

**SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE
INFORMATION AND EDUCATION
COMMITTEE MEETING
Savannah, GA
March 7, 2012**

The Information and Education Committee met on Wednesday, March 7, 2012. The Committee reviewed recommendations received from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel regarding outreach and communication and provided direction to staff. The Committee received an update on the development of a smart phone application for distribution of regulation information. In addition, the Committee received presentations regarding the use of social media for outreach.

Amber VonHarten with SC Sea Grant Extension provided an overview of the final report from the Regional Social Media Workshop, including recommendations and online survey results. Emily Muehlstein, Outreach Specialist with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council gave a presentation on the Gulf Council's use of social media. The presentation included an overview of how the Council utilizes Facebook, blogs, and various online forums to provide updated information on Council issues. She also provided insight on staff responsibilities and time involved in use of social media tools.

In addition, the Committee discussed the current format used by the South Atlantic Council for public hearing and scoping meetings.

The Committee provided the following directions to staff:

Regarding the Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations:

- In addition to the new information provided in the Decision Documents following each Council meeting, staff should provide a brief but thorough explanation to AP members regarding the Council's rationale in choosing management alternatives that are not consistent with AP recommendations for various amendments.

For the Smart Phone Regulations Application:

- Recommend including references for Highly Migratory Species
- Modify the disclaimer to include reference to the Code of Federal Regulations as the official source for regulation information; and
- Explore options for including regulations for National Parks as part of the App menu.

(Continued)

Social Media Recommendations:

- The Committee recommends staff move forward with the use of social media tools, starting with Facebook and blogs. The Committee stressed the need for accuracy in posting information and responses to inquiries.

Public Hearing/Scoping Meeting Recommendations:

- Maintain the current format for the meetings, but modify the way that public testimony is taken by Council members. Designate a single Council member to take formal testimony while allowing other members to observe presentations and participate in informal conversations with attendees.
- Explore the use of social media tools for posting public hearing/scoping meeting presentations and soliciting public comment.