devices now that zoom over the bottom and take photographs that they're using I know in the scallop areas in the northeast. There are alternative approaches to getting some idea of what is in the closed areas.

MS. McCAWLEY: So just to be clear based on this discussion, it sounds like what we're asking for when we say data; that we mean data about not just this northern zone but the area that they want to expand to and maybe just the fishery in general in all the zones, the CPUEs. I wanted to clarify we're talking about all the zones, the northern zone and the proposed area that they would like to expand to?

MR. PUGLIESE: And very specifically to that as we began having the discussion with industry, one of the first requests I had made was the opportunity to do similar to what we did before to understand how the fishery operates is have the vessel tracks provided not for distribution but for us to understand the footprint of the fishery as it operates now both in the northern zone and throughout the other areas. We have not seen that.

We have put the maps on the table; so hopefully in the spirit of cooperation we can work together to be able to understand that. I mean that area that is in the middle and south; there is a lot of area, that is not under closure areas, that is open, that we really don't know that. There are other values to understand the fishery operation and footprint in those areas for all the other actions that are happening that are going to affect their fishery.

MR. HARTIG: And in talking to Howard yesterday, he said he was willing to put a VMS on his vessel to just start down that path to identify how the fishery operates at least for his vessel.

MR. PUGLIESE: Exactly; and I had the same discussion and I think we have some real opportunities for the citizen science that we're talking about right now about characterizing that for something other than enforcement and being able to use some of the technology.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; and I'm glad you mentioned the habitat characterization because that was one. Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: And to get some of this data we may need some help from the science center to help get some things like CPUE for this fishery. That would mean we probably have to put a request in and that gives us basically three months to get all this stuff back and ready to present to the council in June.

I guess I'd like to make sure that Bonnie is aware of that and that we're not going to have any problems being able to get maybe some of that information in a manner that we can use it and do some analysis with it so that we can bring it back to you in June.

DR. PONWITH: What really has been a successful approach to that is rather than crafting the formal letter with a request is to have informal discussions with the analysts before the final ask is formalized. That will be really helpful. It gives them a heads-up what to be looking for; and it helps kind of craft that in a way that is executable.

MR. HARTIG: All right, I guess follow-ups will be occurring. We have a motion and we have a substitute motion. Is there any other discussion on the substitute motion? **Is there any objection to the substitute motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved. That becomes the main motion. Is there any discussion on the main motion? Is there any objection to the main motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved.** That was a lot of discussion for one motion or committee report. That concludes my report. That brings us to Mel Bell, Data Collection Committee.

MR. BELL: The Data Collection Committee met March 5th. The agenda was adopted and minutes from the previous meeting were approved. We had five items that we dealt with. In the interest of time and the fact that we need to do a little work, I won't go into all of those. Let me just say that we have progress occurring in a number of areas, which is really good, related to bycatch methodologies, which was the first item we talked about.

Electronic Technology Implementation Plan from the National Marine Fisheries Service; that is out now. That ties to the other things that we're involved in. Of course, two efforts we were briefed on was the status of the Implementation Plan for Commercial Logbook Electronic Reporting and another one dealing with Electronic Reporting for Commercial Fishery, the pilot project that Bonnie briefed us on.

We're making a lot of progress and moving forward in areas related to improving data. What I would like to spend some time on is the discussion of the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf Councils Generic Charterboat Reporting Amendment. Out of that discussion of our decision document yesterday came several motions.

The first motion was to approve the purpose and need as modified. On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion of the motion? Objection to the motion? The motion stands.

The second motion was to approve the purpose of Action 1 alternatives shown above for detailed analysis. On behalf of the committee I so move. Any discussion of the motion? Objection to the motion? That motion stands. Yes, Bonnie.

DR. PONWITH: We looked at those alternatives and I think those are good. There is one under Alternative 3. Just to refresh memories; Alternative 3 was daily reporting and daily reporting was defined as by noon the following day. One of the things that have been heavily discussed particularly in the aftermath of the Charter Pilot Study that was led in the Gulf of Mexico was the fact for that one there was a lot of follow-up required to obtain those data.

The sample sizes of dockside intercepts to match the landings observed against the landings reported are quite high. My question is if there is someone in the council that would entertain a motion to split Alternative 3 into a 3A and a 3B. Alternative 3 will be daily reporting and Subalternative 3A would be defined as noon the following day and Subalternative 3B would be prior to arriving at the dock.

Again, what this would allow is instead of matching average to average, we would be able to match actual observation to actual self-reported report, which would give us higher precision for developing the reporting error calibrations it would take to be able to really consider these as real-time data.

MR. BELL: One thing to keep in mind with this is the document, as it stands right now, is our initial take on this; and what we would like to do is have something to move forward with that is broad enough to have a number of options in it. That is into some technical aspects of this of what will and won't work. The document, remember, is built initially on recommendations from the Joint Technical Subcommittee. Would anybody care to make that motion? Doug,

MR. HAYMANS: **I would move that we add Subalternatives 3A and 3B; A being daily reporting by noon and B being prior to arrival at the dock.** I would love to hear what the angling public has to say on that one.

MR. BELL: **Second by Zack. Discussion of the motion? Any objection to the motion? Then that motion stands.** I'm advised that perhaps we'd better take a break because checkout is at 11:00.

Okay, I'm pretty sure this is where we left off. We dealt with the first two motions. **This would be the third motion that the committee dealt with yesterday, which was to approve the range of Action 2 alternatives as modified. On behalf of the committee I so move. Is there any discussion of the motion?**

MS. McCRAWLEY: So this is the motion that Doug just made based on Bonnie's comments; is that what we're talking about right now or have we already approved that?

MR. BELL: No, we already approved that one. We had two motions from yesterday and we dealt with those and then we added some additional language to Action 1, I think it was, and we approved that. This is the last motion from yesterday. Roy.

MR. WILLIAMS: I don't really want to address this motion, but the subject came up yesterday that I might have not answered correctly. When you're through with this motion; I would appreciate it if you'd recognize me to clarify something I said.

MR. BELL: Okay, we can clear the motion first. Any discussion of the motion itself?

MR. BREWER: Since I'm not a member of the committee, I didn't speak yesterday; but now that we're in full council I think I can speak. I assume what Roy wants to speak to is there is a lot of controversy with regard to VMS; and it is primarily in the Gulf. It is primarily because of the expense of the equipment.

The discussion centers around what types of information would be generated by VMS that would be of value to NMFS and is there the potential – well, there certainly is an argument that VMS and a required VMS system for the charterboats would be – charter for-hire sector, I should say – that it would be used as a way to get some of the smaller – or I believe the terminology they use is lightly used permit holders out. It is a raging fight.

Zack said something yesterday that I picked up on when we were discussing or when this was being discussed is that in his perfect world he could take his Smartphone and at the end of the day push one button and have all the required information, including locations where the boat had been, push one button and he is done.

I don't know that the different alternatives that we have here actually would sort of capture – and it does come later on. If you read down, there is some discussion of this; but I don't know that Action 2, as it is currently framed, picks up that possibility. All the discussions that I've been involved in, the recreational sector and the charterboat folks don't object to having better data. They want better data. The question is how to provide that in an economical and easy way such that they're not being burdened more.

I'm not sure how to frame this. Again, I'm not on the committee, but it would seem to me that some thought should be given to developing an app that could be used on a Smartphone or a tablet that would either in real time or at the end of the trip – well, it could be provided in real time or perhaps at the end of the trip you push one button; and the information goes to NMFS and whoever else it might be necessary to go to. Is that sort of capturing what you were talking about Zack?

MR. BOWEN: Yes; that touches it, but we've had a presentation at this council and at the AP meeting about the type of technology that you're describing. If we need to have that presentation again, I don't see where –

MR. BELL: No; and I follow what you're saying, Chester. I think the idea here is what we want to come away with is a document that provides us lots of options, and that is an option. You're right; the presentation for the pilot program up in New Hampshire, I think it was –

MR. BOWEN: Northeast; correct.

MR. BELL: Yes; but we want to make sure the document allows to capture those types of options. I guess the question is whether or not the existing wording does. It seems in Alternative 3 where it says electronic device that kind of deals with location; well, maybe some additional words or something. Bonnie.

DR. PONWITH: The notion of VMS as one of the options for understanding the location of those vessels; the reason that is important is we've already talked a little bit about being able to validate the landings' reporting. That will be self-reported data; and we will dockside validate that. Anything we can do to make those validations more precise is good.

The other part of converting those observations to total landings is understanding effort. If you have an app on a cell phone, the good people who care about the resource and care about their permits and things will carry that app with them and push the button and those data will be sent. There is a risk that there will be people who are less inclined who will say, "Well, I made a trip but I'm not going to report any of it"; and there is no way to validate that effort as sort of a false/negative.

By having VMS or some other thing affixed to the vessel, when that vessel goes out, there is an assumption that vessel went out and did something. It either was out fishing or out doing something else, but it was out. That is a way to validate what the effort is. Of course, you need both; you need effort and CPUE to merge together to get the total landings.

MR. BOWEN: I had two words written down on my notes when we were talking about this, when Chester was speaking, and those two words were "validation" and "effort". Just to Bonnie's point; I agree 100 percent with you.

MR. BROWN: When the charter for-hire vessels leave the port, they leave port from the same location every time and return to the same location. The majority of the people that launch at a boat ramp, they leave their car there and their personal belongings; they're going to come back to the same boat ramp.

A majority of the fleet nowadays, as far as the charter fishing fleet, is smaller vessels. You have a lot of boats now that are high-speed, two- or three-engine boats. They're going and coming, but they are smaller vessels to where they are limited to what area where they can put a device.

I had some comments last night that people were telling me that this would be a great burden on them to have something like that on their vessel. As far as having anything in this document in regards to VMS, I know that the South Atlantic is opposed to this. The majority of people that are in the for-hire business are not in favor of this.

In the Gulf I know that there is a mixture, but I think that the majority is not favor of it. I'd just like to make a point that to include anything in here in regards to VMS, whether it is for the Gulf or for the South Atlantic, I think would be a mistake. That would give so much negativity to the document; I just don't see the necessity to have something like that included in this document. I can understand the electronic logbook. I already participate in that. There are multiple ways that there can be validation done other than VMS.

MR. BELL: Roy, I know you said you'd until after we've dealt with it, but now would be a good for you to make some comments.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes; the context has come up through Chester. When Mark asked me yesterday about whether this VMS was supported in the Gulf, I may have answered it incorrectly. I don't know; I'll have to look at the verbatim minutes before I can be sure. We have no requirement in the Gulf that charterboats have a VMS, but we do require the shrimp boats and the reef fish fishermen to have VMS.

When I left the council; I think my last meeting of the Gulf Council was in the fall of 2006; and then I came back in 2013. When I left, there wasn't anybody that really wanted to carry those VMS. I was amazed at the change in the attitude of the commercial reef fish fishermen. The change in the attitude, in my absence they in general I will say they were supportive of them. They had found them to be useful.

There just wasn't the opposition among them. Now, as far as the charter fishery goes, there is some support among charter fishermen in Destin. I think the Destin Charterboat Association favors them. The Orange Beach Charter Fishermen Association has favored them. I personally was a participant at a meeting with a bunch of charter/headboat fishermen in Clearwater. They were supportive of them.

But you have to examine their support in the context of red snapper. They're not just looking for another expense. What they are looking at is some way to try to lengthen their red snapper season. If there is some way they can do that and gain access, at least those groups, I believe, are willing to do it.

As Bonnie said it is a way to validate. They have tried pilot programs with iSnapper type platforms in the past. They've been partially successful, but there is a continuing problem of some people not reporting. They mean well when they become involved in it; and they mean to get around to it.

People are what we are and we don't do everything we mean to do even though we may go into it with good intentions. If I misrepresented the support among the charter industry for VMS, I apologize. I will say there is a significant portion of the charter fishery in the Gulf that supports them in the context lengthening the red snapper season.

MR. HARTIG: The context of the red snapper fishery is that the AM that is used in red snapper, if you could reduce the uncertainty in your reporting, you could get more of that AM back to the fishermen; is that the context that we're talking about?

