

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **JOINT ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT AND HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEES**

**Savannah Hilton DeSoto  
Savannah, Georgia**

**March 3, 2014**

### **SUMMARY MINUTES**

#### **Ecosystem-Based Management Committee Members:**

Doug Haymans, Chair  
Chris Conklin  
Dr. Wilson Laney  
Charlie Phillips

Anna Beckwith  
Dr. Michelle Duval  
Jessica McCawley

#### **Habitat & Environmental Protection Committee**

Wilson Laney, Chair  
Chris Conklin  
Doug Haymans  
Charlie Phillips

Anna Beckwith  
Lt. Morgan Fowler  
John Jolley

#### **Council Members:**

Ben Hartig  
Zack Bowen  
Dr. Roy Crabtree

Mel Bell  
Jack Cox  
David Cupka

#### **Council Staff:**

Bob Mahood  
Roger Pugliese  
Kim Iverson  
Dr. Mike Errigo  
Myra Brouwer  
Julie O'Dell  
Dr. Brian Chevront

Gregg Waugh  
Mike Collins  
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
Amber Von Harten  
John Carmichael  
Anna Martin

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

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith  
Doug Boyd  
Phil Steele  
Karen Antrim Raine

Dr. Jack McGovern  
Col. Jim Kelley  
Mike Kennedy  
Pres Pate  
Tracy Dunn

Additional Attendees Attached

The Joint Habitat and Environmental Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Madison Ballroom of the Savannah Hilton DeSoto, March 3, 2014, and was called to order at 3:40 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Doug Haymans/Wilson Laney.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay, we will start the Joint Habitat and Environmental Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee Meeting chaired by myself and Wilson. You will see on the back of your agenda the committee members of each of those committees. We will start with the approval of the agenda. Does anybody have any additional items to add to the agenda? Seeing none, we will take the agenda as presented.

You've had a chance to look at the minutes that have been sent around. Does anybody have any additions or corrections to the minutes? Seeing none, we will accept those minutes as provided. We only have an hour and 50 minutes and I want to try to stay on track, so we will try to keep this straightforward and moving along as we can, so let's move right into Coral 8, and that would be Jack.

DR. McGOVERN: Coral 8 includes actions to extend protections to the Deepwater Coral Ecosystems by expanding the boundaries of the Oculina HAPC, the Stetson-Miami Terrace HAPC and the Cape Lookout HAPC. It also proposes a transit provision through the Oculina Bank HAPC for fishing vessels with rock shrimp on board. Coral Amendment 8 was submitted for secretarial review on November 26<sup>th</sup>. The proposed rule package is under review in the region. We expect that this proposed rule package will be cleared probably next week or soon thereafter and go to headquarters.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you, Jack. We're just having a short discussion about the order here. We should have probably had Item 5 directly under that Amendment 8. Are there any questions for Jack? Seeing none, Anna.

MS. MARTIN: Okay, the next item on the agenda is the status of the council's cooperative agreement with the Coral Reef Conservation Program and our grant that we submitted for Fiscal Year '14 through '16. This was something staff submitted on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November of last year.

At the December meeting, I presented an overview of what we have included in the grant proposal for the next funding cycle, which is my council staff position and also the project field work that is conducted by the science center within the existing marine protected areas in addition to the Oculina Experimental Closed Area. This grant is still under review; and I've learned that the negotiation letters are to be sent some time this week.

MR. HAYMANS: Are there any questions for Anna? Seeing none, we'll move on to the next item, which is actually kind of picking back up on – or at least elements of Coral 8. Roger; we'll have the short presentation over the deepwater shrimp industry's recommendation.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay, what everybody has under Attachment 1 is in response to the rock shrimp industry providing some coordinates for a possible alteration of the eastern boundary of the northern extension that is already moving forward in the process in Amendment 8 at this

time. There are two different options; one which provided some points to the south which just addressed the southern portion of the eastern boundary and then an Option A that addressed the entire eastern boundary from the beginning to the end.

The intent of this was to shift the boundary further and closer to the pinnacle areas in response to some concern about possible fishing in that area and production related to activities that I think Anna will touch on at least what the comments were with regard to that.

MS. MARTIN: We did reach out to Mike Merrifield – he is the Chair of the Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel – following the council’s guidance at the last meeting in December. We requested voluntary trip ticket information from vessels where landings had occurred in the area in question during last year’s fishing season and specifically during the month of September of last year, which, as you all recall, Mike had cited in his e-mailed letter request to council members right before the December meeting.

He did provide us with information that said there were six vessels that reported depths of 250 to 300 feet on eleven trip tickets between the 4<sup>th</sup> of September and the 4<sup>th</sup> of November with one trip from early December with a total value of \$292,680. This was all the information he submitted, and he also circulated an e-mail to council members last evening.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay, what I’d like to do is walk through and kind of progress down what this reorientation was. As I do, I would like to touch on some concerns or issues regarding this. On Option B, as I mentioned this is the southern portion only. It is adjacent to probably the most significant pinnacle distribution in the entire extension to the north.

This area covers – and in some cases if you work down through there it really does, as you move down the line, come right up against the base of the pinnacle systems. If you look at what has been commented about some of the fishing effort, it is all the way into 250, which is actually shallower than some of the line areas that are identified.

The second alternative – and you might just scroll down just for perspective – it starts to move even further into the west as you get down on this proposal in Option B; and just move all the way to the southern portion of it; and then move into Option A, which will show the northern – so it does begin to – with this alternative it moved it in and starts actually pushing it even further into the northern portion of the extension; and then has the identical shift as you get to the – I think it was Points 20 through 25 in the southern zone.

Now, let me put it in the context of what we have proposed here. In the boundaries that were developed for this, the original recommendation from the Habitat and Coral Advisory Panel was a hundred meter outside bound to cover the habitats within the entire distribution but also to provide protection of the eastern component of those habitats, the pinnacles, which is directly adjacent; and go back into the material provided by John Reed in the original proposals and recommendations and supporting documentation, you have a complex of coral rubble, hard-bottom structure which transitions into mud and then associated habitats.

The idea was to protect that entire component and provide somewhat of a buffer away from that area, highlighting both the habitat value of those low-relief habitats but also the fact that in some of those zones there actually were some of the snapper grouper species and other reef-related species that are adjacent to especially to the rubble and bases of the pinnacle systems, therefore, alluding to the fact of the potential for bycatch increase the closer you get into the system.

The other fact is now what the council did is then at the last refinement and finalization of the document and the proposal that moved forward on the northern extension again responded to the industry's request on relooking at this eastern boundary and actually adjusted it beyond the initial recommendation and agreement between all three groups, the habitat, coral and industry at one time; refined it even further at the subsequent request of industry and what was finalized and provided as the recommendation that moved forward in the present coral amendment in review.

This proposal now takes it one step even further and literally does bring it up in many cases right up to the base of the pinnacle systems. I think one thing I did want to just – I wanted to restate some of the rationale that, as I've mentioned before, the coral and habitat had endorsed the original and the fact that we've had two iterations that industry has proposed and the council has adopted the previous proposals in development of this alternative. That's where we stand with what was provided to the council, and it is in your hands for discussion.

MR. HAYMANS: In the development of Coral 8 I think we gave more than due process to all of the APs involved. There was quite a bit of consideration given to all of the industries as well as the scientists that were involved, and I think we came up with pretty good compromises. Though I can appreciate the industry's request, specifically given that this was just last year, we have learned over the course of time that the fishery does move around.

The shrimp are in and out of these areas and to try to create another sliver, I personally don't know that we want to go into another new plan for this one area. I think as Roger has mentioned a couple of times, it really does push right up against the pinnacles, and I don't know that we want to necessarily go there. However, I'll open the floor discussion if anybody has a different point of view. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I just had a question. Option A and Option B, where did these come from; were these original options from before and one of them is just a subset of the other one? How did we get these two?

MR. HAYMANS: My understanding is these were brought from Mike Merrifield towards the end of the last fishing seasons and basically, as I guess Anna had just told us, six vessels had ventured into these areas, had found a considerable amount of shrimp, and they wanted to see if they could include them in Coral 8. They were brought to us right at the conclusion of the process.

MS. MARTIN: That's correct, Doug, and also at the committee discussion about this issue, the motion that was made directed staff to map the coordinates. As you recall, Mike submitted a wide range of coordinates and so the committee provided guidance to map the coordinates for Point 16 through 25 and also for Points 20 through 25; so providing a couple of different

scenarios there. The e-mailed letter that industry representatives had submitted, they honed in on the Points 20 through 25 as an element of prioritizing their request, I think.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; and just kind of a follow-up note is that when you look at some of these, they look very similar to some of what were considered and rejected in the original discussions, some of the earlier discussions, maybe even further east than some of those proposals.

