

SUMMARY REPORT
INFORMATION & EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL MEETING
N. Charleston, SC
February 6-7, 2013

The Information and Education Advisory Panel met February 6-7 in North Charleston, SC. The advisory panel received the following presentations and provided comment/ recommendations.

Overview and Update of the Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) project for the South Atlantic Region

Kim Iverson, Council staff, provided an overview of the MREP project that is being implemented in the South Atlantic region. The program, facilitated by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, initially began in New England. The program, developed by fishermen for fishermen, includes the following program goals: to bring fishermen, scientists and managers together in a neutral setting outside the regulatory process; to increase the number of people at work in regional fisheries who are comfortable working with the fishery data and management systems; help policy makers and scientists become more familiar with the inner working of the fishing community; increase the number of fishermen involved in collaborative research and pursuit of best available science; and to develop leadership and promote trust. Additional information about the program is available at: <http://www.gmri.org>. GMRI has established a specific page for MREP Southeast at www.gmri.org/fishedu. The first workshop, a Science Workshop, is scheduled for April 2-4, 2013 in Tampa, FL.

AP members provided the following input:

- Need to be selective of participants.
- Consider including academic participants (either as lecturers or participants) and media as well.
- The AP suggested an abbreviated version of program for the South East Outdoor Writers Association meeting.
- Suggestions were made to have shorter segments of the workshops. Many of these potential participants are very busy (especially fishermen whose livelihood will be disrupted) and may not be able to give up 3-4 days.
- Hold a media hour/day on final day of workshop to invite media to meet with participants and get some feedback, Q&A, and provide testimonials. This will help push the program out as an announcement.
- Arrange photo opportunities as well with high level officials/participants help promote the program.
- The AP expressed concern about getting applications in before March 1 with such little time. It was suggested to place phone calls to targeted fishermen.
- The suggestion was made to post the application information on the Council's Facebook page. The Gulf and South Atlantic Council will be putting together a blurb with a consistent message to promote the program; also on the Council website; want to coordinate timing of the message release; want to make sure we send out direct link to the MREP South East page because of the difficulty in finding the information on the GMRI website.

- The AP requested a PDF version of the postcard to send out via e-mail; Kim will send the PDF version as a follow up
- The AP expressed caution about the differences in how each of the three Councils communicates and to be able to adapt to this.

Update on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Communication Group Social Media Workshop/ Use of Social Media

Amber Von Harten, Council staff, provided an overview of a Social Media Workshop recently attended by Council outreach staff. Staff learned about new evaluation and archiving tools for use with social media platforms; use of Twitter for live tweeting events; responsive design website programs; and the use of visualization tools through the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Integration and Application Network (UMD-IAN) AP member Pamela Fletcher recently released a book on entitled, *Tropical Connections: South Florida's Marine Environment*, and utilized the UMD-IAN for developing many of the graphics in the book.

Additionally, Kari MacLauchlin, Council staff provided an update on the Council's use of Facebook. Staff intends to launch a Twitter feed in March and utilize video for online presentations as part of the public hearing/scoping process, possibly beginning with Snapper Grouper Amendment 30 (VMS) The AP also had the following discussion of social media:

- The AP supported follow up training/workshop for the South Atlantic region: Science Communications Workshop through the UMD-IAN. The AP suggested having the training in conjunction with an I&E AP meeting.
- The link to the ASMFC group and workshop materials is: <http://acfcomgroup.wikispaces.com/home>
- The link to the UMD-IAN image library is: <http://ian.umces.edu/imagelibrary/>
- Pamela Fletcher offered to have copies of the *Tropical Connections* book for the June Council meeting. Information about the book and how to order is as follows:
 - <http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/outreach/floridaseagrant/> (press release) and
 - http://ian.umces.edu/press/books/publication/374/tropical_connections_south_florida_s_marine_environment_2012-07-02/ (ordering information)
- Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary recently hired a documentary videographer. They may be a good source of information for editing, etc.

SAFMC Web Site Upgrade/Redesign

Kim Iverson, Council Staff, presented an overview of the SAFMC Web site and plans for upgrade. Due to issues with the contractor and staff workload, progress on the upgrade to the Council's website has been delayed for the past year. Currently, Council staff are soliciting proposals from two web designers to finish the programming portion of the website upgrade/redesign. AP members provided the following additional comments:

- Kim reminded the AP that all of the I&E AP input from 2010 was incorporated into the current draft design.
- The AP likes the use of a calendar for events/meetings and the image header.
- The suggestion was made to use the term "Directory" instead of "About Us."
- The AP suggested considering options for having a "fisheries closure calendar" to highlight both annual closures and periodic openings and closings as ACLs and AMs are implanted. Members suggested using colors vs. text.

- Modify the calendar format on the homepage and consider having it read from Sunday to Saturday instead of Monday to Sunday.
- AP members noted that the current SAFMC website is at the top of the Google searches for topics and encouraged staff to consider this when upgrading.
- The AP suggested that the search engine for the new site should be highly functional, given the amount of information on the site.