MR. WILLIAMS: That's correct; I think they would like to be able to dispose of that 20 percent buffer. We don't have to use a buffer with the Commercial IFQ Fishery. They have none; they never exceed their allocation. If we could get instantaneous reporting from the charter for-hire group in the Gulf, we might be able to eliminate that buffer for them as well.

That buffer will continue as long as the fishery is considered overfished; and that may be for a while yet. That is the context of what support exists in the Gulf. If you counted all of the charterboat permits and inventoried every one of them, I suspect that they would be voted down, but there are at least some that favor them.

MS. McCAWLEY: I was just going to add to that a little bit. Based on our experience with the Gulf Council, it seems that dual permit holders are maybe in support of VMS more so than just a charter fisherman. This is outside of the red snapper context. A charter fisherman that is not a dual permit holder, I would say it has been our experience that those folks are primarily against this. They're not against finding other ways to report but against VMS specifically.

MR. BOWEN: We could sit here another week and argue pros and cons about VMS; and that is not what I want to do. The two- and three-engine boats, as Mark said, if they've got two or three engines, they've got room to put a unit somewhere. That shouldn't even come up. We've sat here all week and the public comment and the fireside chat, and we've heard more data, more data, better data, more data.

Well, we can't in my opinion have better data and more data without it being validated. MRIP showing our efforts; the numbers are so inflated. I'm all for leaving VMS in this document and let's just see where it goes. If people really sat back and thought about it, you can't have better data and more data and better data without validating it and without realizing the true effort. That is going to come with I'm not saying VMS but some kind of GPS tracking system so we can know and the National Marine Fisheries can know what is going on in the real ocean, in the real world.

MR. BELL: Let me say something first. This doesn't need to turn into a referendum on VMS. VMS is in the document because it is a technology that exists and is used in other fisheries. We know some people like it and some people don't, and it depends on who you're talking to. It does have very good application for some fisheries. The only reason VMS is in the document is because it provides the option should either council decide that is the tool they wish to employ, it is in there.

The fact that it is in there in no way obligates either council to go with that. Remember, this hasn't been out to the public yet. I followed, Mark, what you were saying is it is going to create perhaps some negativism about the document, but it is in there for a valid reason. It is an existing electronic technology that is useful in fisheries management. We don't need to argue about whether people like it or don't like it at this point because that is true.

MR. BOWEN: Well, I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, but when I hear people that are at this table say that this council does not want VMS; that is not in my opinion an accurate statement. There may be some people on this council that are not in favor of it; but that is not a thirteen to zero vote.

MR. BELL: Okay, but again let's try not to get down in the weeds because we've got to move along with this. Jack, I had you and then Mark if you have something new to add.

MR. COX: I just wanted to say that I don't support the current logbook program with the grids being 60 by 60 square miles. We've got definitely got to figure out a way to refine that. I don't know what kind of electronic monitoring equipment we want to call it and what kind of technology is out there and what the price of current technology is doing.

Yes; I'm speaking on behalf of commercial; but I'll certainly tell you that it is hard to take a fishing a trip when you might move two or three hundred miles in that fishing trip and put a block on there just to satisfy the report, but it is not refining the information enough I think to help the science center. I will say that.

MR. BROWN: I'll be brief. I just wanted to make it aware that what I was speaking towards is the majority consensus amongst the fishing communities and not so much directed at the council. I'm directed at the fishing communities in the Gulf and the South Atlantic.

MR. BELL: Yes; and I appreciate that and we've heard that, but this will all come out when this document goes to the public for comment. Mike, you've got something you want to add there.

DR. ERRIGO: I just wanted to let everyone know that at the technical subcommittee we talked quite a lot about validation and all the science that goes behind this logbook program. Just to let you guys know; you probably don't have to worry too much about all the very detailed specifics about how the logbook program needs to work in how you craft your amendment.

There is a lot of people that need to come together to help create how this is going to work. The validation program for the data is going to take a lot of work and a lot of people to put it together; and it will be a validation program. That was unanimous. There are lots of different avenues to go. There has already been pilot studies done and this and that and the other thing; so just to maybe help you guys along there.

In terms of effort validation, they even tried some stuff in Florida where they would go out early in the morning and count the boats that were there and then go back and look at the reports and see did those people say that they were on the dock or that they were fishing; or if the boat was gone, did they say they were there to try validate effort as well as catch. We talked about a lot of this kind of stuff; so just remind you. I know when I gave my presentation on what the technical subcommittee talked about, it was very late in the meeting at that time and there may not have been – not everything may not have been completely there.

MR. BELL: We tend to get stuck late in the meeting sometimes. One thing to keep in mind; we do have the report. I would encourage you to read that because that's where these recommendations come from. These folks put a lot of time and effort into working through this in terms of what might work, what is the best thing that could work and how we could do this.

What we want to make sure we do right now is we walk away from here with a document that can go forward for public review and it is broad enough that it allows for the full suite of technologies that we might want to embrace and a full suite of methods in terms of validation and everything else in there. Again, remember, this will be resulting in something that will come back to us in June for some re-tweaking and then that will go to the public. Chester.

MR. BREWER: First a question; under Alternative 4 it says, “Require the use of vessel monitoring systems for charter vessels in the Gulf of Mexico.” There is no reference there to the South Atlantic; and I wonder why that is.

DR. DUVAL: In the discussion yesterday we specifically decided to add that language to clarify that at this time, keeping Zack’s comments in mind, the majority of folks at least that were sitting on the committee did not have a desire to implement VMS or go out to the public with an action that would consider implementing VMS on charterboats in the South Atlantic. That’s why we added that language, thinking that if the Gulf was very interested in; that it would be specific to the Gulf and just allow for the Gulf Council to pursue that as an option and just clarifying that we were not interested in pursuing that here.

MR. BELL: And that was followed up on our recent experiences with VMS and significant – I mean we worked this issue not too long ago really hard and we heard loud and clear. In terms of allowing this whole thing to move forward, we wanted to make it clear that was our council’s particular experience, but it certainly does not preclude the Gulf from doing whatever they might want to do with it.

MR. BREWER: I was asking a question first. As I said earlier, I don’t know that this document right now captures what Zack was talking about at least under this Action 2. There is some discussion later on; but how about maybe an amendment to the language in Alternative 4, which would be “require the use of vessel monitoring system (VMS)” – excuse me, “require the use of an electronic device that records vessel location and transmits that location in real time along with the logbook information”.

MR. BELL: Or, how about this; if you look at three, three says, “Require the use of an electronic device that automatically records vessel location for later transmission.” That includes both the South Atlantic and the Gulf; so you could stick in something there, “for immediate or later transmission”, something like that.

MR. BREWER: Sure, that does exactly – all I’m trying to get at is VMS is one of those things, just like MPAs, that as soon as you say it, you get all kinds of blow-back. I’m just trying to ameliorate the blow-back is what I’m trying to get at there.

MR. BELL: So if there is some interest in that – yes, Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Chester, that is exactly what that Alternative 3 does. The later transmission just refers to as soon as you get a cell signal; then that information can be transmitted automatically. It is not that the information would be recorded and then come back and a week later that information is transmitted. It does in essence exactly what you’re looking for it to do.

MR. BELL: So that covers us for – or you could also hit it and it could go immediately if you’re within cell range or whatever, but it could go later if you’re not within – but we want those particular technologies to be covered here. If we’re comfortable that we’ve got that covered; is there any other discussion of the current motion? The motion is simply to approve the range of

Action 2 alternatives as modified. **Any objection to the motion? Okay; then that motion stands approved.**

Recall yesterday we were into Action 3 when we had to end the meeting for the public hearing. Gregg included in the actual report here the language that is in Action 3 as it is worded right now. What we want to ask ourselves; is there anything in there that we might want to adjust in Action 3? I'll just suggest, if you look at the wording there, we're kind of down into the weeds in some areas.

For instance, under Alternative 2, little i, simplification of reporting; "Reporting should allow the individuals to hit one button to simultaneously send" – I don't know that we need that level of detail right now as this goes out to the public. To not kind of lock us into just that particular way to go with this, we could strike that whole sentence.

Another thing, notice that under Alternative 2, two little i's, we have included wording in there that says "logbook and dealer data". That was the thinking that you could do other great things with this, including dealers; but I think if we drag dealers into this, it changes the whole flavor of the amendment, so perhaps we might want to just strike "dealer" out of that. That is a suggestion.

Then if you go under three little i's, "data fed to ACCSP"; again, we're kind of presupposing a certain way this needs to go. I don't know that we need to get into that specificity at this point. Then also under Subalternative 2A, it says "apply to dealer reporting"; so I'd take that out. I think it would be best to separate ourselves from that. That's a whole 'nother world.

Then the other question is we have "headboat" in there as well. There is a whole separate system for headboat reporting right now; but I guess sort of in a perfect world if we were building all this together, your headboat and your charterboat systems would all be same and be able to work the same.

I know in South Carolina we treat our headboats and our charterboats as for-hire boats and they all report in a similar fashion; but we do have a separate headboat reporting system. This document is related specifically or the focus was charterboats. We just need to ask ourselves do we want to leave some language in here as an option for the future or strike it now to simplify it. I throw that stuff out for consideration and maybe some discussion on that. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Although I agree with the simplification reasons, I thought that part of the flow process was because some of the data was going straight to NMFS and it was delayed in getting through the ACCSP. I thought we wanted to require it to go to all three simultaneously. I mean, I thought that is what we were trying to do.

MR. BELL: Gregg, would you like to address that?

MR. WAUGH: Yes; and Roman Numeral II there does that, what is outlined under the data flow. This is what came out of the technical subcommittee; that the logbook data would go to ACCSP on the Atlantic side or GULFIN on the Gulf side.

That would be the first place it would go to; and then the data would be integrated into a single composite data set and then distributed, made available to the centers, and we would be able to tap into it there. In essence, the way you achieve Roman Numeral I and III is by using the data flow that is outlined in Roman Numeral II.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I don't know that you all usually get into this level of detail as to where the data goes and that sort of thing. Maybe we could have some discussion of why that is needed; because when you lock it into an amendment, if anything needs to be changed, we need another amendment to amend how the data flow is going.

I don't know that you usually get into that and maybe you could have a brief discussion at some point, whether it is today or later or whenever you want to do it, as to why this is necessary to have this in here as opposed to perhaps a discussion in the document of what the technical committee said would be the best way to handle the data. I'm just trying to think of down the road for maximum flexibility for you.

MR. BELL: Yes, I agree; we don't want to lock ourselves into something if that is what this does, but I think this in effect came as a recommendation from the subcommittee if that seemed to be a reasonable to flow it. Bonnie, do you want to speak to that?

DR. PONWITH: Yes; just the same point. It is a little concerning because this has the look and feel of regulating science; basically regulating the science and the flow of the data as opposed to regulating the conduct of the fishery. We do have that report. That report was hard won. They worked really hard at it; and certainly I would see those recommendations as being given due weight as any program going forward unfolds; but there are risks in regulating science.

DR. DUVAL: I appreciate Bonnie's comments and Monica's about not wanting to tie ourselves into something that is going to take a lot of effort to undue later. I think part of the concern is that right now the data flow is sort of like spaghetti; and that doesn't help us very much. I know the issues that we have to go through in North Carolina just with our dealer reporting.

If we have dealers that have both northeast and southeast permits, it has got to go to the northeast. We've run into multiple issues with having to extract black sea bass landings and then some of that stuff goes directly to Bluefin and then the Southeast Center picks it up; and so there is lots of spaghetti involved in the data flow right now. I think the concern here is that we just want to make sure it is flowing in the most expedient way possible but allows everybody to access it.

MR. BELL: And I'm not piling on with that; but I've mentioned before when we sit down and try to draw out our data flow on a particular fishery, it does look kind of like spaghetti. That has been frustrating I know at the state level for me. I think that was the idea here was to try to come up with something that seemed simplified enough; but that is where that comes from. I think that's why we wanted to leave that in there; and it didn't consider it necessarily as – well, not at all dictating science. It is more of just frustrations over timeliness and data flow process. Bonnie.