MR. HAYMANS: And so what we're seeing here is the fulfillment of our request to Roger to map these points. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I did rock shrimp many years ago back before my beard got gray, so I understand the importance of fishing close to the ledges. I have some sympathy for them. I also know that these rock shrimp move around a lot, and there is a lot of economic value on the table here. I also know that when you're working those electronics that those guys have, they are very, very accurate. They're even more accurate than the stuff I had when I shrimped.

I think they can stay out of the coral. If there actually are historic tracks in there – and because this is going to be the last cut. I mean whatever is done here is done and this area is going to be protected after that, then we're through, we can move on. I hate to leave a lot of value not being caught if we can catch it and still keep the coral safe.

MR. HARTIG: Doug, I'm not on your committee, but I kind of brought this back up before you. My concern was what Roger touched on. On the downsides of these pinnacles – and to me Roger talked about the hard bottom and the different kinds of smaller substrate that occurs on the so-called what Mike mentioned in his letter, the roll-down.

Roger, can you identify where the mud starts in this and where that bottom ends? Is it in between the red and the green where you're talking about that area? You talked about blueline tilefish habitat. The other thing I know that I've observed over time watching some of the bycatch in these fisheries is that these little snowy grouper and yellowedges don't necessarily fall out on the major portions of the habitat.

The smaller fish seem to be out on the edges away from where the real predators are on this rock complex. I'm looking at the pros and cons of this. That may be a very important habitat for some of these juveniles, especially groupers, that fall out on these small pieces of habitat outside the major pinnacle system. What are your observations on that?

MR. PUGLIESE: Well, to some degree that's why you had the original proposal from the Habitat and from the Coral Advisory Panel on the hundred because you get that area and you really are getting into the true mud bottom areas. One of the things feeding directly to your comments I think is a new bycatch report has just come out on all shrimp fisheries.

I don't think we've had a chance to distribute it or anything. I was just going through that recently and some of the higher concentrated effort and potential bycatch are up in these deeper areas; so I think that's a consideration that was raised in the original proposal and some of this newer information may actually reiterate that. I think that concern about those edge habitats

being significant was also raised earlier and the fish being, like you said, not necessarily up inside but using that kind of edge effect habitats.

MR. HARTIG: Well, I remember a paper – it has been quite a while back, but they actually put out these small squares with oyster shells in the deeper habitats on the offshore sides. I think it was on the offshore sides of this area; I can't be sure. I do know that they collected significant numbers of both snowy grouper and yellowedge in those types of habitat that they put out there. It is obvious to me that some of these smaller habitats are as important as the major pinnacle system at least from the grouper point of view.

MS. McCAWLEY: This particular option that was suggested; so, for example, Option B, this line was discussed before and rejected by the three different APs?

MR. PUGLIESE: It may not be the exact line, but it is pretty doggone close to these. I think one of the original discussions was trying to push it right up to the edge originally at 90 meters. In some cases I think it goes inside the 90, actually, so it is very similar to proposals that had been discussed in the beginning of this process two years ago. It is almost like we've gone full circle, but it kept on whittling away and getting closer and closer and almost I think back to where we started.

MS. McCAWLEY: I hate to keep belaboring this, but I guess there is really no way to split the difference without starting a whole other process; and if we're going to go down that path, I would suggest the shorter of these two options that would only look at one area and try to split the difference between the red line and the green line here. I can see it looks like some of them are right up against – I mean, it is just a thought. I don't know how feasible that is to do that.

MR. HAYMANS: And as Roger has just reminded me, I guess we pretty much have seen that split in some of the previous iterations. The question here would be whether or not we want to start a new amendment for this area. I guess that's the main question here. Otherwise, we're going to move on; and when we've seen this a few times and when we've seen reports on rock shrimp, maybe then we'll come back and address it. Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: I would say we should move on; and if there is an opportunity for something else to be considered in a coral amendment, maybe we can bring this back up and see if we want to add this as an additional action to a future coral amendment; but certainly to start now over again, I don't think it's appropriate.

MR. PUGLIESE: I think one of the important things that we really do need to get in is while this information that I've identified, the characterization has been done, I think getting more significant characterization of the bycatch in this fishery is really going to be important on all sides of here because I think that was lacking to a great degree in the last round.

There had been only so much done. There has been more work done in this iteration, but I think a focus on what that might mean on not only fish but the ecosystem level because there is a lot of significant amounts of Calafate crabs and a lot of things that were identified as not significant, but also before – and going way back in the discussion, bycatch of calico scallops was a

significant activity, and we have a significant calico fishery starting. I think there needs to be some longer-term issues also addressed that would feed any of this additional discussion on needs for modification.

MR. HARTIG: That was interesting, Roger. Catching some of these species that live in association with these coral pinnacles; it is obvious that at least as far as Warsaw grouper in particular, they range off those pinnacles to feed on crabs specifically and a number of different species of crabs; but you see a lot of the shamefaced and you see there is another kind of a Jonah type crab that they have in them.

I don't know how many other species feed on that associated fauna that lives on that mud, you know, sparser hard-bottom habitat interface that may be important feeding areas for these fish. The one thing I would like to know; you mentioned the bycatch that has been done recently; can we get that? Can you get that to us? I'd like to view it before full council.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; I'll get that e-mailed out to everybody or I will get it to Mike and he'll send it out to everybody. It just literally came out like the last week or a couple of weeks.

MR. HARTIG: And is some of that specific to rock shrimping?

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; it was a characterization of U.S. Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic penaeid and rock shrimp fishery based on observer data. Truthfully, I have just kind of touched on the highlights on that to be able to at least raise it for discussion here. I will get to Mike and he can distribute it.

MS. McCAWLEY: Like Anna, I'm not ready to go down this path. I think we've spent a lot of time on this; but if we do look at other coral amendments, I'd be willing to go back and look at this, but we won't really have any other data because they won't be able to trawl in this area anymore from here on out. It is going to be hard moving forward when we really only have last year's data is the last year data to look back to other than the bycatch information.

DR. DUVAL: I'm wondering if maybe one way to get at that would be to get an exempted fishing permit to perhaps look at some of those areas where you can actually have an observer on board where you could have some further characterization of the bycatch and the habitat utilization in those areas.

MS. McCAWLEY: To that point, I would love to see us embark on that, to go back to the Merrifield's and maybe suggest that they get an exempted fishing permit to look at this bycatch in some of these areas. What do other people think about that?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes; that might be the way to go and then we can make a much better informed decision, and they can still work in that area, whichever boats get that exempted permit. If there are only half a dozen, that may be the way to go. Of course, we would have to support the experimental permit and I think we can.

But, yes, if we use the deeper of the two lines and there is nobody that ever goes back in there, it is kind of like when we shut down a fishery, we don't have any information to make judgments on anymore. That might be a good way to do it.

MR. PUGLIESE: I guess we're forgetting that we do have a directive to all our partners in the region to do additional research in the area; so I mean specific characterization of not only the pinnacle system but out into these edge systems. I think what you were seeing in some of the previous work, they did work where they came up on to the edges and began that process.

We're making some inroads to get and focus future mapping and characterization into established managed areas. I was going to highlight something coming up a little later on in the coordination. We've worked to get some of the other efforts even in transit to be able to map some of the high-profile areas.

I think with all the technology available and the opportunities to get some ROV and other things to actually characterize because it would be shame to do a lot of fishing out in the area if you are talking about impacts on those habitats and you're not getting the characterization of it before you actually go beyond.

MR. BELL: I guess we just sort of had a collective light bulb go off at the same time. I was thinking the same thing, though, is kind of working with the fishermen, if there was a way through permitting to allow some level of effort in there, then you're going to get data. I appreciate what Roger said related to using assets that are available, but this would just – you know, you were listening to the fishermen, you're engaged in some sort of cooperative effort with them to try to look at this. Once you draw the line and it is sealed, then you do run out of data all of a sudden; so I just thought it was a good idea. I'm not on your committee, but thank you for asking.

MR. CONKLIN: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to note that the landings' information, the X-vessel value that Mr. Merrifield has presented to us is also brand new, just like the bycatch reports. We didn't have that information before and it is certainly valuable and we need to take it into consideration.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for that update, Roger, on the directive to all partners to actually continue and keep doing characterization and bottom mapping whenever those assets are in the area. I think the point was that this is a specific gear type that is being used in that area; and so I think if there was a way to have an exempted fishing permit that could demonstrate – that could characterize a fishery, do some characterization and potentially demonstrate that there is not harm being done, then that would be useful. That was my point in bringing up an EFP as a potential tool; that's all.

MR. HAYMANS: So would it be appropriate then that we direct a motion or a direction to staff to get with the chairman of Shrimp Committee, Mr. Merrifield, and let him know that we've considered his request and that we're not going to move forward at this moment; but if he would like to work with staff to develop an exempted fisheries permit and come back to the council



with that request. Well, it goes to the council for approval first and then to Roy – for that happen with the aid of the staff; would that be okay, Anna?

