

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL
COMMITTEE

The Crowne Plaza
North Charleston, South Carolina

April 15-16, 2024

Transcript

Socio-Economic Panel of the SSC

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Dr. Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes
Dr. Brian Chevront
Dr. Chelsey Crandall
Dr. Eugene Frimpong
Dr. Kevin Hunt

Dr. Andrew Ropicki
Adam Stemle
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Attendees and Invited Participants

Shepherd Grimes

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Socio-economic Panel of the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at The Crowne Plaza in North Charleston, South Carolina on April 15, 2024, and was called to order by Dr. Scott Crosson.

INTRODUCTIONS

DR. CROSSON: Welcome to the 2024 meeting of the South Atlantic Council's Socio-economic -- Currently Socio-economic Panel, and we'll see if that name lasts, and so we have some things on the agenda today. Now, Christina spoke to me about not having the NAS report immediately, that we would move that to later today, if possible, and I have no problem with doing that, because there are people that want to be able to watch that, and so what I did not do -- What I usually do for this meeting is divvy up responsibilities to assist with writing the report, all right, and some of these things on the agenda are not necessarily ones that we really need help with, like Approval of the Agenda, or anything like that, or even -- You know, Reviewing Recent and Developing Management Amendments, and that's usually not something that we need assistance on.

I do need people to volunteer, and it looks like we have a good turnout today, and so I need people to volunteer as we go along, and, you know, what I need -- If you're new to the SEP, just keep notes of the discussion, and write a paragraph or two to assist me in editing the final report, and somebody will be taking over the chairmanship at the end of the meeting, and so that person will also need help, because they're going to do this with me.

Does anybody want to volunteer for anything right now, first? No? Okay. Well, then it's going to be -- Then it's going to be like Russian roulette as we're going down the list, and you're going to get stuck with something eventually, but the first serious thing, the first serious thing that I would actually expect to have some feedback on, on this agenda -- If we're going to do the NAS report first, then it would be Number 4, which is SEP Feedback on Upcoming Stakeholder Engagement Meetings.

I expect, by the time we get to that item, in about fifteen minutes, somebody -- At least one person will volunteer to assist with the writing on that. Otherwise, I will assign somebody to that, and so the first item that I have listed on the agenda is Approval of the Agenda, and, other than the aforementioned moving of the agenda items to accommodate today's schedule for the NAS report, I don't have any other amendments, and does anybody have anything that they would like to add, or remove, from the agenda? Not that you have a lot of ability to do that, but okay.

The second thing is approving -- I guess I have to sign-off on the SEP minutes from last April, and does anybody have any edits, or anything, that would prohibit me from doing that? No? Okay. Seeing none, then I will consider those minutes approved.

Then we're going to move the NAS report to later this afternoon, and so the next thing would be then Item Number 3, which is Recent and Developing South Atlantic Management Council -- I guess we do have a few new people. All right. We'll go clockwise then and introduce everybody, and so your name and what you do for a living, and I guess your educational background.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I'm Brian Chevront, and I used to work for the South Atlantic Council, but I'm retired, and so I just work on my tan now.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I'm Christina Package-Ward, an anthropologist for NMFS at the Southeast Regional Office.

MR. WALSH: I'm Jason Walsh, and I'm the Fisheries Economics Program Manager at the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, like half of the people here. I've seen all of your reports. Thank you.

DR. FRIMPONG: Eugene Frimpong, and I'm with Georgia Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, and I'm an economist.

MR. STEMLE: My name is Adam Stemle, and I'm an economist with National Marine Fisheries Service at the Southeast Regional Office.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes. I'm an applied anthropologist at Georgia Southern University.

DR. CROSSON: Scott Crosson, and I'm an economist at the NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

MS. WIEGAND: Christina Wiegand, and I'm South Atlantic Council staff, and I'm the fisheries social scientist.

MR. HADLEY: John Hadley, and I'm also South Atlantic Fishery Management Council staff, and I'm also an economist.

DR. CRANDALL: Chelsey Crandall, and I'm a social scientist with Florida Fish and Wildlife.

DR. WHITEHEAD: John Whitehead, and I'm an economist at Appalachian State University.

DR. HUNT: Kevin Hunt, and I'm a professor of wildlife, fisheries, and aquaculture at Mississippi State University, a socio-economic guy, and don't put all that in the minutes, like you did last year, but I'm a sociologist.

DR. CROSSON: You're going to have to make a choice about that later.

DR. HUNT: I don't have the degree.

DR. CROSSON: All right. Then, moving on, the first item that we will get into is I have both John and Christina listed as discussing council management proposals.

MR. HADLEY: So two things, really quickly. One, I did want to mention that Andrew Ropicki will be on here shortly, and he emailed me earlier, and so he'll be attending remotely, and so, if you hear him joining in, and he'll be joining in over the webinar, and, also, I just wanted to hand it over for public comment.

DR. CROSSON: I don't see anybody in the -- If we have somebody online, go ahead.

MR. HADLEY: Seeing no one in the room, if there's anyone online that would like to make public comment, please raise your hand on the webinar, and we will unmute you. All right. I'm not seeing any hands, and so no public comment online.

DR. CROSSON: Okay. Is there anything else that I'm forgetting? Okay. All right, John, and either you or Christina are up for council amendments.

RECENT AND DEVELOPING SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL AMENDMENTS

MR. HADLEY: I'm going to be pulling up the overview, which is Attachment 1a in your briefing book. I did circulate a Word version of this, to all of the SEP members, and so, you know, as we build the report, if you want to use that to build-in your comments, or pull pieces from that, and each of you should have that in your email inboxes.

I'm going to step ahead to Agenda Item Number 3, and we'll come to back to -- As mentioned earlier, we'll come back to Agenda Item Number 2 around 4:00 today, and so we're going to be jumping into Item Number 3, and so this is Recent and Developing South Atlantic Council Amendments.

The idea here is just to kind of get everyone up-to-speed on some of the stuff that the council has been working on, some of the actions and rules that have gone into place, and sort of just -- Not necessarily an action item, per se, but just sort of to build background, potentially, on some of the subsequent discussions that we'll have later in this meeting, and just kind of keep everyone up-to-date on what's going on in the fisheries world for the South Atlantic Council.

This part is really pulled from Attachment 3, which is the full list of recent and developing council amendments, and so we'll just hit a few highlights for you. To start off, there's Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, and we'll go through several snapper grouper amendments, kind of right off the bat, since that's where a lot of the action, so to speak, is happening, but we have Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, and this is the wreckfish ITQ program modernization.

For some of you, this may look familiar from over the years, but this is -- You know, it's been an ongoing action, and it's coming to a close. The council is scheduled to have public hearings and take final action at the June 2024 meeting, and so, really, this is really a -- It's been a long time in the works, but it's really an overhaul, an update, of the wreckfish ITQ program, particularly coming out of the paper era and then moving towards an electronic era, both for the ITQ coupons, accounting for the catch shares, as well as the logbook, and so just trying to bring it up-to-speed and bring it up to other ITQ programs in the country.

DR. CROSSON: Can I ask a question about that? Christina, you're the new wreckfish person for the council staff, and so it's going to hopefully get approved by the council, and then would it be implemented in time for the 2025 season, so that we can review those implementations in the 2026 wreckfish review, which would be due, right, the seven-year review?

MS. WIEGAND: So you're correct in that the next wreckfish review is coming up quickly. There will be some actions, in this amendment, that could feasibly be implemented by this coming 2025

season, things like the allocation action, the fishing year action. However, the part that's moving this from a paper-based system to an electronic system is likely to take a significant amount of time for the agency to develop.

Additionally, one of the reasons this amendment has been on sort of such a long-term trajectory is that one of the things that was added, around this time last year, were modifications to some of the monitoring requirements for wreckfish, and those will also likely take the agency a little bit of time to implement, and so that's something that will sort of have to be discussed, and grappled with, once we start that next wreckfish ITQ review.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so, moving along to some of the other items that the council has been addressing recently, certainly Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 35 has been quite a hot topic, over the past couple of years or so for the council, and this is addressing updated catch level recommendations for the red snapper fishery, or for red snapper, the species, and then, going along with that, they're facing -- They're overfished and undergoing overfishing, and one of the main issues, in regard to that, is the discard mortality, and that's not necessarily the harvest, the direct harvest, but it's the discard mortality that has been identified in the stock assessment as an issue, which that has been -- Particularly in the recreational sector, and that has been an ongoing topic that the council has tackled over the past several years.

I will mention that Scott will be giving a presentation at the SSC meeting, regarding some work that the Southeast Regional Office, as well as the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, has been working on, and some of the -- As well as some of the publications that have come out of that, and so that will be at the SSC meeting tomorrow afternoon, for those of you that are interested, and I know that some are sticking around, and some will be also on the SSC, and so you'll be seeing that presentation, but kind of as a primer to that.

This is sort of a background for Amendment 35, and this is something that the council has been developing, but they've sort of grappled with the issue of the discard mortality problem, and this high discard mortality that is being exhibited in the fishery and how exactly to address that. That amendment has been developed, but it was rescinded for approval at the December 2023 meeting, and so it's sort of in a purgatory phase right now, if you will.

Moving along, we have Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, and these next two items sort of relate to that Regulatory Amendment 35, sort of loosely, and that discard issue, both directly addressing the discard issue as well as improving estimates of discards, because there was a lot of uncertainty in those discard estimates, and so the council has been developing Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, which implements a private recreational permit, and so trying to get a better handle on the universe of anglers fishing in the snapper grouper -- Private anglers, specifically, fishing in the snapper grouper fishery.

I should say anglers or vessels, and it depends on the permit type, but trying to get a better handle on that effort component, and then going along with that is an education requirement, and so that would be -- The idea there is to improve fish handling and, in doing so, how to properly handle fish, and the idea there is reducing the discard mortality of species that are caught and then subsequently released.

That's an action that's been moving along, and it will probably move along for the next year or so, at least before the council would be considering that for final approval, and so it's sort of in the middle stages of development, and then also related is the snapper grouper management strategy evaluation, and so this has been a fairly large project, where the council has wanted to take a holistic view of the snapper grouper fishery, particularly the recreational fishery, and see, you know, what needs to take place.

Considering the multispecies nature of the fishery, what can take place to address some of these ongoing topics that they need to tackle, as far as high discard mortality, particularly in the recreational sector, and so this management strategy evaluation, or MSE, is looking particularly at three species, and so the red snapper fishery, the gag grouper fishery, and black sea bass. This is an effort that likely will be coming to completion later on this year, probably in the December time range, and so the final results will be available, of this MSE effort, either later this year or early next year. Then the plan is that the council will sort of take on a large holistic amendment to look at the snapper grouper fishery as a whole.

Moving along, a few other items to point out, and Snapper Grouper Amendment 45, scamp and yellowmouth grouper, this is establishing a new complex for these two species, and then all of the other management items that come along with this, such as catch levels, setting sector allocations, and sort of creating a new complex, and all of the measures that go along with that, and then Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 56, which is responding to the recent black sea bass amendment, and this is -- The stock assessment was far from rosy, when it came back.

There is some significant cuts that will need to take place in the black sea bass ACL, to encourage rebuilding of that stock, and so that's something that -- That's really an amendment that's at the pre-scoping level, but it is going to have some notable repercussions in the snapper grouper fishery.

Then, moving along, we'll kind of jump out of the snapper grouper realm, and into the other fisheries, and the council is considering a comprehensive recreational for-hire limited entry amendment, and so this is looking at implementing limited entry in the three major finfish FMPs that the South Atlantic Council manages, and then a few other items that have recently gone into place, that I just wanted to bring the SEP up-to-speed on.

The Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment went into place on February 2, 2024, and you did weigh-in on the risk component of this, and so this is something that has, you know, finally come around to completion, that the SEP did weigh-in on, and, as part of that risk component, there is some social and economic factors that are considered when the council is taking into account uncertainty in risk tolerance when setting ABCs.

Then, last, but not least, I wanted to note the allocation review guidelines that the council has recently put together, and so this is a topic -- I know that the SEP has talked about this several times. However, several years ago, there was a report that came out from the GAO, Government Accountability Office, and, really, it critiqued some of the allocation decisions from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. It had several recommendations, and, really, in the past several years, the council has made significant efforts to try to address those recommendations coming from the GAO.

Really, part of this effort was trying to package those all in one place, and so the guidelines are essentially a way of the council saying this is how we are going to document allocation reviews, and so, as part of that, you have the allocation decision tool process, which the SEP has weighed-in on multiple times, and you have the allocation review trigger policy, which was set several years ago, and was just recently updated by the council, and, really, this was all packaged in a website, and so the council now has a webpage dedicated to sector allocations, for those that are interested, and, if you do want some additional background information on the sector allocations in the South Atlantic, or for fisheries managed by the South Atlantic Council, there is now this webpage on sector allocations.

You can see, over here under Allocation Resources, that it has the trigger policy, and it has the allocation decision tool, and then it has the guidelines that I mentioned, that sort of package it all together and specify how the council goes about allocation reviews. Then, further down there, you can see information on current allocations. This is information that we've certainly had in-house, but we wanted to make it publicly available, so you can see all of the species that the council manages that do have sector allocations, and that information is now available on the webpage. With that said, that's sort of the general update on some of the recent action items from the council, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

DR. CROSSON: Do any of the members of the committee have any questions for John?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Maybe I wasn't paying attention at the time, but the Snapper Grouper Reg Amendment 35, that was rescinded, and I don't ever remember hearing of an amendment being rescinded, and what was it rescinded for?

MR. HADLEY: That's a good question, and so the council has -- I guess one of the major sticking issues with that is that you can change the catch level for red snapper that are recommended as a result of the stock assessment, and have been approved by the SSC. However, in doing so, the harvest level isn't the issue, and it's the discard issue, and so, with this amendment, when the council discussed this, and they developed it, and they implemented the -- You know, there's two actions in the amendment, and there's one that implements the catch level recommendation, and then there is an action that would basically state that only single-hook rigs are allowed for snapper grouper fishing with natural bait.

In doing so, the council developed this action, and they did bring it to final approval. However, they decided to disapprove it, at the December 2023 meeting, rescinding it, and part of the idea is that they noted that -- This was noted by the agency, and it was noted by council members, and it was moving the ball in the right direction, but it wasn't the whole action, and the whole measure, needed to address that discard mortality issue, and so the council is continuing work on it.

Then going on in the background is that management strategy evaluation, which is going to come to completion later on this year, and that's really the more holistic view, and those type of measures are what really will -- Or what are intended to address that overfishing issue, and so it's sort of in purgatory at the moment.

I will say that the council is discussing -- It has been discussing this every meeting, and they're going to discuss it in June, and, you know, there's the decision point there that you have an

amendment, and you can pass it forward and, you know, submit it to the agency, or you can continue working on it and looking at trying to address the discard mortality issue for red snapper.

DR. CHEUVRONT: So it never got submitted to the agency? Okay. I was wondering if it was an agency thing that said, no, it's not going to fly or --

MR. HADLEY: No, and it was never formally -- It was approved, but then never formally submitted to the agency.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Then I have one last thing, just because I actually was working on this, way back when, and I'm glad to see that so much of the stuff from the wreckfish ITQ program actually made it into the amendment, and I knew that was going to be a heavy lift, to get a lot of that in, but, if I'm not mistaken, there was a couple of actions that were recommended, or were in the original report, that didn't make it in the amendment, and is that true, because I counted the list here, and I think I counted seven things that were listed, but I thought there were like nine actions, or something, and I don't remember. It may have been such a long time ago, but I was wondering, and it may have been stuff related to rent, or something like that, and wasn't there something like that in there?

MS. WIEGAND: I would have to go back through the ITQ review, to see if there was anything specific. I will say that's an action summary -- It's heavy on the summary, and, if you include subactions, there's eighteen actions in that amendment, and so it's pretty comprehensive, and I believe it addresses almost everything that was in the ITQ review.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's pretty amazing, because that was -- A lot of stuff went into the startup of that, and then, when I was working on it, I just didn't think we would ever get all of that through there, and it's pretty amazing, and so congratulations, and now the agency has to figure out how to get rid of the coupons and go electronic.

DR. CROSSON: Any further questions? Thank you, John Hadley. All right, and so we're aiming for 4:00 for NAS, correct?

MS. WIEGAND: Correct.

DR. CROSSON: So that would mean the next item on the agenda would be the Council Stakeholder Engagement Sessions, and is that something that you're going to be presenting on, Christina?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes.

DR. CROSSON: Then I'm going to start assigning writing, since nobody has volunteered yet.

UNIDENTIFIED: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. CROSSON: I know you are, and that's why Kevin and Chelsey are going to write up the results. Then, at 4:00, when we have the NAS report on equity, there's nothing that John Whitehead likes discussing more than equity and the distribution of benefits, and so John is going

to get assigned the equity discussion, and then I'm actually kind of moving in a circle as we go around the room.

DR. WHITEHEAD: I need a helper.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: (Dr. Sweeney-Tookes' comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. CROSSON: You're going to be assisting in writing-up the report, and so I'm not going to give you too much, but, if you want to volunteer for things, that's fine. Then best fishing practices, I'm going to give to Adam. SAFE reports, I'm going to give to Eugene. Citizen science, I'm going to give to Jason, and then the EEJ stuff I'm going to give to Brian, and, Christina, if you want to help, you're welcome to, because that one has a lot of questions in it as well, and so that one would -- Anyway, Christina, please present to us on engagement. Thank you.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL FEEDBACK ON UPCOMING SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Stakeholder engagement meetings, and this is going to be -- I know, since we're moving around a little bit, this is Attachment 4 in your briefing book, and so I'm just going to sort of briefly run through this, and I promise that I won't read it verbatim to you guys, but, over the last I would say year or so, the council has really been discussing ways that they can better engage the public, especially since, you know, after COVID, we're actually getting back out in the communities a lot more, interacting with fishermen, and sort of what the best way is to build relationships, and, of course, this is something that we're discussing against, you know, a pretty controversial backdrop.

There are a lot of increasing demands on people's time, and we're interacting with people in sort of new ways, be it virtually or in-person, and then, of course, the regulations that are coming down from the council, and climate change, and there's sort of a lot of upheaval going on in fisheries right now, and so the council really felt like a new way to interact with stakeholders was necessary, and so, to that end, we've been developing this stakeholder engagement process that we're hoping to begin, and one thing that I want to note is that this series of meetings that I'm going to talk about -- The intent is to have this sort of become a permanent part of the council's outreach, with the understanding that building, you know, true, positive relationships with stakeholders is something that takes a long-term, committed effort. When we're sort of discussing the structure of these, keep in mind that we intend to be doing these every single year moving forward.

The hope is to design these meetings in a way that will allow for more of a dialogue. Stakeholders have traditionally, you know, participated, unless they're on, you know, an advisory panel, in the public comment process, which is very much, you know, get up, say your three, five, or whatever minute piece, and sit back down. There isn't really that opportunity for sort of informal discussion, than, when we've had in-person meetings, and when stakeholders come to meetings, stakeholders have found really valuable, and it's not always, you know, public comment, and it's those conversations that they're having on the side that are important, and so we wanted to be able to sort of capture that in these meetings going forward.

Then one of the things that I want to note is sort of -- I may be the one presenting this to you all today, but it's been a huge staff effort, and I've got a list of sort of everyone on staff who has been participating in the development of these stakeholder engagement meetings, and then one of the things we did, in December, was actually get volunteers for a council planning team, a group of council members to help us plan these meetings, and we did this because the hope is that these will have council members being sort of forward-facing, and staff will sort of operate a bit more in the background, as support, and so we wanted them to be, you know, integral to the development process, and so we had members from each state willingly volunteer to participate in this planning team, and so that was exciting.

Then, just briefly, on the timeline, and I'm not going to go over it in detail. If you're interested, it's there, but the hope is to completely develop this process through the remainder of this year, and begin actually holding these stakeholder engagement meetings in the winter of 2025. The purpose of holding them in the winter, of course, is that there's not quite as much fishing activity going on, and so we're hoping to get sort of higher attendance at these meetings, at a time when fishermen don't need to be out on the water fishing quite as much.

With that, I will sort of start with the goals and objectives, and these were developed by staff and then reviewed and approved by the council, and, again, sort of that overarching goal is to build relationships with stakeholders by engaging them in more two-way-discussion-based conversation, hoping that that will improve trust and sort of fostering mutual respect between these two groups that can sometimes feel a little adversarial.

Underneath that, providing an opportunity for open dialogue, increasing the knowledge of the fishery management process, and it's a complicated process, and so sort of aware that participating in a council meeting can often feel intimidating, especially if it's going to make that next step to participating in advisory panels or the citizen science program.

The other objective would be to provide a mechanism for stakeholders to bring their concerns forward, this idea that it would allow for more proactive management. Fisheries management, can often be a little reactionary, reacting to stock assessments and problems in the fishery as they're already happening, and the hope is that this will allow stakeholders to bring things forward and allow the council to take proactive action.

Then, finally, providing an opportunity for council members to share information with shareholders on, you know, salient issues at the time, and so those are broadly the goals and objectives, and I do want to just sort of briefly pause here and see if you guys have any questions of sort of what our goals really are with these meetings before I dig into the structure, since a lot of the discussion questions are going to be about whether or not the structure we've outlined is going to help us actually achieve some of these goals and objectives, and so I will go ahead and take a pause here, to see if there are any questions.

DR. CROSSON: Dr. Chevront.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Just to make sure that -- When I was reading this before, I was looking -- The thing that crossed my mind was that what you're doing is providing the opportunity, but it looks like it's going to be stakeholder-driven, as to what the content and all that is going to be, or are you actually going to be saying this meeting is going to be about such and such and such,

because I can see the pros and cons of both ways of doing it, either letting it be open or providing more structure as to what you're going to be willing to discuss with them, because it could be a free-for-all, if it's totally open, and so I was kind of wondering about, but then I just moved on to the next thing, and so I didn't figure it out, and so I didn't know what to tell you.

MS. WIEGAND: So you hit on one of the big discussion points that we've been having as staff, and so I'll talk about it a little bit when we get into the meeting structure, but we've set it up so that there's both a more structured section, where the topics discussed would be something that was identified by council members, and council staff, in advance, and then we have a more unstructured section, where there would be a bit more of an opportunity to sort of talk about whatever may interest anyone who is in attendance.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I may have missed this, but how will people know about these meetings?

MS. WIEGAND: Also something that I'll talk about in a little bit, and something that staff is still working on, but we would intend to do quite a bit of outreach, working closely with our advisory panels, for example, and our state agencies, and I will say we just did our very first series of mackerel port meetings, and you guys will remember that, last year, you talked about that, and we had incredible attendance, and one of the most effective things, in terms of getting people out, was working with our advisory panel members, and then the state agencies as well, and they did an exceptional job calling and reaching out to fishermen personally, and so we would hope to take some of that sort of success and use it here.

DR. CROSSON: Any additional questions right now? Okay. Please continue.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Then I will move into sort of the meeting structure, and so a couple of sort of pre-meeting logistics, and I will note that this is very much a draft structure, and this is something that we've discussed internally as staff, and we're going to have that council planning team meet later in May, to discuss this, and so feel free to sort of rip it apart as needed, and we want to make sure these meetings are as successful as possible.

The intent is to have a minimum of five council staff members present at each meeting, and then, if we're in a given state -- If we're in North Carolina, all three council members that are North Carolina reps would be at all of the meetings in North Carolina, and that's the intent, and then, like I said, the specific topics to be discussed are going to be decided upon by meeting with those three state council reps, and council staff, to really discuss what topics are most salient for a given area, and then the intent would be to keep the structured section, which I will talk about in a minute, and those topics the same for all meetings within a given state, and then the topics for the unstructured session may change a little bit from city to city, so that we can update based on what people may be most interested in talking about there.

The hope is, again, also, since it's more discussion-based, to provide a lot of information for people to sort of grab, or look at, around the room, but not make it presentation-focused, and so we might have something like a general flier, with information on the council, sort of management 101 for anyone coming in that doesn't know a whole lot about how the federal fisheries management process works, a list of opportunities to participate, outreach material, a PowerPoint, maybe, that

runs on a loop, but, again, sort of -- Staff is talking about these ideas, and the intent is to make sure that we're not just spending a lot of time standing in front of people giving a presentation.

Sort of meeting setup, again, not set up where we've got audience seating, where everyone is facing a projector, and we'll have sort of groups of tables around the room that we'll be using for breakout sessions, that I will talk about in a minute, and then one of the things that we do intend to do, since you'll notice, as I go along and talk about this structure, a lot of it is council members will do this, and council members will do that, with staff sort of in the background, and so we will have sort of a pre-meeting training session with council members, to talk about their different roles and responsibilities for a given meeting, and we will probably sort of continue to do this before each set every year, especially sort of as council membership changes.

The hope is that, at the very beginning, and we're calling this the, quote, unquote, the prologue, the sort of as people are arriving, before the meeting has started, and we want to greet attendees and sort of gather a little bit of information on why they even decided to attend the stakeholder engagement meeting and what they want to get out of the night, and so we'll have a welcome table, with staff and council members sort of checking them in, and then we'll provide flip charts around the room, that will allow them, on post-its, to sort of answer the two questions of why did you choose to attend and what's one hot topic that you hope to discuss or learn about tonight.

One of the reasons we're asking that second question is the hope that, if there's -- You know, we've prepared these sort of unstructured topics, but maybe fifteen people arrive, and they all want to talk about the same thing, and it's not something we had planned on talking about, and we can sort of, to the extent possible, adjust, and some of that is, of course, to the extent possible, and the staff workload will have to be considered here, but we're hoping to be able to make slight adjustments to fit what the attendees really want to make sure they're talking about.

Then we'll have a very quick introduction to welcome attendees, sort of quickly go over the flip charts, talk about the council's goals and objectives for stakeholder meetings, some ground rules, and then how the night will operate. We want the council member to be the one giving that presentation and welcome address to all of the attendees.

