

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
JEKYLL ISLAND, GA
MARCH 3, 2010

The Information & Education Committee convened on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 in Jekyll Island, GA. The Committee reviewed the following items:

1. Update on Recent Outreach Activities

The Committee received an update from staff on recent outreach efforts for the deepwater MPAs, the Oculina Bank, and the 2009 deepwater coral research cruise off Cape Canaveral. Staff also provided an update on the 2009 regional fishery management councils' collaborative outreach projects as well as the intent to submit a proposal to the NOAA Environmental Literacy Program in cooperation with the SC Aquarium, SC Sea Grant, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary and the SC Department of Natural Resources.

2. Update on Revisions to SAFMC Web site

Staff presented to the Committee ongoing efforts to update the Council's current Web site by working with an independent contractor in multi-stages. Plans for the Web site include an overall upgrade that incorporates a new content management system, including the use of new graphics, fonts, and modifications to make the site more user-friendly and provide easier access to documents and meeting materials. Staff also briefed the Committee with plans to utilize various forms of social networking tools and reviewed several Web sites using these methods to communicate with constituents, including the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

3. Review of Information and Education AP Recommendations

Cathy Sakas, vice-chair of the I&E AP, provided an update of items discussed at the Information & Education Advisory Panel meeting, held on March 1 – 2 in Jekyll Island.

The Committee supported the I&E AP's recommendations which include the following guidance to staff:

- Utilize a rack card/post card as a "quick glance" reference for MPAs.
- Explore using partnerships (Sea Grant, others) to conduct periodic webinars with selected persons to help disseminate factual information regarding the status of certain amendments, issues, e.g., red snapper.

- Emphasize the requirements of the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act to constituents, including ending overfishing, rebuilding stocks, ACLs and AMs. The concern is that constituents (including “Congressional”) misunderstand MSA flexibility and management measures associated with setting ACLs and ending overfishing for red snapper.
- Work toward developing a targeted message – develop a Q&A with Chairman Harris specific to the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act and publicize via press release and other venues.
- Increase credibility utilizing partnerships already perceived by the public as credible, e.g., aquariums, museums, etc.
- Use a graphic timeline on documents highlighting where in the process an amendment currently stands. Incorporate a “follow the bouncing ball” approach to help the public better understand the management process and timelines.
- AP strongly supports the use of an outside contractor for the website upgrade and establishing a more personable “face” for the Council with constituents. Council should be seen as the key information source.
- Further explore the use of social media including Facebook, and Twitter.
- Conduct an “IT Workshop” or webinar with partners (state and federal agencies, NOAA Coastal Services Center, Sea Grant, ASMFC, etc.) to further explore Web-based communication strategies, including social media in a government/regulatory setting.

The Advisory Panel also supplied the Committee with a detailed list of recommendations specific to the redesign of the SAFMC Web site. The Committee reviewed the recommendations and supported the incorporation of the AP’s recommendations into the redesign process.

There were no motions.