MS. MARTIN: We have an AP meeting in May.

MR. HAYMANS: And there is an AP meeting in May, which would be convenient for them to discuss that. That doesn't need to be a motion; does it? Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I could move that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay, go ahead.

MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we direct staff to work with the Deepwater Shrimp AP to consider an exempted fishing permit for these particular areas for this gear type. Do you want a time period and bring this back? Roger is suggesting edits.

MR. HAYMANS: Is there a second; Charlie. I saw our Regional Administrator had a very perplexed look, and I was curious as to his thoughts on this.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, maybe I missed something, so we closed this area to protect the corals. If we issue an exempted fishing permit to go back in there and trawl, they're going to damage the corals we're trying to protect. Are we trying to see if they pull up hunks of corals in the net or what exactly are we looking for? I'm not quite sure I'm following all this.

MR. HAYMANS: It seemed to be the general consensus of the members of this committee to allow this fishery back in under an EFP; and so I'm just simply trying to move that forward a bit. I don't know what their end result is going to be other than to characterize a greater characterization of the catch within that closed area; whether it is shrimp, corals or other bycatch.

DR. LANEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm speaking in my capacity as a member of your committee and not the other committee. I'm with Roy on this one. It seems contradictory for us to pursue an exempted fishing permit in an area that we already closed. We've heard from Roger on the record and you yourself pointed out that I think we've kind of bent over backwards with the Deepwater Shrimp AP in the past in configuring these areas in the first place.

Roger has already noted that those lines are moving ever closer to the pinnacles; and Ben pointed out the concern about the edge habitat and these juvenile grouper species, particularly snowy and yellowedge. I don't know; it seems to me we're moving backwards on this one.

MR. PHILLIPS: No, Roy, I don't think we're trying to let them go back into coral. I think what we want to do is let them go back on their historical tracks, which is closer to the coral than the line is now, and we can characterize it there is any significant bycatch of Warsaw or anything like that.

If there is, then we know – it won't take long and we'll know, okay, the line should be here or it should be there. I don't think there is going to be an interaction with coral. I think it's going to

tell us more what kind of production they can get out of there, if there is going to be bycatch in there; but I don't think that line has moved far enough where it is going to interact with coral. If it was, I'd say not.

MS. McCAWLEY: Well, we also knew about this issue I think before we approved this amendment, and we said that we would take this issue up after we approved the amendment. To me we knew about this concern. I don't think we knew all the economic pieces and parts of it that we have now, but we knew about this concern before we finalized the amendment and we chose to go ahead and finalize the amendment. To me this is just trying to take care of this additional issue. Also, after talking to Bob, I think I'd like to amend my motion.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay, Anna, to that point and then for an amendment.

MS. MARTIN: Yes; Jessica, you're right, this has come up during the public hearing process for Coral Amendment 8. Those meetings were held in August of last year before the council approved Amendment 8 for secretarial review. At that time there were comments that we received at the Jacksonville Public Hearing about this area in question.

What happened after the public hearings was the landings' information that you see that was circulated around via e-mail kind of further confirming their request for that area that they had already mentioned at the Jacksonville Public Hearings. It did come up before your discussion of final approval.

Also, just to remind the committee, if you go back into the – you know, we developed a timeline for – you know, we had a plethora of AP meetings for Coral Amendment 8. There was a joint AP meeting with the Deepwater Shrimp AP and the Coral AP, also members of the Habitat AP and Law Enforcement AP.

They came up with a consensus for how all of the groups collectively wanted to modify the northern extension of the Oculina Bank. What you see that has resulted since then has been the Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel coming back to request additional trawling areas after they had agreed upon a particular modification. So just to remind you, that did happen; and as time has gone on and additional fishing activity has occurred in this area, there have been more requests that council take a look at honing in on this northern extension of the Oculina Bank.

MR. HAYMANS: The maker of the motion wishes to make an amendment to her motion.

MS. McCAWLEY: Let me tell you what I'm after and then maybe we can figure out how to word this; but instead of directing staff to help them write an EFP; just maybe to let the Deepwater AP know that we don't want to modify this at this time, but they could consider an exempted fishing permit to give us more information, something of that nature. Was that something that you'd like to see, Mr. Chairman?

MR. HAYMANS: Well, I don't know that the Chair would like to necessarily see that. I was trying to work with what I thought the wishes of the committee were; but I thought that is basically what this was. I wasn't necessarily telling staff or asking staff to go back and develop

an EFP with them; but if that is the industry's desire to issue an EFP or to ask for an EFP, that staff would help them.

MS. McCAWLEY: Then maybe the part that is a little bit confusing "is direct staff to work with the Deepwater AP to consider an EFP" is the part that is confusing.

DR. DUVAL: And maybe if instead of saying "direct staff to work with Deepwater Shrimp AP", but suggest or recommend to Deepwater Shrimp AP to consider development of an EFP. I agree with Jessica; we've gone down a process. We're not ready to go back on that process or necessarily move forward with another coral amendment at this time.

My thought in making this suggestion was that there would be a controlled way in which to confirm some of the requests of industry. I think by changing the words to say "recommend the Deepwater Shrimp AP consider development of an EFP," then that kind of puts the ball in their court to do so.

MS. McCAWLEY: So do you want me to amend that motion accordingly?

MR. HAYMANS: Sure.

MS. McCAWLEY: So recommend the Deepwater Shrimp AP consider development of an exempted fishing permit for these particular areas for this particular gear type.

MR. HAYMANS: And, Charlie, you were the seconder; are you okay with that?

MR. PHILLIPS: And that's fine because we know that the Deepwater Shrimp AP is going to have to come to staff in their development of this. Even though we may not direct staff, it just needs to be known and on the record that is the way we would expect Deepwater Shrimp to come, working through staff, and to make sure everybody is on the same page.

MS. MARTIN: The other thing to keep in mind here is that it would seem that the council would want to wait for Coral Amendment 8 to be implemented before recommending development of an exempted fishing permit for this area.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, it's going to take them a while to figure out what they want and how they want it; and I would think that this is going to be done well before – even if they started on the project right today, it is still going to be done well before they could get an experiment set up. I don't see a problem with them starting it now.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I had similar thoughts. I figured that – yes, never mind.

MR. HAYMANS: Any additional discussion? **Seeing none, the motion reads recommend the Deepwater Shrimp AP consider development of an EFP for these particular areas for this particular gear type.** As a reminder, we're going to vote as two combined committees and not as two separate committees. All those in favor please raise your hand. I see two in favor. All

those opposed. There are a whole lot more people than two folks on each committee, guys. Do you all need 30 seconds to think about it and we'll revote?

MS. McCAWLEY: The seconder didn't even vote for the motion.

MR. HAYMANS: All right, I'll tell you what, here is what I'm going to do. The members of this committee besides myself and Wilson are Anna, Chris, Michelle, Jessica, Charlie, Morgan, John Jolley. So now that you know who you are; all those in favor of this motion raise your hand, 7; all those opposed. **I see none; the motion carries and one abstention.** Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: So I assume you're going to give them a list of the things you're interested, the types of research you want or what information you're looking for. Then I would think you need to give them guidance on what does and does not qualify for activities under an exempted fishing permit. I'm not sure if we just go in with something this vague and general that it's going to be real productive unless we tell them exactly what we're getting at.

MR. PHILLIPS: And to Roy's point; yes, one of the things that I would want to know is bycatch, what they're seeing with bycatch in that piece of bottom versus what they would see for bycatch outside of that piece of bottom; the CPUE for rock shrimp in that piece of bottom versus outside. My suggestion is they work with staff and they make that list of things that they need to know.

DR. LANEY: My question is to Roy or Jack, I guess. Does an exempted fishing permit mandate observer coverage for all the trips? I see Monica shaking her head no.

DR. CRABTREE: No; it doesn't mandate anything in particular. It is also not at all clear to me why you would need an exempted fishing permit. You could send a research vessel out there and do this and then you wouldn't need an exempted permit. I think there are any number of ways to get at the data you want. The real question is going to be who is going to pay for it?

MR. PHILLIPS: To that point, that is you send the rock shrimpers because they're the ones that have the points, they're the ones that have been in there, they're familiar with the bottom. Not to belittle the research boats, but the rock shrimp guys actually have the gear on board. They're going to answer the questions that we all are going want to know the answers to.

MR. BELL: Just an observation, this whole discussion is kind of – this fishery is sort of the poster child to demonstrate how VMS can be a very, very powerful tool. In terms of when you're talking about moving a line just a little bit of difference and you have the capability now of managing things that way, it is impressive that you can even have that discussion; and it's because of the application of that tool, which is just an observation.

MR. BOWEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on this committee either, but I would second Mr. Bell's comment there.