Then we're going to jump into the structured breakout groups, and the thought here is that we'll break them out into -- Again, we're still really working on this structure, but two, or maybe three, breakout groups, to talk about the different issues that were identified, and then rotate them through each of the stations, so that every attendee will get to talk about all the two or three topics that are identified for a given state, and we'll have, you know, council members facilitating this discussion, and the thought is that we'll have sort of a list of questions, to help spur discussion, if you end up somewhere where you've got a group of ten people sitting there quietly, but, otherwise, sort of allow for free-flowing conversation and the direction that may lead.

Then a report-out from the groups, and we'll have either a council member or staff sort of very quickly say this is what was talked about in the red snapper group, for example. Then we'll have an intermission, and this is just a break, to allow council members to have some conversations with attendees more informally, and allow staff to sort of quickly reset the room, to move into the more unstructured session, and we're thinking of this as kind of like a very, very small-scale tabling event, and so, if you've ever been to like a fishing expo, or anywhere where there's sort of like

different stations, and you can just sort of mill around as you want, to ask questions and discuss, based on what you're interested in, and so it will be a more unstructured.

The thought is to have maybe four stations set up around the room, as well as that allows for a bunch of staff to be floating, and helping, where needed, but always having sort of like a management 101, or a best fishing practices and citizen science station, and then also having an area where fishermen could go to say what I wanted to talk about wasn't brought up, and they will have the opportunity to have someone to discuss that with.

Our goal is to keep people here for two hours, and so you're looking at this and saying that's -- You can't get through that in two hours, and agreed, and so one of the things that we've talked about, as staff, is sort of prioritizing that structured session, having that one be the longer one, and having the unstructured one and sort of noting that, hey, we're going to stop and sort of conclude things, do a wrap-up presentation, but staff, and council members, intend to stick around, and so, if you would like to stick around and have, you know, more conversations, we'll be here, and, you know, we've got to pack up the room, and so there's time to sort of allow people who are able to stick around to chat.

I will say that this is -- Because I'm only so creative of a person, this is roughly similar to what we did for mackerel port meetings, and it was two structured breakout group sessions, and so they have an unstructured session, and so two hours felt about right. We did have sort of pen-and-paper available, for people to write their thoughts down, if they felt like it wasn't addressed during sort of the fast-moving breakout sessions.

Then, finally, a quick five-minute conclusion, where a council member will, again, sort of recap the goals and objectives, thank participants for coming, and talk about what the next steps are, what the council is going to use the information gathered for. Then some sort of post-meeting logistics, and all council members, and staff, that attended the meeting will hold sort of a debrief the following morning, to talk about what was learned during the meeting, some key takeaways, and any ways to improve future meetings, and then we'll prepare a summary report that will be presented to the council at their next meeting.

Then staff will follow-up with everyone who sort of signed-in and provided an email address at the beginning of the meeting, and they'll thank them, provide them a bullet-pointed list of some of the things that were learned, information on the upcoming council meeting, and other opportunities to get involved.

Also, one of the things that we are going to do is, once we've prepared that summary report, we're going to send it out to everyone who provided an email address for them to review, so that they can note if they feel like something was covered inaccurately, or was mentioned and wasn't covered, that we have those edits and are providing them that opportunity to review what they have submitted. Then, finally, you know, we'll post photos of the evening on social media and try to hype-up these stakeholder meetings a little bit.

Last, but not least, I do just sort of want to note that we did brainstorm some plan B and C options that will work if we get low attendance, if less than ten people show up, and that doesn't really seem like it will work out well for a facilitated breakout group, and so some adjustments there, or, if we have, incredibly, a high-attendance scenario, where we have a ton of people there that we

did not expect, some adjustments to the structure, to try to address that, just as back-up plans, and so I will go ahead and just note that the meeting schedule we plan to do -- Again, it's winter months, and then we plan to do only two states a year, and alternate, and so we'll do like North Carolina and Georgia one year, for example, and then South Carolina and Florida the subsequent year, and alternate back and forth.

That is what I have. I've got probably too lengthy of a list of questions here, and I can, you know, go over them one-by-one, and I know you all have them available to look at, and I will just sort of note that one of the things that I'm most interested in is your thoughts on that structure, and, more importantly, do you think that structure is going to help us achieve some of the goals and objectives that I outlined earlier?

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: Sorry, and this might be in there, but just to confirm, and so the small group breakouts are facilitated by council members, or there's a staff facilitating it, and the council member is just there?

MS. WIEGAND: The intent is to have the council member facilitate, and staff will be there to sort of take notes, in front of everyone, and assist as needed.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: Okay, and so they'll be kind of doing that also, trying to make sure that everyone has -- I saw that you've got some pre-training, and so --

DR. CROSSON: I would think you would definitely want some staff, also, to help keep it directed.

MR. STEMLE: I just have a question, and are you guys going to be tracking the user groups of each of the participants that are in the meeting, and, with the breakout sessions, are they going to be just a mixed bag of users, or are you going to break the sessions out in between the various groups, to try to get like essentially -- Like the charter -- Like things that are plaguing the charter industry, versus things that are plaguing the, you know, recreational anglers, or even something like mode, and you could do shore mode, private boat, charter, to see how those issues are popping up in various groups in the breakouts, and I was just wondering.

MS. WIEGAND: There will be sort of a sign-in sheet that people will sign-in on, and it does note which sector do you participate in, and so we will have information on the sectors involved. One of the ways that we talked about separating people out into groups is simply, as they come in, you are a triggerfish, or you are a greater amberjack, and just sort of handing something like that out and saying, all right, if you got a triggerfish at the beginning, you're over here. If you got a greater amberjack at the beginning, you're over here.

That worked pretty well for port meetings, and I will say that one of the differences is we did have specific sector breakouts, later on in the meeting, and so we haven't talked a lot about whether or not we want to break people up by sector, and I will say that, sometimes, one of the concerns we've heard from people is that, one, they feel like conversations with people in between sectors is really beneficial to social dynamics of the room and whether or not separating out people by sector could cause some frustration or feelings of, you know, well, they're talking secretly about stuff, and then they're talking secretly about stuff, and we're not all in the loop, and so we've gone back and forth on whether or not to separate out by sector.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: That makes perfect sense, but then I would argue that you be really deliberate about making sure that everything is very heterogenous.

DR. CROSSON: Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Real quick, and I don't remember seeing it in here, but have you all thought about using any kind of like information kiosks, as another way to either provide additional training or whatever, because, I remember, at council meetings, we always had the iPads sitting outside, out front, and, you know, those can be programmed to either provide, you know, interactive education, or something somebody wants, or something that can be made available over the internet, or something that may be of interest to people who are attending some of these port meetings, and I kind of thought that -- You know, I was involved when we did the snapper grouper ones, years ago, and, when the groups were especially large, it sometimes became a little bit chaotic, trying to corral everybody, and get everybody involved.

I also remember, a few times, there were some people who would -- They were there, but they really weren't there, and they were sort of standing in the background and not trying to participate too much, and I don't know if they would be more willing, because maybe they're not sociable, as much as some other people, that might be more willing to interact with something like an iPad-type thing, where you can at least gather some information from them, even if it's not done interactively with other people.

It just sort of popped into my head, and I was thinking about it as you were talking about other ways to do this, because the first idea that popped into my head was like using YouTube videos, or something like that, but that's just too one-way, I think, and it would be greater -- I think a greater value if you could it somehow interactively, and that just may be pie-in-the-sky kind of stuff, but I just wanted to throw an idea out there, that you could at least ponder and say, no, we can't do that, or whatever, and, I mean, you have to do what's realistic, and I understand that, but that was just something that came to my mind.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that we have not talked about something like in the stakeholder-engagement-meeting-specific context, and I will say, at some of our ICAST meetings, which is like a fishing expo that the council goes to every year, we have talked a little bit about using an iPad, or something, with like a Prezi, if you've ever interacted with one of those, or something like that, and so some of our staff is working on that for ICAST this year, and so it will be interesting to see how that goes, because I do think that's something that could then be incorporated into this type of context.

DR. CROSSON: Christina, please.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: Or even -- I mean, it's not high-tech like that, but even having like a board, with a topic, where they could put a sticky note with whatever they're thinking, and I know I don't feel very comfortable speaking, even though I'm speaking now, but like you could put it up in writing, and, two, I wondered -- Could you speak more about what you're going to do with this information?

MS. WIEGAND: Absolutely, and so that's something that I would say, as council staff, we've talked a little bit about, but we would really like to push the council to have bigger discussions

about -- Especially given that these are -- These meetings are very different from traditional public comment, where the council has a specific issue on the table that people are providing comment on, and this is much broader, and we do want to make sure we're avoiding any sort of frustrations, where like I went to this meeting, and I said this, and then the council did not do X, Y, and Z, and so this is something that we sort of -- Every time we bring these meetings up to talk to the council about, we also try to incorporate that into the conversation, and I will say it's something that we've struggled with sort of what to do with this information, and it feels very obtuse, at times, especially if it's not something that the council can then immediately take management action on.

Sort of, you know, the first question I've got on my list is does the SEP have any suggestions for how to sort of help the council have those discussions, and sort of drill down into what they are going to do with this information, because we expect to get that question from stakeholders that are attending these meetings quite a bit, and so we want to make sure that we have an answer that both sets expectations realistically, but is also something that is encouraging, and encourages participation in these meetings.

DR. HUNT: Have you guys -- Along those lines, have you thought about a rubric? Have you thought about a rubric? Like what are we trying to achieve in these meetings, regardless of where they are over time, that you can package, that we have five areas that we're interested in, to maybe address the council, or the council may say what do want out of these meetings, and give you five separate things, and then you package the information from these into those five rubrics that the council actually asked for, and then you may have some extraneous information, when you're all done, that may -- The next meeting on could lead to another rubric, or something like that.

MS. WIEGAND: So are you thinking -- I guess I want to make sure I'm clear, and so we've got like the goals and objectives that the council has, and are you thinking of trying to turn those into some type of measurable rubric, or having the council discuss, before each set of meetings, sort of specifically what do you want to achieve this set of meetings, and turning that into a rubric?

DR. HUNT: If you think about this from an educational workshop perspective, is there a logic model, where you are looking for -- What are your short-term outcomes that are anticipated from this, and mid-term outcomes, and then long-term outcomes, that they could be packaged into one of those three things, and, yes, I'm just thinking out loud here, but you can maybe look at some of that logic model, things that they work on with workshops and education, that could maybe help you develop a consistent set of outcomes that we're seeking that you can address -- Package that data into, or that information into.

DR. CROSSON: I mean, this is just -- It's hard for me to answer this, because I'm always thinking like, well, what's the specific conundrum that you're asking people for feedback, because you're asking -- I understand, and I think it's a laudable goal to not be asking for very specific feedback on very specific council management actions, because they tend to be very isolated, but there are big structural questions, maybe, that the council wants to ask about how they think the fisheries should go, and that's where I think you would want to --

I think that would be the most productive use of these sort of sessions, would be where are you trying to drive the fishery, and, you know, what -- Obviously, you have heterogeneity in between the different fishing groups, and also between different people inside each group, right, and not all recreational anglers think the same way, and neither do all commercial fishermen, right, and so

it's like you're trying to get at some feedback, I guess, and not the direction of an aspect of the fishery.

I would see this as being particularly valuable in -- I mean, my mind, right now, has been on snapper grouper, because I have to do the presentation tomorrow, but it's a fishery that defies easy management, as the council has found, right, because it's a multispecies, multi-gear, multi-sector fishery, and everything is caught with each other, and so you have to try to get to some ideas about where the fishery wants to go in the future, and that's where I would see this sort of thing as having a high utility with the public, but you need to -- I agree with what Kevin said, is you need to sort of get at these different four or five different things that you're trying to get an answer to, you know, whether it's, you know, the length of fishing seasons, or whether it's something about catch or what, or choke species, whatever it is, and probably should have some sort of specified thing, or list of things, that you want to discuss. Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: What Scott was saying made me think of something, and Adam earlier, and, when people sign-up, or come to there, and you ask them, you know, what their participation is in the different fisheries, are you going to have any way to link what they're saying, or suggesting, to who said it?

The reason why is because that could become very important when the council is considering looking at an action that's going to affect one sector, or participants in a single fishery, and you're going to want to know have you gotten comments from those kinds of specific participants in the fishery, to inform the council back of, well, we had fifteen people, in the last two years, who commented specifically on that, from these states, and this is what they had to say.

That's really valuable information to the council, because they may not get it from any other source, and it doesn't have to be necessarily even any specific action, but a specific topic, and what are they interested in, because they're not going to know what the actions are going to be, but you might get an idea, perhaps, in some of these discussions, about what's most important to that group, and it may not be real, real specific, but you might get the idea that they might rather have a bigger bag limit than a longer season, and that's real important for the council to discuss, when they're trying to figure out, you know, where they want to head with something.

I just thought -- I don't know, and that might be very difficult to do, but there are actually semi-anonymous ways to do that, and so like you're doing sticky walls, and somebody signs-in, and they're assigned a number, and you can just have the number on the sticky things that you're giving people, and, when you collect the sticky things, you'll know who that came from, and other people there will not know anything about them, and so it's anonymous, in terms of their participation, but you can gather more in-depth information from who said what.

DR. CROSSON: Chelsey.

DR. CRANDALL: I just wanted to go back to the question of how do we help the council have discussions that drill down into this, and did we mean amongst themselves, and, as you said, each state will pick their topics, and so how do we help the council talk about what those topics will be, or how do we help the council tell the participants what it is they want?

MS. WIEGAND: I would say how do sort of, you know, as council staff, help the council get at this idea of what do you want to do with this information, that is not necessarily tied to a specific management action, and then how do you want to communicate that, because, again, we want this to be very council-driven, and not sort of -- We don't want them to feel like the staff are pushing in one direction, because they're going to be the ones forward-facing, having to answer this question, but it's -- I mean, as we've sort of talked about around this table, it's a challenging thing to sort of drill down into, and, well, what do you want to do with this sort of bulk of qualitative information that you're getting about the fishery.

DR. CRANDALL: So you almost need like a structured, facilitated process, with the council members, to come up with what the topics will then be.

DR. CROSSON: I mean, it sounds like an MSE, in some ways, the parts of an MSE where you have that sort of structured discussion, but that's usually very focused on tradeoffs, and this seems like it would be broader.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I think the goal of establishing these lines of communication is really important. I also think that's going to be really hard to sell, because a vague we would like to establish relationships with you might not bring people to the room. Right? I mean, we all know this, right, but I think that -- Again, I know you're stuck in the middle, with trying to figure out what does the council want to do with this, and the council is like, wait, but we want to hear, but I struggle to picture which fishermen, fishers, any sector, are going to come to that, and so I think your work is really cut out for you in that respect.

DR. CRANDALL: It's true that it's -- We know this too, that, if they come, and they have the expectation that something will change, and it doesn't, then we actually erode relationships, and it's counter to what we're -- I know we're in a sticky place, but maybe that's something, as part of this discussion about what the topics will be -- Like, hey, what's something tangible that we could connect to, some sort of meaningful action, or outcome, or something that the people who came feel like something resulted from this, aside from the relationships we know that we want to build. I know it's easy to say we should do that, and then we have to figure out what that is.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I've had lot of people, in the last year, ask me since when has my participation ever actually done anything positive, and I've had a lot of people look me in the eye and ask that, and so it would be good to have those things to be able to point to to start, I think.

MR. WALSH: I went to one meeting in Wanchese, that John and Scott were at, and there was a very vocal misinformation kind of campaign going on, and I think there was some miscommunication about what the meeting was, and what people were showing up for, but I think there was an opportunity, with a lot of people in the room, and there were -- There was one council member, or someone that worked for the council, that was there, that really stepped in and kind of turned it around and made it very productive, and I think going in knowing kind of the issues that are going to come up, and maybe what the meeting --

How it could steer away from like kind of the hot topics, I guess, would be very helpful, because, at first, it was kind of bound for an unproductive session, but I think that it ended up being -- I think people got out of it at least something, and there was a lot of people in the room, and it was

a good opportunity, and so I think there's situations where you can -- I'm kind of rambling, and I'm sorry.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say, thank you, guys, for bringing up some of these more challenging topics, and it lets staff know that we're on the right track, in terms of identifying what's really going to be a challenge. I've got a couple of other questions on here that sort of dig into the structure a little bit more, you know, the first being is two hours sort of an appropriate amount of time to be asking stakeholders to attend the meeting, and that's specifically what our advisory panels have recommended.

Then I talked about those sort of structured breakout groups, and the unstructured breakout groups, and how staff had intended to sort of prioritize the ones that were a bit more structured, and then, for that unstructured session, that might be a little bit quick, and note that the intent is for staff, and everyone, to stick around, to discuss afterwards, but I was curious if this panel had any thoughts on whether or not we should be prioritizing the structured breakout groups, or the sort of unstructured session, and then whether or not we should be changing those topics by city, or state, or trying to maintain some consistency across-the-board throughout the year.

DR. CRANDALL: I have thoughts, and so my inclination would be what you're saying, prioritize the structure, going back to what we've been talking about, and then there can be that prep to try to have a topic that can connect to some sort of tangible outcome, whereas, if it's prioritized unstructured, we don't know what's going to come, and so it might not lead to any actions that they see come from it.

Maybe -- You know, we've done two hours before, and it's been fine, but, if there's a structured and an unstructured, folks have the opportunity to maybe put a sticky note and then head out, if they have to. Thinking of these breakouts, and going back to what was already said, if it's possible to have someone else help facilitate those breakout conversations, so that it's not all on the council member, and you have more of a neutral person to keep that going along.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I just wanted to echo that. Facilitating is an art, and a skill, and it's not easy, and so you might really want to think about having the council there, and, yes, it's important, so that their voices can be heard, or note that they're hearing voices, but maybe someone else facilitating.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say the thought has been, sort of among staff, that sort of every breakout group will have a council member and a council staff there the entire time, and then some other council staff will be floating, to help where needed, and the understanding that some council members might really love to facilitate, and they might be fantastic at it, and others might feel a little bit more uncomfortable facilitating, and so the extent to which staff would sort of be the one really facilitating would depend a little bit on the comfort level of given council members that are participating, and, again, that's why we want to have that sort of introductory training session, and meeting, to sort of -- So everyone knows what's going to be expected of them, ultimately, at a set of meetings.

DR. HUNT: I somewhat disagree, just because, from a participant standpoint, if a council member is not facilitating a meeting, then the other stakeholders in the room view you guys as another stakeholder group, as opposed to the government dictorial. It may put other people at ease if you're

not the facilitator, and that you're sitting at the table with them, as another participant in the meeting, and that may open up some more things and add to that feeling that this is a stakeholder-driven process, of which the agency is a stakeholder as well, and that may put some people at ease.

DR. CROSSON: Kevin, when you say "the agency", are you talking about NOAA?

DR. HUNT: Or the staff.

DR. CROSSON: The staff. Right. Well, getting to the agency thing, that's the other comment that I wanted to make, before I forgot, which is that, if you're utilizing the time of council members, council members that are on the council, representing state agencies, are going to have different responsibilities, and probably different restrictions, than people that are at-large appointees, and so you should consider that when you're putting different people -- Asking different council members to represent the council there.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Each sector is going to see that council member as also specifically representing a sector.

DR. CHEUVRONT: In terms of the types of questions, and topics, that are discussed, do you see a longitudinal benefit out of this, looking at what the issues are over time, in that you are going to have at least a two-year break between each of the places that you visit, but is there much benefit to the council, and I don't know, and this is something that staff and you all might just want to talk about, but is there a benefit to having a core set of questions that you take with you every time you go to one of these things, that you could compare across regions, or across the same region, and I don't know. I'm not really sure, because that's always going to be affected by management issues, and whatever else is going on, but it also might help the council know whether their management is affecting some of the issues too, and so that was just rattling around in my head, and I don't know.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say -- So we haven't talked about that a lot, as the group, and so this is just sort of me answering, and yes and no. I feel like there is a benefit to providing stakeholders - - Or switching things up, to make sure we're addressing what is salient at a given time, as opposed to trying to get longitudinal data. I will say I do think this information could be very helpful for things like retrospective analyses, to go back and look at, you know, these are the concerns that were brought up, and did the management action that eventually went into place, related to shadow shark, successfully address the concerns that stakeholders were bringing up at the time about shadow shark, and so more of a historical narrative retrospective analysis type of thing, but, again, there could be plenty of other ways to use this data, and that's just sort of me thinking about how I might want to use it as me.

DR. HUNT: I think, longitudinally, in that regard -- I mean, the overall goal of this is to create goodwill among the stakeholders, and, longitudinally, are these things that you -- How can you measure that over time, because, if you go five years, and people are still complaining that I don't feel part of the process, then this is a futile effort, which is very time-consuming.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Building on that, this is going to attract a very specific type of person, and I don't know what percentage of fishers like actually get in their cars and drive to a meeting of any kind, and I know you're doing one per state, every other year, and I have had people in

Mount Pleasant tell me that meetings in Charleston are very far away, and it's not something they would ever attend. No joke, and so it's just a -- I mean, you know this. You know this already, and I know you've built in like the process at the end that will share the report-out, and, again, it's -- You know that it's a very specific group of people.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that, first, traveling between Charleston and Mount Pleasant in traffic does feel like it's forever away, and the intent is not to do like one meeting per year in each state, and it's to do a series of meetings, and so we would go to like -- For example, and I'm sorry to keep bringing up mackerel port meetings, but it's just my most recent experience with something similar to this, but we did a week in North Carolina, where we were in Wilmington, and then Morehead City, and then Hatteras, and then Manteo.

That would be one set in North Carolina, and then, that same year, we would do another set in Georgia, and one of the hopes, with these meetings, is that we will attend, or go to, places that maybe we don't often reach for council meetings, because, for council meetings, we need a big space, and we need it to be easily accessible, and so, oftentimes -- For example, when we were in Hatteras, this past week, they talked a lot about how the council has never really come up here, and, well, Hatteras is challenging to get to, and so it's not a convenient place for a council meeting, but, for something like this, we can make much more of an effort to reach some of these communities that may not have always had -- You know, it might not be easy for members of those communities to have face-to-face interactions with council members, as opposed to doing something virtual, like logging-into a meeting.

Then I will say, in terms of evaluation, and that was sort of the very last question that I had on the list, we have not had a chance to talk about that, as staff, but, since this is the only time that the SEP will be meeting before we actually start implementing these, if you have thoughts on ways to evaluate the success of these stakeholder meetings, that's something of, you know, paramount importance to council staff.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I was just going to see if you had thought about, or if this is even something you can do, but targeting any specific groups, like underserved populations, with these meetings, because this could be really exciting chance for them to, I guess, be part of the process.

MS. WIEGAND: Absolutely, and I will say sort of impetus for even discussing stakeholder engagement meetings came from some of our internal staff meetings related to the NMFS EEJ strategy, and it has evolved to be something much broader than just an EEJ initiative, but that was actually the thing that spurred on discussions of this style of meeting.

DR. CROSSON: Go ahead, Chelsey.

DR. CRANDALL: I mean, we could probably think of a few evaluations, but you probably know like the simple -- A minimum post-feedback survey of some sort, to be like did you even have a good time, but I did want to circle to -- Like I recognize that I'm probably continually bringing up stuff that you've all had a lot of in-depth conversations about, and I did want to say that, overall, I think that the meeting you put together was really good, and I'm really excited to see how they go. I know that there's always a million things that we can continue to think about, but I think you've got a really good structure set up here.

DR. HUNT: That said, you're going to learn a lot from that first meeting, and this may not be the final -- This could be considered a pre-test to the rest of them, to see what you find out.

DR. CROSSON: Christina, have we answered all your questions?

MS. WIEGAND: You have answered most of them. There is sort of one other thing that I want to make sure that we hit on. We're going to have to take all of this qualitative information and present it to the council, and one of the least engaging ways is just a list of words on a paper that says this is what people talked about at the meeting, and so, if you have any suggestions on creative ways to summarize all of this qualitative information, keeping in mind that the intent is not to record them in the way that we record meetings like this, one being because we feel like maybe having a microphone in front of them is going to be intimidating. It's all going to be hand-written notes, stuff that people put up on sticky walls, and so that's the type of information we'll be looking to summarize, but creative ways to present that, so that it's incredibly engaging for the council.

DR. HUNT: I think that's what Scott and I -- That I was kind of alluding to, can you package this -- You know, you're going to be typing responses from somebody, but, if there's some preordained themes, that it's related to a bag limit, it's related to season length, it's related to allocation, that you can then just put that comment in one of those rubrics, and some may overlap, but that there's some structure to that, and those could be dictated by council members telling you that, yes, what we want out of this meetings is info on back limits, info on season lengths, info on benefits to stakeholders, things like that, and what are their main things, so you guys can just quickly move comments into a box, and then maybe rethink them later, but then that packaging will probably tell itself, by the end of the -- You know, you're going to either have something in every rubric, or you're going to create your own by the end of the meeting.

MR. STEMLE: This is kind of an odd thought, but the whole point of these stakeholder engagement meetings is, like you said, to build goodwill and trust between the council and the public, correct, and so why are we concerned about giving yet another presentation to the council? Shouldn't the council be presenting to the public about what they learned from these engagement meetings?

It kind of -- It proves a point that the council actually, through all these meetings, paid attention to what the public is saying, and so, instead of having staff members sit behind a table, present a PowerPoint, and have the council, say, oh yes, wonderful, great job, and you actually have the council members go through, for their respective states, and say this is what we learned from these public engagement meetings, and this is what we think the public finds to be the most important. That would be a more creative way, I think, to show that -- To show the public, at least, that the council staff is actually genuinely interested in what they have to say. Instead of having us give them a presentation, have them present what they found, to be, you know, proven from these meetings.

MS. WIEGAND: I had not thought about that, but I really love that suggestion.

DR. HUNT: Along those lines, I'm looking at some bear research in Mississippi, and agency trust is one of the things we're looking at, and it would be nice to, pre-meeting, ask some quantitative questions on what they agree or disagree with various statements about agency trust. Those could

be followed-up with over time, to see did these meetings actually improve people's trust in the agency.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: We have some data for you on that already, from the cit-sci project.

