

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Savannah Hilton DeSoto Hotel  
Savannah, Georgia**

**MARCH 7, 2012**

### **SUMMARY MINUTES**

#### **Committee Members:**

Robert Boyles, Chair  
Lt. Robert Foos  
Jessica McCawley

Mac Currin  
Duane Harris  
Tom Swatzel

#### **Council Members:**

David Cupka  
Tom Burgess  
Dr. Michelle Duval  
Dr. Wilson Laney

Ben Hartig  
Dr. Roy Crabtree  
Doug Haymans  
Charlie Phillips

#### **Council Staff:**

Bob Mahood  
Kim Iverson  
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Anna Martin  
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
John Carmichael  
Julie O'Dell

Gregg Waugh  
Andrea Grabman  
Myra Brouwer  
Dr. Mike Errigo  
Dr. Brian Chevront  
Mike Collins

#### **Observers/Participants:**

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Emily Muehlstein  
Martha Bademan  
Phil Steele  
Amber VonHarten  
Bob Gill

Dr. Jack McGovern  
Otha Easley  
Scott Sandorf  
Andy Strelcheck  
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith  
Anna Beckwith

Additional observers listed at back of document

The Information and Education Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Madison Ballroom of the Savannah Hilton DeSoto Hotel, March 7, 2012, and was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Robert H. Boyles, Jr.

MR. BOYLES: Good morning, everyone; I'd like to call to order the meeting of the Information and Education Committee. My name is Robert Boyles; I'm the chairman. The first order of business this morning is to approve the agenda as it was submitted. Any additions or corrections or deletions to the agenda? Seeing none, any objection to approving the agenda as submitted? Seeing none the agenda is approved.

Next is approval of our December 2011 Meeting Minutes, which were also submitted on the briefing book. Any corrections, additions or deletions to those minutes? Seeing none, any objection to the approval of those minutes? Seeing none, the minutes are approved. Next we'll turn it over to Kim talk to us about the Snapper Grouper AP recommendations with respect to outreach.

MS. IVERSON: If you remember back at our December meeting, we took a quick look at the recommendations that the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel had made in regards to outreach, and that's Attachment 1 in your briefing book materials. I went through and highlighted in red some of the recommendations that are relevant to outreach specifically.

Most of it came from Rob Harris, our advisory panel member from down in the Florida Keys, who has been actively involved with outreach in that area. Some of the recommendations involved having workshops for Q&A sessions similar to the Q&A sessions that we hold here at our council meetings; some evaluation of our Newsletter and other outreach tools; to develop a matrix that would show when fisheries are opened and closed, and that would be changing and updating regularly.

I believe that North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries does something similar on their website, so that's something that we could definitely do. Moving through, he emphasized the need to speak in plain language, to simplify terms and not speak with acronyms. We have a new document format.

Gregg was telling me just before the meeting started that he has been getting a lot of positive responses from the council members and members of the public that are using or that are reading the documents in the new format. We are working with the regional office right now to set up some workshops for tech staff members and all of our staff on plain language, speaking in plain language.

Allison Garrett, who works with Kim Amendola down at the regional office, has been in contact with me on setting up some sort of webinar when we have online training on "Plain Speak". They're four-hour seminars and we've been sent the powerpoint and we're just trying to work it out when the majority of our staff can tune in and receive that plain language training.

I think Rick DeVictor from the regional office has developed a powerpoint presentation on plain language and has given it to the Gulf Council and may be able to come and give it to our council as well. There are some other things that are relevant specific to the advisory panels and the advisory processes that are highlighted there.

I don't want to get into all of the details but you have them listed there in the list of recommendations. One of the things is to engage the advisory panels. I think quite honestly this council does a wonderful job of engaging its advisory panels and the advisory panels meet more frequently now than I recall in recent years.

We do have a series of advisory panel meetings that are coming up in April, and I've asked for some agenda time at each of those meetings to talk with the advisory panel members about our outreach efforts, talk to them about the advisory panel process just to refresh the new members on our advisory panels on what their role is and how the process works.

I still think there is some confusion as to what the role of the advisory panels are versus the council committees and the process that goes through when amendments are developed; also how to do a better job in defining what scoping and public hearings, the difference between that and when we go out and solicit comments to the public. I have been granted that time and I look forward to attending each of the advisory panel meetings in April.

Also, there are the recommendations with getting word out. We do press releases and news releases that go out to all of those media and also using social media. I think we're going to hear a lot more about that this morning from Emily and from Amber. That's kind of a quick run through the list. I believe you have it as Attachment 1 in your briefing book materials, and I'd just like to get some of the committee's input.

MR. BOYLES: Thank you for that presentation and also thanks to Rob for helping us tackle this vexing and challenging task and navigate this complicated world of fisheries management. Comments on what Kim has presented on the recommendations from the AP? Mac.

MR. CURRIN: I appreciate Rob taking a lot of time, obviously, to give this a lot of thought and talked to people about how the process could be improved. I looked at it in pretty good detail and a lot of things are not really the purview of the – not so much the purview but the responsibility of the council.

A lot of the problems he has are the responsibility of the AP members and the people who would like to be engaged in this process. It requires work on their part and I'll tell him that when I see him in April. The one thing that struck me that he said that I thought we should give some real thought to is some way of getting back to the AP, after the council has received AP recommendations and then has acted; and if in some instances the council goes in a different direction than the AP recommendation, they feel that we owe them some sort of explanation about that.

Now, that is contained in the minutes and they could dig it out, I guess, but I think it's worth giving some thought to trying to get our staff or let us do a little bit of that work for them rather

than have them dig through untold pages of snapper grouper minutes every meeting, to give them a little bit of an explanation or rationale as to why the council went against their advice.

That may go a long way towards smoothing some of the relations with not only the Snapper Grouper AP but perhaps some other APs. That's kind of a common complaint that we hear is that here we spend our time and we give you all this great advice and then you do something different. Well, in some cases we can't do what they say. It doesn't meet the standards of the law or we have some other rationale for going another way, and they just would like to have a little handier explanation of that. I think that's worth giving some thought to.

MR. HARRIS: I agree with what Mac said. I think the AP does deserve some kind of feedback once they give us their advice and we take action on those issues. The specific issues that they give us advice on and we take action on, we should give them feedback. We shouldn't require them to dig through the minutes.

I don't like digging through the minutes myself and I know fishermen and AP members don't like digging through minutes. Council staff do an outstanding job with this; but when we find some of our fishers asking questions about scoping and seeming to us to not understand what the scoping process is all about, it's still their perception and we have to address that.

We can't just ignore it because we think they're way off base in their comments. I think we have an obligation to figure out, okay, what did we do wrong, how are we not communicating properly with those people, and we just have to pay attention to what they're telling us and then react to it.

MR. HARTIG: I'm not on your committee, but if someone would make a motion to that effect it may be a stronger signal sent to staff on how we deal with this issue, and I think it's a great idea. I think it's well worth pursuing.

MR. GILL: Mr. Chairman, if you'd like I'd share with you – we have the same problem, of course, on the Gulf Council, and I'll share with you the approach that we're partly doing and partly not doing but at least embarking on the direction. I may have addressed this at a previous council meeting here, but we have a two-step process to inform the AP members.

One is that the staff lead for that AP will e-mail the results of the relevant committee minutes and the relevant council minutes and the council motions relative to their issues. The second part is that becomes part of their briefing book prior to their next meeting to refresh their memory. We try to do the same thing and it seems fairly simple. It accomplishes exactly what you all were talking about and it seems like a good path to follow.

MR. BOYLES: Thanks, Bob, it's always helpful to know what our brethren in the Gulf are doing. I appreciate your perspective on that. Ben made a suggestion – Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Just to let you know that we had a situation with Snapper Grouper Amendment 15A that we'll be talking about later where we had an incorrect preferred, and we've already put a process in place where we're going to use the committee report that once the council has taken

action, then that will be – and we're still working on the name of it, but a final committee report and that will show the council actions on all the committee motions. Then the Tuesday after a council meeting our staff will get together and go through that and make sure we have all the actions correct.

Then we will modify the decision document so that then the decision document, which already reflects what the AP recommendations are, will have the committee and council actions. Then once that is available, we can distribute that to the AP and that's what our staff will be using with the IPTs to make sure we track all the council actions.

Those are two things we can send them, the decision document and the final committee report that shows council actions. The nice thing about the decision document is it has the AP recommendations and the SSC recommendations, any public hearing comments and then shows what the council did. We will have that operational starting next week.

MR. CURRIN: Gregg, I think that's great and that is going to get us 80 to 90 percent where I believe they would like to be. What is missing from that is the explanation of the rationale that the council used, when we do a good job of that, to choose a particular alternative or action as opposed to the one perhaps that the AP chose.

To be honest with you, every time we can and it makes sense, I feel like we do a good job of seriously considering the AP recommendations and oftentimes selecting those, but there are certainly times when we do not or cannot for some particular reason. I'd just rather than a motion of any sort, Robert, I'd just like to ask that the staff think about how we can bridge that gap a little bit or perhaps more.

I don't want to direct you how to do it because I don't know the best way to do it, but give it some thought and see if we can add another 5 or 10 percent to give them a little bit better comfort level and do it in an efficient manner so that it doesn't involve – minimize the amount of time you guys have to put into it. To do it a hundred percent is going to be very, very time-consuming for somebody. I don't think the staff has got enough time to devote to that particular issue, but it is important enough I think that we need to spend some time thinking about how we can get as close as we possibly can.

