



Communities Project Phase I: Place-Based Identification and Characterization of South Atlantic Fishing Communities

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

Phase I of the Communities Project is designed to build on the Council's longstanding history of engagement with fishing communities by strengthening and refining its understanding of who those communities are and how they are affected by management decisions. This phase focuses on the place-based identification and characterization of communities impacted by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council actions, using existing social, economic, and environmental data at a finer geographic scale than currently available. It examines communities' connections to Council-managed species and assesses vulnerabilities related to ecosystem change, such as sea level rise, storm impacts, and shifts in fish distribution. The resulting analysis, data products, and visual tools provide the Council with a clearer, more nuanced picture of fishing communities across the region, creating a strong evidence base to support more targeted outreach, communication, and management efforts in Phase II and beyond. For more information please see the [Phase I RFP](#).

Progress Updates

The proposal review and selection process was completed in March and a contract is now in place. The selected proposal was one of seven received in response to the Council's request for proposals. The project is now underway with an initial oversight team meeting planned for late May, during which project timelines and milestones will be reviewed.

Project Team

Contractors: University of Florida: Edward Camp; Angela Collins; Bryan Fleuch; Joy Hazell; Michael Jepson; Kai Lorenzen; Andrew Ropicki; Jennifer Sweeney Tookes; Tracy Yandle

Oversight Team: Julia Byrd, Chip Collier, Christina Curtis, Kathi Kitner (SEP), Lara Klibansky, Christina Package-Ward (NOAA, SEP member), Jason Walsh (NCDMF, SEP Vice Chair)

Anticipated Timeline

2025

✓ **Dec-** Request for proposals released.

2026

✓ **Jan/Feb -** Proposals reviewed and contractor selected; Project Begins

Mar - Project Oversight Team to be formed and quarterly meetings begun

2027

April - Draft report presented to Social and Economic Panel

June - All reports and presentations completed.

Implementation of project outcomes begins.