MS. WIEGAND: I would say that would be fantastic. I will say one of the things that council staff has to keep in mind, and this can get a little murky, if it's a public-noticed meeting that you're gathering information for at the meeting, but, just sort of by-and-large, the council has a very hard time doing any sort of survey work, because of the Paperwork Reduction Act, and so, for the most part, council staff does not do any sort of like formal survey work. Sometimes, like what Jen was talking about, there will be researchers who help answer questions that the council may have by choosing to do survey research, but us, as council staff, are very, very restricted on any sort of survey work that we can do.

DR. HUNT: Those things could also be collected on the wall. Where is your level of trust with the agency before this meeting started, and go put your sticky note on one to five, and then you avoid the survey. The question will be following-up with them, but is following -- Do they have the same issues with follow-up surveys as they do with pre-surveys, for example?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, for the most part, but I'm thinking about now sort of what Brian said, in terms of longitudinal data, and that's something we can ask at every single meeting, and then see how it has changed over time, and so I love the idea of outright, you know, having that as something that stakeholders can interact with when they come to the meeting.

DR. CHEUVRONT: One of the things that always kind of astounded me, working all the years with the council, and meeting just people in the general public, or brand-new council members, is the number of people who think the council can do whatever they want. That is a source, a huge source, of unrealistic expectations, when people say, well, I want to know why you can't just raise the bag limit, and why can't you do that, and you know we want that, and it would make our fishing much more enjoyable for us, and just do it, and then the council doesn't do it, and they say, well, you didn't do what we recommended, and so, therefore, they don't understand that, you know, the council has rules, and regulations, and Congress, and all this other stuff, that they have to answer to.

It's amazing how many people, and, you know, even -- I have seen council members, new council members, walk in with the attitude of I'm going to fix this, and, you know, within a year, they're going to be doing the right thing, because they don't know what in the hell they're doing there, and I've got to fix this, and they come in with that attitude, and then, amazingly, at the first meeting, they're just bowled over by the all the bureaucracy and everything that the council has to work under, and some people leave, and not want to engage in that, whether it's council members or the public.

Somehow, the idea -- We talked about expectations earlier, but I think they need to understand that the council has limitations on what they can do, and, because we may agree, if we were, you know, representing the council, or even the SEP, and we might think that's a good idea, but there may be reasons why that cannot be done, and, while we know that's important to you, it needs to be noted, but the expectation for action on that anytime soon is probably really small. Somehow, there needs -- That needs to be conveyed, that that's a realism that everybody has to deal with.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say so it's one of the reasons that staff has talked about having, sort of during that unstructured session, a sort of management 101 table, quote, unquote, where you can go to talk to someone about the management process, what the council can and cannot do, and also having, you know, paper fliers available for people to pick up that will detail some of that information, understanding exactly what you were saying, Brian, is there is often a sort of confusion over what the council can and cannot do, but, also, we sort of don't time, during this, to go full detail into this is what the Magnuson-Stevens Act allows the council to do, and so sort of very briefly, in a sentence or two, setting the stage for who the council is, at the beginning of the meeting, and then having an opportunity to have some of those discussions, but, if there are suggestions for how the council can sort of address that, you know, very real concern during the meeting, we certainly welcome those.

DR. FRIMPONG: Beyond the fact that management can affect stakeholder -- What sort of incentives do they have to participate in the meeting? Also, I believe you said it, the time, and also on the days to hold these meetings.

MS. WIEGAND: So we'll likely be holding these meetings in the evenings, during the week, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., is sort of what we have talked about, and most council public meetings start at 6:00, and 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. is what we've been doing for mackerel port meetings, and it worked well during the first week we did them, which is our only experience, but it worked well, 6:00 to 8:00.

Then, in terms of the incentive to get fishermen out to these meetings, I would say that's still something that we're very much working on, and it will be driven a lot by the council's answers to some of those questions about what you want to do with this information, and I will say the other thing, that we are hopeful will be some incentive, is that opportunity for face-to-face interaction with your council members in your community.

I'm going to talk about some of our best fishing practices outreach in a minute, but one of the things they've noticed, just going to tackle shops up and down the coast, is a lot of really positive interactions with people who are excited that the council, or Sea Grant, are sending people to their communities to talk face-to-face, and so the hope is that some of that is an incentive, and of itself, of like this is your opportunity to tell your council members, who are representing your state at the table, what they should be concerned about, and it's your opportunity for that face-to-face interaction, and so that, sort of like what Jen was talking about, I imagine will speak to a certain type of stakeholder, and that we're going to need to have bigger conversations about how we want to reach people, and incentivize people, that maybe that sort of opportunity for communication is not quite as appealing, or not enough of an incentive, to come out to a meeting.

DR. HUNT: Back to Brian's point earlier with kiosks, it would be nice if you had a timeline of the management process, and say where does this meeting fit in there, so they can see, on the timeline, where does this fit in the process, and maybe it would ease their mind a little that it's a contribution, and it's one part of a whole, and could -- You know, you were talking about having a management 101 table, and you could probably -- If you laid everything out on a posterboard, you know, probably that could answer a lot of questions in itself.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Can I jump on that same topic, too? I have lots of ideas for you, but even like little twenty-second thirty-second videos of what is NOAA, what is NMFS, what is the council, what is Fish and Wildlife, what is DNR, and how are they not all the same people, and what can each of them do, just little short things, right, and, like you said, Prezi. Just little presentations, and like charts, maybe, or, you know, a cool graph, like on a piece of paper, but like really simple, quick, like sound-bite length, so that people can look at it and then carry on with what they're doing.

DR. CROSSON: Like what is a stock assessment.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Or what is a stock.

DR. CROSSON: Do you think we're done with this item? We're good? Anybody else? Do you want to move on in the agenda, so that we can have enough time to get to the 4:00? I want to get several things finished today, and so let's finish this up, and I guess Christina is done, and let's take like a five-minute break, and then we'll do the next presentation, which will be -- The next one up is best fishing practices, and so we'll take a five-minute break, and then we'll get to that.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. CROSSON: We're resuming the SEP meeting, and the next item we have on the agenda would be the best fishing practices, which is Item Number 5, and I have tasked Adam to keep track of this, and who is presenting? Christina again? Lucky you. Okay. Take it away.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL FEEDBACK ON UPCOMING SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL BEST FISHING PRACTICES OUTREACH EVALUATION WORKSHOP

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, me again. I'm going to talk to you about another meeting that I'm planning, and luckily this one is just a day-and-a-half meeting, and so we're sort of switching gears here and talking about best fishing practices outreach and how outreach, and the work that we've been doing through our best fishing practices initiative, can help meet some of the snapper grouper management targets, and so I'm going to breeze through the background pretty quick.

I don't think it's a secret to anyone in this room that regulatory measures, and growing fishing effort, are resulting in more fish that are released, that do not survive, and they're released for a variety of reasons, sometimes regulatory, and that this increase can make it -- This increase in fish that are released, that do not survive, is creating a bit of a management challenge for the council, and oftentimes particularly in the snapper grouper species. Because it is a multispecies fishery, it can be challenging, sometimes, to not come into contact with some of these non-target species.

For the last three years, I believe at this point, the council has had a best fishing practices outreach that has been conducting a significant amount of outreach, throughout the entire South Atlantic region, and, if you have never tuned into one of the best fishing practices update presentations at the council, I highly encourage you to do so, and Ashley Oliver, and our Sea Grant fellow, which is currently David Hugo, have done a ton of work related to getting the best fishing practices word out into communities.

One of the things that we really became aware of is that there has to be a way to sort of evaluate the effectiveness of this outreach, and one of the things we've talked about a lot, and it was in fact Ashley Oliver, our best fishing practices outreach specialist, who talked about how there needs to be a transition in the conversation.

One of things that we do a lot of outreach on, related to best fishing practices, is barotrauma mitigation tools, like descending devices, and, by and large, the effectiveness of descending devices is widely accepted, and so there needs to be this transition from talking about whether or not descending devices are effective to whether or not the outreach we're doing, to get the word out there about descending devices, is effective, what are the compliance rates with current descending device regulations, and what sort of information on these things is needed to go into stock assessments to affect discard mortality rates.

One of the things the council did, when they expanded their best fishing practices outreach program, was set aside money to conduct a workshop, where we bring together people that had a background in a variety of related topics, as well as people that have already started doing some of this research, and there is research available out there, and there have been studies done by Return 'Em Right, which is an organization in the Gulf, and there have been studies by The Nature Conservancy, as well as, of course, the council's own citizen science project, SAFMC Release, that have gathered some information on descending device uses, perceptions of best fishing practices, and overall sort of knowledge of these tools.

All of it is sort of very location specific, or time specific, and there is no real sort of longitudinal data available, and it's all piecemeal, and so one of the goals of this workshop is to bring all of those sort of groups that are doing this type of work together and have a discussion on how to move forward.

We've got some of the workshop goals here, and I want to go over them briefly, because they really drive how we've structured this meeting, the first being synthesizing, and sort of summarizing, current stakeholder knowledge on the use of best fishing practices, and sort of the prevalence of use, and what the current knowledge gaps may be, looking at ways to examine the effectiveness, like I said, of that best fishing practices outreach and education, and what we really need for evaluation.

Understanding the relationship between social norms and the use of best fishing practices, understanding that, in a lot of other arenas, and certainly we've heard a lot from fishermen, and those working out on the west coast on descending devices, about the power of social norms in driving use of things like descending devices and best fishing practices.

Then, finally, sort of reviewing the role of best fishing practices and their use play in the discard mortality estimates for the stock assessment process and sort of what data is needed to meet some of the management targets that have been discussed at the council level, and so, ultimately, we hope that we'll have a final report that comes out of this that will both summarize discussion and provide a set of research recommendation that can be incorporated into the council's research and monitoring priorities.

The hope is that people that do research, maybe outside of the council, that aren't restricted by the Paperwork Reduction Act, might see some of these council research and monitoring priorities and choose to move forward with conducting said research, as I'm looking around the table.

The plan is to have this just be a one full-day and one half-day meeting, that will occur sometime in mid-September, and we've set some tentative dates, but mid-September is our sort of target area, considering all of the other meetings that the council has going on, and our main discussion topics are going to be social norms in natural resources management, current descending device data collection efforts, and then incorporating regulatory knowledge and compliance rates into stock assessments.

We hope to have approximately twenty-five participants, and we have actually thought about specifically who, but we didn't want to start naming people until we've reached out to them, and so the hope is to have sort of one moderator, seven to eight presenters, and then fifteen additional participants, focusing on outreach professionals from the different state agencies, Sea Grant, staff from organizations that have already conducted some of this research, like Return 'Em Right, FishSmart, The Nature Conservancy. Then social scientists, like you all, that are familiar with survey techniques and social norms research, and then stock assessment scientists who are familiar with how the data that is available can, or can't, ultimately go into sort of the stock assessment process.

Here is our proposed structure, and we will, of course, have presentations and background material available online for participants to review, similar to the way we do for these SEP meetings, and we're also hoping to have some sort of broad pre-workshop survey that might ask participants their thoughts on what is needed to improve our understanding of all of those different topics, and, again, the extent to which we're going to be able to do that is still up for debate, I will say, and then one of the other things we want to do is have a Google document that allows anyone who is a participant to sort of provide resources that they think might be helpful for discussion that would be available to all of the other participants, similar to what was done for the climate change meeting that both Jen, and I think Christina, were also at a few weeks ago.

We intend to have this sort of setup, and, if any of you all have ever been to any of our SEDAR meetings, and we intend to have it set up similar to that, where there will be sort of like one large, u-table that we'll use for, you know, initial presentations, plenary sessions, but then we'll have sort of smaller rooms that we can use for breakout sessions.

We'll sort of start off and have participants introduce each other, talk about the goals and objectives, the usual sort of introduction stuff, and then we'll have a session on social norms, sort of starting out talking about social norms maybe in an industry outside of fisheries, and then social norms related to descending devices or fisheries in general, and we're hoping to reach out to someone in Washington State, specifically.

When we were developing Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29, which was the amendment that implemented the requirement for descending devices, we worked a lot with law enforcement out in Washington State, because the council, at the time, was sort of concerned about making sure the definition of "descending device" was broad, but also effective, and how that could be enforced.

One of the interesting things that came out of those conversations were, out on the west coast, descending device usage is, while required, really managed by fishermen in the industry. There is a huge social norm around using descending devices, and if boats, like charter boats, for example, are caught not descending fish out there, they will be sort of, you know, talked about on social media, in a not positive light, I will say, and so there is a lot of social pressure surrounding devices that I think would be interesting discussion for this session, but, again, I really want to talk about social norms and how they might affect descending devices, and then we'll have participants meet in assigned breakout groups to discuss sort of research applications, gaps in future needs. We will intend on creating the breakout groups in advance, to try to make sure all of the breakout groups have both a mix of expertise and geographic knowledge.

Then report-out in time for discussion, and we'll move on to the afternoon session, and this is where we'll sort of switch gears and talk more about current descending device data collection efforts, in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions, since work over there is possibly relevant over here, and we'll probably have someone talk about SAFMC Release, the council's citizen science program.

If you don't know a lot about that, don't worry, and Julia Byrd and Meg Withers will be presenting about it later, tomorrow, I believe, and then, also, maybe having someone present on that southeast Florida and South Carolina releases practices survey, and maybe someone on the Gulf of Mexico recreational survey report, and so sort of trying to get information on what's already out there and then having the breakout groups, again, sort of discuss applications for that, gaps, and then sort of future research needs related to survey work, and outreach work, on descending devices.

Then, last, but certainly not least, we'll move into day-two, and we'll recap the first day, and then we'll have presentations on incorporating regulatory knowledge and compliance rates into stock assessments, and we'll have someone come and talk about sort of that process works here in the South Atlantic, and we've also talked about maybe asking someone from the west coast to talk about descending device usage was incorporated into stock assessments for rockfish.

Again, breakout groups, report-out, and then a conclusion, and so this is a pretty rough structure, and this isn't something we've presented to the council yet. This idea was included in sort of the best fishing practices outreach expansion that they approved a year or two ago now, but we will be taking this to them at the June meeting, to sort of talk about this is how we intend to implement what was in that appendix.

I've got a list of questions up here for the panel, and sort of one last thing that I do want to note is that I've been planning this, along with Ashley Oliver, who is our best fishing practices outreach specialist, and then Judd Curtis, who is a quantitative fishery scientist, and the SSC lead, that many of you know very well.

DR. CROSSON: Are tackle shop owners, or employees, part of this, because the opportunity to sell more gear to old guys, who come in and buy hooks, and bait, regularly, is something that -- I mean, they're always -- They're so trusted, a lot of times, by recreational anglers, in terms of guidance, and, like I said, they have an interest in selling more gear, and so, if they're able to demonstrate -- If somebody is established in the area, and they're able to demonstrate how the gear works, how you kind of incorporate it into your fishing when you're out there, and, if you have

several guys on a boat, and one guy, you know, needs to be minding that, and that would probably be of value, both for the participants and also for the person running the shop.

MS. WIEGAND: We haven't talked about tackle shop owners being a part of this workshop specifically, and I will say they are a huge part of our outreach initiatives. Like I mentioned during the stakeholder engagement meeting discussion, our outreach staff goes up -- We have a lengthy list of tackle shops that have been compiled by all of the states, and they sort of cold-call, for lack of a better phrase, those tackle shops, to go in and talk about descending devices. We also often partner with tackle shops to do seminars, where we'll talk about descending devices, and citizen science as well, and so it is a key part of our outreach efforts.

DR. CROSSON: Jennifer.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I don't know where this fits in this discussion, but I just keep hearing, over and over, that they're discarding, and the devices are commonly used, but sharks are eating them on their way down, and so does that fit into this workshop, or discussion, anywhere? I don't know how many are surviving that descend.

MS. WIEGAND: So staff, that sort of goes out and does this outreach, has very much heard the same thing. We have talked to charter captains who have sort of made adjustments to their descending device rig to address that, and I also believe that Marcus Drymon has done some research that showed that it's actually often fish are not being eaten by sharks on the descent, with descending devices, and it's much more common on the ascent, when the fish is biting.

DR. CROSSON: More questions?

MS. WIEGAND: If no one has questions, I'm happy to sort of dig into some of the discussion questions we have, the first being, you know, sort of those goals and objectives that we have, and I'm happy to scroll back up to them. Are they appropriate for sort of the ultimate goal, and topic, that we're trying to discuss here?

DR. CRANDALL: So just making sure I'm wrapping it all in my head, and it's like a state-of-the-science, state-of-the-knowledge, kind of workshop, where it's like let's all say what do we know, where are we now, and what do we need to find out next, and what should the priorities be? Those seem like fitting goals for that then.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I think your idea of bringing in people from the west coast fisheries is excellent as well. They've been down this road.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Kind of related to that, I think a lot of the reason why the rockfish fishery was so successful is because it's not just sort of a carrot approach to the social norms, and there's a stick with it as well, and they knew that, if they didn't do this, they were not going to have a fishery altogether, and that's what helped provide some of the social norm pressure to get people to participate in this, and so the idea is that, if you don't participate, you are hurting our ability to fish, and I don't know that that connection exists with descending devices in the Southeast.

I'm not sure, because I --At least when I was more involved with some of this, I wasn't seeing necessarily that connection, and it was a feel-good sort of thing, but, prior to working in fisheries,

I worked in public health, and a lot of the stuff that we worked on was things like -- Whether it's cigarette smoking, or seatbelt usage, and there's always a stick side of it too, to help encourage the social norm development, and I think that would be something that the folks on the west coast could really elaborate on, if that was truly a component that they felt helped them to get where they got with descending devices.

That's then something that -- I know it's a requirement in the South Atlantic, but seriously, and how many citations have been written for not using a descending device in the South Atlantic? I bet I could probably count on one hand, and I don't know, and I'm just guessing, and you just don't hear about that very often, and so there's not much of a stick, and so maybe the shakers, and the movers, in the fishery, whether it's charter boat folks or social media people, influencers, say, yes, this is a nice thing, but they don't push it as hard, maybe, as it happened on the west coast, and that might be a topic you might want to see, is what is the relationship between the carrot and the stick on the west coast, and did that have an influence.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I guess I'm just wondering, and this isn't what you're looking for, but how much culture played into the success on the west coast too, and, I mean, as a former west-coaster, I think there's just more widespread environmental ethics, I guess, and whether that played into it. I mean, I know like they're very militant about recycling, and like -- I don't know if that's just, you know, part of what may have attributed to it.

DR. HUNT: One of the most dominant theories that we study, as human dimensions people, is the theory of planned behavior, which looks at the relationship between attitudes, social norms, your perceived control over performing of behavior, and whether you do it, and so I do not think that just studying social norms is going to answer your question. I think you need to look at that in concert with their attitudes and perceived control, and the perceived control, in this instance, is do they think they have everything they need to use these devices, the knowledge and the know-how to use it.

DR. CROSSON: Chelsey.

DR. CRANDALL: So I did that, in Florida, for my dissertation. I get really excited when we talk about this. I was like, when do I get to bring this up, and so thank you for the setup, because you're totally right, and like it's part of it, and it did come out as informed -- Other things play a role too, and that was Florida-specific, and it wasn't, you know, for these other states as well, which may have some variation, but it's a really good point, and thank you for the setup.

DR. CROSSON: Do you want to -- Should we go through these? Would that help you out?

MS. WIEGAND: So you guys have already started answering some of them, the big ones, just sort of the topics that we've listed to cover -- You know, to accurately get at the goals and objectives, and so we've already started discussing that a little bit, but are there any other thoughts on topics that are maybe sort of missing from here that are really key for the group to discuss, in order to meet those goals and objectives?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Just to make it clear, to follow-up on one of the things I think it was Jen that was talking about, that started it, is to make sure that you have somebody from the west coast, but maybe sure that you have somebody from the west coast who doesn't come and just talk about

their program, but this is -- These are what made the program work, and I would narrow it down to whoever you can get, and I think that should be a real high priority, is finding people who have done something in fisheries, through fisheries management, who have gotten descending devices to work, and be adopted, and get those people to come and talk about why they think it worked, because there may be something there that will certainly work in the South Atlantic.

MR. STEMLE: I was just going to say that another possible discussion question that you might want to ask the public is what are some of the best fishing practices in the past that have been implemented that they think have been seen the most success with, things like circle hooks, to try to gauge that, to see, you know, what does the public -- What is the public's measure of success with best fishing practices, and I think that would just be good information to have on hand, and something that kind of --

What ties this back to another point is I think one of the problems with things like this, like the west coast versus the Southeast mentality, is I don't know what the status of the west coast fisheries are, and why they needed to start using more descending devices or -- You know, I understand why they need to use a descending device, but like what brought about the -- My point is, for something like with red snapper, you want -- It's mandated that you want people to use it, and then, if you talk to some of our charter fishermen out there, and they go out, and, I mean, why do I need to use a descending device, when all we're catching is red snapper, and they can't get away from them.

How concerned can you really expect these guys to be, to send these fish back down to the bottom right, when there's a disconnect between what they see and what the science says, and so I think that's a big issue, and so I don't know how to work this into this specific topic, but I think that area, that subject, of the disconnect between what they might see on the water, versus what they're seeing in management practices, and what they're being asked to do in best fishing practices, I think there's a need to find out what the gap is between there, because something like descending devices -- You can understand the science all day long behind it, but there is -- If you look at some of our fishermen around here, I can see why they say there's no incentive to really keep doing this, because they think that red snapper is not in the sorry state that our scientific panel thinks it's in, and so that's just my thought.

You know, like was the west coast fishery like in a dire state, and did they really know that, you know, they needed to start using descending devices to really save this fishery, and then, once they started using those devices, was there a noticeable uptick in catch rates, or something like that, and that would be good to know, and not just, you know, did they mandate the device, but, you know, fishermen were still seeing the same number of fish before and after the descending devices, and so something like that.

DR. CRANDALL: Sorry if I'm not seeing it in here, but thinking about is there going to be space for synthesizing across all of these things, and having all those folks that are there say looking at all the research needs that have been identified, and what would be the biggest bang for the buck, and what would be a priority in their view, and like what should -- Where should things focus, to be able to pull all that together.

MS. WIEGAND: So we haven't, sort of in like the schedule we have now, allocated time, necessarily for that, but I do think that's something worthwhile to add at the end, to sort of talk

about all three of the breakout groups and where, you know, priorities should lie, given that only so many people can do so much research at a given time.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: You have a question about how to make the breakout groups successful, and, again, I would really recommend a deliberate put all of the outreach people together in a breakout group, to have these discussions, and then divide all of them and make sure every group has, you know, one representative of each of those different segments, to make sure that there is communication happening within, but then also across.

MS. WIEGAND: Speaking of breakout groups, I know you all have been asked to participate in breakout groups, and you have been asked to report-out at breakout groups, well over half-a-dozen times, and so, based on your experiences, do you have any thoughts on, you know, this activity, or this structure, made the breakout groups really effective, or this way of reporting out, in my experience, was really engaging for us to consider?

DR. HUNT: No offense, but I hate those things. I've been asked to -- You leave them like stakeholders do, like what was that all about, and you never kind of see the summary of it, and, yes, some are effective, and, yes, they flesh-out ideas, but, in the big scope of things, you walk away, from a lot of those, going that's an hour of my life that I'll never get back. That's my honest opinion.

MS. WIEGAND: No, and I appreciate that, and so then I guess I would follow that up with, knowing that we want to be able to have a lot of this be discussion-based, and no one can sit through a day-and-a-half straight of presentations, what would your recommendation be? Would it be to sort of lower the number of attendees, so that we could just have sort of broad discussion among a group, instead of breakout groups, and so I would be curious what the more effective alternative might be.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I want to take the flip side. I think task-focused breakout groups, where you give them a job, something they have to walk out of there with, a product-focused breakout group, and, to me, those are more satisfying, because you put all of your heads together, and you address an issue, and then you leave with this is our wish list of future research needs, or this is our scenario of what happens if we do X, Y, Z, but I agree that, without that, it just turns into everyone just chatting.

DR. CHEUVRONT: One of the things that I thought maybe -- I don't remember seeing it on your agenda there, and you have sort of breakout groups and then report-out, but I think it's probably a good idea to consider having something like a larger plenary session at the end, since you've got experts all there together, and try to see if you can get people to agree on the key points, and what are the takeaways from everything that you have done, because you're still going to have people, in all these different groups, who are not going to necessarily agree with each other, but maybe, by consensus, you could come up with the key takeaways that the participants can all, or at least mostly, with the key takeaways. Then you've got some solid weight behind what your recommendations are.

DR. CROSSON: I mean, my point, I think, was redundant to what Jennifer and Brian said, and so go ahead.

DR. CRANDALL: I was going to say, for the -- If there are small groups, and they have report-outs, having some sort of wrap at the end of each of those, at a minimum, something that says like, hey, did anyone notice any common things popping up, and did anything that another group said stand out to you, and I think those things help too, because, otherwise, it can just feel like, okay, we just heard a lot of people read what they wrote on their flipcharts, and then we had a break. It's all the same theme, and like having little wrap-ups, and big wrap-ups, and things that help people see what's coming from it.

DR. CROSSON: More questions, Christina?

MS. WIEGAND: I think the next one -- Like I said, staff has sort of put together a strawman list of people that we think would have valuable input to provide, and I just didn't want to put their names on a screen before we reached out to them personally, but, if you guys have any suggestions, and if you're thinking like I know someone who conducts research in this area, that would be such a valuable voice for this process, please feel free to shout it out. If you've got someone now, raise your hands, but, if not, feel free to email myself, and Ashley and Judd are also working on this with me, and feel free to email us with suggestions.

DR. CROSSON: Okay. If there's nothing else, we'll finish that item up. At 4:00, is this what we've -- You've been in contact with him, and we're definitely going to go at 4:00 for the equity report, the NAS report.