MR. BOYLES: Mac, I agree with you. I'm struck by the fact that we've changed – and I don't want to jump down the agenda about the public hearings and scopings, but I recall early on in my tenure on the council the public hearings were structured quite differently and I think a lot of our constituents wanted explanations for why the council had arrived at this particular decision. It strikes me that what I think we're looking for maybe what Rob and the AP have suggested is really a constant communication effort.

It's like painting the Golden Gate Bridge; you're never done. It strikes me that perhaps that we should all redouble our efforts certainly to communicate ex post these decisions with our constituents. Certainly, we hear from them after council meeting weeks, so I think this is one of these things that we're going to always have to struggle with.

MR. CURRIN: One more thing that just occurred to me; in fact all those explanations and the rationale that the council used are in the final document, so they need to understand that as well and that the documents are fluid until they're finalized. We may have a preferred going in that is different from what their suggestion was and that may change before the document is finalized.

Then when the document comes out, the rationale should be there and usually is for why the council went a particular direction. They need to be aware of that; and if they're asking every time there is an interaction, they need to understand that it's fluid and can change and we don't want to waste time giving two different explanations at two different times as well. Maybe that would satisfy them; I don't know.

MR. BOYLES: Further discussion on this topic? Okay, Kim, again, I appreciate the effort that the AP and Rob put into this, and I know it will be a fruitful discussion when you meet with them here in a couple of weeks. Next we'll move on to social media.

MS. IVERSON: At the December meeting we had a recommendation from our council on developing a smartphone app for regulations similar to the one that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council currently uses. We've moved forward with that and I went to the same vendor that the Gulf Council has used, OF Verona and Verona Solutions out of Miami.

I asked them to please send me a copy of some templates. Anyway, we have a contract now with Verona Solutions to develop our application. It will be similar to the one that the Gulf is using and it's in your briefing book. These are preliminary versions of the application. These are some preliminary designs and I welcome your input, but basically this would be the image that comes up when you see the application on your smartphone.

For those of you that aren't familiar with the Gulf Council app, I would encourage you to go to the iStore and download the application. We will have it for Droid and also for iPhone so it will be both an application. We were able to save some funding because we're using the same template that the Gulf Council used so the cost for the application development is going to be \$8,260, and that's for both the Droid and the iPhone, which is much less than the Gulf paid so we saved a little money by being second.

When you open the application, there will be several templates that you'll see. Again, these are draft. OF just wanted to make sure that we are covering all the needs that we have. We can add items here to the application. For sanctuaries and closures, we're looking at another part of the application that would have managed areas that would include the Coral HAPCs, SMZ information, Deepwater MPA information, all of that as part of the application.

Again, this is just a template so you can see where we're going with all of this. There will be disclaimer on there similar to our written regulations. I think we probably need to modify the language a wee bit on this disclaimer because it does point that you need to go to the council's website for the latest regulation as published, and I think we really need to – when we discussed this a little bit in December, it may direct them to the website but also point to the Code of Federal Regulations because that is indeed the law, and I feel more comfortable that they need to go to the CFRs.

We'll work with OF on that, but there again he just sent these quickly so that you would have an idea of what our application will look like. We'll have a list of species. One of the things that I would like to get some input and some direction from you is we currently only highlight the regulations for species that are managed by the council in our regulations brochure. We don't get into HMS and other regulations. I'm thinking from the staff's standpoint that it would be simply easier to do the same thing for our app.

For the Gulf Council they do HMS. They have a lot of other species that are included in the application. I spoke with Charlene Ponce at the Gulf Council and she said it does make it more difficult to keep up with the updates. I would ask for your input but basically you can scroll through and there will be a species list and they're alphabetized.

You can go in and find the species that you want and then find similar to our online regulations – you can open the individual species and there you would see – using banded rudderfish as an example here; again, not the content so much as just the layout and the colors and things like that currently we're looking at. Then you can see the information relative to that individual species.

I would appreciate some input from the committee and your recommendations on those species that we need to include in our application because we're to that point now where we need to let them know the regulations and go ahead and move forward.

MR. BOYLES: Thanks, Kim. I think this is exciting. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Kim, can I ask you about banded rudderfish regulations under there because really we don't have any regulations for banded rudderfish. Those were the state regulations under there right now.

MS. IVERSON: This is more design than content. I asked OF to go back and maybe to do some design work with species that we manage, and he was very kind to do that very quickly last week, but he sent red snapper as an example and red snapper regulations that weren't great, so I thought it may be safer that you go with banded rudderfish.

MR. HARTIG: Well, it's funny because it is a point of contention. The state does have a management plan for banded rudderfish but we list it as a management species. The state is in a precarious position where they can't really enforce their regulations out into federal waters, and about every three years we have a problem with the marine patrol that tries to do that. It's just one of those things that came up and it was interesting.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, I am not on your committee, but I do have an opinion. First of all with regard to the HMS species, I think we really need to include them because the general public doesn't know who is who and they're going for a one-stop shop. How much more was it to add my state-provided Blackberry format? You talked about iPod and Droid; can you not do Blackberry and cover everybody?

MS. IVERSON: I can ask. I don't think that's included in our cost, but I can certainly ask.

MR. HAYMANS: So you didn't ask about Blackberry. Everybody is just so Droid –

MS. IVERSON: I have a Blackberry for work, but that was the format that he came back and said that he would provide us with for the cost, but I can certainly ask.

MR. HAYMANS: Now, as far as other states, we are in the process of developing the same thing for the state of Georgia. Does it matter the format of the app or is it just going to be a link over to that state's format?

MS. IVERSON: It's my understanding that it would be a link. You can see here on this template that he put together quickly that there are state regulations. I believe the Gulf Council has as part of their app that it will take you to the state regulations.

MR. BOYLES: Doug, as far as the Blackberry, I think it's a conspiracy to get at the heart of research in motion I think. Duane.

MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman, there is no question about that. I'm looking at my IGFA app now, and Verona Solutions is the same company that did IGFA's app. This is the first app I ever paid for, \$7.99, and it broke my heart to have to pay that much for an app; but let me tell you, it's one of the best things I've ever done.

It has got all the world records on it, it has got the IGFA regulations and rules for world record catches, it has got links. This is the way to go if you're a fisherman and you want to pull up what the existing regulations are on a species. Back when this was a whole lot less complicated, I still couldn't remember what all the minimum sizes and bag limits were on everything. You just pull it up on, well, your iPhone or your Droid phone right now and you've got it right there at hand. I think this is the way to go and I'm happy that we're doing it.

MR. BOYLES: Duane, how far out is it functional offshore?

MR. HARRIS: Well, I'm an inshore fisherman so I don't know.

MR. CURRIN: And I don't know that either, but, Doug, your Blackberry, just get used to it, it is a dinosaur and it's going extinct. We don't know to be investing money in dinosaurs. (Laughter and applause)

MR. HAYMANS: Just some council members, right. (Laughter)

MR. CURRIN: That's right, exactly. Regarding the state regulations, I think Ben has got a real good point, and I think where there are different state regulations, if we could just have a little link – you know, have each state listed NCFL; whatever that they can click for additional information on state regulations, that might be useful. I'm okay with HMS stuff being added. I don't think we need to get too far beyond that, though, and start adding other things. We've got enough species to deal with.



LT. FOOS: I would echo what basically everybody has said and say that this is an outstanding tool that I'm looking forward to being implemented. Talking about referring them to the CFRs, I think that would kind of get us back to kind of putting everything in layman's terms. Being council members and being enforcement members, we know how to read the CFRs, but what I think the general public will be looking for is something that explains it very easily instead of having to figure out what the "shall" and "may" and the "should" and the numbers all equate to and wanting to see it on a line-by-line species.

Not knowing how much of a time drain in regards to how many species to have, whether just the South Atlantic's or other councils, not knowing the time drain, I think as many as we can within a reasonable time, staff/council, would benefit the fishermen overall or at least be able to link them to where they would be able to find that information. As far as how far offshore it works, it depends on the population center you're off of, but you can get it as far as ten or twelve nautical miles, but typically not further than that.

MS. McCAWLEY: A lot of what I was going to say has already been said, but, yes, I'm really excited about this, also. I was thinking about what we have up there on the screen right now; I agree with Robert that it would be difficult to try to navigate the CFR, but I think that maybe having something about that in the disclaimer as well as something in the disclaimer – I see it says, "Regulations" and "do not include those of surrounding states," but maybe as part of the disclaimer, strengthen that, that there might be different regulations in state waters versus federal waters.

MR. HARRIS: With respect to that warning, is it proper to say that those regulations are published by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council? Okay.

MS. IVERSON: And was my point; and there again this is a draft. He sent this out very quickly, and that was my point is that I don't want them to think that we are the official agency for all the regulations, that the Code of Federal Regulations is actually where the official regulations reside. We do our best to summarize it, but there may be something that is incorrect and if it had to go to court or something like that, we would want to have that in there. I think we can modify that language, and I appreciate your input.

DR. CRABTREE: Along the lines we were talking about, the regulations and the CFR, we're beginning a process of rewriting and reorganizing all of our regulations. The goal is to kind of group regulations for reef fish and mackerel and some of those things together to make them a little more comprehensible to the public, because it is awful hard to go in them the way they're organized right now to find anything. We're going to try and fix that over the next year.

MR. HAYMANS: I understand the disclaimer with printed regulations. We have the same issue; we print regulations once a year and we change regulations multiple times in a year, and so for the most current format you've got to go somewhere else. I'm curious in the social media forum that you guys had, you can change it at a moment's notice.

We do I think through instant media have a more stringent requirement to make sure that the regulations are current. I know that's tough but at the same time when we change it – we change something here, we can change it that afternoon on the web. I guess I'm asking does that change

our disclaimer in any way. If an angler goes on here to get a regulation, he expects it to be right the day he goes out.