DR. PONWITH: It is just when we look at how long it takes to get a regulatory amendment into place, basically these are regulations. There is no other way to look at this than you're regulating the way the science is being done. If this is exactly what the council wants, that is fine, but the council isn't a science body. If something happens where you decide you need to make changes, then you're right back at this council table X numbers of months, weeks, years, whatever, making changes to this. I hear what you're saying and I believe rationalizing the flow of data is a smart thing to do. My suggestion is that there might be a more efficient way of doing it than putting it in the amendment.

MR. HAYMANS: Well, I would ask Bonnie before we finalize this amendment and wherever we get to; that you would offer up that rationalization.

DR. PONWITH: So allow me to say I'm not saying that I'm king of the world and know exactly how this should be done; you know, what the outcome should be. What I'm saying is the process of arriving at that by putting it in a council amendment which freezes it and makes it very difficult to change. I'm not telling you I have the perfect solution.

I'm saying that the way of arriving at that perfect solution and agreeing upon it in my mind isn't putting it in the amendment. I would be happy to be a participant in taking the joint committees' recommendations, getting that group back together again and working through how do we align the flow of the data and keep that conduit as short and straightforward as possible and reach rational agreement. It may be this exactly, I don't know, but doing that kind of in a science forum in a way where the agreement is a little more flexible than this may serve the process better.

MR. BELL: So the way it is structured right now commits to a particular flow; so what you're saying is that perhaps that might be good or perhaps it might not be the best; but we don't necessarily – I mean, we're going to have one more shot at this. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: I guess it might be a subtlety, but to me this doesn't have anything to do with science. This is talking about the flow of data. We convened a collective group of experts that are involved in data collection and management, including the center, including headquarters, including ACCSP, GULFFIN, the councils. This is the technical folks' recommendation.

They have dealt with the problems with the data flow for years; and this is their collective recommendation. We have frameworks and we can complete a plan amendment in one or two meetings. We can modify this very quickly should the need arise, but this is a recommendation of the collective "our" technical experts on how to design a system that is going to be efficient, that is going to be timely and that is going to work.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: My thoughts were not so much that it was regulating science but you've all hardly ever do this in terms of put a motion in an amendment that says where the data goes. I understood and I heard why you think that is important. I also heard what Bonnie was saying.

When I looked at the timing of this, you're going to see this again in June and at that point I guess approve it for public hearing. If we can't hash this out here or Bonnie wants to bring something back or something like that, that could be done at the June meeting, too, where we discuss this. For example, you leave it in the document now and then if we want to further discuss it June, we can do it there, too.

MR. BELL: Well, that is what I was about to ask. We are going to look at this again in June. If there is a better idea or a better way to do this, we can certainly discuss that. We can leave it as it is right now and move forward but fully understanding Bonnie's concerns and maybe there is a better way to do this. Well, we could hear it. Does that make sense? Obviously, I can't make a motion.

MR. WAUGH: We still need to deal with guidance on the headboat. Are we going to include this headboat subalternative in here or delete that?

MR. BELL: Is everybody comfortable with deleting the dealer part? I think we need to stay away from that. Headboats, now, do we want to leave language in there right now with the potential tie-in for headboats or do we want to simplify things and just keep doing headboats; the intent being we're setting up a completely independent system here for just charterboats only. What do you think?

MR. BROWN: Well, we've already got a system set up for the headboats. This is pretty much directed towards just the charterboats; isn't that correct?

MR. BELL: That is how it has been worded; although the language was kind of taken from some headboat language I guess originally.

MR. WAUGH: We're just talking about the data flow here; and we're talking about where the charterboat data flow – how that would go. Do we want to apply that same data flow to the headboat data?

MR. BROWN: Okay, so just to make it uniform so it all flows in the same direction? Yes, that is fine.

MR. BOWEN: Couldn't we use the term "for-hire" and that would encompass both?

MR. BELL: Well, we haven't used that term throughout the whole document; but I follow the logic there. It makes sense. Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: It is logical to me to have headboats and charterboats flowing the same way. In fact, it may come where if we put greater restrictions or more stuff with the charterboats than headboats currently have; we might even want to bring the Actions 1 and 2 in line for headboats and charterboats as this amendment goes forward. Just a comment.

MR. BELL: Yes; as Gregg said, right now this is just under this particular action dealing with data flow. Any strong feelings one way or the other? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Let's just leave in the subalternative to apply to headboat and charterboat. I think with the previous actions dealing with specifically charterboats because we already have electronic reporting weekly for headboats right now; I think it is good to have the subalternatives in there to make sure to be specific about which component of the for-hire sector we're applying this to.

MR. BELL: All right, we'll leave it in. Are there any discussions on Alternative 3; I don't have any.

MR. WAUGH: The only question is do you want that to apply – put in those same subalternatives to apply to charterboats or headboats? I would assume not commercial since we –

MR. BELL: Yes, I would strike “commercial”. The question is as it is currently worded is should Alternative 3 apply to both charterboats and headboats?

MR. WAUGH: So now we would need a motion. If we're leaving it in for charterboats and headboats, we would need a motion to approve the range of alternatives under Action 3 as modified.

MR. BELL: Is someone willing to make that? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: So moved.

MR. BELL: Second by Jessica. More discussion? Any objections to the motion? The motion is to approve the range of alternatives under Action 3 for detailed analyses. We have a second by Jessica. Ant additional discussion? Any objections to the motion? We have one objection; the motion carries. What other little piece here – okay, Action 3 is added. We need to go back and address the purpose and need.

MR. WAUGH: Right; and by virtue of you adding that, what I would suggest is that then staff and the IPT will propose to modify wording to the purpose and need and bring that back to you in June.

MR. BELL: All right, do we need a motion for that or that is just direction to staff?

MR. WAUGH: No, if that is okay with everybody. Then the final item is just timing. This is the rough timing that we have discussed with the Gulf and it is laid out in our amendment. I talked with John Froeschke and he has given some indications of when the Gulf would take action. They will be discussing this at their March 30 through April 2 meeting. The final item, Mr. Chairman, is just dealing with that timing and task motion.

MR. BELL: Right; so remember we're in the context of a report here; so now moving to the end of the report we have the timing and task draft motion so I'd need somebody to be willing to make a motion. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: So moved. **My motion is to approve the timing and task motion as presented:**

Direct staff to continue working with ACCSP (Mike Cahall) on developing a Commercial Logbook Electronic Data Entry Form for voluntary use by commercial fishermen; direct staff to work with the Gulf Council staff to work on a Joint Charterboat Logbook Amendment; provide the SAFMC's actions to the Gulf Council and make sure the next version of the document includes the data elements (ensure discard data are included); direct staff to explore sending a letter requesting a portion of the funding for electronic reporting be allocated to South Atlantic Council fisheries.

MR. BELL: Second by Charlie. Any discussion? Any objection? All right, that stands approved. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

MR. HARTIG: That brings us to the Spiny Lobster Report; Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: The Spiny Lobster Committee met on March 3rd. We adopted the agenda and approved some minutes from March 2012. We got status of landings and catch versus ACL from Jack McGovern. We also received a report from the February 9, 2015, Spiny Lobster Review Panel. This panel recommended that the councils pursue an exemption from the ACL for spiny lobster.

There was no motion to do this at the committee meeting; and I would be looking for maybe a little bit more discussion on that. I would still like to see a letter go to the Secretary of Commerce about the uniqueness of this particular species and why I think it should be exempted from the ACL.

I also mentioned at the committee meeting about when the review panel met; that the discussion was based on the years that were used to set the ACL in the first place, those were some historically low years so we will likely be going over the ACL again in the future if the landings stay anything like what we're at now. Is there any more discussion on this? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: You'd like a letter from the council to the Secretary of Commerce?

MS. McCAWLEY: I would.

DR. DUVAL: I'll make a motion that the council send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce requesting that spiny lobster not be subject to an ACL, and I think laying out the arguments that were presented by the Lobster Review Panel.

MS. McCAWLEY: Seconded by Doug. Under discussion; Bob.

MR. MAHOOD: The letter would actually go to Roy.

MS. McCAWLEY: Anymore discussion on this item? **The motion reads that the council send a letter to the Regional Administrator requesting that spiny lobster not be subject to**

an ACL, with the reasons outlined by the Spiny Lobster Review Panel. Are there any objections to that motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.

We also had discussion about a spiny lobster bag and possession limits north of the Georgia/Florida line. Michelle discussed this a little bit more earlier today. We actually had a motion on this. **The motion was to develop a framework amendment to increase the bag limit and possession limit for spiny lobsters north of the Georgia/Florida Line, with alternatives for three per person and four per person; and alternatives for max vessel limit of 8, 12 and 16. On behalf of the committee I so move.** Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I think probably the cleanest thing to do is to just vote this motion down. As I referenced earlier, I've had some discussion with Bill Mansfield about this. He expressed concerns about potential abuse with a boat limit and was kind of alarmed by the boat limits that were in this motion. I think the issue here is that most of these multiday trips occur on private boats.

In our other fisheries where we have allowed for multiday bag limits, it is because an angler has some proof that they have actually been out for a couple days. These are vessels that are taking trips on a private boat for a couple days. Apparently it doesn't happen very much; and I think Bill is under the impression that this might be a little bit easier to do. I think I was under the impression that this might be a little bit easier to do.

Certainly, north of the Florida/Georgia Border you're not making any more than two dives per day; but I think the logistics of this probably warrant us leaving this around right now. For that reason, I would simply say that we vote it down.

MR. HAYMANS: I was looking at that 12 per boat per day as a reasonable increase. Our average dive trip is four divers. Right now under the current limit; that is all they can bring back is eight, anyway. I hate to see that opportunity for a very modest increase go away.

DR. DUVAL: I'm just going on what our advisory panel member is saying that he is concerned about the risk of initiating a 16-per-boat limit and that it would apply to such a small population of anglers who were staying out for two days; that it is probably not worth the effort. He was also concerned about the rate of recruitment and just where these lobsters are coming from and increasing that daily bag limit would be a mistake as opposed to having a limited two-day bag limit that doesn't go over that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I'd be content with taking the 16 out; but I'm kind of like Doug.

MR. COX: I was going to say exactly what Charlie said; 16 is too strong, but I think the rest of it looks fine to me.

MS. McCAWLEY: So does someone want to offer a substitute motion? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I'll just say that Bill has had mixed feelings about this on and off. Again, he was just trying to offer a limited means of allowing for a multiday trip limit for those few trips and

few folks that do stay out a couple days but is just concerned that this could really create a very targeted – increase the targeting from the recreational fishery north of the Georgia/Florida Border.

MR. COX: Michelle, I hear what you're saying and I see both sides of it. I'm going to support what you think we ought to do here. It is fine with me either way. I was just going to say 16 – I was going to bring up 16 is way too many to have as I got to thinking about it.

MR. BROWN: Madam Chair, I would like to make a motion to change the alternative to a max vessel limit of 12.

MS. McCAWLEY: Okay, we have the motion on the board. **Let me read that motion and make sure this is what you wanted: develop a framework amendment to increase the bag limit and possession limit for spiny lobsters north of the Georgia/Florida Line, with alternatives for three per person and four per person; and an alternative for max vessel limit of 12.** Is that what you intended? Charlie seconded. Under discussion; Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Just a point of order; is this a substitute motion?

MS. McCAWLEY: I believe it would be. Mark, is this a substitute motion?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. BELL: I'm not hearing a lot of interest from divers in retaining more up our way. Our lobster are a lot bigger than what they're typically catching down south. My feeling is that I don't think we're making our own lobster up there. I think they're recruiting in from down south. The populations are not necessarily really strong. I don't think putting any more pressure on them is a good idea. If it's a boat limit of 12, we might have six divers on a boat; so with the two you're going to end up with 12, anyway. I can go either way on this, but I think I'd say away from the 16.

MR. MAHOOD: Mike has communicated with me also; and I think it was one of these things you've got to be careful of what you ask for. He asked for something and he got something he didn't expect to get. I think he has communicated with Michelle and he'd prefer to drop it.

MS. McCAWLEY: Michelle, do you have anything else?

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I'm going to vote against the substitute and I will also vote against the main motion. Again, I think this ballooned beyond what Bill thought where it was going to go. I don't want to send staff down the road of taking on more work when there are more important things to deal with.