MS. WIEGAND: He hasn't logged on yet, but, yes. In all of my conversations, right prior to this meeting, the intent was to sort of begin that at 4:00.

DR. CROSSON: All right. That's fine. Okay. I'm loath, obviously, to begin anything large between now and then, but I wouldn't mind actually having -- One of the last items on the agenda is this question about renaming the Socio-Economic Panel, which I think is a relatively short item, and, if we get into a really heated debate about this, then we can continue that debate tomorrow, after everybody has had time to think about it, but let's look at least the background for the social and economic name.

RENAME THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL? NEW GUIDANCE TO KEEP "SOCIAL" AND "ECONOMIC" TOPICS SEPARATE RATHER THAN REFER TO THEM AS SOCIO-ECONOMIC

DR. CHEUVRONT: Let's not go with CESS, please. I don't want a cesspool, Committee of Economic and Social Sciences.

DR. CROSSON: Under no circumstances will we name ourselves after ASMFC's committee.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Thank you. I appreciate that.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so I'll kick-off the discussion here, and so we're down to Agenda Item Number 9, and this is Attachment 9a in your briefing book, if you want to follow along on your own, but, really, this is a topic that has come up, and, you know, the question that's eventually going to be posed to this panel is do you want to stay with your current name, as the Socio-

economic Panel, or should this be changed, and so one of the, I guess, main recent events that brought this to light was the decision at the United States Court of Appeals, the 5th Circuit. They essentially struck down the rule that implements the federal electronic for-hire logbook in the Gulf of Mexico, and the vessel monitoring requirement in the Gulf of Mexico.

You know, that's a topic in and of itself, but, within that court decision, the court was very critical on the use of "socio-economic", and, really, when you get down to it, it was sort of the nebulous meaning of this, and so it's a broad term, and it can mean several different things, rather than we typically -- You know, at this table, we typically talk about very social-specific, you know, non-economic social science, human-dimensions-specific topics, and then some very specific economic topics, and not necessarily a blend of the two, and so, you know, there's a wide range there.

Then, also, there is the -- There is the notion that the term "socio-economic" is sort of tied with other connotations, and so thinking of societal status, and often it's tied with demographics, and so, basically, the non-specific nature of this term was something that was identified in the court summary, and they really felt that the final rule didn't provide fair notice, essentially, to the regulated public, in how it was described, where "socio-economic" means social and economic, whereas the questions tended to be -- That were being asked on the logbook, they were very specific economic questions.

So, that's all to say, you know, given the somewhat non-specific nature of "socio-economic", and, also, I will say the staff leads for the Socio-economic Panel, we tend to say social and economic, or social or economic, and we tend to avoid the term, there again just because, you know, we're typically referring to a specific item, whether it be a social topic or an economic topic. So, you know, that's sort of a little bit of a brief background on this agenda item, and kind of what brought it to light, given the recent court decision and the critique that the court provided of the term.

So, you know, a pretty simple discussion question here. Given the recent scrutiny of the term "socio-economic", does the SEP feel that potentially renaming, or changing the name of the panel, would be appropriate? You know, if we wanted to -- Obviously, an easy fix, if we did want to change it, would be the Social and Economic Panel, and we could keep the SEP, which is -- The SEP name, which has been used over and over again throughout the years, and so there would be some continuity there, but, you know, do you feel it's appropriate to revise the name? If so, you know, are there any suggested changes for what the new name of the panel should be?

DR. CRANDALL: Yes. That was it, and I just agree. I totally agree, and it seems totally reasonable to rename it, going with social and economic, so that the acronym is the same, and that makes a lot of sense to me.

DR. HUNT: I agree, and I think Bob wrote -- Shep Grimes is in the back of the room, and I thought he wrote an article in *Fisheries* about choosing our words more carefully, a few years ago, and I thought that was included in that journal article, and I will try and look it up, but this was one of the things, and "socio-economic" is an economic term for sociology concerns. Socio-economic variables are those demographic questions that have a mixture of education, income level, at the end of questionnaires, but things like we have been talking about today, social norms, theory of planned behaviors, that is sheerly from the sociological realm, and it has really no economic in it,

and there is a lot of economic research that has absolutely no social, and so, you know, if we have to make a motion, I would make a motion to change it to Social and Economic Panel.

DR. CROSSON: Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I'm not quite ready to make that motion, because my concern is about the term "social" here, because look at what the court case did. We all understood what we meant by "socioeconomic", and clearly they didn't. They may have a completely different definition of what they think of as social, versus what we think about social in this context, and we would be back to square-one here, just by "social", and I thought, before we go to that point, do we want to have a little bit of discussion about that, and am I making a mountain out of a molehill, or is it something worth following up on and having a discussion first, before we go on?

DR. CROSSON: I will let Adam speak after me, but my only comment on this is that the distinction, to me, is not so much the subject matter, although there is some difference, but there are areas that both of them will overlap, and it tends to be a methodological difference, for sociology for example, versus economics, and so that does usually shape also the type of questions that would be put onto a questionnaire from one discipline versus another, and so, in that sense, I think it's -- I would be in favor of separating them out. Adam.

MR. STEMLE: I was just going to agree with Dr. Hunt. His definitions -- You know, those are perfect, and you could find them almost anywhere, and so I don't think the court had as much of a confusion about the difference between social and economic questions. I think their biggest issue was the fact that we're smooshing them together in one word, and then only providing the economics of it, and so they made a huge point about that in their -- So I think that was the bigger problem, and so I don't think keeping "social" will -- I want to say it won't cause us any problems in the legal world down the road, but I don't think this specific court case -- I don't think it was with the definition of social-based, and it was mostly just the fact that we were smooshing them, and then we only presented one side, which --

MR. GRIMES: Well, I don't know that I would model anything off of that case in particular, right, and, I mean, that's a very hostile court, and it's a hostile opinion towards everything the agency is trying to do, and it shows in the way that's written. I mean, in saying no -- The way this issue was teed-up is it's what is called a logical outgrowth argument. In order for our final rule to make changes from the proposed rule, without re-noticing the public, it has to be a logical outgrowth of what we proposed.

When we proposed, we said we're gathering socio-economic information, and the court dinged us and said, no, you're gathering economic information. I have never seen anything that we've done -- I've been litigating for the agency for about twenty-three years now, and I've never seen us get that kind of review. I mean, it's just shocking, in some ways, but, you know, to say to the expert agency that, no, you're gathering economic information, and you said you were gathering socio-economic information, and, ultimately, I think it's a record issue, right, and what we should have done, in that proposed rule, or in the notice, is say we're collecting these specific things, right, and I'm going to ask you your income, and I'm going to name specific things, and include the array, and then these other kinds of things. Then we would have it in the record, and it would be before the court, and they would have considered it, and we probably would not be in the same situation.

DR. HUNT: (Dr. Hunt's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. GRIMES: I think what you called it -- I mean, the question was what notice did we provide to the public that this is what was going to be included in the text of the regulation, right, and "socio-economic" wasn't enough, because you didn't say income, and I'm going to ask, you know, charter operators trip costs, I mean, all the kinds of things we ask on surveys, right, and so I think, ultimately, it's more of a record case, but it does make some sense, to me, when splitting it up. I will be honest, and Kevin mentioned our former professor, and, when I read this case, I thought, oh, Bob is spinning in his grave, and this is his thing, or it was his thing, and so --

DR. HUNT: Your opinion is, if we were already called the Social and Economic Panel, this decision would have still -- Their feedback would have been exactly the same, regardless of our name.

MR. GRIMES: Yes, I think that's correct. The name of the -- Well, for one, this is a Gulf of Mexico case, and so it didn't have anything to do with the South Atlantic, or the name of this panel, and I think this is just reacting to this case, and the very detailed sort of liturgical textual analysis that we get out of the 5th Circuit.

DR. CROSSON: We have a distinguished SSC member in the room. Dr. Fred Serchuk, who also -- You ran the group up at Woods Hole at one point, right, and you were --

DR. SERCHUK: There is always going to be disputes over language, but my feeling is there are scientists that work with sociology, and there are scientists that work with economics, and it seems, to me, and I know this sounds far-fetched, but people often misconstrue things, and the social panel can be a panel that plans parties, and they can plan social events, and why not just call it the Sociology and Economics Panel? That gets into both disciplines.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Because there is anthropologists.

DR. SERCHUK: I see. I stepped on somebody's discipline. Forgive me.

DR. CROSSON: I was actually laughing about this, because the social science group in Miami is mostly economists, and so econ is a social science. Do we have -- I mean, to me it just -- It is not the Sociology and Economic Panel, and I'm pretty sure it's not that, because, in my experience, people that work in fisheries, that are non-economists, social scientists, can either be sociologists or anthropologists, but I'm sure -- Or political science, right. I don't know. I mean, I'm fine with Social and Economic Panel, but I don't know if anybody else wants to weigh-in on this. We're not supposed to vote, and I think we're supposed to operate on consensus, and Brian has very strong feelings on this.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I think it's cool if we just go with Social and Economic Panel. I think that's okay. I think what is the risk of doing that? Somebody gets pissed off later on, and we have to revisit this years down the road, but, right now, who cares? I just wanted to point out that there could be -- We could plan parties, and so there you go.

DR. CROSSON: Well, yes, and the social and economic scientists on the SSC have long been renowned as the ones that tend to organize the group dinners and everything else, and so I don't

think that's incorrect, but -- All right. Well, then I'm going to go with I think we're the Social and Economic Panel, unless Kevin has a strong --

DR. HUNT: I was going to go back, and, technically, if we just said we were the Social Science Panel, we would encompass the entire rubric under social sciences, but I don't think economists would agree with that term.

SEP MEMBER: I'm fine with it.

DR. CROSSON: You're fine with what?

SEP MEMBER: Social Science Panel.

DR. CROSSON: Do the other economists on this group accept that, because, as Kevin pointed out, there's certainly a history of economists avoiding that sometimes, and get irate about it.

MR. STEMLE: No, and we belong in STEM. I don't have a strong preference either way. I would be fine with either. The only nice thing about saying "social and economic" is we don't have to change the acronym, and it's still SEP and SEP everywhere.

DR. CROSSON: All right. Andrew Ropicki also would like to contribute to this.

DR. ROPICKI: Yes, and I'm good with social science as well. I mean, it would be nice not to have to change the acronym, but either one works for me.

DR. CHEUVRONT: So we would have the SSP of the SSC, if you go with the Social Science Panel, and you get the SSP of the SSC.

DR. CRANDALL: That could be confusing.

MR. STEMLE: Science and Statistical Panel.

DR. CROSSON: That's actually a really valid point, given the acronym messes that we tend to get in. I would stick with SEP. I would stay Social and Economic just for that, but I think it's -- The points are very well made, and I agree that econ is definitely a social science. John Whitehead, please.

DR. WHITEHEAD: I will tell a story related to that later on tonight.

DR. CROSSON: I think we're sticking -- Right now, it sounds like we're sticking with Social and Economic Panel, just for sanity's sake, and, if we decide to revisit it next April, then we'll do that then. All right. Are we ready to move on to the agenda item for the NAS report? Are we prepared for that?

MS. WIEGAND: We are prepared for that. Dr. Steven Scyphers is online, and I've got you unmuted, Steven, if you want to go ahead and do a quick sound check, while I get your presentation pulled up. Steven, it looks like you're unmuted, but we can't hear you. One of my first suggestions

is to always just sort of toggle between your different audio settings, to see if that might be the issue. Now we've got you.

DR. SCYPHERS: That was it. Thank you. Thanks for the invitation to share some of this, and I was just saying that I also noted that Dr. Tom Miller just signed-on, and he was the chair of this report, and so I believe he's going to be able to give the presentation today, and thank you all for accommodating with the time, too.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REPORT ON ADDRESSING EQUITY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BENEFITS

DR. MILLER: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk with you today about this National Academies report that was released a little over a month ago now. I have a few slides to show you that I think emphasize the principal findings from the consensus study, and I'm certainly happy to address any questions that you may have based on the study itself.

This was a National Academies consensus study that was sponsored by the National Marine Fisheries Service. They came to the National Academies to ask us to undertake this study, and the National Marine Fisheries Service deserves, I think, considerable credit for choosing to come to the academies to ask for input in this area, and the statement of task that was agreed to is shown here, with some of the key words highlighted, and this was what we were sort of contracted to provide back to National Marine Fisheries Service.

They wanted to know what information was required to adequately assess where, and to whom, the primary benefits of commercial and for-hire fisheries accrue, and so one of our first questions really was what did they mean by "primary benefits", and we were guided by their response that, in asking us to conduct this study, National Marine Fisheries Service was really interested in those benefits that would accrue directly from the issuance of a permit and the allocation of a quota, and so it was a very immediate set of benefits. It was what the committee came to term a first in sequence, first in priority, rather than necessarily a first in importance question.

The second point the committee struggled with was that this was very much a distributional question, and what's the distributional equity related to the issuance of permits and the allocation of quota, and we were asked to determine what information currently exists that would allow the agency to undertake such an assessment, and we were asked to identify the obstacles in collecting additional data, such as might be required, and we would identify appropriate methodologies that the agency could use in meeting its task.

Importantly to note, we were not asked to undertake a specific analysis of the distribution of benefits, and we were asked to comment on what information would be required and what methods might be used for such an analysis at a later stage.

The committee, as always on a National Academies study, was carefully selected to include people from across the nation, from the different regions, with very different expertise and experience. We had one or two people, such as myself, who were fisheries scientists, and we had fisheries economists, and we had anthropologists and social scientists, and they all came together to address

the terms of reference, and we were ably supported by an outstanding group of staff from the National Academies.

The first question that we really encountered was that we thought the statement of task was insufficient to really address the equity question, and so the statement of task focused on the distribution, which is the lower-left triangle in that green box in the center of the slide, and it really didn't include ideas of procedural equity, and that is the processes that arise, or that give rise to decisions, perceived as being equitable, and it didn't consider recognition equity, and that is who is in the room when decisions are made, nor did it fully address what is being termed as "contextual equity", which acknowledges that we got to where we are today through a very specific sequence of events, which may or may not have excluded certain people from fisheries, or certain people from decision-making, and it may or may not have been driven by particular considerations, or particular goals for fisheries management, and so we're not operating on a completely blank canvas. There is already structure to the fisheries, which in some ways affects the potential of receiving an equitable consideration.

From a personal point of view, I probably learned more than the other committee members with the information on this slide. I imagined, before this study, that there was a universally-accepted definition of what an equitable distribution would look like, that someone could define it, and everyone would agree that that is what constitutes an equitable distribution, and it became very clear, as the committee heard from experts and entertained discussion in amongst ourselves, that the criteria for recognizing equity are themselves challenging to establish. Does it mean equal distribution? Does it mean an egalitarian distribution?

Is it by defined current needs, by defined future needs, and so there are a range of criteria that the committee defined within the chapter that all are potentially viable ways of defining what an equitable system might look like, and so there needs to be consideration of those criteria, and there also needs to be consideration of who is subject to those criteria. Is it individuals? Is it groups? Is it communities? Do we consider future generations? Do we consider non-human organisms and ecosystems?

Some of you may have heard that there is an iceberg running, or trying to run, for the presidency of Iceland, suggesting that there is an increasing recognition of non-human parts of our ecosystem that deserve consideration, and so the first effort that the consensus committee undertook was to place our statement of task within this broader context of what is equity, and then, to meet our statement of task, we then drilled down to the distributional question.

Our first approach then was to take this very narrow focus just on the distribution and just on the focused lens that National Marine Fisheries Service envisioned when they gave us the task of looking directly at the benefits that accrue from the issuance of permits and the assignment of quota. In a second approach, we then took a much broader view and took that more holistic version of equity that would include different subjects, the broader issues of recognition and procedural and alternative criteria which could be used to define equity, and we presented both approaches.

We are going to show you some select recommendations from the different chapters in our report, and so Recommendation 2.1 is, for example, the first recommendation from the second chapter. The recommendations are not presented in any order of importance. They are numbered in the sequence in which they were developed, and so please don't take Recommendation 3.1 as more

important than 3.2, for example, but here are some of the select recommendations that we thought were important.

The first one is that the committee feel, unanimously, that National Marine Fisheries Service does need to develop and implement a contextual place-based and participatory approach for identifying, and integrating, this broader, multidimensional definition of “equity” into its decision-making process.

In that approach where we took the more focused lens of looking just at distribution, we recommended that National Marine Fisheries Service should expand its current opportunity, in its work on equity, by doing more with the data that it has, by generating data dashboards and data summaries that more express different aspects of the distribution of permits and quotas.

The idea of this is that we value what we measure, and, if we are not showcasing what we measure, there is a tendency not to value it, and we felt, the committee felt, that progress on this more comprehensive definition of “equity” is not needed to make progress using the data that is already in-hand. We felt, very strongly, that the National Marine Fisheries Service should develop guidance documents that inform, and establish, the principles that lead to the definition of “equity”, and we viewed these documents as comparable to the technical guidance that support each of the ten National Standards.

There is technical guidance to National Standard 1 that talks about how overfishing shall be defined, the principles under which overfishing shall be defined, but the operational definitions are then left to the individual councils, and we thought, in the same way, that these guidance documents should establish overarching principles that could lead to definitions of “equity”, but the actual definitions would be at the individual councils.

Recommendation 3.3 is a clear recognition, by the consensus committee, that the National Marine Fisheries Service needs to invest in developing social science capacity and leadership. We did not necessarily specify the positions, and we thought that that could arise from a needs assessment, but we did highlight the importance of senior-level leadership, as a senior scientist for social sciences, in guiding the development of that needs analysis.

We also recognize, in Recommendation 3.4. that much of the current work on measuring, and assessing, equity is done in a research framework, and there are some good reasons for that, but that this work must transition to an operational system of data collection and assessment in exactly the same way that there are operational stock assessments, and research stock assessments, but the operational assessments are supported by standardized regular data collection, standardized regular analysis by staff who are empowered to do that work, and we think the same sort of transition has to occur in the social science in the agency.

In Recommendation 4.1, and this sort of follows on from that, that the agency should commit to the regular collection, and analysis, of those data, and that those data should be collected at regular intervals and be disseminated publicly, to the extent that it can be.

The consensus committee supported the continuing development of community-level indicators, as shown in Recommendation 4.2, and Recommendation 5.1 highlights, I think, the strong belief by the consensus committee that it is important for the National Marine Fisheries Service to move

beyond its initial targeted focus on distributional outcomes, to adopt this multidimensional assessment of equity, and the consensus committee concluded that, if that is to occur, then qualitative data, qualitative analytical methods, and mixed methods, are going to be important for assessing procedural recognition and contextual equity and that their value has to be elevated in fishery management decisions.

This is the last slide, and, if you have questions over the report, and you want to know more about it, the report is available for download on the National Academy website, and the link is there on the slide for you. I am happy to address questions now, and I'm also happy to address questions after the fact, if they occur you later on, and my contact information is there on the screen, and one of our very capable National Academy staff, Darryl Acker-Carter, is also available, if there are particular questions that you have related to the overall study, its context, and perhaps future status, and so, with that, I'm happy to answer any questions that people might have, and I thank you for your time and attention.

DR. CROSSON: Questions for Dr. Miller? I will just -- As an observation, as a federal economist, the OMB has put out new revisions to Circular A4, which guides us on doing our cost-benefit analysis, and it told us to start looking at equity in the distribution of benefits, when we do a CBA, but they didn't tell us how to do that, and that's a dilemma I think that all of the different federal agencies that do CBA are encountering right now, and so I will be curious to see what comes out of that.

DR. MILLER: We were aware of that change, and we were also aware that there I think is a reluctance, on behalf of some in National Marine Fisheries Service, to recognize, or to make a forceful case, for the mandate that the agency already has to collect social and economic data. We encountered, in several cases, sort of issues where data collection systems were hampered by concerns that OMB may reject it, or has rejected it, as not being essential, and I think one of the sort of implicit messages in the consensus committee's report is that the socioeconomic data, not just on quota holders, and permit holders, but on crew, and captains, on processing facilities, and that, if we are going to understand equity of how we manage our natural resources, and our fisheries, then those data are essential, and we have to be collecting it.

DR. CROSSON: Thank you for pointing that out, because the sort of questions that you would need to get at to answer these distributional and equity issues are the exact sort of ones that usually get OMB to flag a questionnaire of like why are you asking this, and why are you asking that, and Brian Chevront has a question here.

DR. CHEUVRONT: One of the things, from my experience in the past, is it's difficult for decision-makers, in fishery management councils, sometimes to decide how and what data to use. It's a lot easier to count fish in dollars than it is to count concepts, and one of the things that happens is that there's always the feeling of, whatever decision say a council makes, that could affect equity, it has to be invented, and so you rely on stock assessments to know how many fish there are, theoretically, but it doesn't -- It only informs the actual fish that were caught over a long period of time.

There are examples of, like in the South Atlantic Council, where new fisheries, or new aspects of the fishery, are emerging in different locations, but so little of the data got included in the stock assessment, because it was just emerging, that that whole sector, or that whole new developing

arm of the fishery is left out, when it comes to things like allocation and equity. That has happened, and -- Because the pie is, you know, relatively small, and so you cut out the small people first. They're the first to go.

The councils always have struggled with, yes, we would like to be able to address these things, but I think they feel constrained by how are we going to defend making those decisions, because they know that people are going to come at them, no matter what decision they make, whether it's the allocation, either by sectors or even who gets a permit, and all that sort of thing, and it's going to be contentious. So, if they can't defend that, in a way that seems to make sense to everybody, then it's difficult for them to include the data.

My experience has been that the council wants to include social science data, to help them deal with issues like equity, but it's hard for them to figure out a way to do that that's defensible, and so it's easier when you're counting fish in dollars than it is when you're counting impact to communities.

DR. MILLER: I don't disagree with anything you said, particularly as someone who does stock assessments on a day-to-day basis, and I love those theoretical fish, but those concerns that you raised really underpinned that final recommendation that I highlighted in the presentation. The weight of qualitative and mixed-method analyses has to be elevated, in fishery management decision-making, if equity is going to enter the process, that it cannot be related just to the number of fish we catch and the dollar value of those fish. Fisheries management is an implicit discussion about sharing the pie, and who gets a slice, and how big those slices are, is a contentious and difficult question, and it cannot be answered just by the number of fish.

The number of fish might tell you how big the pie is, but it offers very little guidance as to how you divide a pie, and we have got to work towards elevating the status of social science information in those decisions. I came into this consensus study knowing very little about the social science related to fisheries, and I have come out as the worst kind of person, a sort of born-again believer, and I have really come to value the insight that these fields provide regarding how decisions are made, and what decisions are made, and I think we are really risking making less good decisions if we don't open up the decision-making process to these concerns.

DR. CROSSON: Dr. Hunt.

DR. HUNT: Tom, it's Kevin Hunt here, and you guys did a great job, I think, and answered some important questions. Did you, by chance, have anybody come talk from a distributed justice perspective?

DR. MILLER: No, we didn't.

DR. HUNT: I am not an expert in the field, but that term is kind of -- It relates to equity, and fairness, and the fair distribution of resources. I don't know if somebody with expertise in that would be able to help you, but it may be worth looking into.

DR. MILLER: Right, and so those questions, Kevin, relate to that criteria issue, right, of what's the criteria that you're going to use to determine whether something is an equitable distribution or not, and we really didn't get into that question to any degree within the consensus committee, and

that's where these questions of environmental justice, and distributed justice, would come in. By what criteria are you going to determine whether decisions are equitable or inequitable, and so there is a lot of scope for work to be done in that area, for sure.

DR. CROSSON: Are there further questions from the committee? Tom, I have a couple of questions, and one is -- I'm coming from an economist's viewpoint, but the two most common discussions that I tend to hear, within the agency, or within fisheries management, regarding the distribution of benefits, and one is the distribution of quota shares, and how even that is, and we usually use something like a Gini coefficient, or an HHI, to look at that, and then the second thing we tend to look at is the distribution of benefits, and we usually put it in terms of fishery rents, and there tends to be a lot of accusations, with ITQ programs in particular, that a lot of those rents, a lot of those benefits, ultimately go to shareholders, and not so much to the fishermen on the water, and, you know, the accusations of armchair fishing. I was curious as to whether those came up in discussion with the committee.

DR. MILLER: Yes, they certainly did. We didn't get as much into methodology as I think National Marine Fisheries Service would have hoped, but we certainly talked about how you might characterize distributions, and discussions about Gini coefficients certainly came up, and we also talked about ownership within the fisheries, and we used the scallop fishery as -- Sorry. The surf clam fishery in the Mid-Atlantic as an indication of how permits are becoming devolved, or disconnected, from the people who are actually on the water doing the fishery.

That wasn't meant by way of criticism, and it wasn't meant by way of saying it shouldn't be that way, but it was really meant as just saying even a question about the distribution of benefits becomes hard to address when the beneficiary is a bank that holds the loan on a fishing vessel, and who is gaining from those benefits? Do you map it down to the shareholders in the bank?

Where did you go with that, and so I think we would conclude that even this very narrow focus that the service wanted us to address at the beginning was a not insubstantial question in itself, in part because of the lack of information that the service has on the characteristics of the permit holders, and it's not allowed to ask certain questions about permit holders, which would be essential if it was going to fully understand the focused definition of the distribution of benefits.

DR. CROSSON: Christina.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I was just wondering, and so your reports talk about the possibility of a second report that will build on this effort, by evaluating equity in select illustrative fisheries, and I wondered if you could talk a little bit more about plans for that second part, and then I was just thinking, and are you imagining that like that effort will feed into the guidance document that NMFS, or whoever, should build?

DR. MILLER: Yes, and I think that's a really perceptive question, as to whether a second study, if it occurs, could be used to try and inform the guidance document of things that would need to be considered and how viable one approach is over another, and I think those discussions -- I will say the initial intention was that there would be this very focused study on the distribution of benefits, and we would identify data gaps and methods, and then largely the same committee would go forward then and study -- Use those methods and fill those data gaps for specific fisheries and come up with an answer of distribution is equitable or inequitable.