MR. MAHOOD: The staff is no longer mentioned in this, but people keep saying the staff is going to help them. They gave us the coordinates to put on maps to show you. They know

where they're talking about. They know how to operate their vessels and the trawls and those types of things. We don't know any of that.

I'm not sure what role you see the staff contributing to all this. I think it is also not very appropriate for staff to be helping people develop exempted fisheries permits. That is my opinion. Now, we don't mind giving them copies of the maps. Again, they gave us the coordinates; we didn't develop these. We don't mind providing resources to them, but I'm not sure what our role would be in developing an exempted fisheries permit.

DR. DUVAL: Maybe Charlie and I disagree on this a little bit, but it wasn't my intent in making that suggestion that staff work on this at all. I think if the Deepwater Shrimp AP has questions about, well, where do we go to find out what the requirements are for an EFP, staff might be able to say here are the rules for an EFP and here is where you go and direct them to Roy's staff actually to get that kind of information. It is not that staff would work on it. I just wanted to be clear about that. I think if there are folks who want to know, well, what are some of the existing studies, what are some of the ongoing efforts, that's where council can provide that information because they know what is going on. That's all.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes; and I guess my only direction to staff was actually to communicate back to them that the council considered this set of data but are not acting on it; and from there, it's up to them. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: And my point wasn't for the staff to write it for them. The staff could maybe say, yes, this a question that we want answered; or if it needs to go to region, then region could say, yes, we want to know bycatch as part of it, we want to know productivity as part of it. Instead of them trying to write something and say we're done and then bringing it and saying, oh, no, we want some other stuff in there. That was the only part I would consider as the working agreement.

MR. HAYMANS: Bob, can we get the last work from you?

MR. MAHOOD: When you say recommend that the Deepwater Shrimp AP consider this; are you really just saying this is one avenue they may approach the council with? This kind of says we're going to pay for them getting together to develop an EFP, in my mind. When you say it is recommended that they do this, the council is recommending to you to do this, you're basically saying this is one avenue they could take to bring information through the regional office and then to the council. The exempted fisheries permits don't go through the council. We just recommend whether we think the Regional Administrator should approve it or not.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, the other issue I see, it sounds like to me you're talking about research data that you want; and I don't know that anyone on the AP is qualified to design a study to go out and do this. It seems to me whoever is going to do this, you're going to have to start with here are the questions; and then you're going to have to have someone who is a scientist come and say, all right, here is the way we could go out and get that. Maybe it is an EFP or it isn't. The only real thing an EFP allows them to do is sell the catch after they do it. Now, I'm sure

they'd like to sell the catch, but it doesn't pay the bill for who is going to pay for the observers, who is going to pay to do all the analysis and things that comes out of it.

MR. HAYMANS: It sounds like a great opportunity for the scientists and the fishermen to work together. Bob.

MR. MAHOOD: Yes; and another avenue would be the cooperative research program that Bonnie administers. They could put in a project for that; and in that they do get a representative from the center that is a member of their team to put this together. They do have oversight and it is done through a process that exists right now. I don't know how the funding is for that program this year, but it is a program that would be another alternative they could take.

MR. HAYMANS: Is there any additional discussion? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Again, I'm not on your committee, but, Roger, if we ever see this again, can we have the plots from this season, the VMS points plotted on this chart from this season? This was the season in question; the was the one where they asked –

MR. PUGLIESE: And that's part of the issue with this initial discussion, to even begin this discussion is that the analysis done for the last amendment that is in process right now didn't include this information. It would have to go through an entire process of getting the updated VMS information and combine the entire package to see where – because if I really remember, I think from 2007 to '11 there was very little that was in this area, so this is truly kind of moving in and looking at some other areas.

I'm able to work on any of this if we get further down the road on these processes; but there had to be a decision about this discussion and the reality of where we stand with the amendment in process, what this proposal is relative to the previous, and if the council wanted to pursue how far down the road you wanted to pursue action on this to get in and do this.

One of the things that I think I touched on is also the fact that really the last iteration didn't have any additional input from Habitat and Coral; and it actually is even closer than what was the original agreed-upon proposals and the considerations. I've highlighted some of those, but I think there may be – whatever process moves forward, if they'd have a consideration for an exempted permit, there may be some input directly to the region or to the council on some of the concerns we've already discussed on bycatch, et cetera, even to move forward with something like that.

MR. HARTIG: Well, one other question. Roy brought up a good point; this is a Coral Plan Amendment. When this was done; was it done only on consideration for corals? Okay, it was done for the whole suite of species that inhabit this ecosystem?

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; and I think that's the thing that gets lost sometimes in all of these discussions. We made that very specific transition when we dealt with the deepwater coral ecosystem and the fact that not only are those Deepwater CHAPCs established as coral habitat areas of particular concern, but they're also now established as essential fish habitat areas of

particular concern, which means the complex of all habitats are important and you have the ability through review processes, et cetera, to incorporate those into comments, et cetera.

That's the same type of attitude going into the Oculina – the Oculina is also now an EFH-HAPC; and so it covers all the habitats in the complex, so it is the ecosystem so it covers everything within the system, hard bottom, coral rubble, mud and sand and shell habitats. Those are all part of the complex and even really how dynamic the benthic or the pelagic system is.

DR. LANEY: And to tag onto that, Roger, I would presume that ecosystem here includes not just the structural components of the ecosystem but all of the biological and chemical components as well, which would include, among other things, I suppose – and Ben already mentioned it – forage species and the case he mentioned, Warsaw grouper, moving out from the edge of the defined coral ecosystem to consume crabs that may be an adjacent habitat. I presume that would also include forage species as well.

MR. HAYMANS: So in light of Bob's concern and Roy's concern over this motion, perhaps we should reconsider the motion and simply have an agenda item on the upcoming AP's meeting that lists the options that they might be able to pursue seeing as how the council is not moving forward with these changes. Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I would be fine with that. Again, an EFP was one possibility that came to mind for how the industry could potentially provide some additional information. I think the industry is saying here is an important area for us economically and we're not going to fish in an area where we're impacting the coral because it tears up our gear; and here is one of several possibilities, an EFP, a cooperative research program, whatever.

There is a suite of tools that could be used to both demonstrate the value of the area to the industry as well as whether or not there are impacts of significance that are occurring to the ecosystem, to the species, to the coral. I would be fine with reconsidering the motion or withdrawing the motion or whatever parliamentarily we need to do. We've already voted on it but to reconsider it I would be fine with doing that.

**MR. HAYMANS: Is there a motion to reconsider? Let's make the motion from Jessica and a second from Michelle. Any discussion? All in favor, 7; any opposed. Seeing none; we are reconsidering the motion.** The next step is we either change the motion or vote the motion down, I guess. Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Well, now that's back on the floor, can't we just withdraw it with the consent of the committee? We've had all the discussion.

MS. McCRAWLEY: Or a substitute motion.

MR. HAYMANS: Do you have a substitute in mind?

DR. DUVAL: Maybe something along the lines of provide information to the Deepwater Shrimp AP at their next meeting a variety of tools or options available to conduct research in the

area of interest to demonstrate the economic value and ecosystem importance of the area, something like that; I don't know. I'm thinking off the top of my head and it's hard.

MR. HAYMANS: I would ask the executive director, Bob, is this more attuned to your liking? Is it basically rather than the previous motion, this is at the next Deepwater Shrimp AP Meeting to provide them a list of options of their next steps or how they might pursue this. That's okay? Is there a second; Charlie. Any additional discussion?

**The motion then is to provide information to the Deepwater Shrimp AP at their meeting to include a variety of tools and options available to conduct research available in the area of interest. All those in favor. I see seven in favor. Any opposed? No opposed; the motion carries.**

**It is the main motion now, which means we just vote again. Any additional discussion on the motion now that it is the main motion? Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none; the motion carries.** Now we're going to turn to Item 6, policy statements, over to Wilson and Roger.

DR. LANEY: As a reminder, we had three draft policy statements that we brought to the committee at our last meeting; and we are going to further consider those at this meeting. I think, Roger, did you want to brief us on those first? First, I will say that I know that Jessica sent out some extensive comments on a couple of the policy statements and at some point the Chair would recognize her to address those, but let's go to Roger first.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay, I guess right from the beginning, this is Attachment 2 of the briefing package. It is all of the policy statements in combination. Originally what I had planned on doing is really just going directly to the policy recommendations of each one to highlight kind of the core of what these statements – they have been in development for a while. The concern I have is that there were some pretty substantial comments that Jessica had on some various ones of the statements.

I'm not sure to what degree both of the committees have had a chance to really maybe have the ability to review or have their staffs review portions of those. They do get into a lot more significant activities and aquaculture is a lot more extensive than before. SAVs were fine but there is some concerns over maybe connecting some of the water issues relative – that were raised under the flow regimes.