MS. McCAWLEY: Okay, are you ready to vote? **All those in favor of the substitute motion raise your hand; all those opposed; are there any abstentions. The motion fails.** Now we're back on the main motion. Let me read the main motion again. The main motion is to develop a framework amendment to increase the bag limit and possession limit for spiny lobsters north of

the Georgia/Florida Line, with alternatives for three per person and four per person; and alternatives for max vessel limit of 8, 12 and 16. Anymore discussion? **All those in favor of this motion raise your hand; all those opposed; abstentions. Okay there none in favor, nine opposed and one abstention. The motion fails.**

The next thing on our committee report is to adopt a timing and task motion. The only thing that we have left on the timing and task now is to draft a letter about the ACL. I would be looking a motion to adopt the timing and task item as presented. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I move we adopt the timing and task item as presented: Draft a letter to send to the RA requesting that spiny lobster not be subject to an ACL, with the reasons outlined by the Spiny Lobster Review Panel.

MS. McCRAWLEY: Second by Chris. Any discussion on the timing and task? Any opposition to the timing and task motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HARTIG: That brings us to presentations, I believe. Bob.

MR. HARTIG: The Highly Migratory Species folks were going to come down from Silver Spring and make a presentation on the latest amendment to the HMS Plan. I think all flights out of Washington were cancelled yesterday. They're kind of snowed in up there, but they have kindly offered to make the presentation online.

MR. DuBECK: My name is Guy DuBeck. I'm here for the Highly Migratory Species Division. I just want to first say I appreciate the council accommodating us due to the weather situation. I'm here to talk about Amendment 6. I'm going to go through the presentation kind of fast since we're running a little bit late. If you have any questions or anything, feel free to let us know if we're going too fast.

Here are some of the issues currently affecting our shark fishery. The main thing has been the declining of the markets. The profit of each trip has caused a lot of fishermen to leave the fishery into other fisheries. Under rulemaking, we can actually make each trip more profitable, to continue with our rebuilding plans for the overfished stocks or overfishing of the overfished stocks.

On top of everything else in Amendment 6, we included our two most recent assessments. They were both done this past year. In the assessments both the bonnethead and Atlantic sharpnose; the assessment determined that there were two different stocks, Atlantic and a separate Gulf of Mexico stock. With the Bonnethead Shark Assessment, due to varying factors, the assessment was rejected; and so the Atlantic and the Gulf stocks are both unknowns.

For the Atlantic Sharpnose Assessment, the assessment was accepted; and both the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico stock came back as not overfished and no overfishing occurring. Here are the range of alternatives I'm going to be talking about. The first one is permit stacking. Permit stacking is you can put multiple permits on one vessel and get multiple trip limits.

Some of the comments we've been hearing from fishermen is to consider this; but based on other comments, we preferred not to go with this at this time. A lot of fishermen felt this was not equitable to everyone and it would really just benefit the few fishermen with multiple permits. Now we will move on to the commercial retention limits.

An outgrowth of the comments that we heard from the permit stacking is to we look at the fishing potential for every shark permit holder. To do that, we looked at that and we felt that based on advice from our advisory panel that it would be a good idea to increase the retention limit instead of permit stacking. We're proposing to do 55 large coastals per trip.

To increase the retention limit, you have to reduce the sandbar research fishery quota. Back in Amendment 2 in 2008, the initial 36 large coastal retention limit was based off of how many sandbar sharks would be discarded dead from the number of shark trips that were expected to interact with sandbar sharks; so to increase the large coastal trip limit we have to decrease the sandbar research trip to account for the interactions and then mortality of sandbar sharks.

Now we're going to move into the regional and sub-regional quotas. We've been hearing from fishermen and constituents; that a lot of comments we're getting requesting different season opening dates based on the sub-regional differences in the shark fisheries. Mostly on the Atlantic side, a lot of different fishermen prefer different opening dates because of how the migratory patterns of the sharks are and where they are located at the time of year.

An as example more South Atlantic fishermen prefer an earlier opening date while North Atlantic fishermen prefer a summer opening date. We're looking at potentially implementing sub-regional quotas to allow for different opening dates; but then there is also the potential for unequal distribution of sub-regional quotas based on historical landings.

Also, the sub-regional quotas would have more flexibility for the fishery. Now we're going to go into the Atlantic. We're considering establishing sub-regional quotas in the Atlantic Region. We considered a few alternatives. We're preferring to look at the 34 degree latitude line, which is around Wilmington, North Carolina. We are using historical landings and aggregated large coastal and hammerhead management groups. We're looking at 2008 through 2013.

For the small coastal fishery we are looking at 2011 and 2012. These years we chose were based on the rulemaking for each one. In 2008 we changed the fishery around for the 36 large coastal trip limit and removed sandbar from the commercial fishery. We go back as far as 2008. For the small coastal fishery we had a big rulemaking in 2010 where we removed the blacknose fishery from the small coastal complex.

Then we chose, based on comments, 2011 through 2012 because they're only the years where the fishery was open year round. We're also looking at modifying the quota linkages in the Atlantic Sub-Region; and we're doing that by proposing to prohibit the harvest of blacknose sharks in the North Atlantic Region.

This is what the potential quotas would be for each one of the sub-regions and then also the percentage of the quota that the sub-region would receive for each one of those. As you see in

the North Atlantic, we propose doing a zero retention of blacknose sharks and also remove the linkage between the blacknose and non-blacknose small coastal in the North Atlantic.

We're also keeping the linkages for the large coastal fishery and also keeping the linkage in the South Atlantic between the non-blacknose small coastal and the blacknose sharks. In the assessment that was just one for the Atlantic sharpnose and bonnethead sharks; we came back and we're looking at new TACs and quotas for the fishery.

Currently the quota is the top there. We're proposing a range within the quotas' option based on the assessment. We're preferring to go with status quo, which would be maintaining the current commercial-based quota of 176 metric tons. The next couple of slides we have skipped through is the Gulf, and we're doing similar things for the Gulf of Mexico Region.

The last alternative in Amendment 6 is we're looking at modifying the commercial vessel upgrading restriction. We're proposing to remove the upgrading restriction because the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils are considering initiating a modified action of the upgrading restrictions; so we're proposing to consider removing it for the shark fishery.

Here is our timeline for action. The comment period ends on April 3rd; and we're hoping to have this implemented by the summer of this year. Here is the public hearing schedule. I just wanted to make a note that the Manteo public hearing was cancelled on February 26th due to weather and we actually rescheduled to March 18th.

We also have our advisory panel next week and then we have a webinar on March 25th. The comment period ends on April 3rd. Here is how you can submit comments. The next slide is if you guys have any questions.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you for your presentation. From my perspective, looking at the adjustments you made, you actually really did take a lot of what the public wanted into your changes. From our perspective, that is very much appreciated.

MR. DuBECK: Yes; we started this process in 2010. We originally started with permit stacking, catch shares and a couple of alternatives and then now we evolved to the retention limits and sub-regional quotas.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for giving us the presentation. I know it is not the most ideal conditions. I was just curious if you mentioned – and I'm just trying to get back to the slide where it is; but you mentioned bonnetheads; and I was wondering how you are addressing bonnetheads in this amendment.

MR. DuBECK: Bonnethead sharks are within the non-blacknose small coastal management group. We are not proposing rulemaking and pull it out to that separate quota or what. We're proposing to keep it within the management group but keep the current TAC and quota to the status quo.

DR, DUVAL: So if the TAC is staying the same; how are bonnetheads being accounted for? It seems like if everything is staying the same; that –

MR. DuBECK: Sorry, I misspoke. The total allowable catches are going to be changing, but the commercial quota we're proposing to keep it as the current base quota, which you remember in years past is much lower than what the quota has been since the complex was originally – all three species, the harvest could be carried forward every year; so the quota in the Atlantic was much higher, let's say over 500,000 pounds, and we're proposing to keep it at the current base quota of a little over 300,000 pounds.

MR. HARTIG: Rusty, would you like to comment to Guy?

MR. HUDSON: Rusty Hudson with the East Coast Fishery Section, advisor. Next week, when I get there – and I've already proposed it to Margo – you still have your linkage with your blacknose in the southern zone with the small coastal shark complex. As you may know – Margo may have let you know – that I have proposed a 200-pound trip limit for the blacknose so that we can potentially be able to harvest our small coastal complex that keeps getting shut down prematurely as a result of that 80 percent of the 36,000 pounds.

We've been leaving several hundred thousand pounds of small coastals, mostly sharpnose and some finetooth, on the table each year with no rollover ability and no ability to catch it. I'm hoping that we can get that into a future iteration of the proposed rule and be able to allow our fishermen to fish on the small coastal complex without being shut down. That was the main comment I wished to make to you today.

MR. DuBECK: Thanks, Rusty. We can discuss this in more detail next week. We're going to discuss that 80 percent quota closure next week at the AP meeting.

MR. HARTIG: Guy, thank you very much. I appreciate that presentation. Like I said before, I appreciate you incorporating a lot of what the public had proposed into this amendment. We will be looking forward to see what comes out of the AP meeting. That brings us to a presentation from Monica unless there are any questions about that, but I don't think there are. We have a presentation from Monica on the financial disclosure form.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It was asked I think by the Fisheries Service that all NOAA attorneys who advise councils to give a brief presentation to all councils about Magnuson-Stevens Act financial disclosures and recusals. I just have a few slides to go through. Just before I get started, council members and SSC members must file a statement of financial interest according to the Magnuson Act.

It is unlawful for a council member to knowingly willfully fail to disclose or falsely disclose any financial interest required by the Act or to knowingly vote on a council decision in violation of the Act. Generally, you're only restricted from voting on a council decision that would have a significant and predictable effect on your disclosed financial interest or on a disclosed financial interest of your spouse, minor children or general partners.

When in doubt my prelude to this quick overview is give me a call and we can discuss these things if you have any questions at all. The second slide is what does the Act require? Each affected individual must disclose any relevant financial interest in any harvesting, processing, lobbying, advocacy or marketing activity that is being or will be undertaken within any fishery over which the council concern has any jurisdiction or with respect to an individual or organization with a financial interest in such activity.

Affected individuals, as I mentioned before, are all council members nominated by a governor or appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and SSC members. The next slide is where can I find or where can you find more information on what interests must be disclosed? The description on activities considered to be harvesting, processing, lobbying, advocacy or marketing can be found at the following regulations contained at 50 C.F.R. 600.235(a); but when in doubt, disclose it.

You must make these disclosures no later than February of each year regardless of whether any information has changed; and then if any information has changed, you should do an updated form and file it within 30 days. Is the financial disclosure requirement confined to just the interests of the affected individual, you may ask, and I would say no.

This affects relevant financial interests held by you, the affected individual, or your spouse, minor child or partner and any organization, except for the council, in which you are serving as an officer, director, trustee, partner or employee. What happens if an affected individual has a potential financial interest in a specific council matter?

In that case you would not be permitted to vote on a council decision that would have a significant predictable effect on any financial interest held by you or that individual. For further guidance on what significant and predictable effect on a financial interest is; again turn to 50 C.F.R. 600.235(c)(2); or you could call me.

What steps must you take? If there are any concerns that you might have a significant predictable effect on a financial interest held by you; you should contact me as soon as possible that we can work through the steps to see whether actually it would affect whether you could vote or whether you would need to be recused.

I should mention that if you fail to comply with financial disclosure requirements, you could be subject to criminal and civil prosecution. Those would be at 18 U.S.C 208 and 217, as well as in the Magnuson Act at Section 307(1)(O). That would be if knowingly and willfully fail to disclose or false disclose any financial interest required under the Magnuson Act or that you knowingly vote on a council decision in violation of the Magnuson Act. Further, you could be potentially removed from the council; or if you're a member of the SSC, from the SSC as per those same regulations I quoted before at 50 C.F.R. 600.235(i).

The last slide is where can you go to find more information? I looked up those particular links. You can find the financial disclosure form that I'm sure you're familiar with at the link provided; and then they have a frequently asked questions on the other website provided. I've looked at them both and they're pretty thorough.

I noticed that the financial disclosure form kind of walks you through the process because it asks you a series of questions leading you through the next steps. I think it is probably better than the old forms used to be. That is my presentation. You have my phone number or you can easily get it. If you have any questions regarding your own personal financial interests in any upcoming matters or anything you could think of, just give me a call.