I think it's become apparent to National Marine Fisheries Service, and it has certainly become apparent to the committee members, and I think apparent to the academy as well, that exactly what the form of the second study would be, to be most helpful in moving this discussion forward, is a little uncertain at the moment. I know those discussions are going on, and I don't know what their status is, but the idea that the second study could help inform the guidance document I think is very insightful.

DR. CROSSON: Are there further questions, and comments, from the committee? Tom, do you have any other comments that you want to add to it? This is a very interesting discussion, for sure.

DR. MILLER: No, and I really just want to thank the committee for its time in allowing me to talk today, and I know Steven is part of the group, and certainly he was along for all of the discussions, and so I would encourage you all to talk to Steven, for his viewpoints, and, as I said, please feel free to reach out, either to me or Darryl at the academy, if you have any questions, or if you have specific points you want to make, and I think, as I said, there are ongoing discussions about a second study, and ideas, and criticisms, could certainly help inform that, and so I appreciate your time this afternoon, and I hope the rest of your meeting goes well.

DR. CROSSON: Thank you, Tom. Christina, we have some questions, I see, that are on our agenda, that you wanted us to get into, and so should we have a discussion about those, and see if we can answer them? Kevin.

DR. HUNT: Can I add something to the record on this part, because, you know, I'm speaking for the academics, and, you know, the discussion that came up about OMB questioning questionnaires -- That almost behooves the agency to farm that research out, because I do not have those same restrictions, through an IRB in an academic setting, and, rather than just say OMB won't let us ask it, and therefore let the question go unanswered, or only half answered, I think there needs to be some discussions about grant programs that can address this.

DR. CROSSON: Without disagreeing with you, one of the problems with that is you're going to get fragmentation across different regions, because it would be very unlikely that the agency would give a large grant out for studying this at the national level, or that a party could probably do it without our assistance, which also would then invoke OMB again, and it would be a -- Once you get too far into there, you can't avoid it, and so I don't disagree with you, but it's certainly a conundrum that we run into.

Like, if we do try and send things to academic partners, and sort of hint at things, then you get these small-scale projects, and we don't get anything to address this at a holistic level, which, theoretically, the agency could do. We could design a set of questionnaires, or a group of questionnaires, and we do this for economics.

We have discussions all the time about, you know, question banks, and this sort of standardization, and we've had a big discussion with OMB, and, you know, the fifty or so NOAA economists have had a big discussion with OMB, over the past decade, where we've stopped sending so many little piecemeal surveys, and we instead standardize questions, to the degree that we can, so that, you know, questions about crab traps look somewhat similar, and there are going to be some differences between like Alaska or Oregon or the Southeast, but there are at least some basic sets

of questions that we can get approval from OMB, and we can proceed, and so it could theoretically be done, but it's just, you know, whether OMB is willing to give us the credit to do this or not. Adam.

MR. STEMLE: We would also need regular data collections for that, and so, if we farm it out to grant programs, we would have missing time periods, and so that creates a whole problem there.

DR. CROSSON: Are there further questions, or comments? We haven't answered anything yet, but -- Okay. Having dealt with IRBs and OMB, I have no idea, and just it's interesting. All right, and so the discussion questions we have up there -- The first one is -- I'm sorry. John, go ahead, and he's keeping track of this discussion for the notes.

DR. WHITEHEAD: Is this the one that I'm taking notes on?

DR. CROSSON: Yes, this is the one that you're taking notes on. Thank you for your service so far. You can read the questions as well as I can, but the report recommends further developing products that are not geographically constrained or limited to the spatial resolution of census data that may not always align with a holistic definition of equity, and what data sources fit the criterion that are available to aid in understanding community dependence on fisheries, and I'm trying to decipher that question.

MS. WIEGAND: So most of you guys have seen presentations on the type of information that goes into our council amendment process for determining say the communities that are, you know, dependent, or reliant, upon a given fishery, and, of that, it's all what goes into then the social effects analysis, when we're analyzing the effects of a given fishery management action, all of which can encompass different, you know, forms of equity, and so one of the things we wanted to know is sort of, given this recommendation from the committee, are there data sources out there that we have maybe not been considering that might help us supplement what we're already using, a lot of those social indicators that we've presented to you on before, that would help us better assess equity.

DR. CROSSON: So a lot of that is the stuff that has kind of descended from the Colburn and Jepson datasets, or their methodologies?

MS. WIEGAND: Correct.

DR. CROSSON: What say you all?

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that I know that some of these are incredibly challenging questions to answer. You know, there's a reason that we use the social indicators. They are a great compilation of the data that we know is available to begin to look at this type of thing, but I wanted to sort of crowdsource a little bit and see if there's maybe something we haven't considered.

DR. CROSSON: Jennifer.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I honestly think that the lack of it is what the report is pointing to, and we don't have it, and so you're not missing anything. You're doing a very comprehensive search. I was saying to Scott that I sort of wanted to turn these discussion questions back to him,

and, you know, how do we do this now, and these are really excellent, and lofty, and valid goals, but now how do we operationalize these?

DR. CROSSON: Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: There are probably some historical documents, at least in some places, that could help give you an idea of understanding community dependence on fisheries. They may not be exact, but it's like the whole idea that the council is doing with the photographs, and looking at potential abundances of fisheries prior to any kind of data collection, formal, standardized data collection programs, and the issue, of course, there is that's going to be very sketchy, and partial, but I tried to think, and I just remember some of the other guys from North Carolina, and those who worked in the socio-economic job may remember, but there was a historical document that looked at communities in North Carolina, and the fisheries, and it went back to the late 1800s.

They could tell you which were the main communities that were landing everything from dolphins and whales, believe it or not, and sea turtles, that were used commercially at least, but for things like -- You know, you look at fisheries that the state was managing at the time that I was there doing it, looking at things like menhaden and stuff like that, and really how historically important a fishery that was, and, in some places, it was the economic driver in that community, and now it's completely gone.

Well, you've got the history, but what you would have a hard time doing is coming up with other current data sources, but there's something to be said for having something to be able to say about history, and you could even -- Perhaps, if you can find documents, historical documents, whether it's newspapers or something like that document from DMF, you might be able to see how rapidly it has declined, and the extent to which things have declined, and maybe -- I don't know if the Jepson and Coburn datasets, which really are kind of the gold standard of what we have to work with now, and I don't know -- I actually, when I was reading this, sat there and pondered this for a while, and, on my notes, I wrote "IDK", I don't know, but, just as we were talking about, that other idea came to me, and I just didn't know -- But that's a very painstaking job, just like doing FISHstory was.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I just wanted to respond to that, really quickly, and I agree completely. Brian has nailed it, and I think, when I was responding, I was thinking about universal datasets for the region, comprehensive datasets that matched across the whole region, which doesn't exist, but there is a lot of great history, and social science, from the whole coast, if you have, you know, a couple of years. Right? I mean, there's going to be a lot of digging into it, but that's definitely a good way to approach it, and the information is there.

DR. CROSSON: I mean, the only two regions that I'm aware of in the Southeast, where we keep sort of this running census of what's going on with, like I said, the commercial fishing community are North Carolina, with the Division of Marine Fisheries, and, oddly enough, the U.S. Virgin Islands, where we continue to do a census of the commercial fishing down there. All the other states, and territories, in the Southeast, I don't see any of that kind of broad surveying, outside of what we have from, you know, the American Community Survey, or any of these other much broader things that focus on the fishing communities themselves.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I think the NOAA Voices database might include some of this information, the oral histories, but, yes, the challenge is like mining through it and having it for all places.

MR. STEMLE: Christina, would you mind clarifying what you mean in Discussion Question Number 2? I just don't understand what you mean by "other regulatory measures".

MS. WIEGAND: So we talk -- I mean, we talk a lot about how access to a permit is then access to a fishery, and then access to quota is another way, access to a fishery, and that's a lot of what we talk about when we think of it in terms of equity, but are there other regulatory measures that might be important to consider? I'm thinking -- You know, I don't want to put words in the committee's mouth, but I'm thinking broadly about like seasonality, and how stuff like that might affect equity, in term of access to a fishery, or, you know, sort of what we were talking about earlier, the idea of bag limits versus size limits, and what're more, you know, important to a fishery, and how that can change sort of regionally, and how that might affect equity, and are there other things that the council should be considering?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Talking about that, one of the things that occurred, when -- I believe we still have a split season for beeliners, and that happened when I was on the council, and the allowable catch was so low, at the time, it was thought that the entire allowable catch for a year, a fishing season, an entire fishing season, could have been caught in Florida, prior to the fishery ever even starting further north, and so the compromise that we worked out was simply to split that quota and allow the people up north to have a chance to fish it as well, and, if anything was left over from the first season, it would roll over into the second season.

That has worked out well, and there doesn't seem like there's much of a problem with vermilion snapper, not like it was back in the early 2000s, or whatever they were, but, anyway, that sort of thing, but an issue that -- The one that I was kind of referring to also is an issue that came up when I was on the council, and it was with golden tilefish.

There was a small group of fishermen, fishing out of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, commercial fishermen, who had found what turned out to be a motherload of golden tilefish off of Cape Hatteras, and they only had known about it for a year or two when there was a stock assessment that was done, and that stock assessment turned into the current management program that we have now. Well, the bulk of that fishery had always historically occurred off of Florida, and so what ended up happening was all the permits went to fishermen in Florida who were fishing on an overfished stock. Meanwhile, there is an unknown huge amount of golden tilefish, sitting off of North Carolina, that nobody can fish on.

There's a problem there, when you -- When the fish are there, people want the fish, and the market wants the fish, but nobody can fish on them, because the people who have the permits are all down in Florida, and nobody in North Carolina is going to pay the huge amount to somebody down in Florida to get one of their permits to come up to North Carolina to fish on the stock, and, since nobody is fishing on it now, they're not getting included in any future stock assessments, and so nobody even has any idea how many fish there are, and so, you know, it's a circular thing, and now you've got a problem.

You don't know how to accommodate emerging fisheries when allocations, for access or whatever, and how are we going to define "access", as groups, or subgroups, within a fishery, when you don't have any way of including them as part of the fishery, and so I'm not saying anything bad about people in Florida who got these permits, and it was a tough situation all the way around for everybody with that fishery, but, to me, it just seemed kind of unfair that that was an inequitable situation at the time, and, when the quota was so low, that we couldn't figure out a way to get people into a fishery where there seemed to be plenty of fish, and they were much larger fish than what was being caught in Florida as well, and so it just tells you that the stock, at least that subsection of it up there, seemed to be much more robust than what people were hammering on down in Florida.

I don't know, and I always saw that as a problem, and it just never -- We never figured out a way to address that issue, and I think, when I was reading the information about this equity and distribution of fisheries management and benefits here, I thought, yes, we need to -- Social sciences, or something, and we ought to be able to help figure out a way to help fishery managers do this, and do it in a way that is defensible, without hurting other people at the same time, and sometimes you can't do that, because you're really not changing the size of the pie, and sometimes we don't even know how big the pie is.

DR. CROSSON: Kevin.

DR. HUNT: Isn't that the same as the Atlantic bluefin tuna that we found off the coast of Hatteras in 1997? How was that handled different? It wasn't necessarily a permit, and it was a quota kind of thing, but there was no quota for ABT at the time, but it's like every bluefin tuna in the Atlantic was off the coast of Hatteras in the mid-1990s, and how did that evolve?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I think what happened, in that case, is those vessels are much more -- The people who fish on that are much more equipped to travel longer distances and do that, and so the people who could get permits were able to do that. This is one where it's really -- I mean, look at our snapper grouper fisheries, and we're talking, you know, family-based fisheries, largely, and most of the vessels are not necessarily as large. There are a few, but not a whole lot, and, in this case, the guys down in Florida -- They're not going to make that trip, and they're not going to trailer that boat all the way up, because it's such a short season that, as soon as their season is over, they're re-rigging to fish something else, and so they're just moving on to the next best thing.

DR. CROSSON: Just another comment about the data, and the management actions, for particularly the snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic, the use of accountability measures, and they tend to shut seasons down abruptly, without any consistency from year-to-year, as soon as the quota runs low, and it's nearly impossible to use fisheries-dependent data streams in stock assessment. If you can't use them in stock assessment, it's going to also be very difficult to use them in any sort of analysis for the distribution of benefits, because there is just no consistency from year-to-year. Everything is constantly moving, and there's always amendments that seem to be changing things over, or a new -- You know, a change, because of something that's coming down from NOAA, because, again, they ran out of quota, and they ran out of quota, and so they had to shut something down, and so it's very hard to find good data sources that exist in the fisheries-dependent data streams.

Did we answer the second question? I am still -- All right. The third one is -- I don't know, and I'm still a little bit unclear about that question, and Christina -- I mean, if Christina says yes, then I think --

MS. WIEGAND: I will say so I feel like you guys have addressed it, and you've listed a couple of sort of other management measures, or management situations, which the council should be considering, sort of just outside the general idea of base permits and quota.

DR. CROSSON: All right. How about the third question? In what ways can council staff take a participatory approach to identify and integrate equity considerations into this decision-making process? Wow. That's a big question. All right. Any commentary? Do you mean in discussion with the council? What are you asking?

MS. WIEGAND: So I will say, you know, broadly, the way I was thinking about is, you know, a participatory approach to identify and integrate equity concerns. The council process alone is already pretty participatory, but are there other ways we can sort of incorporate that feedback, and I will say that NMFS, through the focus groups that they did related to equity and environmental justice, I thought was a very good start to that, and we're going to be talking about tomorrow, and how the council can sort of incorporate some of the recommendations that came out of that effort into the council process, but just, by and large, you know, we've talked a little bit about the available information, or perhaps lack thereof, for equity, and, selfishly, as someone who does a lot of qualitative work, I think there's a big role for qualitative research here, and that is participatory in nature as well, and so how can we sort of work to gather the type of information that we would need to integrate into some of these equity assessments.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I think that your uses of the word "integrate" really kind of nails it. I think one of the issues -- One of the things that I've been concerned about, as a social scientist, watching all of the EEJ stuff sort of roll out this year, is that it's being treated as a separate bounded topic that has to be dealt with in this way, by these people, at this time, and now we're all going to solve this problem, and we're going to solve the EEJ problem, right, in these workgroups, or whatever it is, and I think the whole point of equity, and environmental justice, is that it needs to be integrated into all of the things that we're asking about and all of the things that we're doing. So you're doing all of these other really amazing workshops, and shouldn't that be a question, or a subtopic, in all of these things, rather than trying to solve it all by itself?

DR. CROSSON: Other comments? Did you do a good job taking notes, John?

DR. WHITEHEAD: (Dr. Whitehead's comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. CROSSON: Good. All right, and so, at this point, we've taken care of Agenda Item Number 2, which was the NAS report, and we've done council actions, Number 3, and we've done council stakeholder engagement sessions, and that's Number 4, and what else did we do?

MS. WIEGAND: Best fishing practices.

DR. CROSSON: We did best fishing practices. That's right. We did, didn't we, and we did the one about the SEP name. So it's 6, 7, and 8, and I think we can accomplish those. What time are we scheduled to come in tomorrow morning? 8:30? I'm asking. Do we have a scheduled time

that we're supposed to start tomorrow? 8:30? Okay. I think we can finish the other three items tomorrow morning, if we start at 8:30, and so I think we're going to finish this up for today. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 15, 2024.)

APRIL 15, 2024

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

The Socio-economic Panel of the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at The Crowne Plaza in North Charleston, South Carolina on April 16, 2024, and was called to order by Dr. Scott Crosson.

DR. CROSSON: Good morning. We're going to resume the SEP meeting. This is the second day of the 2024 SEP meeting, and we're on Agenda Item Number 6, SAFE Reports, and so it appears that Chip is going to be presenting this, and so he's up.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC METRICS USED IN STOCK ASSESSMENTS AND FISHERIES EVALUATIONS (SAFE) REPORTS

DR. COLLIER: I have been trying to put these SAFE reports together for the council, for a couple of years now, and we're getting close, I feel like. Last year, we started working on snapper grouper, and we also developed this one for dolphin as well, dolphin and wahoo, but, starting with snapper grouper, we're starting off with fifty-five species, and so it's a little complex, and you don't get all the nuances that you might need, and so looking at one that is just two species is a lot easier. You can begin to dive in and really get some of the details that might be important, and then you can take that code, and hopefully it translates over well to the snapper grouper, and then start working on fifty-five species.

This is one example that we're working on right now. Next week, the Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Committee is going to be looking at the shrimp draft SAFE report, and trying to get some of their feedback from it, and then we also have a golden crab SAFE report that we're developing as well, and so we're working on a variety of these. We want them to be somewhat consistent across fisheries, to make it a little bit easier for coding, and also for interpretation, and maybe, if a council member likes a certain graph, they can go to that same graph over and over, and look at that, and maybe figure something out.

The way these SAFE reports are starting out, and just a little bit of background, and the SAFE reports are called Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Reports, and they are required, either -- It's a requirement of each of the fishery management plans, and it's supposed to have different components to it. It's supposed to have a stock assessment, and it's supposed to give -- Let me get all the details on it.

It's supposed to give changes in the resource, and we like to include information on the determining the annual catch limits, documenting changes in the resource ecosystem of the fishery, and as well as evaluating the state and federal FMPs, and so it's going to have quite a bit of information in it, and the other thing, with SAFE reports, is they're supposed to be available online. That's pretty progressive for the Magnuson, and so this is an online version, and we do hope to get it into a Shiny app, so it's not my name showing up there, but we'll get there.

The first thing that you'll see is a real summary, and I'm trying to get like an executive summary here, just with some color-coding, so they can visualize how things are going, and this is the actual information for the dolphin wahoo. You will see that this is developed for dolphin, and I didn't have time to start working on wahoo, and that's why -- We just wanted to focus on one species, to get some of the information to you, and so, from there, you can click on dolphin, and then, today, we're going to be really focusing in on some of the economic trends, and so I do have it broken out, so you can get to these different sections pretty easily. It does allow you different levels in the table of contents on the left.

For this, we looked at -- For the recreational sector, we were looking at directed trips. For this, we only have the past five years. Going forward, we might actually extend it quite a bit, looking at the last ten years, and then, for the commercial sector, we were looking at the ex-vessel value, and these values have now -- I believe they have been corrected for inflation. We also included adjusted average price per pound, just trying to think, in the commercial sector, that's also very important, if the price per pound is going up, and that can be a good indication for the fishery. When we're looking at something like the shrimp fishery, we're not seeing that price per pound going up, because of competition.

We also have average revenue per trip, thinking about how many pounds are being brought in per trip, and I think one thing that we do need to add onto this is maybe regulations. I don't think it's going to be impacting this fishery, but other fisheries, where we put in a trip limit, it might be good to see that change in the average revenue per trip.

Then, for the social trends, we've been working on this quite a bit, trying to figure out how to do it. The first one we were looking at is closures, just noting how impactful closures can be, either for the recreational sector or the commercial sector, and this fishery has not closed very much, and it's just had one commercial closure since 2012, and that was 2015.

The other thing that we wanted to include in this is the fishery performance reports that staff do, and really trying to figure out how to evaluate that. Let's say they have two negative comments, and four or five positive comments, and is that a pretty good indication that the fishery is doing well, or how would we evaluate the non-quantitative stuff? I need guidance.

With that, we're not going to go into wahoo, because it doesn't have everything else in it, but another really cool thing for dolphin wahoo, that I do want to plug National Marine Fisheries Service for, is their participatory workshops that they did. We do have some really cool socioeconomic plots that are in there, and these can be very complicated, when you first look at them, but it does provide you all kinds of information on let's say regulations, and the overall impacts of regulations, and you can see where that reaches out into different sections of the fishery. Those are included, and we'll probably keep these in here for the first couple, and then hopefully

we can get an update on some of these participatory workshops and update these graphs. With that, I will turn it over to John and Christina, if they have any comments.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Yes, absolutely, and so, with this topic, we're really looking for, you know, ideas and feedback on what we have here, and then ideas on other potential readily available pieces of information we could add in there, keeping in mind this is something that we're going to be updating every year, or every other year, and so it needs to be sort of a continually-updated data that's available.

Then, you know, just thinking -- Are there particular pieces of information, or is there a way we could show it that would be particularly -- You know, that you would think would be particularly appealing to constituents, or particularly appealing to managers, and, you know, is there a way that we could really highlight for the intended audience of these reports? Those are, you know, kind of an overview of the discussion topics.

I did want to show, you know, from a -- You know, kind of brainstorming on what other information is out there, and I came across some performance measures that I believe the Northeast Fisheries Science Center puts together by FMP, and, you know, again, this is kind of generating ideas, but, you know, if you click on say the bluefish FMP, there is information, and there's economic metrics, and social metrics, available, and a lot of this comes from the logbook, and, you know, that's a great source of information, that's regularly updated, and that's the sort of information that we could use to plug into these SAFE reports, but, if you just have general revenue and prices -- You know, we do have that in the SAFE report.

Information on effort, and revenue per trip, and we have that as well, but there's also a Gini coefficient for the fishery, and, you know, we had a discussion on this a little bit earlier this morning, but, you know, I don't know how helpful that would be in the context of these larger open-access fisheries, like the dolphin fishery, or the wahoo fishery, and I know that's typically often applied, or examined, in the context of ITQ fisheries, or more smaller boutique -- You know, limited-participation type of fisheries, but that may -- You know, that may be another avenue that we could examine and plug into the SAFE reports, but, you know, putting it back to the SEP, again, looking for any feedback on what we've put together so far, and then, also, if there are any other ideas, and, you know, what else could we plug in here of, again, readily-available information that we could update regularly?

MS. WIEGAND: Just to note a couple of things about the social trends section, so you've probably noticed that one of the biggest things missing is some of the social indicators from this, and I will say that's for sort of two separate reasons, one being we want this to be something we can do in-house, and plug-and-chug pretty quickly, and we really rely heavily on the agency for a lot of the social indicator data, but, second, it's actually already a great social indicator database that NMFS maintains, that people can look up that information on.

Then the second thing that we've sort of been discussing, for the social trends, is doing some type of sentiment analysis. If you've ever looked at some of the work the Gulf Council does for their Fishermen Feedback tool, they take all those comments and do a sentiment analysis, and then sort of show word clouds, and they've actually done quite a bit of work to edit the lexicons that are used for sentiment analysis to fit with fisheries, and so a word like "shark", for example, might not have a negative context unless you're talking about fisheries, and so they've done a pretty good

job of editing that, to make it work, and shoutout to Lisa at the Gulf, who sent me her code for that, and so that's one of the things we've considered including, and I will be honest that I haven't gotten around to putting stuff together for Chip to include in this year, but --

DR. CROSSON: Are you still presenting, or are we looking for comments now? Okay. Well, John, I have one question about the Gini, but, if there's other comments people would like to make that could be added to this.

MR. STEMLE: I have a question. Chris Liese's reports on the commercial fishing performance metrics, could these be included here, because it seems like that's a lot of valuable information on performance of commercial fisheries that you could use. It's not regularly collected, but most of his publications, for everything up to 2018, now are published, like actually published as papers now, and so they're citable. You can grab, you know, at least the percentage breakdowns of things like trip net revenue and return on economic assets and things like that.

You can use those estimates and apply them to, you know, as the data comes in, moving forward, and so that's an area that I think you should probably consider maybe adding to the SAFE report, and just -- You can use Chris's reports to build some additional metrics from the landings and revenue data, and then that will give you a little bit more insight into some specific details of the performance of these vessels.

DR. CROSSON: Christina.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I was just wondering about maybe including some of the other things that we usually include in the social environment, like landings by state for commercial and rec, and then, also, the RQ stuff, and then you mentioned social indicators, but like -- I don't know, and I could build off of that, if you wanted to include that in addition, but I do really like, I wanted to say, the summary that you have of the fishery performance reports, and like I think it's helpful, the way that you have it right now in there, at least for giving -- Like giving the information for amendments and things like that.

DR. CROSSON: So is a lot of this designed so that the language is pretty similar, and it's just updating the pages for different species, based off of the information that you guys are linking to it?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, that's the plan right now, is to keep it pretty similar across species and across FMPs. If there are certain ones that come up, like, obviously, the shrimp fishery is very different than the dolphin wahoo fishery, and so we'll focus more on the commercial fishery for the shrimp, and then, for the dolphin wahoo, hopefully try to focus more on the recreational sector.

DR. CROSSON: I agree, but I was also thinking, when you mentioned the price for those, and you mentioned, obviously, the competition that the shrimp have, but the commercial price of mahi probably is heavily reliant also, because the South Americans are the ones that sort of dominate that market, right, and it's an international species, and so it might be helpful to have at least a couple of sentences in there mentioning about market competition, what imports it faces. I mean, that's usually in an FMP, and so that wouldn't actually be too hard to put something in there. Kevin.

DR. HUNT: I know you guys are constrained by survey research issues. From a quantitative perspective, that's kind of troubling, that we have nothing, and I know you were talking about a sentiment analysis, which is a way to quantify your qualitative data, but this kind of begs for something like a measure of satisfaction, and are anglers satisfied with the fishery, because, if we go back to yesterday, looking at the 5th Circuit, to me, I would look at that report, and those judges would say where is the social data, because those are really all economic indicators, and not social indicators.

I don't know if there's satisfaction data that has been collected, that's readily available, and like you guys are looking for readily available, but, you know, to me, this begs for some kind of measure that is collecting consistently across fisheries annually, and I don't know how you do that if you're pigeonholed into not using quantitative measurement instruments, but I think there needs to be a way, because a sentiment analysis -- You're going to have to keep it consistent over time, and that may be difficult, and so that's just --

DR. CROSSON: Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: It's been a long time since we've seen much in the way of SAFE reports, because these weren't being generated, but, if you're trying to think about who the end users are, and what they might want to use these reports for, I noticed that this is -- This report is for the South Atlantic region, and I think there might be some benefit, and I know it increases the length of the report, and that may be a disadvantage more than an advantage, but even to handle some things like landings trends, and things like that, by state. I don't know if there's much call for that, but I would think that people from the different South Atlantic states might find the SAFE reports more valuable if just something like that was put in there.