I'm picking up on some of the comments that came from our partners at FWC. We worked very closely – Amber Whittle who is with the Research Institute has a lot of input on these. However, some of these concerns, after reading those, were some that I think are ones that we need to do. What I would indicate is that we aren't under any timeline to absolutely refine these.

I'll touch on this quickly after I get past these in terms of the FEP and EFH revision timeline. Wilson may have a different idea and want to move forward on these. If there is a desire to have an opportunity to review and provide input – and what I would like to do is if we do this now is provide anything in advance of our April – we have an April 1 through 3 Habitat Advisory Panel.



We were going to already be looking at additional policy statements, refinement and expansion of energy and other policy statements – many of these are linked together in terms of some of the activities and issues covered – the opportunity that we could bring these back with – if I could get all those types of comments, we could refine those and get final input and have kind of the entire policy statement package brought back in June or as we move forward.

That is an option that we can not to belabor or to – especially if individuals haven't had a chance to highlight these. But that is the purview of the council. I was prepared to kind of really highlight really the policy side of this, really our recommendations moving forward. I think the point that came out of our discussions especially at the last meeting is to try and make these as useful as possible.

That came from our partners with Habitat Conservation. They want to be able to use these and provide these – and our state partners and other ones that would – especially with what is going on in the region with our work with the Governors Alliance, our work with the Landscape – all these things that really are looking to some guidance on the bigger picture. With that, those are at least some thoughts, and I would defer back to Wilson and then to the committee on thoughts on where we go from here. Where do you want me to go from here?

DR. LANEY: Thank you, Roger. I'll recognize Jessica to discuss the Florida FWC comments.

MS. McCAWLEY: I'll just hit a couple of highlights. I had our commenting staff review these policy statements. They also sent it out through our agency commenting process, internal agency process, which looks to people in various parts of the agency as well as pulls in some things from Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. That was pulled into our comments also. Some of the comments were minor.

As Roger was mentioning, one of the comments was about, in the first policy, the protection and restoration of essential fish habitats from alteration to riverine, estuarine and nearshore flows. There is a separate SAV Policy but it doesn't fully address water flow issues. We were recommending that the Water Flow Policy be amended to incorporate SAVs and perhaps refer to the SAV Policy for the more in-depth discussions. That was really all we had on that particular policy.

We had more extensive comments on the one that was about the interactions between essential fish habitat and marine aquaculture. The comments were very lengthy; but, for example, we recommended addressing the use of anti-fouling biocides. There was not a lot of information about open water, whether that's nearshore or offshore marine aquaculture operations such as net pens. We made some specific recommendations in there.

This matches some recommendations we've made for policies that are in place in the Gulf. It somewhat up to you guys what you want to do. I like the idea of maybe bringing this back to the council at the June meeting. I can offer my staff to either provide comments directly to South Atlantic Council staff or be part of a conference call or something of that nature to help explain

these comments further. We also offered some flow charts and stuff that we used when we prepared comments for the Gulf.

DR. LANEY: I guess I would look to members of the two committees for any additional comments or input that they want to make at this time. As Roger noted a couple of things; there is no urgency I think, although we have been talking about these revisions for I guess the better part of a year now. While they aren't urgent, it would be nice to get these things wrapped up.

The second thing is the timing is good because we do have a Habitat AP meeting scheduled for April; so that AP is going to be meeting and can consider the Florida comments along with any other comments that any of the rest of you may have. I would open it up for discussion by committee members at this point in time. Dr. Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Mr. Chairman, the last time the Habitat and Environmental Protection AP looked at these statements was at their November meeting?

DR. LANEY: That is correct.

DR. DUVAL: And I was wondering actually, Jessica, if you would mind sharing the FWC comments with the rest of us. I think that would be great.

MS. McCAWLEY: Sure; I'll send them to Mike and maybe he can send them to everybody.

DR. LANEY: Yes; that would be good; and I will just say that, Jessica, with regard to the flow policy, Roger and I discussed that for a brief period of time today. What you're looking for there maybe is some sort of a cross-indexing or cross-referencing between those two policies. He and I were discussing the fact that we're not sure that there has been a lot of work on flows and SAV.

There has been work on salinity regimes; and to the extent those influenced by flows, then clearly that would influence SAV distribution and restoration potential and all that sort of thing. Is that kind of where you're looking for us to head on that one?

MS. McCAWLEY: I think so; and I can also have my staff that worked on this talk to Roger directly if that helps.

DR. LANEY: Okay, that would be beneficial. As far as the aquaculture comments go, I think clearly your staff did a very thorough and in-depth review on that. There are a good many substantive comments there that would be beneficial for us to incorporate into that policy, I think. That one definitely would need to go back to the AP I think for further consideration. Does anyone else have any comments, any preferences on how you want to proceed on this?

DR. DUVAL: I do like the idea of allowing a little bit more staff input on these policy statements. I know that certainly Anne Deaton from our agency participates on the North Carolina Subpanel. I think she is maybe the Chair of the North Carolina Subpanel right now. There are probably some other folks that might want to comment on I think in particular the aquaculture statement just because the Department of Agriculture does also have a role within

our state. I certainly have not circulated these to those folks; so if we might be able to take a look at it one more time, that would be great.

DR. LANEY: Okay, I've heard from one committee member what she thinks. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I agree with Michelle. I would like to bring it back to the council in June after other folks have had a chance to look at it. I think that the state folks, if their staff needs to talk to the South Atlantic Council staff, maybe a conference call or something, I'm fine with that, too, if that's what you think is needed; if you think that level of detail is what is needed.

DR. LANEY: Okay, I'm hearing that there is sentiment for sending these back to the staff and the AP. Jessica will send out the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission comments that she provided to some of us; so that the entire council can be the beneficiary of those.

Then the plan would be for the Habitat AP to review these again at their April meeting and we bring them back to the council in June presumably along with several other policy statements that we're still working on in the interim. Does that sound like a good plan? Anybody opposed to that approach? Seeing no opposition; then that's the way we'll proceed. I'll turn it back over to you, Doug, for Agenda Item 7. I guess the item is Roger is going to give an overview. Do you want to just move on to that one? Okay, Roger.

MR. PUGLIESE: What I'd like to do is touch on two things. The FEP; there was some discussion about timing process and it is relevant to exactly what we're talking about at the next steps on the policies and then beyond and integrate into the EFH updates. I wanted to quickly go through some – so what we're looking at is that the real development of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan is really going to proceed between 2014 and '15.

I mentioned and they really took it to heart the concept of connecting this with our EFH update. So what we're going to be doing is completion of the EFH Policy Statement Updates and development of new ones, workshops and/or webinars to facilitate the review and revision of the original FEP sections; in addition the development of new sections; modeling workshop that we anticipate to try to integrate a number of different efforts that are ongoing right now relative to forage fish; relative to integration into stock assessment and habitat characterization; completion of the new sections, as I mentioned earlier; or appendices; however we're going to ultimately integrate these that address fisheries oceanography; a very clear indication of what we have in our region; what we need to manage our fisheries; and the technologies available; a review of climate and South Atlantic climate and fisheries; building on some of the activities and coordination that is already going on in our region; and the South Atlantic regional potential mapping strategy, which we kicked off discussions at our last SEAMAP Bottom Mapping Work Group; and ultimately EFH revisions and updates supporting the EFH five-year review.

What you've got is a process right now – we're looking at development. The real deadline for the five-year review is in I'd say March of 2016. We're moving forward from the initial discussions from April and November in development of – the Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel developing the policy statements that kind of kicked off this entire process; moving into November, looked at structure and expansion of the FEP to highlight those

new portions of areas that I identified in fisheries oceanography, climate, forage fish prey/predator interactions.

In addition, continued development of the EFH Policy Statement throughout 2014 and '15 that will include looking at – in January we kicked off the review of our bottom mapping information with a SEAMAP Bottom Mapping Work Group. I had integrated that in one of the previous timelines. This was important to discuss refining and updating the spatial presentation of benthic habitats but also kicked off what is going to be a regional strategy for mapping.

What we want to do is connect what we know – and we've been kind of pulling everything from multi-beam, et cetera and connected to individual managed species or habitat distributions with an idea that if some opportunity comes forward and/or directed funding, that we can identify critical components within these habitat distributions that need to be mapped or characterized; so it builds on our managed areas, EFH- HAPCs, the Coral HAPCs, marine protected areas and really provides some focus on that.

This moves forward to our upcoming Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel; and we had anticipated already building and refining the EFH Policy Statements and also having discussions on refining the development process. Then when I had looked at into November, we're going to have a fall meeting where we will either have directly the technical workshops in conjunction and/or webinar in advance to address things such as benthic habitats, artificial reefs, impacts on fishing on habitat and research and monitoring.