I have been called in the past by some council members. It doesn't happen too frequently on this council, but occasionally council member will call me and we will talk about the financial form that the council member is provided and then whether he or she could vote on the action. Voting would be at the council level.

I think you could still participate at the committee level and all those sorts of things. That 50 C.F.R. Website kind of talks about what you can do and what you can't do. That is my conclusion. If anybody has any questions, feel free to ask me now or just give me a call and we talk about it.

MR. HAYMANS: As a state agency person not having to fill these, I've probably filled out more than anybody else sitting here because I've helped every person who has applied, but that is not my question. The forms are getting better, but there is a long way to go.

My question, though, is that it would seem to me that with almost every vote this council takes, there should be somebody who is recusing themselves. At what level do they need to do that because we're always talking a charter fishery or we're always talking about a particular fishery that somebody on this council is involved in. Give me an example of when that happens.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It really gets down to whether you have a greater than 10 percent interest in the total harvest of the fishery or the sector of the fishery in question or greater than 10 percent interest in the marketing or processing of the total harvest or full or partial ownership of more than 10 percent of the vessel using the same gear type within a fishery or sector. It doesn't come up as often as you think it might.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes, right, so that is if you owned 10 percent or more of the total catch of the whole industry?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, it depends on the action that the council is looking at, right, and then it depends on the fishery; so, for example, the snapper grouper fishery, but then we have the black sea bass section; so you just kind of have to drill down into that. It is pretty fact-specific. It is hard for me to generalize other than this 10 percent interest that we would have to look at.

MR. HARTIG: And that is what I've used when I can vote or not. I haven't had to recuse myself on any of them because I don't catch more than 10 percent of any particular species that we manage. I looked at it for golden tile and things of that nature. Bob.

MR. MAHOOD: There have been very few instances that we have had council members recuse themselves. I recall that Rita Merritt; she and her husband owned some wreckfish shares. She did a couple of times recuse herself when we were talking about it. I know Elaine Knight, when

we were dealing with shrimp and turtle devices and when we were involved in all that, she did recuse herself at some times.

She did it just for – I don't think she ever had to, but she just didn't like the look of impropriety since she was the chairman of the council. I think she had a lot of boats and they had a big dock and all this kind of thing. Probably in our fisheries and our council members, very rarely are you going to run into a situation where you'd have a recusal.

Now you go up in the North Pacific where you've got multi-million dollar captains or representatives of big organizations that have a big stake in the fishery, that is what this was originally put together for and not our little southeast fisheries that we deal with. It is going to be a rare occasion I think that we would ever have that happen.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I agree with Bob; and if you ever have any question and you're not sure whether you should vote or not vote – well, you could voluntarily recuse yourself, but just give me a call and we'll walk through it and work it out so that you're comfortable.

MR. MAHOOD: Yes; and there is some misperception out there on the part of some of our constituents because I've had people call me or e-mail me and say look at that Ben Hartig guy, he catches mackerel and yet he is voting on that mackerel stuff or he had a position on mackerel.

That was the whole basis of the Magnuson Act of having the people that were involved in the fisheries sitting as council members to use their expertise to help manage these fisheries. There is a fine line there between when you're just using your expertise and you would have to recuse yourself. Again, I just think in our fisheries I can't see it happening a whole lot.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Monica. When I fill out that form, I think there is one place where I don't have to fill it out but I fill it out anyway just in case. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I was going to ask you about SSC consequences since it says they shouldn't vote; and the SSC doesn't vote. I think that maybe becomes moot because I don't think any of them are ever going to hit a 10 percent financial interest in a fishery; so it is okay for them to continue to discuss.

I had another question about the logistics. In the FAQs it says they may submit via e-mail, e-mail an electronic file, but they must print and sign for official filing. I ask the SSC members to mail us a hard copy that they physically signed; and I just wondered if that is what we should be doing because a lot of them are very interested in just filling out the form online and doing the Adobe electronic signature and being done with it. Are we misinterpreting that to ask them to send us a hard signed copy?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I'm not exactly sure so I will follow up with that and find out.

DR. DUVAL: John, I had a similar question just in terms of the nomination packages for council members because not all council members are actually able to – nominees are not always

in a position to sign and physically get something to us in that time frame. We're going through nominations right now for our at-large seats in both the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic.

I've asked the folks up at headquarters who handle the nominations if it was – it is allowed on the form; so is okay for us to send them up like this with the electronic secure signature that has a PIN and everything; and they said yes for a nominee. It might just be that a supplemental filing with an actual physical signature, once a nominee is actually appointed, might be necessary to follow up.

MR. HARTIG: Any other questions? Thank you, Monica, I appreciate that. Next is the MREP Update from Kim Iverson.

MS. IVERSON: There is nothing like going into the lunchtime hour and being the last presentation of the day on a Friday, but please bear with me. I will not be talking about VMS or requirements for anything else. I would like to give you an update on a program that this council has supported in the past. You're familiar with the program.

It started with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute up in the northeast. It supported by the council. We have Ben Hartig and myself on the steering committee, but it is a program designed by fishermen for fishermen and operated through the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. There are two components within the program; Fisheries Science and Fisheries Management Workshops.

I've put the goals up there. Every year we're amazed at how the interactions between the participants and the instructors facilitate this interaction. It is difficult to explain unless you participate in the workshops, but there is a lot of good interaction that occurs at all levels; not just in the formalities of the workshops but in a lot of the free time and social portion of it.

It certainly has facilitated exchange throughout the last three years. The program funding began back in 2012. This will be the third year of the workshops. We have a steering committee. As I said, Ben and John Carmichael and there are several people associated with the councils who sit on that steering committee.

We had two workshops this past year. The Science Workshop was in St. Petersburg in April and the Management Workshop in Tampa in the fall. It is between September and October. We had 58 total applications for the workshops. It was publicized through the Gulf of Maine Research Institute through postcard mailings.

Every permit holder in the southeast, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico received copies of the postcards that I left with you. The Introduction to Fisheries Science Workshop was held in partnership with Florida Wildlife Research Institute, in the lab there. It included all sectors, recreational, charter, for-hire, commercial fishermen, industry representatives, chefs, media representatives. We had a very diverse group of people there. For the first time we had two brothers that were charter captains out of the Gulf that were very young; at least relatively speaking. We had a good workgroup and we had a really good workshop.

John Carmichael and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center folks and Luiz Barbieri from FWRI; all of those folks were involved in the Science Workshop Curriculum and the instructions. We talked about sampling and survey methods again, data collection, always lots of good questions. We went over to the lab at FWRI. We went to the wet lab again, looked at age, growth and sampling gear.

These are just some quick photos of the participants in the 2014 workshops. We were indoor/outdoor at the lab talking about sampling techniques and protocol, the chevron traps; go back into the lab, extracting otoliths; talking about acoustical monitoring and tagging. The FWRI staff were awesome. They are very professional and go through a lot of information within a short period of time but allow for questions and open discussion.

This year we added a new activity. We're always modifying the curriculum for the workshops, and we actually had the participants read otoliths and do their own aging in workgroups and then develop a growth curve. At first we were a little concerned that may not be something that they would be interested in.

As you can see, Clay Porch is leaning over the table there and grinning because he is very, very happy that our workgroups were very much interested in it. We held the Management Workshop at the hotel in Tampa in the fall. We had 25 participants from each of the regions. Again, we improved the agenda. We increased the role-playing exercises.

Ben and Amber both participated in the instruction. Amber gave a presentation on the council's visioning project; and Ben talked about the council process and public involvement. I don't have any other pictures because I plugged in my iPhone the next day and I got the dreaded purple screen. That is the group shot. We had a really good time there.

One thing that always amazes me is the ability for a group of fishermen and others to sit in a room very much like this with presentations and find it very, very interesting and participate and ask questions at the end of each instruction period. We had a wonderful group of people, and I would encourage the council members – I believe Doug is going to be joining us this year at the workshops. It is a really diverse group of folks that do pay attention and participate.

With each workshop, we do evaluations. The steering committee takes a close look at those evaluations. For the most part they are very positive. They really ranked out the instructors highly. We go back and look at what people like, what they didn't like and re-examine the curriculum. Most people find that the workshops are valuable or very valuable.

Some notable outcomes for 2014/2015; in January there was a three-day MREP Workshop specifically for the Caribbean. It was all in Spanish and it was kind of combining our science and management workshops into a three-day workshop. It included a lot of law enforcement. They tried to have it in the fall and the threat of a hurricane delayed it.

I don't have any photos from that, but my understanding is that it was very well received. We have three new advisory panel members. We have two new applicants that were appointed at our December meeting that have participated in MREP. Ira Laks and Robert Olsen were both

appointed to the Mackerel AP; and then Dave Tempe who participated is now in our SEDAR Pool.

We had some positive articles from the media representatives that were there; a cooperative research proposal that has been sent in from a participant in the workshop representing the Gulf. We did get a good report at the steering committee meeting – we met in New Orleans back in November – that funding has been secured for two years, but we still, like most every program that was talked about at this table this week, need long-term funding.

We have new steering committee members that are coming in; participants that have attended previous workshops that are willing to work and attend the meetings and continue to guide the program. The 2015 workshops are coming up, April 14th through the 16th. Again, we will be in the St. Petersburg area and at FWRI.

The Management Workshop is September 22nd through the 24th in Tampa. The steering committee will once again meet this fall. I left you with parting gifts. You all have some postcards. Applications are still being accepted for the workshops for 2015; and they will have to be in by March the 10th. If you know someone that would like to participate – we've already received, it is my understanding, more applicants than spots are available; so that is always a good thing. There is a lot of interest in the program. Questions? Mark.

MR. BROWN: I would love to participate in that, but the only thing is that is when our AP meetings are. I'm trying to figure out how to be in two places at once.

MS. IVERSON: Yes; and to that point, it is unfortunate that it landed on that same week. When we were looking at the steering level back in the fall; we were looking at the availability more – we were focused on the instructors. We were looking at the SSC meetings and when the folks like or John Carmichael or Luiz may be available.

The AP meetings were tentatively scheduled at that point, so one of the things that we discussed at the steering committee; and I personally emphasized that we schedule our meetings far in advance; and if we can start working on scheduling the workshops for MREP further in advance, then we can avoid this conflict. It certainly wasn't anything that was done purposely and we will work in every way not to have that happen again.

MR. HAYMANS: I have a question about funding; and if you just elaborate just little bit on where the funding comes from for the program.

MS. IVERSON: I am not directly involved as a steering committee member. We have a funding subcommittee of the steering committee that is directly involved in soliciting funding. I do know that some of it comes through the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center. I meant to note, Bonnie, earlier this week you had noted in the review of the stock assessment process; that you had noted that there was support for MREP being a communication tool and an outreach tool as part of that review process. I can find out and I can get back with you, but I'd have to check with Alexis.

MR. HARTIG: Any other questions of Kim? I'd just echo what Mark said. I was slated to be a presenter and then had to back out because of the AP meetings. That mackerel meeting is really, really critical for the AP and to be able to sit down with them and snapper grouper as well. I really enjoy going to that AP meeting.

MS. IVERSON: I had asked Alexis to try to reschedule it. Obviously, there was going to be that conflict. The hotel was not available so there was a logistics aspect, too, but again at the steering committee level and certainly Alexis Dayton, who is the program coordinator, will work to try and avoid that.

There is a narrow window when you're working with three councils and trying to schedule things. I have some flyers if anybody wants to take some back with you as well, but please distribute those postcards. We're flexible on that deadline for the applicants. I asked if they would give us a date, and they said March 10th.

MR. HARTIG: Did you sign up, Doug?

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, that brings us to status reports and I guess Dr. Jack McGovern is going to take over that for today in his new role.

DR. McGOVERN: It is good to be in this new role. I think the Southeast Regional Office has a very good relationship with the council and the council staff. I hope to continue that role because I feel like working together we do a lot more than being separate. If anybody ever has any questions about anything, feel free to contact me and I'll help you out the best I can.