You know, if you look at landings, and, when you start seeing downward trends, especially with dolphin, and you're probably seeing that mostly coming from Florida, and that's driving the bus, but it could be that North Carolina's are actually going up, and I don't know, but, when we talk about northward migration, are we getting the details of a single species when you talk about northward migration, but, if you did something like even on a state level, if it's an appropriate thing, you could see --

If you're talking about migration, you might actually be able to see where those fish are going, and that might give an indication as to what's happening in the fishery, at least within our own region. I don't know if that's outside the bounds of what a SAFE report should be, and, if it is, that's fine, I understand that, but it might just -- It would be an easy layer of data to add, because I'm sure it's very easy to get all this stuff by state, and it's just figuring out whether it's worth it or not, or it's out of the scope of what a SAFE report should be.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and I've been at least very careful, in the beginning for this, trying not to look at state-level data, and the reason for that is trying to protect confidentiality. Now that I have the code up and running, I can definitely go in there and add that state level, and I have checks in there to remove confidential data, and so I can definitely do that, but, when you first started speaking, I thought you were going to be talking about, you know, what are the landings outside of the region, because that could be very informative too, and so I might consider putting that in there as well, you know, some of these fish -- We manage them in the South Atlantic region, or

along the Atlantic coast, and they might have fisheries that are occurring elsewhere, and so maybe that information will be important to put in there.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, and, to that, just before I retired, I was working with, you know, the WECAFC folks down in the Caribbean and northern South America, and they were talking about the abundance that they were getting of little schoolie fish, and, I mean, just slamming them down in the Caribbean, and, of course, I'm wondering, is that -- How is that affecting our fishery, and that relationship wasn't really clear, and some people would be able to show, because there is the dolphin tagging program.

I'm starting to get in the weeds with dolphin, but the dolphin tagging program was showing some of the migration stuff, and it looked like perhaps there was some impact on that, but, maybe in a specific case, where you're showing like a downward trend, if there's just a little something specific to that species, that might be able to be added, with a little bit of data, that could back up why you think this might be happening, and it could be outside the region, but, you know -- Then, also, if it's worthwhile to add something small, species-specific, to explain what's going on within the region. Just seeing the trends, you're going to look at it and say, oh my, but what is causing this, and I don't know if that's out of bounds for the SAFE report or not.

DR. CROSSON: Andrew Ropicki has a comment.

DR. ROPICKI: Along those lines, and, I mean, I haven't looked at this personally, but I've heard, in talks with others, if you reach out to some of the wholesalers, distributors, associated with the dolphin fishery, it's all determined by the Pacific fishery, and what's going on over there, and like El Nino and La Nina really impacts the availability of dolphin there, which impacts the east coast fishery, and so it might be good to add some talks with some of the wholesalers and distributors.

DR. CROSSON: Christina Package-Ward.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I just wondered if it might be helpful to include permits too, and maybe trends in that by state, and that could be interesting, or like top communities, or whatever might look interesting.

DR. CROSSON: Chelsey.

DR. CRANDALL: You're likely already thinking about this, but I was looking through the sentiment analysis, and that's really cool, and I didn't know about that in the Gulf, but just, you know, ensuring that we approach with caution the generalizability of those, because we know biases associated with when people offer comment, and what motivates people to offer comment, and, when they're happy with things, they're less likely to do things like that, and so I'm not saying we don't use that, because, again, it's really cool, what they're finding, but just, you know, put those caveats around it.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I had a couple of thoughts, and I'm loving these. I spent a lot of time scrolling through these yesterday and this morning, and so, overall, it's just really cool, really useful stuff, and then I had some questions, and some thoughts, and I know you're not including the social impact assessments, but I wonder if you want to link to them, just as an acknowledgement, and a way to remind people that this is important.

I was thinking about the social data, and the FMP data, you're putting in here and hoping that you will keep it cumulative. Each time you have the new AP groups, and you have new information, not replacing the old, but showing what the trend is over time, and you're probably already thinking about that, but just reinforcing that.

I also -- I found, as I was scrolling through this, and I found myself wondering why things are in the order that they're in, and I don't know if there's some really simple reason, like this is the way the reports have to be, in which case stop me now, but, as I'm looking at it, you know, sector, yes, and then we go into economic, and then social, and I'm not saying we -- The whole economic part, I'm going, what's going on, and how could we explain this, and so I didn't know.

This is something for you all to think about, but is it more important to know the what of the economics, before you start to understand the context that are people are experiencing it in, or would it be an entirely different experience if people first heard that this is what people are experiencing, and now we see what the economic impact of these things is, and so I don't know what the right answer is, but it's just something to think about, about how people are building -- As they scroll through this page, how they're building their understanding, and what are you trying to communicate, or what you think doesn't need to be prioritized.

DR. COLLIER: There is no thought process on the order of this, and so it was basically the ease of getting the data, and so that's how it's organized right now.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I love the idea of like linking to the management actions and the social parts, and I was just going to say that, hopefully soon, the new community snapshots are going to be completed, and so that could be something that could be linked in there too that could be valuable.

DR. CROSSON: To Adam's point earlier about Christopher Liese's reports, he's trying to build time series now. I mean, he's trying to put out these annual reports, and he's trying to develop it into sort of a longer data series, and so that's going to be developing, and so, yes, I definitely agree that trying to get those things at least linked would probably be of use, of utility, but they don't tend to very species-specific though, and they tend to be like for the fishery, right, because he's using a limited sample every year. Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Getting to the overall function, and format, of the SAFE reports, I think there is a huge value in trying to keep them very similar across species, so that people who are regular users of them kind of know what to expect. On the other hand, when you see some interesting trends, like in dolphin landings going down, that might be something, if there's room in the report, or any given report, where you can add a section of things that are unique to that species, because you're not going to see landings going down, for example, in every species.

Sometimes landings go down as a result of management measures, and sometimes landings go down because of just stock abundance, and, other times, landings will go down simply because of climate change has affected the availability of the species, and so, if there is any kind of way to give an indication as to why the trends are the way they are, if it's significant, and that might not be the same kind of a thing across species, and, as long as it's flexible enough to include some of that information, I think that will really help, because people are going to read this, and I can

imagine that I am -- I looked at different things, and I happen to know some things about the dolphin fishery, that I think may be explaining what's going on, but I could see people looking at it and wondering why, and what's the next part, and so either though links, or something that will help people to get the extra why that's behind what is happening here, and that would be really helpful.

You may not want to include it in the report, and that's fine, but I really like the idea that others have suggested of at least, if you want to know more, click here, that kind of a thing, and I'm not saying do it in that way, but somehow allow people to get more information, or direct them, even for things like -- I mean, I suspect that the -- For example, that the landings decrease is driven by Florida, where so much of the landings have always occurred, but that may not be the case for everywhere, and so I think it needs some explanation behind it, because people are likely to think, oh my god, the species is crashing, and what's happening, and we don't have dolphin anymore, and, I mean, these are the rabbits of the ocean. They're there, but it's just somebody else is catching them, probably.

DR. CROSSON: Yes, and, I mean, without disagreeing with you, it's going to have to be linked to something else, because doing an analysis to try to figure out why landings are going down, if it's something besides stock abundance, is usually like a major research thing to do. Like, when we did it for wreckfish, trying to explain what happened with the wreckfish fishery, that took us like a lot of work, just to get into that.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, and that may or may not be available to explain it, and that's okay, and it's just a matter of, if there is something available, pointing people to what is available I think is where the help really is, and you can say, flat out, we don't know why this is happening, if there is no data to support it, but, if you do -- I mean, I think there's plenty of things out there that, like in the case of dolphin, that could help explain what's going on.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you for that, and some of it we probably can try to do, but we also have to be very careful, and we want to be like Switzerland. We're not trying to -- If there is a very good paper that describes why it's happening, we can include it, but we're not going to be trying to develop this ourselves. We're trying to give the information that we have available to us, and not doing all that much interpretation, because we can run afoul and get into that, but, based on what you have been talking about with dolphin, you know, one of the things that has been talked about quite a bit, especially in south Florida, are the environmental trends.

John pulled that up for this section, and you can see the sea surface temperature, which is one of the issues that's being talked about causing some changes in this fishery, and so that's why we included the environmental. We don't have this type of information for each species, and so, when there is information that we think is extremely valuable for the species, we will include it.

DR. CROSSON: We're going to do golden crab. First of all, does golden crab have landings now that can be reported? Because the fleet had shrunk below the magic three number for quite a while.

DR. COLLIER: So, in 2022, the data became confidential, and so, yes, going forward from 2022, we have to be careful with it.

DR. CROSSON: Anyway, just remembering, for golden crab, Tracy Yandle and myself and Fred Stoffle published something on the golden crab fishery, and like now it's at least ten years old, but, as part of it, we did a big oral history in there, and so like we met with the golden crab guys, and had a big kind of group interview, and so that's documented in that paper, and so I definitely would link that, whenever you do the golden crab. Other comments? Should we move over to the list of questions that you guys have? I haven't looked at that? Did we do them already? Okay. I guess we answered these. If there's nothing else, we can finish this agenda item, or, Chip, please.

DR. COLLIER: I will just give you guys the path forward for this. Based on your comments, we'll, obviously, revise this SAFE report, but we'll also try to incorporate all this for shrimp, golden crab, and I believe we're going to try to do the Atlantic portion of the coastal migratory pelagics, and so that will be going to the full SSC in October, and then it will be provided to the council potentially in December.

DR. CROSSON: Okay. All right. Thank you. Our next item is the citizen science update with Julia.

CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAM UPDATE

MS. BYRD: All right. Good morning, everyone. For those who I haven't had an opportunity to meet, I'm Julia Byrd, and I manage the council's citizen science program, along with Meg Withers, who is our Citizen Science Program Project Coordinator. What we wanted to do, in the presentation today, is just give you an update on a few of our projects that are underway and then ask for your input on something for our SAFMC Release project and our FISHstory project. Again, that's kind of the rundown of what we're going to go through over the next few minutes.

The first thing I wanted to kind of share with you guys is kind of announce that we have launched new citizen science project idea portal on our website, and this is basically kind of an online tool, where any member of the public can share their citizen science project ideas with us, and so we have a lot of wonderful people who have been contributing to our program, but I know that there are a lot of kind of project ideas that we haven't even thought about, and so this is a way for the public to share their ideas with us.

It's an online form, and you can submit a project idea in less than ten minutes, and what will happen is our citizen science program will review all of the information that's submitted via the portal, twice a year, in May and October, and then the project ideas that are submitted are going to help us update our citizen science research priorities.

We do this every two years, and those priorities really kind of guide the types of projects that our program kind of supports and pursues, and so you have all these data needs, and kind of we try to kind of narrow the focus to tangible ideas that are important to our fishermen and our scientists and our managers, kind of in these research priorities, and so information submitted through the portal will help us do that, and then we're also hoping that it will help us connect fishermen and scientists who may have similar research interests, and help us connect them to one another, to see if they're interested in developing a project.

The QR code on the screen will take you to the form, and there's also a link from the main citizen science webpage that will take you to the form as well, and so it just went live a couple of weeks ago, and so we're really excited about it.

The next project that I wanted to give you a quick update on is a project called SMILE, and this is a project that's being led by REEF, which is a citizen science organization that's been working with recreational divers very successfully for decades, and so this project is working to partner with divers to collect length information on some of our data-limited species, and so what the project is doing is they've developed kind of an underwater laser-mounted Olympus camera that divers can easily use, and you can see a picture of the camera right there, and they're very small, and they have one laser on top. The diver goes down, and they put the laser on the fish, take a burst of photos, and then the photos are analyzed, after the fact, to get a size on that fish.

The camera was developed, and tested, in the field for the first time last fall. They're analyzing that data now. When they're doing the testing, they're pairing that with stereo video cameras, and so how these type of data are typically collected, to be able to compare results between the two. They are pilot testing it in the Florida Keys, and they -- I think I was two weeks ago that they just started their second field season, and there's also a social science component, and Chelsey is actually participating in this, thankfully, and they're wanting to learn more about kind of motivations, and barriers, for participants to kind of participate in the SMILE project.

So REEF does a lot of other citizen science work, and so they're trying to really understand what might motivate people to want to pick up a SMILE camera when they're going diving, and so that project is underway. We're in our kind of second year now, and more field testing will be done, and we should have results from the first field season soon.

Then the next project is our Release project, and so this is the project where we're working with fishermen from all sectors to gather information on released shallow-water grouper and red snapper, using a free called SciFish, and so, for this project, we're really focusing in on learning more about the size of those released fish and information that helps us better understand how many of those released fish survive, things like depth, did you use a descending device, did you vent the fish before you released it, that sort of thing.

A quick update on what's been going on, and so we're still working with participants, and participants are logging information on their released grouper and red snapper, using the SciFish app, and Christina talked a little bit about this yesterday, but we've been -- We, Meg really, has been doing a lot of outreach, working really closely with the best fishing practices crew, visiting tackle shops, and, actually, Meg and David, who is the Sea Grant fellow, are driving up to North Carolina right now to present to a fishing club this evening, and so they're really doing a great job of getting the word out, kind of about the project, and there's a lot of overlapping messaging between our Release project and the best fishing practices campaign, and so we're kind of leveraging that and kind of doing a lot of outreach together.

We put together an annual data summary each year, and so I'm just going to hit a few highlights from that and tell you a little bit about a participant recognition program that we've launched, to try to help with participant retention over time, and then we're going to talk a little bit about development of a participant survey, and that's where we're hoping to get some information from you guys especially.

Each year, we -- Meg is the person who really does, and she kind of analyzes the data, and puts together a data summary that first goes out to our participants, so they can see kind of what we've learned through all of their hard work, and so they have a time to kind of look at it, ask questions, that sort of thing, for kind of about a month, and then we'll put it on our website, so it's more generally available to everyone, and so there's a lot of great information in the report. I'm just going to hit on a few things, but, if you want to see the kind of full report, there's a link at the kind of bottom of the presentation that will take you there.

This is just a little bit of information from the 2023 data summary that shows you kind of where our Release submissions are coming from. If you look at it by state, you can see the majority are from Florida, followed by North Carolina and then South Carolina. If you look at it by sector, we have all sectors represented in the data, but the private recreational sector is the large majority of the data submissions that we get on released fish.

If you look at kind of the releases logged by species, the majority of releases logged are red snapper, and that makes sense, based on kind of everything we've been hearing from fishermen, that they're catching, and releasing, a lot of red snapper, and that's followed by gag grouper, at around ten-and-a-half percent, scamp at just under 8 percent, and red grouper at just under 7 percent.

Then one of the things we were really interested in looking at is looking at kind of when people are -- When, and how frequently, people are venting or descending fish, and so, as you guys know, barotrauma is likely to occur more frequently in deeper water, and so we were really excited to see -- This graph shows, kind of by depth bin, when release treatments were taken, and so you can see that, as you're getting into deeper water, where you're more likely to see barotrauma, the folks participating in Release are more likely to use kind of a descending device, or kind of venting a fish, before it's released.

Some of the things that have been most challenging, for us in this project, is participant recruitment and retention over time, as I think that's always a challenge for many citizen science projects, and so one of the things that we've done to help with retention is launch a participant recognition program that's really designed to celebrate the achievements of our participants, and so this launched last year, in the spring of 2023, and what we do is we put together specific year milestones that will kind of highlight whether it's kind of the largest and smallest of a species, the kind of most submissions, the best photo, things like that, to kind of highlight, and celebrate, all of the kind of data that our participants are logging and what we're learning from it.

In our annual data summary, we kind of highlight who successfully reaches all these milestones, and we did that last year for the first time, and we thought that it worked really well, and, in 2024, we've been able -- We've kind of changed up some of our milestones, and then we're really excited for a partnership in our PRP program that we've been able to do with Sea Grant, thanks to kind of our reef fish fellow and the Sea Grant folks in the South Atlantic.

This year, our milestones include things like quantity of submissions, the smallest and largest of each species, what we're calling a round-of-the-reef, which is, when people submit all eleven species that are in the project, and then Sea Grant has a couple of photo milestones, and, through those photo milestones, as well as some quantity of submissions, Sea Grant is able to provide some

rewards to some of our participants for kind of reaching those milestones, and so we're really excited that we're able to expand the program, and we're really thankful to Sea Grant for collaborating with us on this.

Then the last thing we really wanted to talk about with the Release project with you guys, and hopefully kind of pick your brains a little bit, is we're really interested in trying to learn more about who is participating in the Release project, what their kind of motivations and barriers to participation are, and then get some feedback on our communication techniques, to help us with recruitment and retention and see how kind of successful those communication lines are, and so we're in the process of developing questions.

We don't have questions that are ready to kind of share with you guys at this point, but we have kind of broad topic areas that we were hoping to get feedback from you guys on, whether we're thinking about including the things that will be most important, as we're trying to understand who is participating in our program, what their motivations and barriers are, and how we can make our communication more effective.

We want to try to make sure -- You know, I know, the longer a survey is, the more challenging it is to get people to complete it, and so we want to make sure that we have a survey -- We're shooting for around ten minutes or less for a survey, I think is what we're going for, and so we're just interested in getting feedback from you guys on are these the right topics? Is this too many, too little, are there things that we're not thinking about that we should be thinking about? Are there kind of topics on here that you think we could take out of the survey, to make sure that we don't make it too long, and just generally any other feedback we should be thinking of when doing this survey.

I will say, as has been noted earlier, the council has challenges in doing survey work, and so this is -- It will have to go through the Paperwork Reduction Act, and it's a long time coming, but we really feel like, in order to make the program better, we need to do this, and we were really lucky, in that, when we first launched the program in 2019-ish, I think, we had a graduate student, who now works with the council, Nick Smilie, who did interviews with a bunch of kind of participants, who were kind of the first folks who signed up for Release, and they provided a lot of helpful feedback, and so we were able to change the program a little bit, to kind of help improve it, and help improve its success, and so we think this is a really important component of what we're trying to do, even if it will take a long time to get this up and running.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Just the mechanics of the survey, and it was brought up by somebody yesterday, is have you thought about farming out the survey and working, quote, as an advisor to whoever does the survey, and you've got plenty of academics who can do a survey of this type, and there would be -- I mean, I see something like this as being a great master's project, or something, for a student, and all they have to do is go through an IRB, at whatever their university is, and that can take a month, or six weeks, is what it used to be, and I don't know, but, if there's the money available to do that, that might be a way that you could expedite getting this survey done, and there's a lot of people sitting around the table, in this room, who would probably jump at the opportunity to do this, to be able to fund a project of that nature. I just don't know the resources, but that might be a way you could really speed up the process.

MS. BYRD: So resources are a little limited, but that's something we can work on. I would love to -- I would be very interested in having a graduate student work on this, if anybody knows any graduate students or works with students who you think this may be a good project for, and I'm certainly all ears.

When working with researchers, we have to be careful that we are not running afoul of PRA-kind of restrictions and that sort of thing, but, yes, I think this would be a wonderful graduate student project, and I know Nick's interviews with fishermen -- I think he enjoyed them a lot, for this kind of Release project, and boy did it help us a lot too, through what we kind of learned, and so we're definitely open to that.

DR. HUNT: I think this would be a great cross-sectional survey for a master's thesis, but I'm trying to look at this from a longitudinal perspective, because these programs -- What you've got to be careful of is the participants become so involved, and do they start fishing more often, and they get enthralled in this, and it becomes a competition of who can release the most fish, and who can -- So you have a captive audience who -- You know, I see this in the birding community.

They get so involved that they participate more, for their own gratification, to be the one who submitted the most reports, to have gone fishing most often, and from -- So I think a survey is good, but I think a longitudinal survey would be better, of if you -- Do you intend to maintain this over time, because it would be interesting to see what are the participants of somebody who is in their first year in one of these, versus five years, and I think that really would help answer your questions about who gets involved in this, and why, and who maintains participation in it.

MS. BYRD: I think that's great feedback, and helpful, and I think kind of the longevity of the program depends a little bit about the resources we have, and so we're always trying to -- We're always kind of looking for avenues to kind of fund this kind of work, and definitely I hear what you're saying about changes in behavior and how different kind of milestones, or rewards, or that sort of thing may change people's behavior.

I think one of the things we've seen more of, at least right now, is attrition with people, right, and so people will come into the program, and they will log once or twice, and they may go away, or we have, you know, super participants, or whatever you want to call them, and they're very active in the program for a year, and then they may fall off, and so we're always trying to recruit new people in, because there's this attrition over time, and so that is certainly something that we'll need to look out for, but, I mean, this program is still relatively new, and we haven't run into that sort of thing yet, I don't think, and that's something to look out for.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I will just jump in, and I was thinking along those lines, and so, when you talk about participants, are we including those folks who dropped out, and maybe learning more about why they stopped participating?

MS. BYRD: I think the idea would be -- So we also have had a number of people -- You know, hundreds of people have signed-up, but a very small number are the ones who are actually logging, and so also figuring out that you've signed-up, and you haven't logged anything, but you're reading our monthly newsletters every month, and so like you're interested, but what kind of takes you over the edge, from being kind of an observer to a participant, and I think that would be important.

DR. CROSSON: Are there other questions?

MR. WALSH: I guess this might be a naïve question, but is there a way to insert a survey into the app, where people are already opting-into participate, and then seeing, okay, why are you here, versus asking the people that aren't participating why are you not here?

MS. BYRD: I'm sure there's a way to do that. I'm not an app developer, and it's not something we've built in now, and you can put in like links to things, and so, if someone were -- If they had connectivity, they could go into the app and click a link that would take you somewhere else, and it's not built into the app right now, but I'm sure that's something that could be done.

The way that SciFish is, it's kind of an umbrella app that houses multiple projects, and so there are other projects kind of under its umbrella, and so there are ways to do things in the app, where you would kind of customize it just for your program, or if -- I know I was at a workshop last week, and it sounds like some of the kind of demographic-type information is important to everyone, and so maybe when you sign-up for an account, there are some kind of questions you could answer, and you just do them once, when you sign-up and get an account, and so I think are different ways to kind of do that, but doing more of a kind of survey, with lots of questions built into the app right now, isn't something we have.

DR. CRANDALL: Will these be linked to the people's participation? What I'm getting at is will you also have their, you know, fishing avidity, but also --

MS. BYRD: (Ms. Byrd's comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. CRANDALL: Yes, and those super contributors, or should there be something also to what percentage of your trips did you log, you know, so you can separate out maybe people who logged 100 percent, but they only went out twice, and so they've still effectively a super contributor, because they're like logging all their trips, but they're just fishing that much.

MS. BYRD: I think this is something that I would maybe hope to get your feedback on, and so we want people to participate in the survey, and I know that confidentiality, and things like that, are super important, and so, you know, ideally, if folks would be okay with it, we would like to be able to link -- To know who their survey is, and then know what they've logged in the app, so we can match things up, unless that would be a major turnoff for people, and they would want kind of their responses to be more anonymous than that, and then I think it makes sense to ask those sorts of questions, and I think kind of what you just said is --

It really hits home for me, Chelsey, because, you know, I think, particularly in the offshore fisheries, a lot of people, particularly private rec guys, will go like three or four times a year, total, and that's it. So it's -- Their data is just as important as the people who go every time, because they may do different behaviors, and things like that, and so, yes, I think those are things that we would definitely want to ask about and be able to tease out.

DR. HUNT: I'm just thinking this would be an awesome public/private partnership with the people who run that Fishbrain app. That has fourteen-million participants, and it's geolocated, and, you know, they're telling you what they caught their fish on, and so I don't know if your app has location on it, but, you know, if you're seeing releases, you can now go into the ocean and say

that's where he was, which may help your biologists as well, but, you know, I don't know how that app is -- You know, if it could turn into magic, but, you know, reaching out, and maybe just talking to the people at Fishbrain, and say, you know, what could we collect, and maybe how they're doing it, without giving up too much proprietary information, but that may give you some ideas as well.

MS. BYRD: We were actually at a workshop last week with some of the Fishbrain people, and so we were talking to them about things, and, just as far as like location in our app, you can supply a GPS location, but one of the things that we learned early on is that that really turned a lot of people off, if they had to log a location for their released fish, and they -- You know, one of the things we always say is, you know, your fishing spot stays secret. If we ever share this information, we're going to group it with many others, and so your kind of secret fishing spot stays secret, but how the data will be used -- You know, eventually, we would love to be able to use length comps from this, maybe in an assessment, and so released fish length comps.

In the assessment, that's -- Right now, that's done by state, and so, as long as we have state information, and they don't want to provide a location, that's still okay. Right now, I think we have about 60 percent of folks are doing GPS point locations when they're logging fish, or maybe 65.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Related to that, about the GPS locations, are they logging it right at the time they catch the fish, because some of them wait until they get home, or to the dock, and so you're finding, you know, fish that you've got a GPS location, and it's somewhere like in Tampa somewhere, and it doesn't work, and so sometimes you -- Even if they're at-sea, they may just wait until they have a break, because the fishing -- If there's a fishing lull, then they log their fish, and that may not be exactly where they caught the fish, and so there are problems with trying to use GPS location at the time.

MS. BYRD: Yes, and I think there's some people who seem to log when they're on the water, but we have also a number of people who will like take a picture of the fish, or just write down the length, the thing that they can't -- You know, that it's harder for them to remember, and then they will finish the log when they're back on land, and so we've definitely had some people that we have followed-up with and said it looks like your fish -- The GPS location said you were in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, like on land, and so that is what has happened a lot too, and so, I mean, I think we're -- We, again Meg, is doing the heavy lifting on this, and she's kind of QA'ing all the data, and so, if we see unusual things like that, we'll ask, and we'll reach out to the fishermen and ask, if there are kind of unusual things that are logged.

DR. CRANDALL: I feel like I just keep belittling the survey, and so we don't have to do this, but thinking about -- You know, again, their avidity, and who they are, if there's questions that can efficiently get at whether they participate in other citizen science things, whether they go to meetings, and like are they just people who are really engaged in everything, or is it something about this project that they're really excited about, and that might help, you know, know how you're communicating this project that's getting them, or are they just someone who is going to do everything that's out there.