Note: Below is an overview of the input the AP provided previously and that has been incorporated into the redesign:

- a. Current site is good and useful (relatively speaking)
- b. AP strongly supports use of an outside contractor for upgrade – need to ensure cost effectiveness.
- c. Support for “humanizing” the Council via the Web site, raise awareness of who the Council members are, establish a more personable “face” for the Council with constituents. Council should be seen as the key information source.
- d. Important components for the upgrade include:
 1. New content management system
 2. Calendar and RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed
 3. Ability to subscribe to SAFMC email from the homepage (Constant Contact as a manager).
 4. Ensure that the content management system supports internal file sharing.
 5. Utilize a blog as a means to disseminate information (news releases, etc.) using the Pacific Council’s Web site as an example. Blog should be managed effectively and closely and monitored in house. Consensus that a blog is a strong communication tool.
- e. Further explore the use of social media including Facebook, and Twitter. (Contact Pacific Council regarding their initial experience).
Some concerns include:
 1. Managing postings and feedback – staff time
 2. Social media should engage and not sway public opinion
 3. Social media outlets may be blocked by agencies (e.g., USCG, some state agencies)

Note: The AP provided many specific recommendations for a newly designed Web site:

- Keep pull-down menus consistent throughout the site
- Search Engine should be tested and effective
- Keep important information on the homepage – Who We Are, Announcements
- Keep the ‘box type’ layout
- Ease of navigation important – use more graphics and less text to define layers
- Need for “branding” using graphics, colors, etc.
- Address species specific information from the homepage (e.g., red snapper) and provide direct link to short summary of current situations regarding species.

- Link to NOAA FishWatch
- Have a “What’s New” on the homepage
- Utilize a content management system that can utilize metadata files with tags that will link information throughout the site and from the homepage.
- Have a photo gallery and links to other sites with photo galleries (e.g., NOAA Photo Library, FWRI, Gray’s Reef NMS).
- Have categories on the homepage for “audiences” (e.g., commercial, recreational, educators, etc.) and direct to information on site that is of interest to specific audiences.
- Publicize the new site development long before implementation – (reduce “surprise” factor).
- Utilize older black and white photos when appropriate to emphasize the historic nature of fisheries.
- Control inputs/outputs on the Web site – especially when dealing with social networking tools.
- Utilize video postings. These could be used as a tool to increase understanding of management process, etc.
- When working with the contractor:
 - Clearly define in the contract what the contractor will provide and what is expected from Council staff.
 - Request a 2-month period following the implementation of the new site for the contractor to address any glitches (not at an additional hourly cost).

Proposed Outreach Activities for 2013-2014

Amber Von Harten, Council staff, explained the draft plan of work developed for outreach activities in 2013-2014. The AP provided the following comments:

- The AP agreed the list of activities is ambitious but necessary.
- Skepticism about effectiveness of outreach at boat shows; be selective to participate at more regional boat shows.
- Suggested hosting more informal outreach sessions like Science Café’s to get out and about in communities before heading out to the docks and public hearings so that people get to know you and the Council process.

Review of Visioning Process for Snapper Grouper

Kari Maclauchlin, Council staff, provided an overview of the Councils current effort to develop a visioning strategic plan for the snapper grouper fishery and how this process will be carried out in the context of outreach needs. The AP made the following suggestions:

- Recommendations for possible facilitators -
 - Conflict Resolution Consortium
 - FL Sea Grant Extension – Natural Resources Leadership Institute

Discussion of Strategic Planning

Kim Iverson, Council staff, led a discussion about following up with the previous AP meeting idea of developing a strategic plan for outreach efforts by the SAFMC. The AP discussed the need for this type of effort and methods for carrying out the development of a plan. The AP recommended that staff approach the plan development as more of a communications operation plan rather than a strategic plan. They provided additional suggestions including:

- Start with Council Goals/objectives to serve as a framework to be sure to meet the needs of the overarching Council goals.
- Needs assessment is the first step in the process and will be necessary to meet with key informants to develop appropriate goals/objectives (Council members and AP members).
- Start with Council members to understand charge and expectations of outreach to meet Council objectives; then do the needs assessment (one-on-one interviews); “what approaches should be considered for conducting outreach in the region to address MSA and National Standards? What does the Council expect from its Outreach and Education Program?”
- Need to develop an Operational Plan rather than a Strategic Plan. Work in stages to achieve the plan, involving fishermen and other constituents later in the process.
- Elizabeth Von Kolnitz and Pamela Fletcher volunteered to serve on a working group to help develop the operational plan.
- Plan another I&E AP meeting for the Fall 2013.

Information and Education Advisory Panel Members in Attendance:

Cathy Sakas, Vice-Chair

John Mark Dean

Suzi Durant

Pamela Fletcher

Elizabeth vonKolnitz

Lt. Brandon Fisher

Jennifer Koches

Staff Contact: Kim Iverson