



Communities Project Phase II: Stakeholder Outreach and Communication Assessment and Strategic Plan Development

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

Phase II of the Communities Project focuses on turning the community knowledge developed in Phase I into a practical, relationship-driven outreach and communication strategy for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Building on identified fishing communities and their characteristics, this phase will conduct a targeted stakeholder outreach and communication assessment to understand how communities prefer to receive information, engage with the Council, and contribute local knowledge. The work will culminate in a strategic Outreach and Communication Plan and supporting tools—such as guidance materials, training, and an online communication hub—that support a more consistent and effective integration of community perspectives into management decisions. By emphasizing trust-building, clear communication, and actionable qualitative data, Phase II is intended to strengthen engagement with stakeholders and support adaptive, community-informed fisheries management across the South Atlantic region.

Progress Updates

- The project oversight team held a kick-off meeting in May to discuss Phase I and II coordination, timelines, and project plan
- Given the project timeline, the OT will meet monthly to ensure alignment between project phases and project objectives.
- An in-person team meeting is planned for early September.

Project Team

Contractors: Edward Camp, UF; 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

May - Kick-off OT Meeting; project underway

Fall - Current outreach assessment and Communications plan tasks begin

Winter - Communications Hub

2027

▶ **Spring -** Draft Outreach and Communication Plan presented to Outreach and Communication Advisory Panel

TBD - All final reports presented to Council

Implementation of project outcomes begins.