DR. HUNT: If you could link kind of the survey questions into the app, and you don't have to ask it all at once. Like, when they open the app, you could just have one question, and, you know,

how many days did you fish in the past month, bam, and then that's it. The next time they log-in, you're asking them a demographic question, and the next time -- You know, where you're building that database on that participant, but you're not fatiguing them, and that could be an option as well.

DR. CRANDALL: Remind me. Do they register to participant in this, or do they just enter it, and, if they do, is any of this -- Can some of this be part of the registration, and, when they sign-up, they can share things about who they are?

MS. BYRD: Right now, when people sign-up, and so there's an online form that you fill out to sign-up, and then we go in and create accounts, and send people their information, and so it's not auto-approval, or whatever you would say right now, and this information is going to the ACCSP SAFIS database.

We do ask for birth date, kind of city, state, what sector you're fishing in, and so we're asking for some of this, and so we do have some of that information. Right now, we're not asking for things like avidity, or fishing experience, and it seems like you would want to ask that more than once over time, just because that changes, and I don't know, and so we have some information, just to kind of help us kind of get them into the system, but it's -- I mean, it's like four questions that we ask.

DR. HUNT: So, when you do that, you should -- You could, without asking some of these questions, but how did you hear about this, you know, what motivated you, you know, to come in here and do that, you know, real simple questions, like where you're piecing together over time. The more that would, again, for an IRB perspective, or an OMB, be shortening the survey that you actually have to do.

MS. BYRD: So we do ask where did you hear about it, just to help us figure out what -- That, okay, we're doing all of these things of communication, and what is actually working, and what is, you know, resonating with people, and I would be interested to learn more about, and this is not a conversation for here, but maybe a sidebar, but how best to ask a motivation-type of question like that, when someone is just signing-up, but, anyhow, yes, I think some of those will be super helpful for us to learn more about.

DR. CROSSON: Should we move on to the list of questions, or are you --

MS. BYRD: You all covered the questions.

DR. CROSSON: Okay. We've already covered it?

MS. BYRD: Unless there's anything else, but I guess the one thing is, is the number of topics appropriate? I mean, again, are we trying to ask too many things, in particular, and, if so, what would you suggest eliminating?

DR. CROSSON: Go ahead, Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I don't think it's too many topics, and I think it's specifically the number of questions per topic. I think some of these you can get at with one or two questions, and some of them you're going to have to do a deeper dive in, but I think it's possible to do this survey in ten

minutes, but just be mindful of the number of questions, but always to keep in mind is, if you're asking this question, what are you going to do with the data once you have it, and, if you can't answer that question before you ask it, then don't ask the question on the survey, and it's not worth it. Just because it sounds like a neat idea -- You're going to be wasting people's time, and so brevity -- That's a key thing to be thinking about, in terms of keeping it as short as you possibly can. If you can make it less than ten minutes, good on you.

DR. FRIMPONG: I think one thing you should also consider is what percentage of the questions are open-ended, because it affects the responses that you get.

MS. BYRD: That's a great point, and I think, in our minds, as we've been thinking through this, the less open-ended the better, and maybe have one or two at the end, maybe, and particularly around this idea of -- One of the things that we've been trying to do, as we're signing people up, is managing expectations, right, and, if we get enough people to participate, what we can learn through this project, and how it might be useful to management, and what it's not doing, and so this last question, of kind of their perception of the project, and its role in fisheries management, I think those are the ones we're not sure exactly how to ask that, and maybe a more open-ended sort of question, just to kind of see what we get. The other ones, we're hoping to do more, you know, pick from these responses, or a Likert scale, or things that are faster.

DR. HUNT: You just mentioned another box of what are their expectations, because, you know, technically, from a satisfaction perspective, it's the difference between performance and expectations, and so it would -- If you get a feeling for what do they think they're going to get out of this, at the beginning, that may help you answer the question of who is staying around and who is not.

MR. STEMLE: I just have a quick question about the scope of this survey. How many people participated, and how many like observations did you even have?

MS. BYRD: So I can't answer that off the top of my head, but what I can say is we have hundreds of folks who sign-up, but a much smaller number who have logged stuff, and so I don't know those numbers off the top of my head, but hundreds and hundreds of people have signed-up, but I would say, you know, a quarter of them have actually logged something in the app, or something, and so it's -- The universe isn't huge, although, with a lot of the wonderful outreach work that Meg and David and others are doing, we're getting more and more sign-ups, and so, like each year of the project, we're seeing more folks signing-up, and more information being logged over time, and so I know that's -- I can look up exact things, if you're interested in exact numbers, but --

MR. STEMLE: No, that's fine, and I saw, in the report, that about a quarter were for-hire trips, and is that buy-in from for-hire captains, or is that rec folks on for-hire trips that are reporting their catch?

MS. BYRD: It is mainly charter captains who are doing it, and I know, in particular, some of the charter captains that are actively participating have been -- Have had concerns about grouper, in particular, and so that's a large part of what they're logging.

DR. CROSSON: Okay. Are we good? I think that's good. We are chugging along really fast this morning.

MS. BYRD: I'm still going.

DR. CROSSON: You're still going. My apologies. FISHstory. I'm sorry. The other part is FISHstory, and I apologize for that.

MS. BYRD: You've got me for a few more minutes. Then the last project that I wanted to chat with you guys about, and get some feedback on, is our FISHstory project, and so this is the project where we're using kind of old, historic fishing photos to learn more about kind of what was being caught, and the size of fish that were being caught, prior to when we had catch monitoring programs available in the South Atlantic.

There is kind of -- It's a three-part project, and the first is kind of archiving all of these historic photos, and the second part is analyzing the photos, and we're using an online crowdsourcing platform called Zooniverse, where members of the public can be kind of trained to help us count and ID the fish and the people in the photos, and then the third part is kind of estimating the size of the fish in the photos, using kind of the lumber in the leaderboards as a scale, and so it's kind of a three-part project.

We did a pilot project that ended I think in 2022, maybe, and, since then, we've been really excited to get some additional funding, and we have been working to kind of grow the project from a pilot to kind of a full-scale project, and so one of the things we've been working really hard on, last fall, was to get new photos, and so, from the pilot project, we just had photos from the Daytona Beach area of Florida, and so, in order to make the data more representative of the South Atlantic, we needed to get photos from a larger geographic area.

Not only have we been working to get photos throughout the South Atlantic, but we also kind of extended the timeline we're looking for photos. Originally, we were hoping to get photos through the 1970s, but, after talking with stock assessment scientists at the Beaufort Lab, we're trying to get photos through the 1980s, or the early 1990s, and the idea there is catch monitoring programs, in the South Atlantic, started in the 1970s, the mid-1970s, or the early 1980s, depending on kind of where you were, but we want to try to get a time period where we have photo data, and where we have catch monitoring data, at the same time, so we can see how they relate to one another, and, you know, ideally, if we're able to do this, folks at the Science Center, and at NC State, have been playing around with the idea of trying to put together an index from the photos that could be compared to kind of the headboat index, to see how they relate to one another, or if they could be calibrated to one another, that sort of thing.

Last fall, we held kind of six photo-scanning events, at council-related meetings, and we did a scanning event at the September and December council meetings, and at all of the fall AP meetings, and so we got some photos scanned in at these kind of scanning events, but what ended up being even more helpful was that AP members, or council members, helped connect us to other people in their community that had photos that we could reach out to, or gave us an in with a person that we could reach out to, and so that was perhaps more fruitful than the actual scanning events themselves, as far as kind of number of photos gathered.

Then we also were kind of publicizing these scanning events, and that we were looking for photos, through the council communication channels, and so social media, and the South Atlantic Bight newsletter, and that sort of thing.

We're really excited, and we started with just photos in Daytona, and now we have photos from the Outer Banks down through the Florida Keys, and so we've really kind of worked very hard, over the last kind of six to eight months, to kind of grow our photo archive, and so thanks to a lot of council and advisory panel members and other partners, partners that have helped connect us to like historians at libraries, or to restaurant owners, who have a lot of photos hanging on their wall, and we have, you know, members of the public that said, oh my gosh, my granddad and I used to go fish in that boat, and I have some photos, and we've been able to digitize over 600 new photos in 2023, and so, right now, we're kind of logging them into our system, and we'll be kind of uploading them for analysis kind of later this spring.

Although that's an amazing amount of photos, and I will also say these four photos here -- This is from one of our AP members, Paul Nelson, who is down in Daytona Beach, and this is from a charter captain who one of our AP members connected us to down in the Florida Keys, and, for any of you North Carolina folks, this is from The Sanitary Restaurant, and one of our Snapper Grouper AP members helped connect me to the owner, and he let me go in there and take photos off the wall, and take pictures, last December, and then this is The Captain Stacy, and so Atlantic Beach, and so Bobby Freeman, who kind of ran a charter business for a long time, his wife was ready to get a lot of photos out of the house, and so I met him in the parking lot of the Town and Country, when he and his wife were traveling down from North Carolina to Florida, and I got a bunch of his photos, and then thanks to Rusty Hudson. Rusty is who scanned all of his photos in.

It's really been awesome to see so many people willing to share their, you know, part of history of the fishery, and the growth of the fishery, and so, although we've gotten all these photos, we still need more, and so I will be asking you guys for ideas along this a little bit more, and we particularly need photos from the Carolinas and then from the 1980s throughout the whole coast. In Florida, we've got a ton of photos, but a lot of them only go through the 1970s, and they don't go through the 1980s, and so we're still always looking for more photos, to kind of add them to the FISHstory archive.

Then, just as a kind of what we're looking for when we need to analyze photos, and kind of what makes a photo good for analysis is that it's taken at the end of a trip, where the harvested catch is displayed with the anglers who caught them, and we need to have a year. A ballpark year is okay, and our -- The analysts have said we need to have a location, and, as long as we have state, that's okay. The more specific, the better, and then we want to make sure that we have that photo provider name and contact, to make sure we're giving credit to the person who provided the photo and then also can get back in touch with them, to show them what's going on with the project.

Then what makes a photo even better is that, if the fish are hanging on a leaderboard, then we can get that length. If they're on the ground, it gets a little dicey, trying to figure out what the length is. If we have more specific date information, we can look at things like seasonality. More specific kind of dock location, and vessel and captain name, is better, but, even if you don't have that kind of level of information, we can still use the photos for analysis.

Then I just wanted to give a quick update on the second part of the project, and so this is the part of the project where we built something in the Zooniverse online crowdsourcing platform and trained volunteers to help us identify -- The fish and the people in the photos, and so we learned a lot of things through the pilot, I think that will help us improve data quality, and one of the things is simplifying data collection, and so we have been refining our project in Zooniverse, based on this pilot project findings. We're hopefully going to be beta-testing that new project, in the next week or so, and then we'll be targeting to kind of re-launch the project live in Zooniverse later this spring.

We have multiple volunteers looking at each photo, and so you have less concern about whether someone misidentifies something, and we're looking for the central kind of tendency, and so sometimes the photos are really hard, and sometimes these historic photos are really, really difficult, and so sometimes, when there's a lot of volunteer disagreement, we have a validation team, that's made up of fishermen and scientists, that help us confirm what's in a photo, and we'll be getting our validation team gang back together this spring, and so, if any of you are fishy people, or know fishy people who may want to participate on the validation team, and it's not a whole lot of time, and it would be helping kind of look at ten to fifteen photos in like a month, and so it's kind of a small task, but a really important task.

The last thing I just wanted to update you guys on is so, during the pilot project, we developed this method to estimate the size of fish in the photos, and so, as the pilot, we did size of fish in all of the photos that Rusty provided for king mackerel, and you can see the modal fork length here. The next species we're tackling is red snapper, and so we have been busy measuring. There is seven length analysts, who are awesome, and some of them are kind of members of the headboat program, and some of them are members of MARMAP, and some of them are members of our staff, NC State, graduate students, and they're helping us kind of measure the fish in the photos, and so we've gone through about 500, or 600, photos for red snapper and are kind of chugging along now doing that.

Now I have some questions for you guys, based on kind of what's been going on with FISHstory, and the first one is if you guys have suggestions of avenues that we can explore to gather additional historic photos, and, again, we've been really lucky that so many people have helped connect us to people, or folks on our AP have provided a wonderful bunch of photos, but, if you guys have any ideas, that would be great, or, if you know any organizations in your area that may be good for us to reach out and contact about fishing photos, that would be a huge help, if you have any suggestions there.

Then we're also going to be relaunching FISHstory in Zooniverse soon, and so, if you guys have any suggestions on where we could share information to recruit new volunteers for that portion of the project, we would certainly be all ears, too.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I am guessing you have probably done this, but have you reached out to the state outreach PR people and asked them for suggestions? So you've done that. Okay. That kind of made sense, but I just wondered if you had done that, and is there a way that you could reach out, through social media, to put out a general blast, just to see if you could get people to respond, or even just on the council's Facebook page, or something just to get the word out that we're looking for people, people who may not be linked into other communication ways that are used?

There was two other things that I wanted to ask about, and one is, interestingly -- Does Google identify fish, like they do other animals and plants and things like that, because they do -- You can actually put a photograph up there, like on your phone, and it will tell you what animals and stuff there are, and there actually are some other apps that are more refined.

I have one that I use, particularly for plants, called Picture This, and let me tell you that there's some really weird stuff down in south Florida, and, I mean, I just saw something last week called a shaving brush tree, and it was totally devoid of leaves, and it looked like it had shaving brushes hanging off the end of branches. I had never seen this weird thing before, and somebody though, well, this must be made up, and somebody must have attached these, and I said, no, I took a picture of it, and it's literally called the shaving brush tree. I had never heard of it before, and I never had seen one before, but there are apps out there that can do those kinds of identification.

Then just a personal aside is I live in a condo in Florida, where we were having some problems with some leaky windows, and it's a seven-story building, and so it's very expensive to get up and check the windows up high, and so we used the idea, and I think it was Chip who came up with the idea of how to measure, and you find a known measurement, and then you take the photograph, and you measure the -- Because we can see gaps in some places, and you can see how bad the leaks are, and so we actually have -- All the windows have a standard sill gap across the bottom, but there's a gap on the end of each one, and we know exactly how big that gap is, and so people can go out on their balconies, and take photographs of the windows that are exposed on that side, and we're able to figure out how bad of a leakage problem there is around all the windows, for an entire building of thirty-five condos.

I mean, thank you, Chip, but it actually worked, because we were looking at having to pay about \$2,000 to have people come down and rappel down the side of the building, to measure how bad the problem was, before we figured out how much we needed to pay for, but it actually worked for us, and so -- The idea was great, and so you've spawned people to be able to do other things, but, actually, I would look into seeing if there are like fish ID programs that are out there. I mean, they can identify breeds of dogs, and rocks, and all sorts of things, and so there may be something for fish. I have never looked, but some are free, and some you may have to pay a bit for, but, when you have to pay forty-bucks for an app, if it's accurate, it's probably worth it, because it could identify a lot of fish for you.

MS. BYRD: So thank you, Brian, for all of that feedback, and it's good to know that ImageJ can be used in lots of ways. As far as kind of fish AI kind of work, I don't know about Google, but I know like some apps -- Like Fishbrain is trying to do this, and then there's an app called GotOne that's trying to do this, and then there are a number of apps out there that are trying to -- If you catch a fish, and you don't know what it is, you take a picture of it with your phone, and it will tell you what it is, and so that way you know what the regs are or whatever, and that sort of thing, and so there's a lot of that around.

There are big groups, called Fishial, and Fish AI is another one, and so I don't know if they have -- If their systems are trained for our grouper, or things like that, and, a lot of times, you have to have them trained to what you're trying to identify, and so I'm not sure.

The other thing I will say too is, with Zooniverse, a lot of projects in Zooniverse -- We're not doing this right now, but they use Zooniverse to create the AI training set, basically, and so you're doing

all of this in Zooniverse to create the training set, and so then, eventually, you can -- I'm trying to think of -- There is a project in Alaska, and it's with a marine mammal. Stellar sea lions, and that's what it is, and so they were in Zooniverse for a long time, and then they trained AI, through all of the information through that, and so now they're not in Zooniverse, and they're using AI to analyze all the data, and so that is something that is occurring in Zooniverse a fair amount now.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I just wondered if you had explored the national archives collections at all, and there might be some good stuff in there, and I had done some historical preservation stuff for NOAA, years ago, and they had like tons of photos, that we took a scanner and scanned in from their physical locations, and so I don't know like what's been digitized, or what hasn't, but that might be something to explore. I can look, and it looks like the Southeast Region location is in Georgia, near Atlanta, but I don't know.

DR. HUNT: I think this would be a great graduate student project, and maybe not from a wildlife and fisheries department, or something like that, but from a history department, because you have a lot of people who are trained to do that, you know, to go into the archives and then tell the story, and so, you know, I don't know if you have the money for that, but, boy, that would be probably a pretty good use of it for a grad student.

MS. BYRD: We have a grad student from State who is like a quantitative person, who is helping us with all the analysis and setting up things in Zooniverse, but one thing that he's not doing is this kind of archiving, and that's fallen more to kind of council staff to do, and so we don't have money for that now, but we can always look for money.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Speaking of students, if you had just some catchy little social-media-ready JPEG, to send to biology departments, and history departments maybe, and I hadn't thought about that, but, you know, oftentimes, professors are looking for things for students to do, for extra credit or outside of the classroom, and you might hook in a fair number of people that way.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Along that line is a lot of schools that have good fishery programs have student fishery groups, that they might want to take some of this on, and so like the ASF school groups, and they may be willing to -- Those are people who are really into this stuff, and so they might be interested in looking at it as well, especially if somebody could volunteer to, like Kevin is saying, to do some of this work, because they know they're gaining -- Help them get a degree or something.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Some of those recreational angler groups, too.

MS. BYRD: Thank you, and another -- Zooniverse is great for lots of reasons, but another reason they were so great is they have a community of folks who -- The recruitment of participants is easier with their community of people, and one thing that they helped us do was connect us to libraries a lot, and libraries were actually a good kind of recruiting ground for people who are interested, as well as some kind of educational folks.

I think, when we launch again, we really want to try to make -- Anyone can participate in the project, and we welcome anyone in the project, but we want to try to target recruitment for the people who know fish, and so some of these ideas, with like student fishing groups, and other things like that, is a good place for us to dig into, and I think it was Chip who made the suggestion

when we did the pilot, and we just didn't have capacity to do it, but is to make it like a competition among AFS student groups, or, you know, something like that, to really get people in there and maybe kind of helping analyze photos, and maybe that's something we can actually do this go-round, when we launch again.

DR. CROSSON: We are done now? Okay.

MS. BYRD: Thank you.

DR. CROSSON: All right.

MR. WALSH: I had a quick question, sorry, before you go, about the fork length estimation, and so you're doing so you can compare that to the data from the 1980s, or like to get some sort of idea of whether this is representative, because we have like two levels of bias, where someone is going to take a picture of a good day, with good fish, and then someone is going to share something they're particularly proud of more than they're not.

MS. BYRD: I think that's something we're going to have to think about more, now that we're moving away from the pilot. For the pilot project, this was -- Rusty provided 1,300 photos from his family's fishing fleet, and so headboat and charter, and so they took a picture, a commemorative photo, and like you come back to the dock and take a commemorative photo, and it's kind of for the folks who went fishing that day, and there are trips where there are a ton of fish, and there are trips where there is not as many fish, and so you're hoping it's more of a -- It's not a census, probably, but more like that, right, and so, now that we're gathering more photos --

When we're getting things from like the libraries, or we have some charter captains, and, you know, their fathers, and their grandfathers, who are providing photos, and you see that same sort of thing, but we're also -- If, you know -- We're also getting people who are very proud of a certain catch that they got that day, and that's why they're sharing their photos, and so I think that's something we haven't thought about as much, and, in a lot of these kind of -- I don't know if "professional" is the right word, but it's like they had professional photographers come and take photos, and so you got more of everything, and so I think that's something that we'll have to think about more, as we're gathering more photos, but a lot of like the library sets, and like at The Sanitary, there were photos that had tons of fish, but there were also some photos that didn't have quite as many fish, and so I think that's something that's good for us to think about, that we haven't kind of tackled in-depth yet.

DR. CROSSON: What's the oldest photograph that you guys have found? I'm curious.

MS. BYRD: So I know that there are -- So we went up to Manteo, and to the Outer Banks History Center, I think it's called, and they have a collection of Aycokk Brown photos, and he took a lot of photos in the Outer Banks area, and some of those are back -- We were looking at the fish that we were interested in, and I think early 1900s, and maybe late 1800s, but there are photos from before that, certainly, and, as we've kind of been doing this project, and sharing information, we've been connected with other people.

There's someone who is in -- I can't remember, and it's Australia, or New Zealand, and I can't remember, but they're doing a project with old photos, and they're looking at a lot of newspapers,

and they've gotten photos from hundreds of years ago, and, I mean, it's pretty incredible what's out there, I guess, when you start digging.

DR. CROSSON: Okay. Thank you. Let's take a ten-minute break, and then we'll catch the last big item that we have, which is EEJ, which is a substantial one, and so we're on break right now, until 10:10.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. CROSSON: All right. We're going to resume, and we have, I believe, the last big agenda item on here, which is the EEJ, and so Christina is, yet again, going to be presenting to us. Lucky her, and so here we go.

EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE DISCUSSION BASED ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL'S IDENTIFIED ITEMS FROM THEIR MARCH 2024 MEETING

MS. WIEGAND: I promise this is the last time you guys have to hear from me for this meeting. I just wanted to go over a brief presentation on equity and environmental justice and talk a little bit about sort of the council's role in this whole process, and so sort of set the stage, and I'm sure some of this is, you know, redundant information for you guys, but, back in May of 2023, NMFS released their equity and environmental justice strategy, which sort of described the path that the agency is going to take to incorporate EEJ into a lot of their services, which, of course, sort of, as you go down the way, includes a lot of the work that the council does.

One of the things that I want to briefly, very briefly, go over is sort of some of the key terms, as they were defined within that EEJ strategy, and we talked a lot this week about how there can be different meanings of things like "equity", and so I wanted to make sure that the conversation we're having today is sort of framed within the way the agency -- I believe a lot of these definitions also come from the Executive Order that sort of triggered the agency to go through and do this draft -- Or no longer draft, but this EEJ strategy.

When we're talking about environmental justice, we're talking about the fair treatment and meaningful involvement, which is key, of all people, regardless of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, et cetera, in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations. When we say "meaningful involvement", we're talking about making sure that stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in decisions that may affect them, that their contribution, the public's contribution, is affecting decision-making, that community concerns are considered during the decision-making process, and that decision-makers actively seek out and facilitate the involvement of anyone who may be affected by regulations.

Then, when we're talking about "equity", specifically we're talking about the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, and, of course, this is a definition of "underserved communities", and so these are communities that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

There's a list of them here, but, of course, in fisheries, we can sort of broaden that definition and think about things like fishing vessel crews, fish processors, territorial fishing communities, subsistence fishery participants, and so keep in mind that the definition of "underserved communities" applies to fisheries, but it could also be thought about in a broader fisheries context, and, of course, these communities are likely to vary by region and sort of the barriers that they're experiencing.

Here are sort of the big goals that came out of that EEJ strategy, and the ones that we're going to be talking about today are sort of broadly about empowering environment, incorporating equity into policy and plans, incorporating it into research, and doing more research on equity itself, making sure that our outreach and education efforts are equitable, distribution of benefits is equitable, and then inclusive governance.

One of the things that I wanted to mention is that one of the -- What's sort of going to be driving the actions the council considers taking are the work that was done by the Southeast Regional Office in the development of their equity and environmental justice implementation plan. They did a huge amount of work, in a very short amount of time, to look at taking what NMFS had put together in that broader strategy and looking at how we could implement that in the Southeast Region, and that included in-person focus groups, scoping sessions, online public request for information, and then a number of multilingual listening sessions, and I will say, if you have questions about all of this work, and what came out of it, there is a presentation in the council's March briefing book that was given, but, also, Christina Package-Ward was an integral part of doing a lot of this work, and I'm sure can answer questions about how that process went.

What I'm going to sort of do here today is they had a list of action items that was presented to the council, and it is a very, very lengthy list of action items, and so what I have done here is sort of pulled a couple of key ones that the council really honed-in on, at their meeting, and that really serve as a space where the council itself can work to forward some of the goals that were identified through that focus group work, and so we're sort of going to start by identifying an action item and then sort of posing a question to the group about how the council might work to better implement that action item.

The first here is talking about creating an empowering environment, and one of the action items was to look at developing, or offering, Southeast-region-specific EEJ training to council members, AP members, staff, and so one of the questions that I have for you guys is are you aware of any Southeast-region-specific EEJ training, or just sort of any other general diversity training that might be beneficial for council members and staff, and I know that working in DEI, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, is sort of a very specific discipline, and it's not a discipline that we necessarily have represented right now on council staff, and so training could be incredibly beneficial, and so, if anyone on the SEP is aware of trainings that you have done that were really helpful, or that others have done, we would welcome that information, especially while we still have funding to maybe do some staff training.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I kind of was -- I thought about this question for a little while, and the one source that I could think of, and especially like here, even in the Charleston area, and someplace like the College of Charleston may have faculty members, but you don't necessarily know what department they might be in, because there are so many different places they could be, and so what I would start with is maybe perhaps looking -- Contacting like the College of Charleston, or any

other universities, especially places where the council frequently meets, and see if they have an academic department of DEI, that includes DEI, where there are faculty members who specialize in DEI, because it could be in psychology, or it could be in sociology, or it could be political science, and there's just education, and there's lots of different places.

Then I would start -- If you can locate some of those people, ask them about DEI training, because some of them might actually do that themselves, or they can help you locate somebody, and I think the path that I would follow is, thinking forward into the future, where the council is going to be having meetings, and seeing if you can find somebody locally there, through colleges and universities, and, also, there are some religious institutions who do DEI kinds of work.

