

**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel Meeting**  
**May 8, 2024**

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel (AP) [met via webinar](#) on May 8, 2024 from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. The AP was tasked to provide additional input on the educational component for Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting and Education Requirement).

The AP approved the agenda for the meeting and opportunities for public input were provided. No verbal or written comments were provided.

Following introductions and welcome by Spud Woodward, Chair of the Council’s Outreach and Communications Committee, and Scott Baker, AP Chair, the AP received an update and overview of Amendment 46 from Council staff, including the purpose and need, actions in the amendment, and the amendment timeline.

The Outreach and Communications AP was reminded of the list of recommendations relative to the education component of the amendment previously provided during its October 2023 meeting. Staff updated the AP on discussions by the Council during its March 2024 meeting and direction to the AP. The AP then focused on the two actions addressing the education component as outlined in [the Decision Document](#) for the meeting. The Decision Document included prior recommendations and list of questions for the AP.

**Education Component for Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting and Education Requirement) – Additional Recommendations**

**Establishing an Education Component**

General/Framework:

- Reiterated that the education component should be required before issuing the permit and should be available online.
- A grace period should be provided for the permit requirement.
- Continued support for considering education components of other programs, especially [Return ‘Em Right](#) and FWC’s current development of an education course for the Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit.
- Recommended an online course (suggestions included 3-5 minutes, 7-10 minutes, to 15 minutes) for the initial permit and a shorter online course for annual permit renewal.
  - The AP strongly supported building in benchmarks for the course rather than a quiz at the end. Little support for “pass/fail” approaches.
    - Any approach should meet the goals for the education course.
  - Module should not allow ability to skip questions or sections.
  - Users should have the ability to retake sections of the education module.
  - Consider those with learning disabilities. Particularly if a test is involved. (ADA requirements)
  - Have module available in other languages.

- Include background information on why the permit is required and how the information will be used in fisheries management.
- Different online platforms can be tailored for the online module. Consider if the program goals are being addressed based on the platform chosen and materials covered.
- Evaluation is essential.
  - Consider an evaluation component after a certain amount of time (e.g., 2 years)
- Annual permit renewal reminders will be needed that include information on the education requirements.

### **List of Topics for the Educational Component**

During its March 2024 meeting the Council developed a draft list of topics to consider for the education component in Amendment 46. The AP reviewed the list and provided the following recommendations:

- General agreement that the draft list of topics is too ambitious considering the length of time suggested for an online module.
  - Consider removing Fish ID and How to Measure a Fish.
  - Have a downloadable component for these topics or link to other sources.
  - Consider a reference booklet mailed to those completing the test to keep on the boat.
  - Focus on barotrauma and regulations in place to help released fish survive.
    - Remind fishermen that not all SG species need a descending device or to be vented when caught (i.e. certain species and when fishing in shallow water).
- Have information available in an engaging way with video and graphics.
  - Use a “story” approach to convey concepts, e.g., a fishing trip.
- Include information on how recreational fishing pressure can impact stocks.
- Strong support to involve AP, state partners, Sea Grant, and other agencies in developing the education module.

### **Program Scope**

- AP reiterated this is a HUGE project and will require funding and oversight by that exceeds Council staff capacity.
  - Will require program coordination and additional staff.
  - Noted logistical issues with existing online education programs in dealing with incomplete modules, confirmation numbers for participant IDs, multiple IP addresses, etc.
    - These issues have to be monitored and require dedicated staff to do so.
- Collaboration for enforcement should be considered.
- NOAA Fisheries would be the agency to handle the scope of the education program, implementation, and responsibility to maintain the program.
  - Could consider private contractor similar to other NMFS education required programs (HMS).
- Reiterated the need to have the AP and partners lead the development of education materials.

- Learning doesn't necessarily incite behavior changes. Consider multiple facets to the program, similar to Return 'Em Right, e.g., use of communication techniques through social media, etc. to encourage behavior changes.
- AP also noted the scope of the project and need for dedicated funding:
  - FL State Reef Fish Survey – Includes 628,826 permits (SA and Gulf) as of 4/17
    - Note that no education component is required, but exemptions exist for those under the age of 16.
    - Amendment 46 SG permit and education requirements could exceed the FSRFS in numbers in comparison.
  - \$20M funding dedicated for Return 'Em Right Program.
- An estimate of the number of permits for the SA region that may be generated is needed in the near future:
  - The estimate would provide information needed for a better quote for services from a potential contractor.
  - An estimate would be helpful for managers to get a handle on the number of anglers that may be involved as discussion continues.

### **Establish a State Exemption**

- General support for a single universal requirement.
- Important to have a standard education module that states could use. A state could add information separately if needed but the core materials would be the same between the federal and state programs.
- Idea is similar to state-based fishing license or federal saltwater angler registry.

### **AP Members in Attendance**

Scott Baker, Chair  
 Shelly Krueger, Vice Chair  
 Bryan Fluech  
 Tyler Jones  
 Jocelyn Juliano  
 Emily Muehlstein  
 Nicole Nichols  
 Matt Perkinson  
 Patricia Smith  
 Robert Todd  
 Camilla Warren

**Staff Leads:** Kim Iverson and John Hadley