MS. IVERSON: And it's my understanding that the update of this is going to be a simple – it will be like updating a website. There is a website, you go in and update it. The question came up how effective is this offshore? Well, basically you get the alert that you need to update the app, you update it before you go offshore, and then you don't need your signal. You just look at the application and you have the latest. But it will go back to us to keep that updated; and you're right, Doug, it will be done in a timely manner, but still pointing to the official regulations.

I think we need to point to the Code of Federal Regulations. Even when you go to the National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office, they have the CFRs there and a link to the – I mean the link to the CFRs that they note that the official regulations reside with the Code of Federal Regulations.

MR. HARRIS: Is this going to be a free app?

MS. IVERSON: Yes.

DR. LANEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on your committee either. This speaks to different regulations being in different areas, and it occurs to me to just point out that some of the national parks and national wildlife refuges also would have regulations relevant to fishing mostly in inshore waters.

They're not going to have anything offshore that would be within the council jurisdiction, but there again, Kim, it might be advisable to have links to those. I think those are in the CFR. Monica may know the answer to that, but I believe all those would be in the CFR as well for anywhere there is anything different.

I know in Everglades National Park at least the spotted seatrout regulations used to be different from the state regulations, and Roy may know the answer to that, but just something else to consider when you're trying to make sure that they have current regulations on their application or links to them.

MR. HARTIG: I'm not on your committee, but I had a question. Many of you know I'm electronically challenged, but if you were on land and had a signal and you had a handheld device; could you store that information and then be able get to it offshore? Thanks, Emily; okay, great. That's cool.

MS. IVERSON: Yes, that's the beauty of the app is that it gives you an alert. Once you download the app, you get an alert. There may be two updates and so as a fisherman, before you launch your boat at a ramp or you leave the dock, you can look and say, "Oh, there are two updates, I need to hit that." I have a signal, I get the updates and now I go off for the day and I have everything at hand. I don't need a signal; I can be a hundred miles offshore and I don't need that signal.

MR. BOYLES: Further discussion? I think this is terrific! Emily and Bob, thank you for breaking trail for us on this one. I think it's an exciting development. We're going to move on now and talk about expand our horizons a little bit with the Social Media Workshop. We've got Amber Von Harten from South Carolina Sea Grant. Amber, it's always nice to see you.

MS. VON HARTEN: Thanks to Kim and the council for having me here today. Back in October or actually before that, Kim and Andrea and I had a conversation about how do we start effectively using all these different social media platforms to convey not just fisheries information but any kind of message through a state agency or a non-profit organization.

I found this graphic online and to me it kind of conveys a lot of people's feeling about social media as it can be pretty overwhelming and all the different strategies that you have to think about engaging your stakeholders with using social media. We decided to host a workshop with Sea Grant and the council to bring together folks that are using social media different platforms to find out how they're using them – we covered seven different platforms that I'll briefly talk about in this presentation – and trying to figure out how all these different agencies and groups are developing these effective strategies to engage with their stakeholders.

Then at the end of the workshop we also talked about some of the challenges and opportunities that you have with social media. I want to see a show of hands; how many people use some kind of – how many council and staff use some kind of social media; Facebook, Twitter, whatever? Okay, so a good number of you; that's great.

Many of you have probably seen this image before, social explained, and it lists all the different platforms that are there and what people do when they post, using all these different platforms; so Twitter, I need to eat a doughnut; Facebook, I just ate a doughnut; Four Square is where you ate your doughnut; and You Tube, watching you eat a doughnut by posting a video and linked in is the professional network where I'm good at eating doughnuts.

That's kind of how these different platforms can be used, and so we wanted to figure out why are people interested in posting what they're doing and how can we engage them in two-way communication. So a couple of platforms that we started looking at – and we had speakers come into the workshop from different agencies that are using these platforms.

We had some folks come in and talk about Facebook and Twitter. The South Carolina Aquarium gave a really good presentation about some of their strategies and how they are particularly using Facebook and Twitter and came up with these five points that they kind of use as their guiding policies for operating.

First they tried to establish and build a presence, almost like a branding initiative, for their organization to help market what messages they're trying to convey. Obviously, when you have these social media platforms, they have to be active. You have to maintain them, which takes a time commitment, but they can't be static, which is what is so neat about these social media platforms as compared to, say, like a website which oftentimes can just be static.

Engage; you start to develop relationships with your stakeholders, and like I said it's a two-way communication. This is a quote from one of the speakers; "Know your audience and what they're interested in." Facebook allows two-way communication, so it's important to get people engaged and get them posting on your social media sites.

Influence; you can actually provide positive experiences for your stakeholders, involve them in Q&A sessions, quizzes, photo contests, things like that. Those are kind a different level to engage your stakeholders. And then monitor your sites; you have to listen and learn, you have to figure out what your stakeholders are interested in hearing about and what you can learn from them.

For tweets and twittering, the point was made that their followers are interested in the quality of the tweet and not the quantity, so you're not trying to barrage them with information ten times a day but actually engage them so that perhaps they'll take some action. The next is You Tube and Blogs. One of the presenters stressed that transparency plus authenticity equals growth and support from your stakeholders, so people want to see what is going on behind the scenes, they want your messages to be authentic, and that's how you garner support for your messages.

Video; a one-minute video can tell literally a thousand words and literally pictures speak a thousand words, so videos can help meet the needs of visual learners and whatnot. Everybody doesn't want to sit down and read a long document but perhaps they're willing to sit down and watch a five-minute video.

And then Blogs are more of an informal communication that you can engage your stakeholders with images as well as up-to-date to-the-minute types of information. You want to do all this stuff, as we discussed earlier, in plain language, and that's often a challenge in this realm. We just spoke about the mobile applications.

One thing that was stressed very clearly particularly from our Florida Fish and Wildlife colleagues was to know what you want from the app before you start designing. It sounds like the council has a great template to work from through the Gulf Council's mobile app. Forums; they can reach a wide audience, but they're wide open to the public and you're going to probably get some pushback.

If you're participating in forums, for instance, fishing forums and things like that, be prepared for some criticism when you do post on those types of forums. Emily said this quote during her presentation at the workshop instead of having a lawyer on board you now have a smartphone because you have your app there with all the regulations and ready to go; knowing what you need to know.

We also had a discussion about live streaming. These are called tweet-ups and things of that nature and it's where you are having an event or a meeting and you're sending out tweets or posting status updates as the event is happening, and that can be another way to actually engage people in a live event.

E-newsletters and websites, that's one of the easiest platforms to communicate with your stakeholders. I know the council has recently done a great job of doing their e-newsletters. What are some of the opportunities? Social media is free. It's very cost-effective and it's a great way to get that two-way communication with your stakeholders; improving transparency; helps create a dialogue with your stakeholders.

They feel like you're approachable, especially if you're speaking to them in plain language. It's also, as was just mentioned earlier, it's near real time. You can update things much quicker than perhaps a website by just going on to your Facebook page and posting a status update. It's a chance to provide accurate information and outreach.

Oftentimes there will be a lot of misinformation floating around out there on forums and blogs, so it's a chance for you to actually correct information. It's really the wave of the future and it's going to be the way to reach your target audiences. Some of the challenges; there is a strong commitment that's required to keep up with all of these different platforms because ideally you want to try to integrate all of your social media platforms so that they feed back into each other. You need to know your audience and their interests; what do they want to hear about; and expect some negative feedback.

You just need to figure out some policies and guidelines to immediately respond. There were a couple of agencies that had some guiding policies and strategies that they would be willing to share with us. Mobile apps can be costly but it sounds like if you can come up with some ingenuity you can use templates that have been developed.

Also, we had a graduate student from the College of Charleston that helped actually our agency develop an app as part of his thesis project, so look to students. There are lots of folks out there that are looking to develop this kind of skills and they're willing to do these different types of projects. Like I mentioned, it's really important to kind of integrate all these platforms so that you can keep your messages on target.

My final thoughts and final thoughts from the workshop was you really need to have dedicated staff or share responsibilities within staff to really be effective at using all these different platforms. Developing these strategies and policies and guidelines of how you are going to use social media, how you respond to comments is also really important.

Honestly, it seems that there is more opportunity than challenges. You're going to hit some road bumps but as long as you kind of adapt your strategies as you go along, you can usually be pretty effective. The message that we heard from those participants and speakers was don't get left behind and jump on the bandwagon.

Also, I didn't put it in the presentation but it is in your briefing book materials; we did a survey of participants after the workshop and I got some really good feedback. Most folks indicated that they really learned something from the workshop and were going to try to implement some kind of new strategy for their social media as well as contact some of the speakers and had a much better understanding of how to effectively use these platforms. Thanks.

MS. IVERSON: I will point that the final report is in your briefing book and that contains really good information from each of the presenters from the workshop as well as summary and the results of the online survey that was conducted by Sea Grant. I want to thank Amber and Andrea for their help in putting that report together and the workshop as well.

MR. BOYLES: We've got some time discuss the use of social media. I'd like to have a general discussion after Emily's presentation, but are there any questions for Amber on the workshop that was held? Seeing none, Amber, you've covered it adequately. Okay, Amber, thank you for that. We're also grateful for Emily Muehlstein who has come over from the Gulf to talk about how you guys have used social media there. Emily, welcome, and give us a little bit of wisdom from your neck of the woods.

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: Thank you for having me today. I'm going to start basically with just kind of presenting a case for outreaching in general. There are a lot of different ways to do it and social media is just one mechanism for that. In this presentation I'll start with sort of stating a case for outreach. That's also for my own job security.

Then I'll move into the social media aspect of it and share some of the things that we at the council in the Gulf have done and show you a couple of the specific challenges that we face and ways we sort of deal with them. We'll start with sort of stating the case and what our problem is. Fisheries management is a public process, as you all know, and the council system was created in part to encourage local level participation and representation in the management of our fisheries.

