

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Fort Lauderdale, FL
June 11, 2018

The Committee approved minutes from the June 2017 meeting and the agenda. The Committee made no motions.

2017 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

The Committee discussed, in closed session, nominations for the 2017 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award. The Committee operated as a Committee of the Whole to select one of the two nominees to receive the award during the September 2018 Council meeting to be held in Charleston, SC. The LE Committee Chair encouraged agencies to continue to submit nominations for the annual award, as it is the Council's way to acknowledge the efforts of partner agencies in enforcing fisheries laws and regulations, and to specifically recognize the hard work and exceptional performance of outstanding officers.

Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LE AP) Summary Report

The LE AP met in Charleston, SC on April 18-19, 2018 and discussed a broad range of topics pertinent to enforcement of fisheries regulations in the South Atlantic Region. Captain Bob Lynn (GA DNR), LE AP Chair, provided a summary of the discussions that took place and specific recommendations offered by the LE AP. The Committee briefly discussed the following:

- The LE AP should meet twice annually to provide timely advice on enforceability of proposed regulations.
- A letter was previously sent to the Gulf, New England, and Mid-Atlantic Councils requesting input on the possibility of expanding and standardizing the Operator Permit Card requirement for various fisheries to render it more useful for enforcement purposes. The South Atlantic Council has not yet received a response.
- Regarding the LE AP's comment on the difficulty of enforcing recreational aggregates, Council staff stated the new Fish Rules App readily provides information on the species composition of aggregates and other regulations useful for law enforcement officers.
- A question was raised on the possibility of requiring installation of a Vessel Monitoring System on a vessel that repeatedly violates a managed area closure. Karen Raine, NOAA General Counsel, stated that the agency's authority under the Magnuson-Stevens Act is limited to monetary penalties and permit sanctions.

U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Priorities

Council staff briefly addressed the Committee to point out comments/recommendations from the Snapper Grouper, Mackerel Cobia, and Law Enforcement Advisory Panels to inform USCG priorities. It was reiterated that the USCG relies on input from the Council to more efficiently address the agency's Living Marine Resources operations. The Council could utilize the LE AP and LE Committee to develop a list of priorities to supply to the USCG.

Other Business

The Committee briefly discussed how the Council could provide input to NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) for setting the agency's priorities. NOAA OLE Assistant Director Tracy Dunn addressed the Committee and explained that priorities are set every 5-years and cover items at a national level. However, there is opportunity for the Council to provide comments as part of that process as well as weighing in on state-specific Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) priorities that are set on a more frequent basis.