To facilitate the broader scope, I wanted to look at and touch on – I think there have been some discussions about this – the process. Between 2014 and '15, both the FEP 2 is to be developed but it will integrate the essential fish habitat revisions and review and development of those. We're looking at key areas, on bottom habitat, on artificial reefs, pelagic habitat and fisheries oceanography.

What I have identified is that we're going to be building from original core members that provided input on either species or habitat distributions and work with our state – right now our advisory panel has state members for each one of the chairs of our APs; so working with to get other individuals directly involved in the revision update.

Also, to tap in on other groups such as the Governors Alliance, Healthy Ecosystem Team, very specifically, and our partners with the South Atlantic Resource Partnership and the Landscape Conservation Partnership, where possible, to address any of these different areas. Moving forward with some additional ones; the Wetlands SAV, these are building on previous activities; ecosystem modeling and forage fish – this is actually going to be drawing on some of our collaboration we've had more recently with Tom Okey and a funded project with Pew on connecting Ecopath modeling with forage species and begin to look at some of the climate considerations with dramatic changes in forage distribution they have on some of those species.

Building on that again with the opportunities to work with some of our – say in this case probably the most significant may be the Landscape Conservation Cooperative because of their

linkages back to the climate science centers and some of the work that is being done at the species level or habitat levels.

Wetlands marsh; that probably, as I mentioned, was addressed very specifically in the November meeting as well as the impacts on fishing habitat. Water issues was one that we had addressed earlier and I think it builds on the activities that we have going forward on policy statements, plus in this case very specifically maybe engaging our partners with SARP because they actually have been doing extensive work on in-stream flow guidance and a lot of really – and actually is co-funded with the Landscape Conservation Cooperative; so we can tie that very specifically into what may be the implications for our management species and especially estuarine-dependent species.

Research and monitoring; I didn't include here this again was one that we were going to try to tie directly to probably the November meeting. Mapping characterization; some of that got really kicked off, as I mentioned, with our last meeting of the SEAMAP Bottom Mapping Work Group; and looking at the characterization and refinement of that information, but also looking very specifically, as I mentioned, a mapping strategy that we can begin to provide and collaborate with other partners.

And then ongoing is the spatial representations of EFH and HAPCs. We have been building that for a long period of time. Refinement is going to critical to all the partnerships we have across the region. This is a big picture timeline for what is probably projected for our development of the FEP and EFH revision.

We're looking in June to complete and have council approve policy statements for FEP 2; moving into September and December having presentations on where we are in the development of some of these different processes for compartments of either habitat or activities and the updates relative to that at both meetings; following up in March to again have an update – and this is closer to having completion of an overall full FEP is anticipated for probably more likely June of 2015; and including at that time those EFH update components to really satisfy that five-year review.

Ultimately then having September council meeting approval inclusion of the EFH review also in advance of the March 2016 deadline. That is kind of the bigger picture, longer projected, more realistic I think perspective on what we're going to do with the FEP revision and the council timing. Are there any questions or comments?

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for that, Roger. That's great and really helps kind of answer a lot of questions that I had in terms of moving forward with this. I assume that as the Habitat and Environmental Protection AP considers this and moves forward with revisions and making suggestions – I know there has been some question with regard to public comment on what is put forward and so would comment be taken at advisory panel meetings?

Would you anticipate that if there are academic or NGO or other regional partners that have comments on the Fishery Ecosystem Plan, that they would provide those comments via written or e-mail format similar to how we receive public comment on almost anything else. I guess it

sounds like this is not something that is maybe notice for formal public comment and the way we do amendments to our fishery management plans. I was just wondering if maybe you could speak to that a little bit.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; I think it is easier when you look at the package; and then at that point if you have the FEP in that format, that we could have that kind of open request and very specific to partners, to the Governors Alliance, to the Landscape Conservation Cooperative, to SARP, to the ACFCMA or whatever; and then to the individual states.

I think maybe we could have a directed request to key players and then maybe an open – and that I think, like you said, while this is not something required, I think that would be good because it does open the door for maybe more significant participation or input from especially other academics that may not be in our process at the time that may be able to provide additional input plus our NGO communities, also.

I think the best thing will be integrating as many players in the process as we can. I think the timeline we've laid out can do that. I think in and of itself I think might be able to do it; but we can learn from some our partnerships who already have – I see with, say, Landscape Conservation Cooperative; we're got this effort going on the blueprint and what it is doing is some of that outreach after they've kind of consolidated. I think we can draw on that same type of effort and it will only make these products better I think in the long term.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; and so I guess I was envisioning I think it would be great to have a webinar Q&A kind of thing that you guys could put on as council staff does for other amendments for fishery management plans, so that might be a great way of soliciting input as well.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; and that may be a great thing as we get maybe compartmentalized even, when we get to this discussion on fisheries oceanography and having a webinar that highlights kind of the context of what it is and where we can go and get some input at that point in advance of kind of the bigger – that would be I think really useful. Having that new technology, that kind of opens the door that we didn't have before. We tried to do some online interaction and that was archaic times and didn't work quite the same way back then; but now I think a lot of those barriers are gone and it can only refine the process.

DR. LANEY: Roger, I'll just weigh in there, too. I think Chris tells me for the second time probably I sent the same paper out, and I apologize for that, but I had sent you all recently a paper of integrating the invisible fabric of nature into fisheries management, which basically is talking about species' interactions and how we overlook those at our peril.

A number of examples were given; fortunately none of them in the South Atlantic Area. I think it is important for us to consider those kinds of things as we move forward with the Fishery Ecosystem Plan. I would note that a couple of the authors on that perspective, which appeared in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, are in the council's work area.

One of them is Pete Peterson at the Institute of Marine Sciences in Morehead City, North Carolina, and the other one is Felecia Coleman who is at Florida State University. We might be

able, Roger, to tap into the expertise that has already resulted in the publication of at least this one peer-reviewed paper and solicit input from them as we move forward and maybe get some advice on how to avoid moving past any of those tipping points.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes; and I think that's going to be real important. I think we really have the opportunity because I remember Pete was involved in our previous work. Felicia, I was actually already corresponding and working back and forth. She is involved in the Pulley Ridge Project, so I have some direct contact with her on there.

We have some direct connections to be able to enhance, I guess, especially with that focus on an area section of the FEP that is going to be dealing with prey/predator interaction and forage fish, and I think we can really tap in on a lot of expertise and make sure that we don't miss anything as we move this process forward.

DR. LANEY: Agreed; and just to elaborate real quickly on the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative's Marine Conservation Blueprint, the SALCC held a couple of what they call virtual workshops, basically webinars, with groups of folks on two different occasions. They have produced a draft map as well as notes from those two workshops.

My understanding is that they delayed the distribution of those to a wider audience. They are going to put it out there for public dissemination. They sent it to the group of folks that I think were involved in those two workshops. I believe Roger has seen it. I have seen it as well and commented back to them on that; so as soon as that comes out for wider public review, I would certainly encourage the members of these two committees to take a look at that and weigh in as appropriate.

MR. HAYMANS: Are there any additional questions for Roger on FEP 2? Seeing none, before he starts the last portion here on the update of the ecosystem activities, is anyone going to have any other business, just so we can kind of look at time? Thankfully there is no other business, so, Roger, you've got 28 minutes to blast through it.

MR. PUGLIESE: I'm not going to take that long, but there are some really critical things I need to touch on; one of which Wilson has already highlighted. I've kind of integrated that into here. I did want to highlight the ecosystem coordination; all of which is connecting into our broader habitat and ecosystem conservation efforts and the FEP and et cetera as we move forward.

The first being the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative; the council is in a very good position with this because we have direct membership on the steering committee. I serve as the representative on the Landscape Conservation Cooperative. This effort is moving forward with the biggest picture and the largest, highest view of connectivity of habitats, water and land, from the mountains to off the Continental Shelf.

What has been a directive over this last half a year and more focus is development of a conservation blueprint. There is a desire to connect again all these different systems. What transpired were both inland reviews of the footprint of the Landscape Conservation Cooperative Workshops. I participated in both.

They had fine resolution at the state level and then at the entire regional level, and I participated in both. It was interesting to see the different perspectives, but I think what came out was a very strong presence of council's estuarine-dependent habitats and how important those were and integration into priorities into the inland portion.

That actually also translated into the marine portion, which is still in review and in development, with in this case very specifically utilizing the council's EFH-HAPC designations as kind of the baseline core and with the opportunities to expand and refine beyond that to focus even further in other areas.

Of interest to me is that I think some of them by going back in actually pulled some of what are actually designated as EFH connected into the HAPC to really kind of get the full package of what you're looking at. This process is moving forward. The draft is developed and as Wilson said is going to be out for review.

We actually have a steering committee coming up in about three weeks for looking at the entire package. However, the inland is already available online at LCC. I think the entire package will be – I think they're trying to weave it together right now in terms of what is going to be moved forward.