Now, this quote here from FDR, it says, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy therefore is education." Theoretically, if we're here to serve our public, they need to be involved and they need to be aware of not only what we're doing in the moment but also have a greater understanding of the fisheries management process and what is happening.

In our five-year strategic plan we have, and I quote this statement, "Great strides must be taken to ensure the public not only has every opportunity to become involved but also has the knowledge and information necessary to be effectively involved." So then I guess the major question there is how do we do that, how do we arm them with that knowledge and that information.

The answer is outreach, but outreach is sort of this nebulous terms. It's a word that is used a lot and it's kind of very general, so I'll just kind of narrow down a definition for you. Outreach is a type of informal education that is based in free-choice learning environments that aim to engage audiences. I'll break that down a little bit.

Informal education is anything that happens outside of your traditional classroom. You informally educate yourself when you read a newspaper. When you want to pick a new hobby, you go ahead and figure everything out about tennis that there is to know. A free-choice learning environment is again outside of that classroom.

Typically outreach itself aims to facilitate a behavior change, and in our case that would mean getting people more involved; even maybe in some cases being more aware of the regulations so that they can be more compliant with the regulations that you all set forth. Why is it important? Well, unless school teachers are covering population dynamics, fishery statistic modeling, citizens are going to have to engage in some sort of informal learning to understand what is happening here and why those decisions are being made.

Also, there is a very good chance that somebody else is already doing that for you. I see a need for us doing that so we can inform them sort of straight from the horse's mouth. That leads into why we should outreach and specifically if you don't somebody else will. There are plenty of organizations out there that are looking to educate your stakeholders about fisheries management.

While those organizations will benefit you by expanding your community reach and the understanding of fisheries management, it can be a detriment to you because there is a lot of misinformation that is put out there. Also, fisheries management is incredibly complicated. Because it's so daunting, the science of it, the politics of it, a lot of people are very likely to give up and to not care about learning all of the nuances of doing this unless you give it to them in an easily accessible, easily understandable package.

And then, finally, because you have to – this says right here one of the special features of Magnuson is that it encourages that participation and representation, so that's our job as the council is to engage the public and so we need to do something in order to do that. We'll go a little bit into – like I said, one of the mechanism's outreach that we use is the social media things. This is a map and if you look at the blue, that is coverage of Facebook in the United States and, well, the Americas in general.

I think in Brazil there is a different platform that is used, but other than that you can see it's pretty solid. Almost everybody, every one of our stakeholders is somehow affected by Facebook in their lives. It is too big to ignore. It's how people get their information. It's how I get invites to parties. It's how I know who has a baby. It's also a way that I look at organizations that I'm interested in.

When I know FWC has done something – I saw a dolphin rescue on Facebook the other day and that's really important. It's how people get their daily stream of information put to them. It also allows for real-time two-way discourse, which is different than traditional sort of public information type approaches to things, and it's a pretty valuable thing.

And then finally, it's personal. It's this way for us to remove the bureaucracy or some level thereof. It makes us an entity that is a part of the population. You as council members are fishermen, you're human beings, and that's a huge surprise to a lot of people, so this is a nice way to sort of point that out.

I'm just going to go through a couple of things that we do and share with you some of our successes and our roadblocks as we've gone through it. I would say that this is our Blog; this is

just a screen shot of what the Blog looks like. It's called Gulf Currents and our little tagline is state and the loop with Gulf Currents.

It's very user friendly; it's very pretty; it's very appealing for people to do. I've just got an example up here of what we do. If you look at the bottom paragraph, it says, "For those of you trying to make summer fishing plans," and so it's this really near opportunity for us to speak to our audience sort of on human terms as opposed to the Federal Register, which is very inaccessible on things like that.

These are the benefits and challenges to blogging. Blogging gets to use that non-formal active voice. It gets to sort of have this personal thing. There are really awesome analytics that are built into it. I can see from my Blog Dashboard how many people have read that particular page, how much time they spent on that page, where they were driven to that page from.

In other words, did they find it from our home page; did they find it from one of the fishing forums that I'm on, from Facebook, and I know where people are coming from. I also know what part of the country they're coming from. In some cases, there are people from, like, Russia that are reading the blog. There is no duplication of effort with a blog.

What is really neat is we get stakeholders that will e-mail us and ask us questions or ask us questions maybe on Facebook, and we get these recurring themes where we're like, oh, people are asking why, you know, blank, blank, blank, fill in the dots, and so what we'll do is we'll write a blog.

We'll put it up on that blog and then when people are asking that question continuously, we can send them to that piece that has already been written as opposed to answering the same question a hundred times. Then we don't have to duplicate what we're doing because it's actually streamlining the fact that we answer those same questions continuously. Also, it has really wide reach. Sometimes it's not even fishermen that are on blogs.

There is this whole blog sphere where there are people who just sit there and re-blog; it's what they do and it's a hobby. We actually reach an audience that we might not normally engage through our blog. Also, one thing that I really like is there is a searchable archive, so on that blog you can look up red snapper and you can see historically everything that we posted on red snapper and the last timeline as it goes through, and that's pretty neat.

The challenge – and I guess it's not so much a challenge as it is a drawback is of all of the different forms of social media is it's not interactive. You can't have somebody call you – or, you know, somebody can't write right on that page and ask you a question. Instead they have to come to your office and e-mail you or call you. It's kind of traditional in that way.

The next one is Facebook. Facebook, there are many benefits to. It's a real-time dialogue that happens. It's a really great way to build relationships. It also meets a widespread audience. You guys saw that map. Everybody is on Facebook these days. Also, built-in analytics so I can see my demographics of who I'm reaching and how many people are going to the page, and you get all sorts of feedback on how many people have seen your posts.



Also, one thing I like about Facebook over some of the other platforms is there is personal accountability in what you're posting. I'll talk a little bit later on those fishing forums. People have like an Avatar and they come up with a different name for themselves and they can be – I call them paper tigers because usually when they meet you, they're really nice.

When you can consider yourself behind some sort of screen name, I think it allows for greater – well, have less accountability and people behave differently. Facebook is linked to you. I can see pictures of your children. It's really neat because I think that personal accountability really does control the way that people present themselves to you. And then, of course, there are always people who don't care, anyway.

Some of the challenges of Facebook is it is constant monitoring. There is I think three of us in the office who are administrators of that page so we can go in and see what is happening, and we are all on here checking it a couple of times a day just to make sure that nobody is posting anything inappropriate.

And then also then there is upload limitations. I can't do anything but upload a PDF; so if we have to get into something really technical, I have to then put it on the blog and link it to the blog because I can't do more than a certain amount of characters, so it's conducive to posting an entire amendment, but we can get around that.

I'm going to go through a couple of examples of some things – and they're really hard to see so I'll just sort of give you the Readers Digest version and, yes, it is in the briefing book. This gentleman asked me if it was true that stock assessments only come from natural bottom. There is sort of this idea that in the Gulf any of the artificial reefs and the oil rigs aren't sampled. He is asking me this question and I got to kind of clear up to him that fishery science isn't just the longline surveys that can't go next to that artificial bottom.

I respond to him and tell him that I hear that a lot, that's a misconception that always happens, and it's one that's very highly perpetuated in our area. Then he asked me a follow-up question and asked me to make – you know, are you sure that you're looking at these structures? And then I answer and I say, yes, but then he asked me if the natural bottom and the artificial structures are weighted differently when we're doing our stock assessments.

I don't know the answer to that; I don't what they do when they do that modeling; and so I got to take the opportunity to then say, you know what, I'm not sure, let me get back to you. I did down the line. So, I'm answering immediately but I don't have to know the answers. I think that's one of those really big, scary things for people that are going to do these pages is to feel like they have to be this wealth of immediate knowledge.

I don't know where everything is but we know where to find it; and you can make promises to get back to them as long as you go ahead and fulfill that. That hasn't become as big of an issue as we thought I would. Okay, this next example is about amberjack. This is kind of a difficult thing. This man is asking for some rationale behind the closure of amberjack, the recreational closure in June and July.

This is what gets a little bit scary for the staff member that is involved in this. When you are asked to give rationale of the council, sometimes I often say, “Hey, it’s 17 people and they all have different rationale for what happens.” And so when you have a staff member that’s in charge of this, it’s a bit of a difficult position because then I am sort of charged with answering for these 17 different people with 17 different perspectives, and it’s kind of nerve wracking.

Typically what we do is go back through the minutes and groom through what the council has said, and here I list the number of reasons; council has said that they want a trophy species open all year long or some fishermen expressed the desire that they wanted the amberjack season to extend farther into the fall. I can sort of give those answers and speak for the council, which is a very nerve-wracking thing to do sometimes, but it’s also really beneficial to be able to offer that perspective to people who ask.

And then finally this is an example of some folks who were talking about – we’ve got this big issue in the Gulf that we’re sort of starting to tackle is a sector separation issue. These guys started getting into a dialogue about charter fishermen and if this sector separation thing was going to happen, if they should have recreational allocation, if they should carve out their allocation from the recreational and the commercial sector.

It’s not on here anymore because I removed it, but one of the participants in this conversation got quite abusive and started using profanities; and I caught it and at the bottom I addressed him and I said, “Mark, you are welcome to express your opinions on the page, but please keep them clean or I have to remove them.”