The Wave 6 landings came in yesterday for MRIP; and our website has been updated with that information. Jack Cox, when I gave the landings' report, asked if we could get a breakdown of vermilion snapper landings by state for 2015. I sent an e-mail to Dr. Ponwith's person that helps out with this, Heather Blachowski, and she said that 53 percent of the landings are from Georgia/Florida combined because the Georgia data are confidential; 32 percent are from South Carolina and 15 percent from North Carolina.

In the briefing book there are two placeholders for EFP requests; and those are actually pre-requests that the council talked about in December. They recommended that we proceed on those. Both of those EFPs were announced in the Federal Register for comments on EFP applications from James Morris and Janelle Fleming. They're for doing lionfish research. The comment period ended today, so we should be sending out those EFPs soon. That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BOWEN: Jack, that was recreational that you broke down the state-by-state percentages, recreational landings or commercial?

DR. McGOVERN: Those were commercial landings for vermilion snapper. I think that is what Jack wanted the other day.

MR. BROWN: Can you break it down for recreational if we wanted it?

DR. McGOVERN: Yes; we could break it down recreationally. I can't do it right now, but I could get it recreationally by area.

MR. BROWN: Yes; I just wondered if it was possible.

MR. HARTIG: I'd just want to know why; I think you're only catching 50 percent of your allocation. But we can do it; that is the important thing.

MR. BOWEN: It sounds like we need to raise that bag limit, too.

MR. HARTIG: That brings us to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center Report.

DR. PONWITH: Just a couple of things to touch on; first the Headboat Program. We have been working on shifting over to an Oracle data base. That gives us the flexibility we need to do a better job of managing these data and a little more efficient job. That is at least partially responsible for our ability to get the annual estimates for 2014 out quite early this year compared to in the past. It came out on the 12th of February.

From this point forward, starting in 2015, as we've been discussing, we are now shifting over to generating in-season estimates on a wave-by-wave basis, on the same timing as the MRIP Program is providing theirs. This is something that you have asked for. We're prepared to do that now with this change.

We recognize we're receiving those data on a weekly basis. The reason we're not generating estimates on a weekly basis is that we need to accumulate enough combination of landings' numbers and landings' weights to be able to populate those average weights to convert those numbers; and that is why we're aiming for those two-month waves.

That will be the shape of the reports. You will be getting preliminary numbers on a two-month wave from this point forward, which I think is a good advancement. The second thing that I wanted to bring to your attention is in the center and throughout the federal government there has been a focus in the last couple of years on the executive order that came out from the Administration dealing with public access to research results; and the basic concept of this as it is taxpayers have footed the bill for data that have been collected by government scientists as well as by non-government scientists through grants.

The notion is that as taxpayers we should all have access to those data and those results. It is a logical good-sounding thing. This is going to take a phenomenal amount of effort not only on behalf of the federal agencies but also the people who do receive grants and collect data and report results using those monies.

We've been preparing a plan over the last year and having iterative meetings with the Office of Science and Technology Policy of the White House, working with them on our plan. Our plan

has now been approved. We are to be in compliance in the beginning of FY-16. Basically what this means is the data that we collect needs to be publicly available.

We need to prepare metadata so that the data that we post can be indexed. It is not just a giant kitchen drawer full of data. Those data are properly indexed so you can shop for the data you want using those metadata. Publications that are drafted and submitted to peer-reviewed publication journals are actually made available to the public free of charge.

It is not just the raw data. It is the results from those raw data that would be made available to the public. We're working very hard on making this a reality. That means all of our fishery-independent data will be available for anybody who wants to see it. That means if a graduate student who doesn't have enough days at sea to go collect the data themselves can go mine those data and conduct second-generation research on those and provide results that can be really useful.

I think this is a very good thing. It is going to take a lot of work. The second piece of that are the grants. As you know, a lot of the work that is conducted by states through the interstate commissions is carried out under a grant. Those data are captured in this because, again, it publicly funded.

We will be working with the commissions, with ACCSP to make sure that we are all collectively in compliance with this new requirement. Again, a lot of work to become in compliance, but I think a lot of good is going to come from making those data available. You will never have to come to the center and ask for data. Those data will be publicly available. That is my report, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions of Bonnie? I would just like to thank you, Bonnie, for the interest you've shown in the cooperative research and citizen science. The discussions we've had this week have been very productive. The enthusiasm you show for this is palpable. We all have a passion for getting this done. We can't do it without you, so we sincerely appreciate that and look forward to see what happens with it in the future. That brings us to liaison reports. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I don't really have much to report. I will call your attention to something that our commission approved at our last meeting. They adopted a resolution to have an annual lionfish awareness and removal day. It will be the Saturday after Mother's Day each year. This year we will be having a large event in conjunction with that day.

The event will be based out of Pensacola. We're having it in conjunction with Guy Harvey. There will be a lot derbies occurring simultaneously statewide. It will be a Saturday and Sunday event. These derbies will be linked up via video into this feed occurring in Pensacola. We're really excited about that and just trying to bring more awareness to the cause and trying to get people involved and excited about removing lionfish.

MR. COX: I don't know if you all caught it the other day on I think it was where the groupers were eating the lionfish. Did you see that; that is pretty cool.

MR. HARTIG: The only question I had; Bill Kelly talks about some kind of a research plan to try and develop a trap for the lionfish. Has that gone through your – okay. Lieutenant Morgan Fowler.

LT. FOWLER: We talked the other day at the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel about someone mentioned the use of remote-sensing technologies and using drones for monitoring. That's really an excellent idea and something that the Coast Guard really – I mean we would pursue, but we don't have the funding for that kind of stuff.

If we can come up with some remote-sensing technologies to monitor those offshore closed areas; that would help us out a lot. We do have a hard time going offshore and patrolling. We're really the only agency that has the legs to get out there offshore. The state agencies can't obviously go 20 miles offshore. The District 7 admiral is having his change of command in early May, so we will have a new admiral in District 7. I will try and see if he can come down to your joint meeting in June in Key West.

MR. HARTIG: That would be great! We've had those opportunities in the past and they've been interesting, to say the least. Any other questions of Lieutenant Fowler? Mel Bell.

MR. BELL: I'm just looking at a graph right here. Recall back in Shrimp Plan Amendment 9 we gained flexibility to deal with the closures of the EEZ for shrimping for weather concerns. About the 12th of February our water temperature started dropping like a rock and we hit that magic 9 degree point. We really only sustained it for a few days.

I noticed on 1 March it started back up, so we're back up again. I think maybe we dodged a bullet. Of course, today it doesn't seem too great outside, but I think we won't have any need hopefully to approach the Regional Administrator about a closure. You mentioned the lionfish thing; I know that Bill Kelly had gotten something sort of started.

I know we've been asked to participate in a study. I don't know if it is that one, but it involved trapping off of a couple different states. We were going to help with the stomach and gonad work or something. It is moving forward. Somebody is going to do something or proposing, anyway. Of interest here, recall back in September we came to you and discussed cobia a little bit and some concerns we had about the cobia fishery off South Carolina.

We are now dealing with some new data we're looking at related to – recall that in the cobia stocks, there is a little area that's a distinct population segment, which is associated with Port Royal Sound and the St. Helena Area, which is that spawning aggregation that we've documented in the April/May time frame.

Well, the genetics' folks at the marine division have basically briefed us on a number of things they've seen related to the genetics and some concerns over the estimated number of fish that are actually left in the spawning population. They're estimating that it is less than 500 fish left in the spawning population.

I'm not a geneticist; but apparently when an animal hits that magic 500 or goes below it, you can start running into issues associated with long-term sustainability of that DPS,. We're having some discussions with fishermen in the state about that specific area. Now, that is a state issue, but again it is cobia which are managed through our CMP Plan.

What we will probably do is – I've talked to Kari a little bit and with the chairman's concurrence, if we could maybe have our genetics folks come to the AP meeting in April and kind of brief the AP on what we're seeing, I think it would be interesting. What this may lead to for us is South Carolina within state waters, of course, pursuing some state regulatory actions next legislative session to maybe restrict some of the pressure on that DPS during spawning season.

We want to make sure we're constantly in touch with the council on what we're proposing to do. There is nothing on the table right now, but we're just thinking about it. I've talked to the fishermen; and based on the science, we think that perhaps South Carolina could do something in state waters only to help protect that DPS, which is part of the overall cobia resource that we manage. We may look to come in April and talk to the AP, perhaps, if that makes sense.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; it makes sense to me. I haven't looked at the agenda and timing and everything but certainly the AP would be interested. A lot of them are interested in cobia; and that science part of it is a bonus.

MR. BELL: Yes, it is pretty interesting. And related to genetics; the same folks that have done the work with genetics on the cobia; we perhaps can make available to assist if we want to do some work with blueline tilefish. We have samples in place already. Our chief geneticist, if you will, has indicated that we could probably knock that out in six to eight months given the samples. I think they also have access to some samples from north of us; but given the samples, they could perhaps add some information to future decisions regarding what we're dealing with, whether it is one stock, two stocks, three stocks. That is really it; that concludes my report.

DR. DUVAL: Since we last met, North Carolina has had a wholesale change in our administration at the secretarial level. We are one division within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. We're currently just over two years into a new administration; so after two years, we have a new secretary, new assistant secretary, new general counsel.

It has been a little bit of a challenging time particularly trying to deal with council nominations right now since we have to work very closely with those folks at least for our process to get those nominations through the cycle. That has been quite a challenge. The legislature is in session, which always means exciting and interesting things.

The governor has proposed some pretty significant changes as well in the administration such as moving multiple divisions out of our department, aquariums, museum and natural sciences, the attractions basically and moving them into the Department of Cultural Resources, which I think would be the Department of Cultural and Natural Resources.

Our department is being proposed to be changed to the Department of Energy and Environment. This is all a proposal right now. We'll see where it goes. I think the other significant thing is that since we last met, our state Marine Fisheries Commission, which Anna is the vice-chair of, voted to delay approval of the rules that would implement our for-hire logbook.

I think unfortunately there have been some stakeholder concerns from one particular region. I think the agency can always do a better job of outreach and communication. Hindsight is always 20/20. I think we did as good a job as we could of on the up-front end of things to get the word out, sent letters out to each and every permit holder within the state who had a for-hire permit – or not a for-hire permit but one of our coastal recreational fishing license blanket permits for the charter and headboat sectors.

Some concerns that have come up from stakeholders have to do with sort of parity with the commercial sector because state-managed commercial fishermen who are only participating in state fisheries don't have to fill out a commercial logbook. There is a sense that if the commercial guys aren't doing it, why should we have to do it from folks.

I've think we've tried to explain it or at least I've tried to explain to people that just as the dealers serve as a single point of data collection for multiple commercial fishermen; that the inshore guides and for-hire industry serves as a data collection point for multiple anglers and that information is essential to us being able to make better management decisions.

There has also been concerns about reporting of releases or discards, whichever term you want to use, and that the commercial guys don't have to do that so why should we. The commercial guys are subject to an observer program. We have a pretty extensive state-wide observer program; so would you like to fill out a logbook or would you like someone on your boat is kind of how I've tried to frame that particular debate. It is a setback.

The commission voted to establish a stakeholder group between now and their August meeting, I believe, to reach out and see if we can work through some of the issues and the concerns that are being expressed. I'm hopeful that we will get there eventually and learn a few lessons from this that we can bring to our process. Thanks.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions for Michelle? I'm going to take this opportunity to recognize Iris Lowery, who is a new NOAA General Counsel hire. Would you like to say something, Monica, in her behalf and what her duties are going to be?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I would like to say thank you for saying that; and I should have introduced her earlier. I've been introducing her personally to people. Yes, Iris started in our office last October. She has just been doing a great job. She has attended a Caribbean Council meeting, a Gulf Council meeting, this is her last on her council swing. She will be doing a number of things in our office, fishery work, protected resources, I think all kinds of things. There is plenty of work for her to do; so we are thrilled that she is with us.

MR. HARTIG: Welcome; and I know you will be busy. Okay, Tracey Woodruff, our NMFS Law Enforcement Liaison for this meeting. We very much appreciate you coming and being

here all week. I guess at some time in the past we had met and we appreciate you being here all week.

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to reiterate, I was just filling in for Assistant Director Tracy Dunn this week. I want to thank everybody and thank the council for the invitation to come here. I don't really have a report prepared at this time. We are late with our Law Enforcement Quarterly Report; and they want you to expect it no later than this coming Monday.