I had already requested Rua Mordecai, who is the science coordinator with Landscape Conservation, to participate in our April AP meeting and we'll see if we can sort that out to actually get that, but it is definitely going to be a topic and review and the ability to have input on this. This is a first iteration. This is not something that is going to be finalized.

The idea is that it begins to in the first time connect all of these different types of conservation efforts and look at how they complement and work together; so you're looking at everything from water flows to land to species across the system. It is a very interesting and powerful view because there are a lot of people who want to see this be something far more than just a effort that just gets shelved or whatever. This is a real opportunity to go beyond that.

Other things that the Landscape Conservation Cooperative has been involved in is directly funding the work on the in-stream flow efforts. I had highlighted the opportunities to look at water issues. I think we're going to try to connect even closer to some of this effort because it is getting to the level of connecting species like at the level of understanding flow-impacted species; and it integrates also flow-sensitive species I guess is the word I'm looking for.

Mostly it had been inland on river systems but is now getting to the point of looking at potentially identifying and highlighting what some of the estuarine-dependent species sensitivities may be. This is again a big regional effort that is funded both through the SARP effort and the Landscape Conservation Cooperative. One of the other projects is a significant one that we actually had a chance to review – it is preliminary and are having the opportunity to guide it – is a TNC Project that is again funded through the Landscape Conservation Cooperative.



That was to kind of coalesce and begin to build and look again at some of the regional distributions of habitat, both estuarine and marine. At that specific meeting we looked at some of the work they had done on going beyond let's say is the original SEAMAP data was into integrating other layers of information to kind of get a broader view of benthic habitat distribution in the region.

I think there is some real opportunities to potentially refine and enhance our information we have; but also I talked about taking it a step further and maybe even be able to use some of that information to guide by habitat contour area where the mapping and characterization really needs to go to understand.

A lot of what you still see on any of these types of efforts is this patchwork that does not connect north and south, which you know these habitats are distributed that way. That is exciting to have that actually available and it is moving forward; and within the timeframe we're working on the FEP and refinement of the EFH, this is all going to be finalized and completed.

As I mentioned, we're going to be looking at that in March to look at the draft conservation blueprint. One of the other collaborators is our Ocean Observing Association, SECOORA. In 2014 it has continued to support the work on connecting fisheries and species-specific habitat models and the integration of remote-sensing in situ data to really look at enhancing stock assessments.

The bottom line is working with Mitch Roffer of ROFFS who has been working with ocean data about as long as anybody in this region, who also sits on the board of SECOORA; and Barbara Muhling on ERASMUS to provide habitat modeling efforts that actually can provide some understanding of variability and catch-per-unit effort, et cetera, on our fishery-independent surveys, looking at observed systems and looking at actually collected information and looking at what some of that variability means.

What you're going to begin to do is understand what some of the implications of ocean change and variability in ocean parameters and how that may affect stock assessments. They're going to be very specifically connected into the suite of species or high-profile species. The first one that's coming on the slate is gray triggerfish; so they're really looking at trying to get some of this on the table for the discussions through the SEDAR process this year and get the oceanographers to begin talking a lot closer with the fishery stock assessment scientists in our region.

One of the other things that is going in SECOORA is 2015 planning. This highlights the habitat model work working with Barbara and Mitch on that begins to capture high-profile areas and what the variability is with regard to temperature, with regard to some of the other parameters identified.

In order to see this continue on, we need to get additional funding. We're in the discussions for 2015 and beyond. It is going to be really important because we want to highlight how this actually is finally getting into Stage 4, the consideration, through SEDAR; but also to expand this to look at – some of the expertise that Mitch and Barbara bring to the table is extensive work

on bluefin tuna characterization in the Gulf of Mexico and really working to use that in the management scenario.

I think when we look in our region, the pelagic species that immediately comes to mind is the opportunity to look at king mackerel and begin to look at a pelagic species and the variability and the connection of oceanographic information in a more direct way than just kind of peripheral in stock assessment evaluation. I think that's going to be a real opportunity.

One of the other things is originally we integrated very specifically characterization in the built-out plan for SECOORA; ten-year build-out. One of the things that we really laid out is how to – you know, the types of areas we need to map, monitor, so not only direct mapping but then use of AUVs, use of glider arrays. It is actually laid out in the build-out plan for five years.

The idea is to refine that and connect it; and this is where I want to see that fisheries oceanography discussion section and a collaboration with SECOORA and not only identify but then see if we can proceed to get additional resources to fund some of these types of things; and if nothing else, begin to do test beds with some of the technology, the gliders, with landers, with a lot of things that can then set the stage that, okay, this is the cost.

We actually went down the road in the build-out plan and laid some of those things out; and not only the cost but even the areas. To cover the shelf edge, the cover the shelf break, to cover those, we actually went through the iterations of looking at that; so a lot going on and opportunities to move forward.

The Governors South Atlantic Alliance; a lot is going on. One of the biggest focuses right now is looking at regional drivers across the system. I think that is going to be an ongoing discussion; everything from restoration to energy to a suite of different things. The steering committee I think just reviewed and had some significant input on guiding – I think the point there is to pick a regional driver, but then be able to translate it to at the healthy ecosystem, at the working waterfronts, those different areas, very specific tangible results and efforts that you can actually see that driver translate into.

I think that is going to be a key as this moves forward. Now, I'm not sure where things are going to stand in the future because some of the resources and funding for those may be going away. I'm not sure where – you know, they were looking at the more recent – the Executive Planning Team was talking and kind of sending up recommendations on other sources of resources to fund some of these efforts.

One of the other things that we collaborated on; the Governors Alliance has been collaborating with SECOORA on building a data portal for the system for the entire region. A more recent effort was to add in estuarine layers. This was really important to us because I think it is going to add – some of the ones that the individual states are kind of pulling and digging into are ones that we had identified as essential fish habitat but didn't have spatial footprints and layers for; so I think there are some opportunities to integrate some of those. Some of them actually are exactly that; and they have just pulled those; but there is an opportunity again to more fully refine our EFH and HAPC designations with our collaboration with the Governors Alliance.

That moves on to the Southeast Aquatic Resource Partnership. The effort in there continues on with the connectivity studies. Again, this is something that really looked at connections throughout the entire region. I think that is already being very much connected and worked with the Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

We will try to tap in a little bit closer in terms of – one of the things I'd like to see is more discussions on the aquatic connectivity inshore and offshore, the estuarine to offshore systems, which I don't think is addressed at this time. It may take an effort through the Landscape Conservation Cooperative to actually take this SEACAP effort to a different level.

One of the other things I had mentioned already is the collaboration on in-stream flow, the building of the hydrologic foundation, ecological data bases, flow ecology literature review, flow alteration assessments, river classifications and aquatic conservation priorities. That moves us into kind of just the other areas of coordination, which are all really pretty significant at this time.

One of the things that is really exciting is the work that was funded for the Pulley Ridge Connectivity Project in the Gulf of Mexico. This was building and connecting research that was really going to provide you a full suite of understanding of how the Pulley Ridge Area actually was providing and connecting habitats; and so it was covering everything from oceanographic species reviews.

As I mentioned, Felecia Coleman and Chris Koenig are actually doing some of the species characterization work specifically in these areas; but it has the connectivity between Pulley Ridge and the Gulf of Mexico, but also into the Florida Keys and how this entire system works and contributes to the different areas; some things that I think we can draw on and use as templates and models.

I serve on the Stakeholder Advisory Board for this, and I think it has been a really important effort that we would like to see something similar done in the Atlantic side; but if nothing else, be able to draw on a lot of the actual refinement of how you would look at these connectivity questions.

One of the other things that is moving forward is our work with encouraging and being opportunistic in terms of mapping characterization work. As part of the Stakeholder Advisory Board – John McDonough, who is the head of the Ocean Exploration Program with NOAA, is also a member of that board.

We had to have some discussions at that Pulley Ridge; and it came up shortly after that the Okeanos Explorer was to have a cruise into the Gulf of Mexico. What has transpired is coordination directly with the cruise coordinator; and what is going to happen is they are going to actually provide some mapping on our deep coral – the northern extension of the HAPC, some of the parts of the Stetson-Miami and pretty much all unexplored areas and into the southern portion of the Oculina.

Then they're going to return in May, and what I'm hoping is that they can actually, again, as I mentioned, combine a lot of information we have got on mapping and characterization of our existing areas; maybe be able to fill in other areas in our marine protected areas; and ideally is if the Okeanos could end up, say, on top of a spawning aggregation in May in an area someplace, I think they would be really encourage to maybe even bring other partners to the table with other assets to be able to provide input on that.

I think that is good step in terms of really being able to draw on that; and I would compliment John McDonough, because I think he was able to kind of get the bug in the ear to be able to make sure they didn't miss critical management needs as part of a process that really complements efforts; so that was an effort going on.