Also, I responded to Tommy and said, “Tommy, it’s not the best idea to promote ideas like the one expressed above,” because he is basically – we get a lot of, well, just filet and release and filet and release, you know, or poach – so again with that personal accountability thing. But sometimes you do have to come in here and we have to clean it up and say, “Hey, Dudes, relax”. But, to me it’s really valuable to give them a sounding board where they can have these discussions, especially when they start engaging with one another and sometimes you’ll get a commercial fisherman and a charter fisherman and a recreational fisherman having a conversation on the same topic and it’s really neat that there is perspective. I think a lot of our stakeholders are very – you know, sort of have blinders on when it comes to what it comes to what is best for the fishery is typically what is best for the group of people that I am with or represent or am a part of, and that is just human nature.

Sometimes it does get a little bit out of hand and you just have to be able to handle it without scolding anybody. Again, the last thing that we do that would be considered social media is the use of fishing forums. At the top I’ve got some icons – Florida Sportsman is a big one that would cover the jurisdiction here, and also The Whole Truth is one that I believe has a national coverage.

I think we are on 22 of those fishing forums. What happens is that blog – I said there was no duplication of effort – is I take that actual blog, the text in there, and I post it under my Avatar,

my Gulf Council Avatar to those different fishing forums and then they're allowed to speak just like on Facebook about that topic and about that issue.

This one is a huge time sucker because if you're on 22 of them, there are 22 different conversations that are happening about the same thing, so it takes a lot of monitoring after it happens, but it's also a way to reach fishermen in their own backyard. There are a lot of fishermen that are already on these boards that maybe aren't on Facebook and maybe aren't doing the social media thing but are going to these message boards to figure out local fishing tips and things like that.

It has been a really awesome relationship builder because it has been about two years now that we've been on those. People know how to contact me, where to contact me, and it's a way to – it's mostly a recreational tool, but it's a way to reach people where they're already at. If we're going to look for commercial folks to talk to, we can go to a fish house. We have these points of distribution.

Recreational folks don't gather in one place as much, but this is a really effective way to get to that group of people. I think that's all I had prepared for you. Again, I know you're going to go into some scoping and public hearing stuff, and I'll be at the table. We do some of that stuff and I'm happy to answer any of those questions as well as some of the social media experience stuff.

Just to be clear, at the workshop people were saying, well, you know, how do you guys get this taken care of? In our communications department there are three of us. Charlene Ponce is our information officer. She is Kim's mirror image. I am a fisheries outreach specialist, so I do more of the social media things. Then we have a third person and I'm not sure what her title is, but she is the smartest lady in the world and she does everything else.

MR. BOYLES: Emily, thank you; that's very informative and intriguing as well. Questions on Emily's presentation? Duane.

MR. HARRIS: Emily, thank you for being her. What is Avatar?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: It's the alias that you create on the internet, and so it's sort of your fear persona that's not you. For me, on the fishing forums my name is Gandy Girl because I fish by a bridge called the Gandy Bridge. I am the Gandy Girl and I'm also Emily Muehlstein, but then people know me as that Avatar as well.

LT. FOOS: Thank you very much, Emily, for the great presentation. I'm curious how often you find yourself removing posts?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: You know, it's much less than I thought. What we've done – and I don't know if we can bring up the page. I don't know, Kim, if have a Facebook and you can onto it. I'll give you recent example that happened this week. There is actually a video, and I don't know if Dr. Crabtree has seen it, of him. It's an animation of him talking to Joe Fisherman.

Somebody posted that on our Facebook page and it becomes a teachable moment. While there is some misinformation and it might not necessarily be painting Dr. Crabtree in the greatest of lights, it was an opportunity for me to step back and say, hey, well actually, you know, thanks for posting that, and dot, dot, dot.

And so a lot of times there are things that are there that might make my palms sweaty, but there is always a way to turn it around and say, yeah, thank you, and here is the real story. I actually thought about making a video in response to that video, but I didn't want to take the time to do it.

DR. CRABTREE: But it seems to me that somehow I should be getting some royalties. (Laughter) I'm looking right now at "Demand the Removal of Roy Crabtree Facebook Page", which I'm up to 1,269 friends. (Laughter)

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: You have more friends than our page does.

DR. CRABTREE: But what does 18 people are talking about it; does that mean 18 people are on it right now talking about me?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: No, if you're talking about something –

DR. CRABTREE: And how many of them are on this council is what I really want to know? (Laughter)

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: If you're talking about it – what you can do on Facebook if you want to talk about somebody or mention somebody, yes, you put an app symbol in front of – so what they would have said is, hey, everybody check out the page and then they'll do the app symbol, demand the removal of Roy Crabtree and then that counts on Facebook as a talking about. There were probably 18 people that referenced that page and said how great it was is what that is.

We just got this timeline but I probably removed two things and it's typically because of swear words. We post our app. We had a Goliath meeting so there is a picture of me kissing a Goliath. You know, it's a fun way and it's a human way to interact with your stakeholders, and it can be incredibly valuable, I think.

Again, asking for pictures on mackerel because we're doing mackerel stuff, so I can ask send me your pictures, and then, of course, somebody responds don't send any pictures; they just want to know what you're catching so they can tell you not to catch it.

DR. CRABTREE: Can you put like some stuff where I'm rescuing a kitten from a tree, things like that on there for me? (Laughter)

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: Here is a council meeting. One thing that is really neat is at council meetings I sort of do a real-time council just motioned blank, blank, blank and people follow along. If they don't want to watch the streaming, they'll just check Facebook all day long at council meetings and they'll see – you know, people want to know what did they decide with amberjack, what did they decide with red snapper, so they'll come ask me, so we posted this

picture of what it's going to look like when you're giving public testimony behind the podium. To be honest with you, it's very fun to do.

MR. CURRIN: And I'll admit I'm a bigger dinosaur than Doug's Blackberry and I don't know anything about this. My daughters are involved in it. My biggest fear, Emily – and maybe you've had this experience – is that someone, either outreach folks or a council member that might be active in all of this misstates something, puts something incorrect up and yet it lives on forever even if you correct it.

The word is out and you're going to hear about it from all the conspiracy theorists, and there are many in fisheries, it appears, who love glomming on to something like that, never letting it go. Even though you correct it and it has been proven as a fabrication or a falsehood or whatever, it still continues to live and it is thrown back in your face and it's irritating.

The fact that it is done so quickly in such real time I think has a tendency to create or allow for more mistakes than something that's well thought out overnight and then posted. Have you had instances where you made a misstatement or a mistake, had to correct it, and what kind of problems did that cause you?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: We haven't had any huge issues with that. I used the wrong form of "their". I think I wrote the "there" instead of "eir" and that was embarrassing for me and I didn't correct it. Like you said even small things like that, people are looking to find any reason to call us idiots; you know, how dare, we pay you with our tax money, if you don't even know the right form of "there".

You know, it's embarrassing, but also again with Facebook we are humans, and so it has only been sort of missteps like that. Like I mentioned earlier, usually what I do if I'm not positive of what an answer is and I can't find it in the motion or in writing, I will say, "Hey, listen, you know, I'm not sure, let me get back to you," and then the first thing in the morning I'll pull it up and do it or the first thing on Monday, and I do get back to it. There is usually a chance for me to say, "Hey, you know, I'm not sure, let me make sure before I answer." That's enough typically to carry people through and not feel like I'm giving them some form response.

DR. LANEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on your committee either. Emily, have you all found it useful to put some like rules in place for yourself? I know a couple that have been strongly urged upon those of us in the Fish and Wildlife Service, particularly with regard to e-mail but it applies equally well to social media, and that is never put anything in writing that you wouldn't want to see on the front page of the Washington Post. The other one is never send anything – you know, never hit the send button on anything that you think could possibly be sensitive unless somebody else on your staff has read it over for you and taken a look at it and giving you a good reality check on it.

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: We don't really have a check-and-balance system where we get it approved by anybody before it goes on, and that's again really a big part of who you choose to be doing this information. We don't really have a formal one. We bounce things back and forth across each other a lot; so if there is something that I recognize as sensitive, I will absolutely

always go and say, “Hey, Charlene, and, hey, Steve, can you look at this before I respond because I know it’s kind of touchy.”

The only real rule I have, and this is a little bit off the cuff, is I do not Facebook after a glass of wine. Sometimes I’m on there at 10:00 o’clock at night. Sometimes there are conversations that you know are sort of contentious and I monitor it every two hours or every three hours even when I’m off the clock, and so there is a major rule because sometimes you want to get on there and be like –

MR. HAYMANS: So do I understand this is at least a three-person at least one of which is full-time responsibility?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: It is my responsibility and the other two are there. As far as I know, neither of them has ever actually posted anything. I think they are just sort of on there on the just-in-case backup plan. It’s more of the fact that they’re part of the communications department and they’re also interested in what is going on there.

As far as time commitment, I wouldn’t say that you have to have a 40-hour a week person to be able to deal with this, but it is nice to have more than one person engaged so you can bounce back those things every once in a while and say, “Hey, Emily, in case you didn’t go on this morning, somebody posted at 3:00 a.m. last night and make sure that you handle it”, or something like that.

MR. HAYMANS: And, Kim, do the two of you guys have opportunity to keep up real time?

MS. IVERSON: Well, I’ll defer to Kari here to speak, but she has expressed an interest as a social scientist to take a lead on developing – she has already formed a template for the South Atlantic Council and is much more, I guess, familiar with postings in Facebook. Kari, do you want to come to the table and talk about that. I think we can formulate some sort of teamwork here that Emily refers to from our staff point. Kari.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: Well, I just want to say that I think between us we can monitor it and I can be the lead on it. If you guys make me only do amendments and not have anything else fun to do, I’ll go crazy, so I’m really looking forward to this.

