

# Outreach and Communications Goals and Objectives

## South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

DRAFT

### **Goal #1: Provide consistent, understandable, and accessible information on the Council, regulations, and stakeholder input opportunities.**

*Purpose: To ensure stakeholders are equipped to understand, navigate, and engage in the Council process, ultimately supporting more informed and effective participation.*

- **Objective 1.1:** Utilize various Council outreach and communication channels to share information.
  - Strategies:
    - Share information through local, in-person outreach (e.g., tackle shop visits, seminars, fishing expos, tabling events, and Council meetings) using videos, graphics, and print products such as brochures and flyers.
    - Share information more broadly through social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and YouTube) using photos, graphics, and videos.
    - Share information through Council publications (e.g., SA Bite, newsletters, and feature articles), external partner publications, and on the Council’s website.
    - Use Fish Rules and the Council regulations page to clearly state regulations for species within the Council’s jurisdiction.
    - Use Fish Rules banners and push notifications for geographically targeted messaging.
    - Use standardized outreach and communication templates, language, and branding that can be adapted across products.
      - Engage staff across disciplines in the development and review of outreach products to ensure materials are accurate, clear, and audience appropriate.
- **Objective 1.2:** Provide stakeholders with clear guidance on in-person and virtual public comment opportunities.
  - Strategies:
    - Use attendance trends and public comment feedback to identify where stakeholders may lack clarity on how, when, and why to participate, and prioritize those areas for targeted outreach.
    - Provide handouts at Council meetings, online resources on the Council webpage, and videos detailing how public comment sessions operate, what participants can expect, the value of providing input, and what makes a public comment effective.
    - Share pre-meeting reminders and details via social media and newsletters explaining when and how to comment effectively.

## **Goal 2: Engage stakeholders in the Council process and Council initiatives.**

*Purpose: To ensure stakeholder perspectives are solicited and available to support effective fisheries management.*

- **Objective 2.1:** Foster two-way communication from stakeholders.
  - Strategies:
    - Continue promoting, holding, and recruiting new and previous stakeholders to the Lines of Communication: Conversations with the Council (Lines) meetings throughout the South Atlantic region.
    - Engage fishermen at high-traffic locations such as visiting tackle shops and fish houses, give seminars at tackle shops and fishing clubs, and attend outreach events such as ICAST, fishing expos, and state partner events.
- **Objective 2.2:** Encourage input from stakeholders in the fishery management process.
  - Strategies:
    - Promote Council hosted meetings soliciting input on amendments such as scoping, public hearings, and public comment sessions through Council publications (e.g., SA Bite, newsletters), the Council’s website, social media, and in person outreach.
    - Highlight that public input is considered by the Council in the management decision making process.
- **Objective 2.3:** Promote stakeholder participation in Council initiatives and activities such as the Citizen Science Program, Best Fishing Practices Campaign, SEDAR, and Lines of Communication.
  - Strategies:
    - Share information through local, in-person outreach (e.g., tackle shop and fish house visits, seminars, fishing expos, tabling events, and Council meetings) using print products such as brochures and stickers, videos, and graphics.
    - Share information more broadly through social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and YouTube) using photos, graphics, and videos.
    - Collaborate with state and federal agencies, other regional programs, and stakeholders through media publications (e.g., magazines and social media) and events (e.g., ICAST).
    - Maintain dedicated webpages for Council initiatives that include clear information on how to get involved.
    - Ensure messages align with related efforts, agencies, and programs across the South Atlantic region by participating in regional workgroups.

### **Goal #3: Strengthen public trust in the Council and the fishery management process.**

*Purpose: To enhance the credibility of the Council by building confidence in its processes, decisions, and stakeholder engagement efforts.*

- **Objective 3.1:** Build and sustain effective relationships with stakeholders and communities.
  - Strategies:
    - Participate in a wide range of community and industry events throughout the Council’s jurisdiction.
    - Foster engagement that represents a broad range of stakeholders.
    - Continue hosting Lines of Communication: Conversations with the Council (Lines) meetings throughout the South Atlantic region.
- **Objective 3.2:** Support engaged stakeholders to serve as trusted ambassadors who help build fishing community confidence in the Council process.
  - Strategies:
    - Attend events where stakeholder leaders are present to support them and build relationships within their networks.
    - Provide stakeholder leaders with accurate information, updates, and outreach materials they can share.
    - Encourage stakeholder leaders to stay engaged and involved in the Council process by attending meetings, serving as an advisory panel member, and participating in the SEDAR process.
    - Promote the Marine Resource Education Program to stakeholder leaders and encourage them to share with others.

### **Goal #4: Track outreach and communication efforts to identify trends, inform outreach priorities, and refine communication strategies.**

*Purpose: To support more effective and responsive outreach and communication efforts.*

- **Objective 4.1:** Establish indicators for outreach efforts.
  - Strategies:
    - Utilize the Outreach Events and Evaluation Tracker for seminars, booths, and tabling events.
    - Utilize the Tackle Shop Database to track information from tackle shop visits such as informational materials left, customer type (e.g., inshore, offshore, snapper grouper), descending device availability, seminar potential, knowledge of the Council, and store contact information.
    - Use post meeting expectation metrics for Council-led outreach events such as Lines of Communication.

- Use dynamic QR codes to track scans on paper and digital materials.
  - Compare outreach and evaluation methods with similar organizations and projects to identify effective engagement practices.
  
- *Objective 4.2:* Establish indicators for digital communication efforts.
  - Strategies:
    - Produce regular (up to two per year for the Council and Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel and more consistently for internal use) analytics reports from the website, email distribution, and social media.
    - Respond to analysis by implementing highly engaged content more often and reducing less engaged content.
    - Compare website, email, and social media engagement trends with similar organizations (e.g., Gulf Council) to identify opportunities for improving digital communication efforts.
  
- *Objective 4.3:* Track and evaluate stakeholder participation in the public comment process.
  - Strategies:
    - Document the number of stakeholders that contribute verbal and written public comment for Council, advisory panel, SSC, scoping meetings, and public hearings.
    - Identify management topics that generate the most public comment to better understand stakeholder interests and attendance trends.
    - Track participation from first-time commenters versus repeat commenters.
    - Assess whether stakeholders reference agenda materials, amendments, or presentations in their comments to help evaluate comment preparedness and effectiveness.