DR. LANEY: I have a few things of interest to the council, I hope. I know everyone always looks forward to my report on the eelways at Roanoke Rapids Dam, which normally opened March 1st, but this year have been delayed because of the low water temperatures. I think it is about 3 degrees up at Roanoke Rapids and Dominion Generation was justifiably concerned about ice damage to the eelway. They have requested to delay opening the eelways and we certainly concur with that request.

We would also give you a very brief report on the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise and Hook-and-Line Operations again this year for tagging striped bass. I think Dr. Duval participated in the hook-and-line trips; and she may want to supplement what I have to say about that. The hook-and-line folks seriously outfished us on the research vessel this year, but only because we told them where the fish were in the later part of our trip.

We used the Research Vessel Savannah this year. Thanks to all the partners who helped with that; Bonnie in the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Dr. List Desfosse sent Nick Hopkins to not only bring our gear up but participated in the trip. Nick and Kevin Brown from the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries did a superb job on the deck keeping the net going up and down.

We did 152 tows. We caught somewhere in the neighborhood of 17,000 critters of various sorts. We're trying to transition from being just strictly a striped bass and a few other species monitoring type of trip into a true survey to get something closer to the SEAMAP and NEAMAP protocol, because we're apparently the only ones out there during the wintertime.

Nobody else is nuts enough to go during the wintertime off Cape Hatteras. We did catch and tagged and release – I think we caught about 420 stripers. We got one tow that was very large; and the folks on the deck thought that it was more prudent to count a lot of those fish back overboard than to try to cram them into our holding tanks.

We did tag and release 333 on the research vessel and 1,042 on the ten trips on the FV Midnight Sun, which is the vessel we charter for the hook-and-line trips. We got a good robust sample size out there once again this year. That gives us two years of having done the hook and line and the research vessel tagging in roughly the same time period.

We have also been notified by the North Carolina Coastal Recreational Fishing License Program that they are going to match our S/K funding for 2016; so we have a little administrative stuff to

do to request a no-cost extension for the S/K funds and move that to 2016. We will plan to do this again in January of next year.

Early on in the trip we caught a couple of very large, possible gravid females, spiny butterfly rays. We didn't know at the time that there was a graduate student at VIMS who is doing a PhD on spiny butterfly rays and she would have loved to have had those. Hopefully, next year maybe we can accommodate her. She also advised me that in her opinion the Mid-Atlantic is sort of the epicenter of batoid diversity in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean.

She and I are probably going to work with the NEAMAP guys to try and put out some peer-reviewed information on a lot of the skate catches that we have been making. We catch a lot of clearnose skates and winter skates and little skates and few thornies up there. We're working on that. I've also talked to the NEAMAP folks, Chris Bonzak and Jim Gartland at VIMS, about collaborating to try and compile some information on Atlantic sturgeon distribution offshore from our two programs.

I'm sure we could work with SEAMAP to compile their information as well and try and basically do an update of the paper that we did in 2007 that looked at Atlantic sturgeon distribution from our cruise samples up to that point. I think that is pretty much it, Mr. Chairman. I'd be happy to answer any questions if anybody has got any.

I've already updated everybody on the American Eel Status Review earlier in the week. I haven't heard anything new on red knots or sea turtles, but Mr. Woodward did give me an earful about some potential issues arising with chairs left on the beach and interference with sea turtle nesting. I'll be talking to our endangered species folks about that and giving them a heads-up that there may be some concern there. That concludes my report.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, I'll keep this brief. It has been fairly quiet in Georgia with regards to finfish issues. The one Wilson just brought up really is a shore protection issue more so than anything else. That is where our battles lay right now is more the coastal marshlands and shore protection issues.

I will say that shrimp continues to be an issue. We've had roughly an average spring and summer that just fell off the table at the end of the summer and towards the fall. Black gill was just through the roof and so we've got a cooperative study going on with Skidaway Institute of Marine Science or Institute of Oceanography. It is funded through the Georgia Sea Grant Program and a few others.

That is really one of the major concerns I think not only in Georgia but South Carolina and Northeast Florida as well is just the occurrence of black gill. The price remains high, eight dollars plus a pound for sizable shrimp. With that, I will just close and say we're happy to have had you this week. I hope you have had a good time with the three good days of weather we had. We look forward to seeing you on Jekyll Island next year.

MR. WILLIAMS: First off, let me thank you for your hospitality. It is really good to come back to the South Atlantic Council. I used to serve on this council a couple of decades ago, I guess. It

is good to come back and see everybody. I would make one note. When I came back to the Gulf Council, I was really impressed with the expansion of the staff and their ability to hire really good people. I will just say I've seen the same thing here, bigger staff.

Bob and Gregg have done a really good job hiring good people. I'm really impressed with the competency that you've got here. I'll note and I'll tell you I look forward to seeing all of you again in Key West in June. I hope we have a good productive meeting down there. The big issue, as you might expect with the Gulf Council, has been red snapper.

We had webinar meeting, something new to me, earlier this week; and we increased the ABC for Gulf red snapper from 11 million pounds to a little over 14 million for this year. Much of that increase – I guess most of that increase came from the recalibration of the MRIP estimates of catch. That, of course, generates some controversy in itself since the recreational people feel that they should be entitled to that.

In fact, we will consider in red snapper in Reef Fish Amendment 28, which is a reallocation amendment giving all of that to them. I don't know if we'll do it or not, but it is something that the council is considering. At our last meeting we approved an amendment to separate the recreational sector into a private boat sector and into a for-hire sector.

It is an issue that really is generated by the very short seasons in red snapper. Red snapper, like your black sea bass, is one of those things that it is great to have the success, but there are a lot of problems associated with success. It just really consumes most of our time nowadays. In this case you have very short recreational seasons.

It has become a derby fishery for recreational red snapper. It really works against the charter vessels or for-hire vessels. They need the longer seasons to be able to carry people out. We voted on a very close vote to partition the red snapper recreational fishery into a for-hire sector and a private boat sector. Like VMS, not all for-hire fishermen were in favor of this.

Some of them were adamantly opposed to it and would prefer to stay under the old way of doing it. The new plan, if it is approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service, will give 42 percent of the allocation to the charterboats and the remainder to the private boats. We put in at the last minute a three-year sunset on it; so after it is approved, we will have to review it in three years and decide whether to continue it or whether to get out of it and go to something else. There are other proposals being considered by the council to try to solve some of these problems.

One is reallocation from the commercial fishery to the recreational fishery; and there are various ways of doing it. One of them is to give all the increase in the estimates of recreational catch from the MRIP recalibration to the recreational fishermen. Another is to grant any increases in the future – 75 percent of the increases would go to the recreational and the remainder to the commercial fishery. I don't know which one we'll settle on.

I don't even know when we will go final hearing on it, but it probably will be this year sometime. We're also taking up – as you know, red snapper is managed with an individual

fisherman's quota. That has been a really successful program; but on the other hand it has got a lot of problems associated with it, even so.

We will go to hearing I believe this month, scoping hearings on ways to try to modify that program that solves or at least ameliorates some of the problems associated with it. One thing I left out was another way we are considering trying to solve the derby fishery in the recreational red snapper is with a regional management approach where each state would be able to set their own harvesting regime. They'd be given a portion of the recreational allocation; and they would have to stay within that. That is not without its problems either.

It has been hard to get a consensus among the states. They do work with one another trying to come up, but there are going to be winners and losers in it; so it has not been an easy thing to do. I would also I guess note, since we talked about mackerel, is we will go to scoping on Mackerel Amendment 26 and 28 next month on the Gulf side. I think that's all I have. Thank you.

MR. BREWER: Roy, is there any word on what the projected recreational season will be this year, the length of the recreational season this year for red snapper?

MR. WILLIAMS: It was not given to us during our webinar. I don't know what it is. It is likely to be short in the federal zone. Some of it was dependent upon what the states did, because the states – well, in some ways or another every state is now inconsistent with Gulf red snapper. Depending upon what NMFS estimates will be caught in state waters prior to the opening of our season and after the opening of our season will affect the length of that. Chester, I don't know what it is.

MR. HARTIG: The only question I had, Roy, is in that recalibration; was any of the for-hire intercepts included in that? When they recalibrated the for-hire, they use that different metric to intercept the later trips. Were for-hire included in that or not?

MR. WILLIAMS: In the recalibration? That is what drove the increase.

MR. HARTIG: No, I know the increase was driven by the intercepts, but I didn't know if for-hire was included in that extra time? To me it sounded like they went to where they intercepted the catches later and they got higher numbers. That is just what I said and so that has been all recalibrated back in the assessment; but to me that seemed to be mostly private boats that they intercepted. That is why I was asking if it throws another monkey wrench into people going – you know, this was based on just private. I didn't know how much for-hire was included in that; that was all my question was.

DR. PONWITH: I'd be careful about assigning the whole jump in the ABC to exclusively the recalibration. Certainly, recalibration played a factor in that change, but this was also as a result of an update stock assessment. The stock is rebuilding; so there is some portion of the change was due to the recalibration and some portion of the change was to an increase in health of that stock due to the hard work of the fishing industry, both commercial and recreational alike.

You're correct; the recalibration had a different influence on the change in recreational landings and those differences could be from state to state. They could be from gear to gear, whether it is the private boat or the for-hire. Certainly, the for-hire, there were changes in the intercept patterns, but my understanding from the reading that I've done is that those changes were not as profound on the for-hire as they were on the private boats. They all contributed but probably disproportionately the changes to the private boat estimates were higher.

MR. HARTIG: Any other questions for Roy? **Bob, upcoming meetings and other business.

MR. MAHOOD: We have our advisory panel meetings in April. The 7th and 8th will be the habitat meetings and the following week, beginning on the 13th through the 16th, we have three AP meetings. I know a number of folks have asked to come to them, so we should have a pretty good number of council members.

Then, of course, the big one is in June, the joint Gulf Council meeting. We have set aside Thursday for the joint part of the session. Right after this meeting, I will be getting with Doug in laying out the detailed agenda of how we're going to lay it. We have a number of items we have to address jointly. It should take all day, I think. Once we get by that, we'll move on to the next mountain to climb.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions to Bob? Seeing none; is there any other business to come before the council? Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: Since we're introducing people, I think most of you have met Erika Burgess. She is going to be our new person representing the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, but she will be coming with me to a number of meetings. That is why she is at the table this week. Welcome to Erika.

MR. HARTIG: Is there any other business to come before the council? Seeing none; the council session is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 1:25 o'clock p.m., March 6, 2015.)