MR. HAYMANS: I guess I would – and we’ve struggled with this as the state agency as well, right. We’ve got the Facebook and the Twitter and all that stuff, too. I think these are great ideas for blogs. I don’t know how involved the council is going to get with the day-to-day decisions on this kind of stuff. I have no idea, but if I have an opportunity to vote on a forum I’m going to vote against them for the same reasons that Mac was saying earlier; they’re dangerous. I think they’re great to get information out, but on that back and forth, Fish and Moore gets on here, anyway, my two cents.

MR. MAHOOD: I’m kind of in the dinosaur crowd, too, when it comes to this type. I’m the guy that when young Susan Shipman was the biologist saying, “We’ve got to have computers, everybody is getting computers,” and I’m saying, “What the hell do you need computers for?”

You've got your calculator." I'm kind of the same way with this. One of the problems I have that I think has been discussed a little bit and that is what goes out. I guess the question for Emily is what kind of oversight do you get from Steve Bortone about what you put out on the street?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: Again, I think a big part of it is the people that you have doing it. He reads it, he follows along. But as far as what I'm posting as opposed to what I'm reacting to, there is not a lot of like fun, goofy things that go on except in the mechanism that you get to grab to people's attention.

That picture of me like kissing the Goliath grouper, for instance, it was because we had that joint meeting with you all in our office and people are really interested in it. As far as the content of what I put out there, sometimes we'll do recipes and that's probably the most flighty, fluffy thing that we do. Otherwise, it's posting motions, posting meetings, posting scoping, posting all the documents that we're putting. He has as much control over this as he does over the communications department in general. He watches it but it's also just kind of part what we do.

MR. MAHOOD: I trust our communications folks but I look at everything that goes out of there, and it doesn't go out of there unless I have said it can go out there. That's where I have a problem with this kind of loosey, goosey stuff. I don't have a Facebook. I'm not really into this and I can see problems.

I kind of go along with what Wilson said; you've got to really watch what you put out of there. We're a regulatory body and that's a little bit different context of how you deal with folks. I think you need to get information out and I think it needs to be good information out there; but sometimes the staff bantering back and forth with fishermen, I can see problems there. It's something we're going to have to look at it real close. We're going to do what the council wants us to do, but it's certainly going have maybe more controls than the Gulf Council.

MR. BOYLES: Speaking of control, I've got Wilson and then Gregg and then Jessica, but for the record this is a meeting that we used the word "idiot", "conspiracy" twice, and "dinosaur" three times followed with a "Roy alty" discussion. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: I think I'm in transition from dinosaurhood to mammalian status, I hope, at least with regard to the use of social media. I have a Facebook page but mostly Gail uses it and not me. I may look at it once every two or three weeks. I'm also on Linked In and certainly the Fish and Wildlife Service has jumped into the game with a Facebook page, and I think we're tweeting now and all that sort of stuff.

I think the significant and important thing here for us to keep in mind is what is the impact of this and does that increase the effectiveness of the council's operations and implementation of the council's policies and the National Marine Fisheries Service regulations that are ultimately put into place as a result of council actions. It makes me a whole lot more comfortable knowing how you can track the use of these sorts of things.

I think Emily alluded to that and I guess what I would like to hear not necessarily at this meeting but one in the future is how effective are these things at getting the message out there versus the traditional means that we relied upon, which is publishing all these voluminous documents that we all try and go through, but realistically the public is not going to go through those things.

To me that's the bottom line is do they make us more effective at doing our job; and if the answer is yes, Doug, then I don't have a problem voting with them. Although I share the concerns expressed by everybody else around the table, I think about the amount of time it takes to provide for the care of feeding of these things, and I'm certainly on the same page Bob is with regard to making sure that you don't put something out there that's not appropriate for you to put out there.

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: Well, to that point of not putting out inappropriate things is when I'm not on Facebook, as the communications department I'm also just directly answering e-mails from stakeholders as well. Steve Bortone never sees those e-mails that I'm having from fishermen who come and directly contact me, so this is actually a way for those discussions to be more – for you to have more accountability over your staff for those discussions because they're up on the message board; whereas, those other ones that I'm having in my personal work e-mail account I'm assuming are not overseen. I would actually say that almost brings that dialogue to the surface more for monitoring of the executive director.

MR. WAUGH: At the risk of getting in trouble for calling people "old", myself included, if you look at the discussion that is taking place, you can see the age break. There is us gray beards that aren't comfortable with this and there is a younger crowd that does this all the time and they are meeting and interfacing with people and have that communication.

I'm not talking about what we do but in a general sense if you try and apply the old controls over the flow of information it doesn't work in this new age. By the time you review something and clear it and give the okay for it to be distributed, the opportunity is lost. For anybody that is considering this, it seems to me you've got to have the trust in your staff who is going to be doing it.

You've got to go in with the acknowledgment that there will be mistakes because we are human. We have that now in our print distribution. There is no difference there. Yes, it gets spread around a lot faster, but it also gets fixed a lot faster, and there is no bad publicity. Even, as Emily said, when stuff gets spun out of control, there are opportunities there to communicate more. It's like getting in a pool; you've just got to jump in.

MS. McCAWLEY: FWC uses both the Twitter and has a Facebook page, and we put stuff out kind of like what Emily is saying to announce meetings, talk about workshops, our press releases and stuff. We do still contact the media using press releases. But kind of like what Doug was talking about, we decided that we were not going to get on the fishing forums.

We used to have a person from our division and an FWC law enforcement officer – we have people monitoring the forums but we used to try to post and it really got into arguments and personal attacks on staff members, and it was sucking down a huge amount of time, even more



so than these other types of media, so we decided kind of as an agency to pull our law enforcement officer and the person from our division back from posting on those forums.

Instead what has happened is that people have contacted us through e-mail or other means and asked us questions; and then when we give the response, they go paste it on the forum themselves. That way they're still involved in the forum; they've gotten an answer from us; and we're not directly responding to people on that forum. That seems to have worked out fairly well.

MR. SWATZEL: Social media is just a great communication tool. I think the council has got to use it. If you look at any political campaign or issues advocacy groups, everybody is doing it because it works. I think it would be just really a disservice to our constituents if we don't go that direction.

MR. HARRIS: I absolutely agree with Tom. This is the wave of the future. I remember back in my younger days with Georgia DNR when I was the first one to have mobile phone within the agency. Once the commissioner found out, he went pretty much crazy, but look at what has happened.

We could buy a mobile phone and pay the monthly cost for a whole lot less than those little Motorola radios that we had. They were just unbelievably expensive and they were only good when there was somebody monitoring the radio, and that wasn't 24 hours a day after budget cuts. You could always get somebody on a mobile phone.

Now, it was one of these great big monster bag phones, I will admit. But we've got to move into the future, and I know there is concern about it but I think trust in the staff and their knowledge and what they can do; and if they've got questions, I think the staff we've got in the South Atlantic Council is certainly not afraid to go to folks and ask for help.

DR. DUVAL: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on your committee and I think I will call myself a young dinosaur because I am not on Facebook myself. I know, shocking! My personal feelings are as a public employee of an agency, I'm just simply not interested in putting my life out there for those reasons.

That said, I agree with what Tom said and I think it comes down to knowing your audience. Reflecting on what Wilson said about being effective in our communications, there are always going to be dinosaurs like me who would prefer to just go to a website or receive an e-mail. I share the concerns about communication that have been expressed by other folks. I think Jessica provided a great means of dealing with some of those. The thing is we do e-mail back and forth with constituents, anyway, and so I don't see that there is any greater risk in terms of moving down this road and starting a Facebook page than there is in communicating by e-mail with constituents.

MR. CURRIN: I don't disagree with Tom and Duane; I think it is the future, for sure, and we're missing some people that have chosen to communicate this way exclusively. I think we need to keep in mind that we've still got people that are fishermen that don't have computers and don't

use them very well, so here we are adding another layer and responsibility means of communication and we can't forget these other people like Michelle and myself that don't do Facebook and tweets and all that. The robins tweet at my house. We've still got people that have computers or don't have computers that rely solely on the printed page. I think we've got to move in that direction, but we can't lose sight of the fact that not everybody is there yet.

MR. HARRIS: I made a mistake, Robert, and I need to correct it. I said it's the wave of the future; it's the wave of now. It's beyond us already.

MR. BOYLES: I think we've had a very engaging discussion, and I certainly appreciate everybody's perspectives. If I can, I'll take the Chair's prerogative for the last word. I'm struck by the fact that we talked about the recommendations that the Snapper Grouper AP had for us communicating better. We talked about the fact – I believe that we've established the fact that it's an ongoing process.

I think, Duane, your last comment is absolutely correct; it's the wave of the present. My sense of things is that there is some interest here among the committee that we ask the staff to wade in, that the water is warm and potentially stormy at times, but that we've got trust in our staff and our executive director to manage this as they think is best, but that we get into this game; and again only with the great work that has been going on in the Gulf with communicating this way. If that's the sense of the committee, then I think we'll move forward. Can I get heads nodding affirmatively or negatively? All right, I'm seeing some positive moves. At this point I don't think we're asking for a vote. Kim, would you prefer –

MS. IVERSON: You can just say that you give direction to staff to move forward with the use of social media tools. To the discussion, I don't think that there is anyone here that is advocating this would be our only communication tool and not to do a newsletter or not to do our news releases, our press releases or continue to answer questions via e-mail or post on our web site.

This is one of many tools that we can continue to use or that we can use. Certainly, one of the other benefits for Facebook – and it came out of the Social Media Workshop – is that this is a tool to get you to go to the website and vice versa so that it's multi-platform so that you don't just have a single platform that you're utilizing.

I would like to move forward with exploring the use of perhaps Facebook and Blogs. The forums, I go back to my years when I started working with the council and we were developing marine protected areas. I got on the Florida Sportsman Forum to help correct some misinformation that was out there, and, Boy, was that an enlightening experience.