One of the other things that I think that is important to highlight is the development of our collaboration on an Ecopath Model Revision. We've been working with Tom Okey and funded through Pew in coordination with the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria on taking a previous or strawman model and subsequent model and using that to actually advance it to be able to begin to look at forage-specific questions, look at what some of the implications may be if you have dramatic shifts, 50 percent reductions in a forage species, how that may translate to some of the managed species interactions.

It is taking the original South Atlantic Ecosystem Bight Model and the preliminary model that was developed a number of years and really taking it to the next step to look at what some of the implications are very specifically of the forage – the changes in forage; so that food modeling effort will provide that opening of understanding that.

What has occurred originally; we did the 2001, in 2003 we followed up and then now we're looking at the 2013 model that there will be a working paper under the University of British Columbia Fisheries Center, a working paper developed that is in process right now; so we will be able to draw on that. It will be available – well, it may be finalized in March.

The idea is that hopefully we can have it for a presentation with details in the summer or fall so that we can maybe coincide directly either with the Habitat AP meeting or that model workshop which I think will be most appropriate; and then focus in on what that all means and try to get some details on and highlight efforts in the South Atlantic.

Now, that moves on to one thing that as chairman of the SEAMAP South Atlantic Committee, I am extremely proud to be able to say that the SEAMAP Data Management System that is housed at SCDNR, but has been in development for how many years, is actually operational. This is significant.

What you see here is the data management system front end, which has the report extraction set. You move in, it actually has set up where you can set up an account, log in and be able to access. The key thing here is to see what you're able to access. This SEAMAP Data System, unlike many other ones, has access to basically all our key fishery-independent surveys/

It has got the coastal survey, the nearshore coastal survey. It has got the longline surveys for red drum in all states. It has the Inshore Pamlico Sound Survey through North Carolina and our collaborative reef fish survey; so it has got MARMAP, SEAMAP and ultimately SEFIS integrated into one system. This has gone live and I have a link at the end for people to begin to test. Now one of the things in terms of the point location, what you do have is a truncated system, so we're not sending people right on the specific point areas; but it provides enough for other types of iterations.

The system also has connections and gives you all the background on the individual surveys so you can go back and forth and look at how they're developed, how they're prosecuted, gears utilized; but then you can query for everything from individual species to environmental parameters collected within the system.

The outputs essentially are excel documents. They have coordinate systems; they have the – what I have done is I've truncated a lot of the internal to fairly extensive. There is a lot of collaboration in terms of finalizing this because some people wanted virtually every field of any survey integrated into one output.

This has become kind of the standardization of this; but I've collapsed a number of these to at least give you a footprint or a snapshot of an output, which gives you coordinates, gives you environmental information like salinity and temperature, bottom temperatures, different things that are collected through the system; so it sets the stage for this.

That is a time-coming process to get to this point; and I applaud all the state partners and the federal partners and everyone to get this to this stage. The companion system for this is the council's South Atlantic Fisheries. What that does is presents this information in spatial format; and it is actually just beginning some of the process to get further down that.

One of the first things is we discussions – actually it came up at the Bottom Mapping Workgroup and Species Characterization because it is actually more than that. For example, it has the ability – now this is a collapse of all species, catch-per-unit effort for all species. You can go in and be able to look at individual species' catch-per-unit effort and it gives you the variable – we came up with an agreed-upon formats – variable presentations and getting away from some of the grid system to a more representative – at least the individuals thought more representative by using circle polygon presentations.

This is a connection to – so in combination you'll be able to get spatial presentations of fishery-independent data from inshore and federal waters and also the actual information and data for the system. The other thing I wanted to highlight was the effort that a number of you will be involved in, the East Coast Climate Change and Fisheries Governance Workshop that is coming up March 19<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup> in Washington.

This is somewhat of a pet project of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council under the guidance of Chris Moore, their executive director, to move forward with a collaboration of all Atlantic Coast Councils, ASMFC and NOAA Fisheries to discuss potential governance challenges that are rising from impact of climate change on the Atlantic Coast.

I think in their region very specifically they have some things that are right in their face immediately, so I think there is some decisions that are going to be very quick coming in the Mid-Atlantic and New England. But this workshop is going to explore the existing and potential impacts of climate change and management. It is going to look at an emphasis on policy implications.

I think that's something that was a challenge coming into this is that what we wanted to do is almost as if in our region we have less of the work that has been done to really quantify the degree of change and the degree of impact that has occurred; but this is kind of coming in to the degree that we understand that some of these may happen; and if they do, this is the type of – you know, what are the types of responses the council, the commission, NOAA Fisheries may have to – is the structure in place to be able to respond.

Are the FMPs flexible enough to be able to include or exclude other states or other partners? What types of action would you have to have, extension of an FMP's range, different things. It is beginning to set the stage for this. It is to evaluate, process or document acknowledging climate change, to identify key management questions and concerns and needs for future research.

Now, I think that area is very significant because one of the things that we did, unlike some of the other councils, was we were able to bring in our SSC representation and other partners so that we could have a very clear indication in these discussions on management of what the types of things we're going to do; and one of the biggest partners I think is going to be our ocean association to be able to provide information to understand this, as well as, say, our connection with Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the Climate Science Center to provide models or capabilities to understand where we go here.

In addition, we're going to look at the flexibility of the existing management systems and discuss potential solutions. That's pretty much it. What I had as the last was our existing tools that we're building and new SEAMAP link. What I can do is I'll distribute actually this to the members so that you can know how to get to it. It is fairly straightforward, but it is housed at the South Carolina DNR. With that, that's a lot going on in our region, a lot that is really supporting council activities, state activities, and I think it is an amazing kind of combination of efforts that are all fruitful.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you very much, Roger. If you don't have those two presentations that he has given, Anna is going to send those around or have those sent around specifically so that maybe you can read a couple of those charts that were out there that I couldn't even see on his. At the risk of asking the question; are there any questions for Roger? Seeing none and knowing that we have no other business; Mr. Chairman, that concludes the business of the joint committees.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 o'clock p.m., March 3, 2014.)

Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Graham Transcriptions, Inc.  
March 25, 2014

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## South Atlantic Fishery Management Council March 2014 Meeting – Savannah, GA

### Joint Habitat & Ecosystem-Based Management Committee Meeting: Monday, March 3, 2014

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MARCH MTA DAY 1

80	L, I	<a href="mailto:captaindiffer@bellsouth...">captaindiffer@bellsouth...</a>	154 min
74	Mehta, Nikhil	<a href="mailto:nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov">nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov</a>	195 min
71	holiman, stephen	<a href="mailto:stephen.holiman@noaa.gov">stephen.holiman@noaa.gov</a>	119 min
70	Gore, Karla	<a href="mailto:karla.gore@noaa.gov">karla.gore@noaa.gov</a>	80 min
70	Merrifield, Mike	<a href="mailto:mikem@wildoceanmarket.com...">mikem@wildoceanmarket.com...</a>	115 min
38	Hudson, Rusty	<a href="mailto:df2009@aol.com">df2009@aol.com</a>	110 min
32	DeVictor, Rick	<a href="mailto:rjck.devictor@noaa.gov">rjck.devictor@noaa.gov</a>	185 min
31	Michie, Kate	<a href="mailto:kate.michie@noaa.gov">kate.michie@noaa.gov</a>	118 min
31	Eich, A	<a href="mailto:annemarie.eich@noaa.gov">annemarie.eich@noaa.gov</a>	195 min
31	sandorf, scott.san...	<a href="mailto:scott.sandorf@noaa.gov">scott.sandorf@noaa.gov</a>	195 min
30	gerhart, susan	<a href="mailto:susan.gerhart@noaa.gov">susan.gerhart@noaa.gov</a>	173 min
28	Byrd, Julia	<a href="mailto:julia.byrd@safmc.net">julia.byrd@safmc.net</a>	172 min
27	Reed, Michelle	<a href="mailto:reedmich16@gmail.com">reedmich16@gmail.com</a>	11 min
24	., fisherynation.c...	<a href="mailto:bfisherynatio@gmail.com">bfisherynatio@gmail.com</a>	30 min
23	Helles, Frank	<a href="mailto:fhelles@verizon.net">fhelles@verizon.net</a>	108 min
20	Austin, Tony	<a href="mailto:redress@ec.rr.com">redress@ec.rr.com</a>	7 min
20	Dale, David	<a href="mailto:david.dale@noaa.gov">david.dale@noaa.gov</a>	11 min
20	Takade-Heumacher, ...	<a href="mailto:htakade@edf.org">htakade@edf.org</a>	0 min
20	Amick, Steve	<a href="mailto:steveamicks@aol.com">steveamicks@aol.com</a>	0 min
20	Abeels, Holly	<a href="mailto:habeels@uif.edu">habeels@uif.edu</a>	31 min