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

2014 Council Membership

COUNCIL CHAIRMAN:

Ben Hartig

9277 Sharon Street
Hobe Sound, FL 33455
772/546-1541 (ph)
mackattackben@att.net

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Dr. Michelle Duval

NC Division of Marine Fisheries
3441 Arendell St.
(PO Box 769)
Morehead City, NC 28557
252/808-8011 (ph); 252/726-0254 (f)
michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov

Robert E. Beal

Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
Commission
1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 20001
703/842-0740 (ph); 703/842-0741 (f)
rbeal@asmfc.org

Mel Bell

S.C. Dept. of Natural Resources
Marine Resources Division
P.O. Box 12559
(217 Ft. Johnson Road)
Charleston, SC 29422-2559
843/953-9007 (ph)
843/953-9159 (fax)
bellm@dnr.sc.gov

Anna Beckwith

1907 Paulette Road
Morehead City, NC 28557
252/671-3474 (ph)
AnnaBarriosBeckwith@gmail.com

Zack Bowen

P.O. Box 30825
Savannah, GA 31410
912/398-3733 (ph)
fishzack@comcast.net

W. Chester Brewer

250 Australian Ave. South
Suite 1400
West Palm Beach, FL 33408
561/655-4777 (ph)
WCBLAW@aol.com

Mark Brown

3642 Pandora Drive
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466
843/881-9735 (ph); 843/881-4446 (f)
capt.markbrown@comcast.net

Chris Conklin

P.O. Box 972
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
843/543-3833
conklinsafmc@gmail.com

Jack Cox

2010 Bridges Street
Morehead City, NC 28557
252/728-9548
Dayboat1965@gmail.com

Dr. Roy Crabtree

Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
727/824-5301 (ph); 727/824-5320 (f)
roy.crabtree@noaa.gov

LT Morgan Fowler

U.S. Coast Guard
510 SW 11th Court
Fort Lauderdale FL 33315
morgan.m.fowler@uscg.mil

Doug Haymans

Coastal Resources Division
GA Dept. of Natural Resources
One Conservation Way, Suite 300
Brunswick, GA 31520-8687
912/264-7218 (ph); 912/262-2318 (f)
doughaymans@gmail.com

Deirdre Warner-Kramer

Office of Marine Conservation
OES/OMC
2201 C Street, N.W.
Department of State, Room 5806
Washington, DC 20520
202/647-3228 (ph); 202/736-7350 (f)
Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

Dr. Wilson Laney

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
South Atlantic Fisheries Coordinator
P.O. Box 33683
Raleigh, NC 27695-7617
(110 Brooks Ave)
237 David Clark Laboratories,
NCSU Campus
Raleigh, NC 27695-7617)
919/515-5019 (ph)
919/515-4415 (f)
Wilson_Laney@fws.gov

Jessica McCawley

Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
2590 Executive Center Circle E.,
Suite 201
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850/487-0554 (ph); 850/487-4847(f)
jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com

Charles Phillips

Phillips Seafood / Sapelo Sea Farms
1418 Sapelo Avenue, N.E.
Townsend, GA 31331
912/832-4423 (ph); 912/832-6228 (f)
Ga_capt@yahoo.com

SPUD WOODWARD

ROBERT BOYLES

BONNIE POWERS

JACK MCGOVERN

MONICA SMIT-BRUNELLO

ROY WILLIAMS

ERIKA BURGESS

DWANE HARRIS

SP. AGT. TRACEY WOODRUFF

IRIS LOWERY

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Staff

Executive Director

✓ Robert K. Mahood
robert.mahood@safmc.net

Deputy Executive Director

✓ Gregg T. Waugh
gregg.waugh@safmc.net

Public Information Officer

✓ Kim Iverson
kim.iverson@safmc.net

Fishery Outreach Specialist

✓ Amber Von Harten
amber.vonharten@safmc.net

Senior Fishery Biologist

✓ Roger Pugliese
roger.pugliese@safmc.net

Fishery Scientist

✓ Myra Brouwer
myra.brouwer@safmc.net

Fishery Biologist

✓ Dr. Mike Errigo
mike.errigo@safmc.net

Fisheries Social Scientist

✓ Dr. Kari MacLauchlin
kari.maclauchlin@safmc.net

Fishery Scientist

✓ Chip Collier
chip.collier@safmc.net

Staff Economist

✓ Dr. Brian Chevront
brian.chevront@safmc.net

Science and Statistics Program Manager

✓ John Carmichael
john.carmichael@safmc.net

SEDAR Coordinators

Dr. Julie Neer - julie.neer@safmc.net
Julia Byrd - julia.byrd@safmc.net

Administrative Officer

✓ Mike Collins
mike.collins@safmc.net

Financial Secretary

Debra Buscher
deb.buscher@safmc.net

Admin. Secretary / Travel Coordinator

Cindy Chaya
cindy.chaya@safmc.net

Purchasing & Grants

✓ Julie O'Dell
julie.odell@safmc.net

FULL COUNCIL - ROLL CALL VOTE

Date: March 2015

Meeting Location:

Issue:

BLUELINE

EMERGENCY ACTION ON ~~COASTAL~~ TILEFISH

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

Statement regarding BOEM & SMZs presented to the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council

I'm David Kyler with Center for a Sustainable Coast, a 501-c-3 organization established in 1997. The Center advocates responsible decisions that sustain the quality of life and environment in coastal Georgia.

I wanted to comment today to connect two issues – the first is your consideration of Special Management Zones (SMZs) as a tool to provide spawning and habitat protections for deep-water snapper and grouper species. I support the creation of these zones and giving snapper/grouper off the Georgia coast protected habitat within which to repopulate, free of the pressure from anglers.

Surely this kind of policy will be increasingly essential to the recovery and vitality of Georgia's economically and environmentally important marine fisheries. By our reckoning, in coastal Georgia alone, as a mainstay of recreational fishing, these fisheries help generate more than a half billion dollars a year in local business activity. Overall, the eco-tourism sector on Georgia's coast brings in about \$2 billion annually and supports, directly and indirectly, some 40,000 jobs. Therefore, it's not only environmentally responsible to protect spawning areas – it's in our region's own economic self-interest, both in the short term and over the decades ahead.

The second issue is BOEM's proposed oil exploration and drilling.

It makes no sense to jeopardize Georgia's prized coastal resources and quality of life by allowing risky, destructive oil-company testing and drilling for fossil fuels - especially when the U.S. is already exporting surplus oil and gas. To the contrary, there is national strategic interest in conserving these resources.

Both the exploration methods and drilling are destructive, putting our communities, marshes, fisheries, and wildlife at serious risk. Seismic air-gun blasts used in trying to find oil and gas offshore are linked to fatal injuries to marine mammals. Safer forms of exploration are available but aren't being proposed. If the science about air-guns is inconclusive as some claim, surely we must responsibly apply the Precautionary Principle and avoid harm to our living ocean resources.

The reason I raise these two issues in this context is because the creation of SMZs may provide additional protections for our fisheries against activities associated with energy exploration.

SMZs would also be categorized as Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) [~~Legal reference or citation??~~]. HAPCs are high priority areas for conservation and management because they are rare, sensitive, or otherwise important to ecosystem function.

Any federal agency that undertakes, funds or authorizes an action that may adversely affect HAPCs is required to consult with NOAA and provide an assessment of possible impacts. In this case, BOEM would have to first consult with NOAA for seismic testing, drilling, building platforms etc. And during a consultation this body (SAFMC) would have the opportunity to express your concerns directly to BOEM.

If you decide to move forward with SMZs, in addition to the intended benefits for snapper and grouper species, the creation of these areas could also serve as another, possibly valuable checkpoint to help avoid the potentially devastating effects of seismic testing and drilling on the fishery and the U.S. Southeast coast in general.

Thank you.



David Kyler, Executive Director
Center for a Sustainable Coast

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Full Council Meeting

Friday, March 6, 2015

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Rushby Anderson SFAECS	386-239-0948	DSF2009@aol.com	32120-9351 PO Box 9351 Daytona Beach, FL
Lora Clark Pew	631-379-6718		
Susan Shipman	912-222-9206	SusanShipman@att.net	
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ballenger, Joseph	ballengerj@dnr.sc.gov	Mar 06, 2015	12:23 PM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hogan, LeAnn	leann.southward-hoga...	Mar 06, 2015	10:49 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	[, k	kpamyah@yahoo.com	Mar 06, 2015	10:32 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brennan, Ken	Kenneth.Brennan@noaa...	Mar 06, 2015	10:31 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	plowden, david	dplowden@ec.rr.com	Mar 06, 2015	10:17 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lee, jennifer	Jennifer.Lee@noaa.gov	Mar 06, 2015	9:34 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ortiz, delisse	delisse.ortiz@noaa.g...	Mar 06, 2015	9:32 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Package..., Christina	christina.package-wa...	Mar 06, 2015	9:29 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bademan, Martha	martha.bademan@myfwc...	Mar 06, 2015	9:27 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bailey, Adam	adam.bailey@noaa.gov	Mar 06, 2015	9:23 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Takade-..., Helen	htakade@edf.org	Mar 06, 2015	9:18 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	McCoy, Sherri	sherrim@wildoceanmar...	Mar 06, 2015	9:15 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sedberry, George	george.sedberry@noaa...	Mar 06, 2015	9:14 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	pugliese, roger	roger.pugliese@safmc...	Mar 06, 2015	9:02 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ward, Leslie	leslie.ward@myfwc.com	Mar 06, 2015	9:01 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clarke, Lora	lclarke@pewtrusts.org	Mar 06, 2015	8:51 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alvarado, Nicolas	Nicolas.Alvarado@noa...	Mar 06, 2015	8:35 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Malinowski, Rich	rich.malinowski@noaa...	Mar 06, 2015	8:35 AM EST
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Raine, Karen	karen.raine@noaa.gov	Mar 06, 2015	8:26 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	c, m	mec181@yahoo.com	Mar 06, 2015	8:24 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Zoodsma, Barb	barb.zoodsma@noaa.gov	Mar 06, 2015	8:24 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Erwin, Gwen	gwen.erwin@myfwc.com	Mar 06, 2015	8:19 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Powell, Jessica	jessica.powell@noaa....	Mar 06, 2015	8:14 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Engleby, Laura	laura.Engleby@noaa.g...	Mar 06, 2015	8:11 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gerhart, Susan	susan.gerhart@noaa.g...	Mar 06, 2015	7:45 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DeVictor, Rick	rick.devictor@noaa.g...	Mar 06, 2015	7:41 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mansfield, Bill	billman@ec.rr.com	Mar 05, 2015	2:33 PM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DuBeck, Guy	guy.dubeck@noaa.gov	Mar 04, 2015	11:31 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	vara, mary	mary.vara@noaa.gov	Mar 04, 2015	10:11 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Herndon, Andrew	andrew.herndon@noaa...	Feb 13, 2015	8:16 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Byrd, j	julia.byrd@safmc.net	Feb 12, 2015	10:06 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FARMER, NICHOLAS	nick.farmer@noaa.gov	Feb 11, 2015	12:39 PM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mehta, Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov	Feb 11, 2015	11:55 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	sandorf, scott	scott.sandorf@noaa.g...	Feb 11, 2015	11:48 AM EST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clemens, Anik	anik.clemens@noaa.gov	Feb 11, 2015	11:48 AM EST

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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

PUBLIC COMMENT ATTENDANCE RECORD
March 2015 Council Meeting

LOCATION OF MEETING

DATE

St. Simons Island, GA March 5, 2015
Leda Dunmore



Check here if your contact information is on file. Provide your name and any updates below.

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

EMAIL ADDRESS

The Pew Charitable Trusts

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

Commercial

Charter/For-Hire

NGO

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Recreational

Other

Describe

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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

PUBLIC COMMENT ATTENDANCE RECORD
March 2015 Council Meeting

LOCATION OF MEETING

DATE

St. Simons Island, GA March 5, 2015



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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

Ron Surrancey

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

Commercial

Charter/For-Hire

NGO

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Recreational

Other

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St. Simons Island, GA

March 5, 2015

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

David Kyle Kyle

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

912 506 5088

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

Center for a Sustainable Coast
221 Mallory St. Suite B St. Simons Island GA 31522

EMAIL ADDRESS

Susdev@gate.net

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

Commercial

Charter/For-Hire

NGO

Recreational

Other

Describe

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Center for a Sustainable Coast

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March 5, 2015

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Rusty Hudson

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

386-239-0948

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

PO Bx 9351 Daytona Beach, FL 32120-9351

EMAIL ADDRESS

DSF2009@aol.com

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

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NGO

Recreational

Other

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BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

DAVID NIELSEN

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

Commercial

Charter/For-Hire

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Describe

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

Brad Whipple

508-269-2378

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

4501 SW 44th Ave. Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33314

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

Commercial

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NGO

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Other

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

NUNO Almeida

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

561-906-0002

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

455 Cresta circle West Palm Beach FL

EMAIL ADDRESS

Transportpb@yahoo.com

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

33413

Commercial Charter/For-Hire NGO

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Almeida Fisheries Inc

Recreational Other Describe

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

HOWARD RAE

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

1673 NE 36th St OAKLAND PK FL 33330

EMAIL ADDRESS

RAEH@pelkouth.net

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

Commercial Charter/For-Hire NGO

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Recreational Other Describe

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

Randy MAUCHESTER

954 632 9492

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

640 SW 8th term Ft Lauderdale FL 33315

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

CRABSKUS61@gmail.com



Commercial



Charter/For-Hire



NGO



Recreational



Other

Describe

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

Lora Clarke

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)



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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

Susan Shipman

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

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YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

Robert Emmitt Nolan Jr

912-265-9010

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

1510 Newcastle Street Brunswick, Georgia 31520

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTOR (Please check all that apply)

Commercial

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BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Congress Buddy Carter's office

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