I kind of quickly retreated noting that I needed to use that information or get that correct information out. But the forums, I believe Emily was posting on forums as Gandy Girl before she started her employment with the council, so people were familiar with her activities as a fisherman and a fisherwoman. We can explore that. We don't have to jump in the deep end right now. We can start at that shallow end. I will point that I don't think that this is meant to replace any of our current communication tools but to help enhance.

MR. MAHOOD: I probably came across as being kind of negative towards this, but actually I've been working with Kim on this and we have been moving forward. I told her what she needed to do now is bring it before the council and get their feelings on this. I sit in my tree stand and text message with the other guys out hunting all the time now. I used to just sit in the tree stand and watch for deer, but now it's a social event when you sit in a tree stand. If you had told me five years ago I was going to be doing that, I would have said, no, I don't think so. If it is the will of the council to move ahead, we will certainly keep moving.

MR. CURRIN: Kim, I didn't mean to insinuate that all this other stuff that is effective now and I think will be effective in the future would be neglected in any way; but my caution I guess is that with something new and exciting like this, it's real easy to get overly excited about it or very excited and devote most of your time to that and you only have so much time. Everybody has got a limited amount of time so something is going to suffer, so just be cautious is my only suggestion.

MS. IVERSON: And I agree with that and that's the reason I was so excited when Kari was willing to take a lead as far as Facebook and the posting and monitoring. I have a Facebook page. Probably I don't monitor it as often – it's my personal Facebook page and I don't post as often as I'd like only because when I get home from work, one of the last things I want to do is get back online again.

I want to decompress in some other way, but there are people that follow it and I think it's going to take a number of our staff to help monitor it, and Kari has expressed a willingness to take a lead on the Facebook page and also blogging as well. That gives our staff a face; it puts a face with the council members as well as our staff.

MR. HARRIS: I just wanted to let Bob know that if he was on Facebook, he could take a picture of that deer and he could post it immediately and all of his buddies, if they were on Facebook, they could see it in real time and it would just improve your hunting experience so much.

MR. MAHOOD: I just need clarification on this Facebook. Now, Roy has a site that wants to get him fired. Now, if I go there and I'm a friend; does that mean I'm in favor of firing him or in favor of not firing him?

DR. CRABTREE: I'm working on right now the real problem is Bob Mahood's Facebook page.

MR. BOYLES: I can't wait to review meeting minutes next time. By the way, Amber and Emily, thank you. You have been very, very helpful as we move down this road. The next item on the agenda, Kim is going to talk to us about the format for public hearing and scoping meetings.

MS. IVERSON: As you know, we currently have a series of scoping meetings and public hearings that are held annually at the end of January, first of February. At some of these meetings it can be confusing as to what items are being scoped and what items are open for public hearings.

Several years ago we started a new format. We used to have a format where the public hearing or the scoping meeting would start at 6:30, there would be a presentation, there would be formal

comment, and everyone would leave and go home. When we started to deal with larger issues and issues that encompassed several different management plans and proposed management measures, we went to a less formal format that you're all familiar with now where we take several of our staff members on the road. The council members are there, we have informal presentations throughout the time period, generally from 4:00 to 7:00, and then the comments are made to the council members.

There has been some discussion and some input from council members as well as staff that the format sometimes is very limiting in that the council members are not privy to the informal discussions that take place after the presentations with the tech staff; and vice versa, the tech staff is not able to hear the comments as they're being made.

You have to literally go back and listen to the transcripts from the comments and the tech staff has to deliberately – it takes a lot of time to go through and summarize those comments and pull those out. The administrative staff does an excellent job. Julie does a great job of pulling that information out and putting it in some sort of category because those comments can deviate away from the topic at hand.

With that having been said in this kind of informal discussion, I thought maybe it was a good opportunity to come before the committee to get your input on the current format that's being used and see if you have some suggestions on improving that. Also, in these last hearings that were done back in November as well as the January/February hearings, in some cases we had very poor attendance.

So we had a large number of staff people that had time and energy and funding invested, that had gone to these public hearings and then two or three people would show. I've contacted Charlene at the Gulf Council and asked them how do you do your public hearings and your scoping meetings. One of the things that they've used now is that they have presentations that are posted on You Tube so that the public hearing or scoping meeting presentations are available, the powerpoint is available, you can log on at any time, and then the members of the public can make comments online; they can provide comments online.

Of course, we have ability to e-mail comments but if you want to see the presentation, if you want to be there as far as the tech staff is concerned, you need to attend one of those meetings. I just thought it would be a good opportunity to maybe get some input from the committee. Emily is here from the Gulf Council and can talk a little bit about how they utilize You Tube and what they're posting now.

It's my understanding from Charlene that doesn't take the place of public hearings and scoping meetings necessarily, but it helps to enhance it. All of you have been at these public hearing and scoping meetings and you've seen a large number of attendees; and when we were dealing with red snapper sometimes three or four hundred people at these meetings and sometimes three or four people. It just depends on the topic at hand and I would just welcome the committee's input.

MR. CURRIN: Kim, I think you hit the nail on the head. You know, when you bring something out that's controversial and it's going to affect a lot of people, then it's pretty predictable, you're going to have a lot of people at a public hearing or scoping meeting; and when the issues are not quite as threatening or important perhaps to the average fisherman, then I expect the attendance to be low. Low attendance in view of what is actually being considered doesn't bother me too much. I think it's a wonderful approach to post those things online, the presentations.

We've had some instances and probably will continue to have some where travel budgets are affected and we'd like to have somebody from the region or the science center at a public hearing to provide some specific input; that approach may well allow for that presentation to be added and available to everyone as opposed to not being there because of restricted travel budgets. I was very impressed when we talked this a little bit yesterday. I would like to see us explore that approach.

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: Okay, just since I'm here I'll show you what we've done as far as doing our electronic scoping and public hearing things. We just got this new addition of this thermometer. Next to it is our proposed amendment section of our webpage. You click on the thermometer and it will bring you to a page that shows all of the issues we're currently considering.

And then that thermometer is sort of like the church fundraiser, the thermometers that tell you how close you are to your goal, so that thermometer is sort of a gauge if we are at scoping, it's not very full, and then as it goes up to implementation and things like that, it follows along. We'll start with amberjack because it's right here so you'll see final action. That's where we're at right now on this thermometer.

Here is a link to the full public hearing document. We do a public hearing guide. I think you guys have dealt with those for lobster. Spiny lobster, we did one that we co-branded with you. We have a guide that is sort of the quick reference version of the actual amendment itself. Once those are finished, we turn it from a public hearing guide into an amendment guide; and as it goes along we change it so that it's consistent with the actual document.

And then there is place where you can submit your comment for that, and it's just like a little online forum. There is also a link to watch the presentation and that will bring you to YouTube. And the same powerpoint that is given at the public hearing meetings, we'll sit down and record it. We have these mikes at our office and we just go do a dry run of that presentation, but we record it.

Just like the live streaming right now, we actually live stream it and then we record it and put it and make that video. And, then, of course, on the blogs and on Facebook and in a press release we say go to the webpage, watch the presentations, submit comments. And then another thing we do is you can read other people's public comments. As you submit yours, it will kind of put it in a stream.

We were a little bit worried so here is everybody's public comment on amberjack, and it's in that format. We were a little worried it would become a dialogue thing, but it hasn't. One thing I do

think it does as far as creating a behavior change is people need to two things. They need to feel like what they do is going to make a difference and they also need to know that there are other people doing it.

So putting it up here is a way to show people that like, hey, guess what, everybody is on this bandwagon so jump on it, and then people will then go ahead and submit their comments there. You can see for amberjack we got lots and lots of comments that were submitted through this format, and that's also in addition to the typical public hearing meetings that we did. We just sort of got I guess extra comments that we might not have normally captured because we put it online.

MR. WAUGH: We discussed this a little bit in mackerel yesterday; and given the fact that we just went out to a round of face-to-face scoping and hearings, the Mackerel Committee is recommending that we use this new approach and try that for Amendments 19 and 20. They contain a number of items that have been out to scoping and hearings before, and so the Mackerel Committee is recommending that we try this. In addition, we're also having our AP meet in April so that's another venue to get out and so we'll have that to report back in June.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on your committee but just so that I have something positive to say, I think the video presentation is a great idea and I'd love to see it go in that direction. With regards to face-to-face public meetings, I like the fact that we break them up and you can go to different rooms and see the presentations that you want to see, but I would really like to start public comment at a set time after those are done for the reasons that Kim gave earlier.

We may be sitting and receiving public comment and there are people just coming in constantly through the two hours, but you might have 30 minutes when there is nobody there. I guess 4:00 has been the time lately, right, 3:00 or 4:00, and maybe the first two hours is all presentations, but then whoever the council member is goes in for public comment at a certain time, and that is when it all starts at that point. And, by the way, just to my friends on this council, don't forget who gave you the "go first", okay.

MR. HARTIG: I would just to agree with Doug's suggestion. We've brought this up before so I think it's a good idea.

MR. BOYLES: Yes, Kim and I have talked a little bit about this; you recall the time when public hearings were spectacles and where there was a lot of opportunity for venting. I think that might have been helpful and made folks feel better; but in terms of particularly the scoping process, trying to get good information and feedback, it was probably a little less than optimal.

I've been a fan of the road show format that we've taken. I like the fact that we can interact formally as council members but I've found equally if not more enriching has been the informal off-the-record comments and contact that has gone on there. I know it's costly in terms of staff time and travel expense but I think it make us as a council more accessible to our constituents. I just think that's something that we're going to have to just acknowledge. Duane.

MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman, I agree with what you just said and what Doug said with respect to starting the public comment at a specific time because I really enjoy sitting in the presentations and interacting with the fishers that are there as they're asking staff questions. Sometimes it's helpful for a council member to actually help answer those questions.

But, I may be sitting in there and engaging in that and then Julie may come down and get me and say there is somebody up here wanting to make comment. The other thing that I've seen – and maybe this is good and maybe it's bad – when you sit in those informal discussions during the staff presentations, fewer people seem to want to make public comment, and so we're not getting as many people making formal public comments.

They're making their comments during that informal session and I think they feel more comfortable doing it that way. I don't know what it is but when you call them up to a microphone in our case a fairly small room and there are three council members sitting up there, they're not as willing to do that, it doesn't seem to me. As long as we capture their comments during that informal session, then we're covering those bases, but I think that having a time certain when we actually take the formal public comments is a good idea.

MR. HARTIG: Robert, I do the same thing that Duane does. I like to be in those when the presentations are being given and then interact with the public. I also take it a step farther and I think Duane does also. We interact with the public as we're waiting for speakers to come, In that downtime I'll entertain any questions the public has.

Sometimes we'll end up talking a long time about things and trying to educate the public and have give and take in that hearing, and I think that's really positive. I've gotten some good positive feed from that. If we continue to do those kinds of things, I think the public becomes much more acceptable to this process.

To take it one step further, Duane, you may not get the public comment – I mean when I've always been in this as a fisherman coming to a hearing, I would come to the hearing and see the presentation and then write written comment. That may be what is happening, I'm not sure, but that's the way I've always done this process. I didn't talk much publicly but I always made sure I had written comments after I knew what was being proposed.

MR. CURRIN: I think another scenario along those lines that I've noticed occurring, Duane and Ben, is that somebody comes and they've got some idea that something is going to affect them in a particular way, they talk to the staff and find out that their pre-conception was totally off base and then they walk away – well, it's not going to do what I thought it was going to do; I've been education; and I see no need to comment. I think that happens as well.

MR. MAHOOD: Mac basically said it. That is the reason we have the informal periods because we get so many people that have a misperception. I think that happens a lot, people find they're not affected. Now, you can have somebody in there arguing with the staff explaining exactly what is going on and it doesn't affect them, they'll still go and testify like they didn't hear what was being said. I think it does cut down on the amount of formal testimony and that's the purpose.

MS. IVERSON: I just wanted to get some clarification because I'm the person at the front when the people come and get them signed in, and I've seen that the majority of participants come at the beginning. If we start at 4:00 they come somewhere between 4:00 and 5:00. We seldom get people through the door after 6:00 o'clock, 6:00 o'clock or 7:00.

We thought we would because people get off from work or whatever, but in most cases the fishermen or the constituents have driven quite a ways and they've taken the afternoon off and they will be there at 3:30 if we start at 4:00 in some cases. I understand what you're saying and I think that you want the first two hours to be presentations with the technical staff that is there informally; but if a constituent just comes at 4:00 o'clock and they sit through the presentation that they're interested in, do I say the council is not taking formal comment, you have to wait until 6:00 o'clock to provide your formal comment?

MR. BOYLES: Kim, I've got a question and I don't know maybe my perception is biased because I'm in Charleston and there are a number of us that find ourselves there where council headquarters are, but a number of these things that I've been to I've enjoyed Michelle's company, Duane's company, David's company and I'm wondering if maybe a hybrid approach may be good.

I hear and I agree with the value of the informal interaction, but is it more often the case that there is just one council member present at these hearings or is it more often that there are multiple council members and could one of us be designated, okay, I'll go and I'll receive the public comment and, Ben, you hang out in the presentation room.

MS. IVERSON: Well, I think in most cases we have more than one council member, and in almost every case we have more than one council member.

DR. DUVAL: Robert, I'm not on your committee but I think that's a fair approach. Certainly, at this last round of comments, Mac, Tom and I were all three of us there. I think I was the actual designated official hearing person, but I think that's a fine approach. I also like to listen to the presentations and I completely agree with the comments around the table that there is a lot of valuable exchange with constituents during those times.

People are a lot more comfortable having that kind of back and forth and asking questions in that type of environment, but I think in most cases there is more than one council member there and one person can just rock, paper, scissors, I'll be the one who goes in if someone is ready to just come and give comment.

MR. HAYMANS: Kim, I know space is limited, but is there a way that you could say public information presentation is 4:00 to 6:00; public comment, 6:00? Is there a way that you could put a little two-line agenda on there or would that just stall people from coming until 5:30?

MS. IVERSON: Well, I think the discussion that I'm hearing is that public comment – if you used that approach where you have multiple council members attending a hearing and then public comment would be taken from 4:00 to 7:00 at any time.



MR. HAYMANS: Yes, that's based on the most recent comments we've heard from council members, but if you were to go to a set period like Duane and I had talked about to begin with, that's just an option, a short agenda.

MR. MAHOOD: Mike just pointed something out is when you do have a big crowd, you better start taking testimony earlier. If we had waited in Jacksonville until 6:00 o'clock, we would have been there to 10:00 o'clock that night. Each circumstance is a little bit different. We do encourage every council member from that state to attend the public hearings, and they are supported.

We generally get one council member to agree to chair it, but there is no reason that the other council members couldn't move around and talk to people and what have you or even trade off if it's over a longer period of time. I think it's strange because – and I think Mac hit it – if it's going to affect somebody right away, you can expect some pretty good crowds. If it's scoping and it's down the road, the council is just considering it, you might not get anybody to show up. It's pretty hard to determine sometimes because of the mix of items we've had going out, but we can pretty well be assured if it has to do with snapper grouper we're going to have a crowd there.

MR. BOYLES: Kim, I think the guidance that I'm hearing from the committee – and I'll look to colleagues to affirm or correct me – is let's explore the use of previewing or making these presentations pre-viewable or post-viewable, whatever the case may be, for the public hearings. I hear still strong support for the informal interactions.

Doug, I think we're at a little bit of a disconnect if we say we want the informal interactions and so to accomplish that we're going to wait until later in the published time period to take public comments. I think what the solution may be here or the guidance may be is let's shoot to have multiple council members available for these sessions.

I like Michelle's idea of rock, paper, scissors in terms of who will be the formal receiver of public comment to allow the others to do that informal interaction. I think I've summarized what I thought I heard; is that correct? I'm seeing heads nodded, so you've got what you need from us on this topic?

MS. IVERSON: I think so. One other caveat – and Robert and I discussed us this a little bit – you have that one-on-one interaction and you have that exchange of information and tech staff also, all of us have that opportunity and sometimes it's difficult to convey that. I hear really good information as the person that's out – Andrea and I both, when we're talking with people, they come in, sometimes kind of bucked up, ready to go to voice their opinion right away.

We've tried to encourage them to listen to the presentations, to meet one on one with the staff that is there and the council members as well informally; but if you have suggestions on some way to convey the information that you hear one on one, and the tech staff can do the same, maybe not in a formal report or anything like that, but sometimes it's helpful for me to be able to share that information.

I know the tech staff gets really good input one on one during the presentations. I think with this new format and allowing the council members to be in those rooms at the same time, but if you have a way or suggestions on how to convey that information to everyone, I'm open for that as well. I don't ask for you to address that right now; I know we're running out of time, but if you get with me later or with Andrea or any of the tech staff to let us know how we can better capture that.

MR. HARTIG: In really thinking about this and how it has progressed over time, really the situation we had works now. There are people that want to come in right away and give their testimony. In some meetings there aren't and in those kinds of meetings I've sat in the informal discussion and entered the discussion during the presentations, so that works.

Other times where I had to go right into the meeting room, I took more time between speakers to do the informal stuff. I think really in thinking about the whole thing, it works pretty well as we have it. Certainly, if we have more council members we can have people present when people are giving the presentations. Right now, in thinking about the whole concept the way it works, it works pretty well because there are people in some meetings that want to get in and get out. They know what they want to say.

MR. HARRIS: Yes, and that's fine with me. I think we've got to be flexible enough to afford the public the opportunity that they need. If they want to come in at 4:00 o'clock and give formal testimony, I'm willing to go upstairs and take that formal testimony at that time and miss part of the presentation and the interaction. We've just got to be flexible enough to make sure the public doesn't get left out of the process.

MR. BOYLES: And one other thing that I think is the unspoken or the thing that I think may have been passed over a little bit is that sometimes we just don't have a lot of participation, and it is costly in terms of staff time and meeting room expense, but I think what I'm hearing from the committee, Kim, is we understand that, but it's a necessary part of doing business.

I think we're comfortable with some modifications to how we do this but we think that we're on the right path with respect to interacting at these public hearings and scoping sessions. Any further on this topic? I see nothing and this takes us down to other business. Is there any other business to come before I&E? All right, seeing none, Amber and Emily, again thank you for being here, for your work and your support of the council. Thank you to the committee members and the council. I thought this was a very vibrant discussion. Mac.

MR. CURRIN: I just want to thank Kim and everyone else involved for going through the list from the Snapper Grouper AP and kind of winnowing out the ones that the I&E group and committee could handle and address and I appreciate that very much. That was very helpful to me.

MR. BOYLES: Absolutely and I was going to get to there, too. Thank you to the staff for just terrific work. I think this was a very vibrant and healthy discussion and I'm excited as we try to find new ways to get the word out and the message out. With that, Mr. Chairman, we are concluded.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 o'clock a.m., March 7, 2012.)

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# South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

## 2011 - 2012 Council Membership

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**INFORMATION & EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
 March 7, 2012  
 Savannah, GA 31401

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**INFORMATION & EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
 March 7, 2012  
 Savannah, GA 31401

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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