You might want to even contact them, and it doesn't necessarily have to be in a religious context, but they do that as part of the social outreach, and, like here in Charleston, Circular Church, downtown, and I know they're very involved in DEI sorts of things, and just calling somebody there, and they might be willing to talk to you, and they might know somebody who can do that kind of training.

You have to be real creative, and I think universities would be the easiest place to go, and, otherwise, you would have to kind of know people within a community who are involved in doing -- Whether they're involved in DEI awareness type of things, but it's going to be one of those finding those key stakeholders, or whatever, who are involved in that and going -- But it's going to be different for every community you go to, but I think the main one might be as far as a university or something, where the state, or whatever, hasn't wiped out DEI programs.

For example, in Florida, it's going to be very difficult to find anybody to do DEI through a state university, but that doesn't mean that private universities can't do it, and it's just state-run universities, and so you might see that, but it's going to take a lot of legwork to find it.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: So there's actually a Southeast and Caribbean Environmental Justice Community of Practice. It's an ongoing dialogue, and it has a huge number of academic partners, of community organizations, of people who work at NOAA, and for NMFS, and for other portions of the agency, and so I can link you into that, and it's a great place to start, because, to emphasize what Brian was saying, this needs to be not just a single training in one place, right, but this needs to probably be a series of smaller workshops, and, like we mentioned yesterday, it's not a here, listen to my twenty-minute PowerPoint, and now you understand DEI, and you shall be now equitable going forward, right, and you might want to think of it as like little chunks, and an ongoing learning process, but definitely across the region, and I do agree that there's a lot of academic partners who -- There are a lot of academic partners who carry a DEI title, and whether or not that will be as relevant to the region, and to the industry, and that is where you will have to do your real legwork, I think, too.

DR. HUNT: I think the training we get at universities is more HR-based, and it's got nothing to do with environmental justice. Like I said, I think there's a lot of people in the area, but seeing something with specific training in that -- I have never seen it, but EPA -- Have you reached out to them, because they probably would be the ones who have something like that built into their programs, and that's the only one that I can think of, government-wise, who may have something that is that specific.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: EPA does have a lot of trainings, and they have some online for their Region 4, which I think the Southeast is part of, and I haven't really explored whether they're relevant to what we all do or if it's all contamination and things like that, but I think it could be really cool for like us to look into that, because I think we'll need to do that for our EEJ stuff, too.

DR. CRANDALL: I would also say, if you haven't already looked there, look at the trainings of the professional societies, like American Fisheries Society have been offering. It could be worth reaching out to them and saying which ones, you know, did the society find useful, and it's not region-specific, but it is a bunch of fisheries folks, and so --

MS. WIEGAND: Excellent. Thank you, guys. That was really helpful. Next, looking at, you know, incorporating equity and environmental justice into our policies and plans, and so one of the things is sort of identifying, and addressing, barriers and structures that are leading to the exclusion of these underserved communities and working to encourage the council to incorporate sort of EEJ principles into all of our operating procedures, and so do you have any recommendations for how council staff could better incorporate EEJ principles into daily activities?

I would say one of my concerns here is I don't want it to just seem like we're now adding EEJ as a think that's under all of our policies without it having an actual tangible effect, and so keeping in mind that we would like it to be more than just adding it into, you know, the code of conduct, but it being something that tangibly impacts the way we're thinking about all of this stuff moving forward.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I have a long list of ideas, but I think -- I mean, you all are doing such great work already, and so I guess like recognizing that you're doing awesome outreach activities, and what you were talking about with the citizen science and your other stakeholder engagement work, and I think that is going to contribute a lot toward it, as far as like engaging folks that maybe haven't been involved with the council process before, but, in addition to that, I guess, you know, a lot of the things that we heard was about communication, writing and presenting in plain language, which I think all of us need to do better, for sure.

Then I think we could also partner to engage in some analysis, and research, to identify underserved communities, barriers, and issues, and then incorporate it into our work for fisheries management actions, and then I'm trying to -- You were talking about traveling to and holding meetings in places that the council doesn't normally go to, and so trying to reach those maybe rural participants, which I think is a question you have later, and something that we did hear was about lack of internet access for folks in rural locations. I think people had suggested trying to have like a listening station place or something, which I don't know, you know, whether that's something that could be explored.

Then the development of an EEJ AP, which I think you have another question about that, and something I heard recently was attempting to make the council appointment system more clear, and so, like if you know that they're looking for applicants, posting that, so that folks know that it's happening, and kind of people mentioned not seeing themselves represented in the council members, and so making sure they have an opportunity to at least apply for those positions, and so these are just random things that came to my mind, but, I mean, there's a ton of stuff in the implementation strategy that I think could be, you know, developed to council daily activities, but

also like ways to make it easier for like women, in particular, to participate. I don't know if, you know, this is a possibility, but things like childcare, or thinking about the times that are meetings are held, whether women are able to participate in those times and for that time commitment. I'm sorry, and there's way more, but that's just like my beginning.

DR. HUNT: I think, when I worked in Jacksonville, Florida, I was in a very diverse African American community, and, rather than try to talk to individuals, I went to the pastors of the churches, and they basically -- They are opinion leaders in those communities, and I'm sure it's the same in Asian communities, that that is a way to minimize who you can go to, and they can get the word out, to possibly have some meetings and things like that.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I think for sure -- I know that the folks -- I wasn't involved in the South Atlantic ones, but I know the folks that did that work relied on like the Gullah Geechee leaders in particular, and so I love that idea.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I think if you do that, as they're saying, you're avoiding replicating work that's already been done, and you're recognizing that these are legitimate organizations that have been doing on-the-ground work for a long time, and so it's important to respect that, and to work within that, and I think, bottom line -- I mean, for me, I always, as an anthropologist, look at this and go, who is at this table, and who is not at this table, and why are they not at this table, for all of the myriad reasons, and Christina has an amazing list, and so I'm hoping she's taking the notes on this section of the report, or she'll share it, but what can you do to give that -- How can you give them access to this situation?

MS. WIEGAND: All right. That was some really incredible advice. Thank you, guys. Next, research and monitoring equity, and so looking at sort of the actual socio-economic impacts, or the realized social and economic impacts of management measures relative to sort of, you know, what we had projected, and I know this is something that the council staff has talked about a lot, and not necessarily in the frame of equity, but sort of the need for some retrospective analysis, and I know we have some of this.

Allie Iberle, on our staff, did a bunch of great work for her master's thesis, looking at the effectiveness of regulations in retrospect, but sort of also looking at that from a social and economic lens, and so do you guys know of any studies that have been done looking at, you know, the effectiveness of regulations from that lens?

DR. CHEUVRONT: This goes back a number of years, but -- I think I can find it somewhere, but there was a report that I did that, when they closed the Pamlico Sound to gillnets in North Carolina, it affected only about forty fishers, and, about ten years later, after that happened, I did a report on, using North Carolina's trip ticket program, how the fishers adapted to that regulation, and what they did, and what we were able to do, because we did some follow-up as well, is some people just switched fisheries.

Some of them were successful in trying to do that, and some were not, and, as it turned out, there was biological implications of doing that, but there were also social implications. It's been a long time since I looked at the report, but I think about 25 percent of them dropped out of fishing all together, which was a shocking thing, because nobody thought -- You know, they'll find something

else to do, and, well, obviously they did, but it just didn't involve fishing, but there were a number of other kinds of findings.

Some people went out into the ocean to fish, and half of those people who did that were kind of successful, and the other half had to come back in, because they just weren't equipped to do it, but one of the big things that occurred was one of the species they changed into catching was croakers, and it sounds silly, but these people -- In one year, they caught -- This small group caught like 20,000 pounds of croakers. It was a huge amount, and I know it wasn't a very politically-correct thing to say, but 20,000 pounds of croakers -- Is that biomass more or less important than a couple of sea turtles?

I kind of brought that up in a discussion in-house at DMF at the time, and I was told that I could not say that publicly, but I don't work for DMF anymore, and so I can say things like that, because turtles are kind of sacred, but it's those kinds of things, and there was a written report that exists, and, now, I can go through my archives and look and see if I can find it, and I know I gave it to staff at one point, because they had a similar question, and that was --

Nobody else at the time, and we're going back probably fifteen to twenty years, when that was done, and they couldn't find anybody else who had done something similar, which is really kind of an easy thing to do when you have a trip ticket program, but nobody followed-up, and they just let it go, but there's an example of where you have basically a family-run fishing operation, in a relatively poor rural community, using gillnets, and having that taken away from them, and what happened to them as a result of that. It was a long-term study looking, a number of years later, as to what happened to them, at least economically, and so I will see if I can dig that up somewhere, and I will send it to you.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Kathi Kitner who used to work for the council, forever ago, has a great article about snapper grouper crew, and the shifts in that community as an impact of those regulations, and I don't know if it fits here so much, but Tracy and Brian and I have used our own work, and then some of the oral histories from the Voices archive, to talk about the need for collaborative gear changes, and we looked at TEDs and the rates of compliance in TEDs in the South Atlantic compared to the Gulf, because of the way that it was carried out.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Next up, we're still sticking with research and monitoring, and so one of the things that has really been a challenge for council staff is identifying some of these marginalized social groups, so that we can get more information on sort of what their barriers are to participating, and so we've talked about this quite a lot this week, but we wanted to see if you guys had any -- The SEP is known for being creative, and so any creative ways for the council to sort of, you know, figure out who is not at the table, and who is participating in our fisheries, but isn't at the table, considering that we have the lovely PRA concerns, and funding concerns, that can make it challenging to do some of this work.

DR. HUNT: My mentor did a research project on the black drum fishery off of Galveston, and what we found was there was a distinctly different clientele who fished the jetties at night, versus during the day, and they were mainly your minority anglers, who were fishing at night, and so does the sampling, where we sample anglers, and when we sample anglers, create inequities in their representation and catch data and harvest data and characteristics?

I think that maybe NOAA -- There is probably a lot more examples of that, but, since we all work 8:00 to 5:00, then creel surveys get done morning and evening, and we may be missing a substantial portion of the population, at the same places that we're currently sampling, but at different times.

DR. CRANDALL: This is massively simplifying it, but we've had success in the past, as a first step of asking the people at the table who is missing, right, because they typically have some idea, and they can give you good insights into who is not there.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I know you're already doing this, but asking all of the state agencies who do we never talk to, and who is never part of this, and, now, if you add on how do we access those folks, then the conversation might fall apart, right, because, if they had figured it out, they would be at the table, but at least you can start to figure out who it is that you need to be trying to have conversations with. Then the acceptance that marginalized groups might look very different than we expect them to look in the Southeast, that it's much easier to identify marginalized groups if you're working in Alaska than it is in the South Atlantic.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Switching gears, next up, we're talking about one of my favorite subjects, outreach and engagement, and so one of the things that we've talked a lot about already is sort of developing a template language that we can incorporate into outreach materials to illustrate that the council is listening, and they do care about stakeholder input, and this is something that, you know, and we've mentioned it all week, that we really struggle with, and we want to avoid the perception, especially with EEJ stuff, that it's just a checkbox that the council needs to check, and then they can move on with whatever they had already intended on doing, and so do you guys have any suggestions for how we can more readily illustrate that the council is listening and truly values stakeholder input?

I will say that especially as we start to undertake more in-person engagement, where we're asking stakeholders to take time out of their day to come talk to council members, and, again, it's key to us that they feel like their input is valuable.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I think, during final comment periods for amendments, NMFS takes those comments and has written responses to them, that are included, but that's only one way, and I think that's actually a good model, but I think there is other ways -- You know, because, like when the council staff do public hearings, and scoping and things like that, sometimes things come up that are discussed, and we might think that they're kind of off-the-wall, or whatever, but they are concerns that at least some, or even sometimes only one fisherman, raises.

There needs to be a way to somehow at least acknowledge that they were made. Now, I think one of the interesting things about the way it's done in those amendments, when they have those final questions, or comments, that are submitted, that need to be responded to, regardless of whether the question is truly relevant or not, the question is there, and there is a response.

Sometimes the response is a little bit government-ese, you know, and say, oh, that's not relevant to this discussion, because, and then you go on to -- But I think there needs to be something that it doesn't really matter whether it's truly relevant or not, and it needs to be treated with respect, and somehow doing that, and making it part of the public process, whether it's kept in writing or somehow documented, even if it can't be included, but it at least lets people know that it's heard,

and I know, after public hearings, they summarize -- The council staff will summarize and report it back to the council, but somewhere there needs to be a more complete documentation of what's said, so that people will at least know that they heard what I said, because I think that's a big issue with people.

They get down on the idea of participation, because I never hear again after what I said, and did they really hear what I said, and does it really matter, and, well, it matters enough that you wrote it down, and so now other people can read it, even if you can't act on it, and at least you heard me, and I think the question now is people sometimes don't feel heard, and so I think that might be a big part of it.

DR. CRANDALL: I think you got some of that in speaking to sending reports back to folks after workshops and such, and I feel like some of this could almost be its own research project, asking people what would you need, or like to see, to feel that your participation was valued, and that's got me thinking of those engagement workshops. You know, is there a way to fold that into that, into one of the topics of the discussion, given that one of the things identified is, you know, lack of connection, trust, et cetera, and like can that be part of the workshop, to some degree, of, hey, you know, what, after this, would help you feel that your participation was valued, or how can we communicate back with you.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: That's been something we've been asking on those citizen science interviews as well, and there is definitely, like Brian was saying, a sense that they have to listen to what I say, and so they listen to me, and they check their box, and that's the end of it, and so I would almost argue that template language might be not a good way to handle it, right, because that would be, again, that sense of checking the box and moving forward, but I love where Chelsey was going with this idea, and now I'm just thinking out loud, but even something as -- You know, you've mentioned word clouds a few times, but, as you're holding these meetings, you know, a QR code, where they can scan and add to the word cloud that they're watching in front of them, right, and some sort of way to see -- It's an immediate result, but then also really managing those expectations.

We are here tonight, and here is why, and here's where it will go in the process, you know, and so, for good or for bad, they see that it's like one tiny little crumb in, you know, the whole beach of information that goes into actual change in management and regulation.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. I'm not done with outreach and engagement yet. Like Christina mentioned earlier, a lot of what they heard, when they were out doing the focus groups, is issues with sort of the geographic context of outreach and engagement, and so we're not often in some of these rural areas, that are distant from, you know, council and other meeting venues, and, you know, all of our -- I would say this is not exclusively true, but, for the most part, all of our advisory panel meetings, those SSC and SEP meetings, and we hold all of these in Charleston.

Our council meetings, like I said earlier, are typically held in easily-accessible areas that have venues large enough for us to host a council meeting, but that often means we're not necessarily reaching constituents in rural areas.

Like I said, one of the things we hope to do is, with stakeholder engagement meetings, get council members out there, but that still doesn't necessarily help with actual council meetings, as members

in those communities want to participate in those council meetings, and it's even more challenging if internet accessibility is a challenge, like it is in some rural parts of North Carolina, for example, and so I wondered if the SEP had any suggestions for how we could increase access in those areas.

I really liked Christina's idea of listening stations, and this is something we've done for public hearings in the past, and not widely, but we have done them in partnership with the state agencies, and so that's certainly something I think the council could consider, but sort of other ideas for how we can reach some of these constituents in rural areas.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Before you can do that, you have to define, at some point, not just all underserved people, but underserved people who either do, or would like, to have access to the resource, and a problem with a lot of South Atlantic resources is you've got to get offshore, and that right there is a barrier to a lot of underserved folks, who would like to participate in the fisheries, but either they may not be able to afford even to go on a headboat, let alone have their own equipment that will get them to the fish.

Now, how do you decide? Are they truly your underserved population that you're trying to reach, or what? I think having a definition of what is an underserved population for the South Atlantic Council, and figure out what defines somebody, for the council, as being underserved, is probably a good place to start, because that's going to help you figure out then where are those people, and how do we get to them.

Somebody who lives up in the mountains in North Carolina, who, you know, is Appalachian poor, which is a lot of around where I live up there, and they probably have no idea, or no interest, or desire, to go offshore fishing, and so why should we try to expend efforts to treat them as an underserved population and reach them? If you had a meeting in Ashe County, North Carolina, I doubt that anybody would show up, and so somehow I think there needs to be an understanding of who you're talking about. It can't be just people who want to do saltwater fishing, because that's very different.

I was having a conversation with somebody yesterday about subsistence fishers, and there are subsistence fishers in North Carolina, but they don't go after the species that the South Atlantic Council manages, because they can't get access to them, and so, you know, when you're talking spots, and jumping mullet, and stuff like that, and those folks probably shouldn't be included, unless there is a way you can figure out they would like to be, but they can't do it, but there are people who go out on headboats who do what they call meat fishing, and especially -- There is groups, church groups, that will go out on a headboat, and they can get a bunch of fish that they can use within their community to feed people. I think having some helpful definitions upfront will help you with your resources. It's a thorny thing that I think needs to be wrestled through near the beginning, before you start looking at how you're going to do outreach.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that one of the things that we have heard from public comment a lot, regarding concerns of EEJ, is about headboats specifically, and concern about sort of the loss of headboats in the South Atlantic region and how that may be affecting access to some of these resources for individuals who maybe can afford a headboat trip, but necessarily can't afford, you know, a six-pack charter, let alone their own vessel, and so, Christina, I don't know if you heard some of that during the focus groups as well, but I know the council has heard some of those concerns.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I think they were talking about like people that go out and basically fill giant containers with food for -- Yes.

DR. CRANDALL: I know you said there had been some kind of past work done, and so did we ask the folks in the rural areas what they think, like what ideas they might have for us to best connect with them?

MS. WIEGAND: So I'm not sure. I mean, I will say, in my short tenure with the council, we haven't done a lot of work specifically asking people in rural areas what would help them be a little bit more engaged. For the mackerel port meetings, which we just did two weeks ago, we went to Hatteras, North Carolina, and a number of the fishermen there mentioned that the council does not come out here very much, and it's nice to have someone out here doing work. Hatteras is not easy to get to, and it's also a smaller area, where it's hard for the council to find a venue of the size that we would need, and so just sort of a note that they are aware that the council doesn't get out there very much, and so, you know, ways that we can be out there more would be great.

DR. CRANDALL: Gotcha, and I recognize that it's hard to say have we heard from them, because the reason we're talking about this is because they're a group we haven't connected with, but I know my default is always, if possible, you know, let's ask them too, and maybe they've got some ideas.

DR. CHEUVRONT: But one of the ways that maybe the council needs to look at non-traditional venues is, for example, while they're rural, every kid in the country has access to a high school, and maybe the council needs to look at having a meeting, either in a high school gymnasium, or a theater, or something like that, where people can actually come to and do that, to look for different venues in rural locations that clearly don't have meeting rooms of this type, or something, and, actually, you will probably find that, in a lot of those places, those auditoriums, and gymnasiums, are already being used for fairly nontraditional things anyway, and so something like this would not be seen as out of the ordinary for the residents of the community.

It's out of the ordinary for the council, and so the council needs to be flexible about how they can do this, and, frankly, a lot of places like that -- I mean, it wouldn't cost the council a dime to use the location, because they would be just glad to have you, and it's just a matter of you might not be able to put people up in a hotel right next to the high school or something, but you need to be flexible and think about how that could possibly be done, but I think you might be able to reach some of those populations, if you can find the right places to go, and that, I think, is going to be very difficult to figure out where to go, but you think about some of the places like in even northern Charleston County, and like going to McClellanville is not -- For a lot of those people up there, they don't probably come to Charleston very often, but they do have -- They used to have a high school there, and I'm sure the building still exists, and they use it for a community center now, I think, and there's a lot of fishermen there. A place like that could be easily done as a place to meet, and so I don't know, and it's just a suggestion.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I think that's a great idea, and like I've been to a North Pacific Council meeting before, and the public comment was in a high school, because, in Kodiak, that was like the biggest place, and so that's awesome. I was just going to say another thing is -- Like there's an action, in the implementation plan, talking about ways to like reach out to communities too in

nontraditional ways, and like newspapers and radio and things like that, and so maybe not just over the internet or the usual methods.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Even sending postcards to people's home addresses has been surprisingly successful and popular.

MS. WIEGAND: Thank you, guys. I think those were some great suggestions, and I was just sort of thinking, Brian and Christina, as you were talking, about this idea of like high schools, or even community centers, if they're large enough, and they might also be less intimidating venues for people who have not historically, you know, participated in the council process, I will say the way you're in a hotel room, with big U, and you're asked to sit up there for public comment in front of a microphone and everyone, and it can be a little intimidating. Having an environment that maybe they're more familiar with, from other meetings, could be incredibly beneficial.

Again, incorporating -- We've talked about some of this already during this meeting, and so don't feel like you need to reiterate if we've already talked about it, but looking at ways to incorporate EEJ considerations into decision-making. This notes specifically resource allocations, but I would also apply that sort of more generally. The council incorporates qualitative information, via fishery performance reports, into some of our allocation decisions. If you can remember, way back last year, or two years ago maybe, we talked to you about our allocation decision tool that incorporates the social indicators, as well as fishery performance report data, but do you know of any other sort of readily-available information that we could use to better understand how allocation decisions are affecting underserved communities specifically?

I will say, for the decision tool we're using now, we rely a lot on the regional quotients, local quotients, those social indicators, and then we sort of use fishery performance reports, as well as the vulnerability indicators, to sort of provide additional ground-truthing on how dependent a given community might be on the specific fishery that we're talking about for allocations. Of course, understanding that communities are often dependent on a diverse suite of fish, and not just a single fish, but that's sort of how allocations work, but any other readily-available information that we could maybe incorporate into that process?

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I think maybe the entire order to do this is based on the fact that this doesn't exist.

DR. CROSSON: You pointed out that we've really addressed a lot of this, the best we could, already earlier. I'm not sure what else we could add.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Then we'll move on to inclusive government and governance, and so one of the things that Christina mentioned earlier was that there was an action item that would encourage the council to establish an EEJ advisory panel that would support implementation of this plan, but also maybe provide an EEJ perspective on other council issues, and so I wanted to know if this group would recommend establishing an EEJ advisory panel specifically or work on -- Alternatively, work on better incorporating members from underserved communities into our existing advisory panels. Then, outside of the implementation plan, are there other council activities that an EEJ advisory panel would really be primed to comment on?

I will say that, for the sake of discussion, let's say we're living in this ideal universe, where we have been able to sort of identify the correct people to have on these advisory panels, understanding that, before we could do this, we would need to do that research that looks at identifying the underserved communities and the barriers to their participation, so that, once we created something like this, we could ensure that they were able to effectively participate and that we had the right people at the table, and so I realize that's an idealized universe, but let's just, for the sake of discussion, say that we did it.

DR. CRANDALL: While we're in ideal, can we not do both of those things, have a panel and incorporate members?

MS. WIEGAND: We absolutely can.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: I just want to second that.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I think one of the things though is that, if you had the EEJ AP, as long as that panel would get an opportunity to voice comments, like many of the other APs do on every amendment, looking together through the lens of EEJ, and I think that would be really valuable, having a single person, which is probably what it would be on every AP, is -- I would guess, from a council perspective, it would be less efficient financially, but I think the advantage of doing that is, if you've really got somebody who is kind of good at that, they could head off problems before they start. The problem with having an EEJ AP is they're going to look at what's already been proposed and say, woah, woah, woah, that's a problem for us, and sometimes it's hard to stop that train, once it's gotten started.

I see the benefits of both, and I would see the AP as probably the first thing that the council might want to put together, at least to have somebody looking at everything through that EEJ lens, because there would be other -- There would be probably some APs that they wouldn't put an EEJ person on, and so I don't want to do an either/or, and I like the idea of both, but I think, at least in the beginning, starting the AP, and identifying which other APs it would be great to have an EEJ person on the AP would be probably a smart way to go.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that I am happy to hear that the SEP feels that we should move forward with both. One of my concerns about putting someone on -- Like incorporating someone into an AP is, if it's not someone that we're putting on that's like a DEI professional, I wouldn't want someone from a specific community to feel like they then have to represent all underserved communities that they might not have a, you know, personal experience in, and so I'm happy to hear that we're sort of thinking of both being effective.

DR. CROSSON: See, I'm less confident about having an EEJ AP, because, to my mind, it depends on what your purpose is. You brought up different issues for EEJ, right, and you brought up three that I can think of. One is how council staff deals with, you know, the public, and another one is how members from some communities are incorporated into the council process, and then the third one is like how do you incorporate this research into our decision-making process and into the amendments.

Those all have different -- If the purpose of having an EEJ advisory panel is to put people from underserved communities into it, I think it's a bad idea, because then you sort of put them over

there, and you're like, oh now this is your problem, and so you can go talk amongst yourselves, but you haven't brought them into the decision-making process. If the point is to get data, and think about ways to incorporate data into the decision-making process, so that we can get some of those underserved communities, you know, better recognized, and better incorporated, then you probably need to talk to a group like the SEP here, right, or somebody like that, that's going to get into that. I just -- I am less positive about the AP, I guess, than some folks are. Chelsey and then Kevin. Christina was first. You're right. I'm sorry. Christina and then Chelsey and then Kevin.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I guess -- I mean, I think there's value in both, and I think that the EEJ AP could maybe help us advise on things, like all the items in the action plan, and how to put those into effect, and like whether we're actually making progress on them, and then I think, like Brian was saying, about like issues that pertain to EEJ, whatever is in front of the council, but then, also, I think it could be valuable to have somebody on existing APs, and I know I had heard that -- I think that folks didn't want to be like separated always too, and so like being part of the process and legitimizing your participation.

DR. CRANDALL: Kind of following on things that have been said, just reinforcing that, just because someone is in an underserved community, it doesn't mean that they're an EEJ expert, and vice versa, and so that's another reason that I see benefits of having both, because we're incorporating, you know, underserved communities into all of these spaces where they might be missing, and then we're also bringing in people who might be experts in EEJ to advise on it, and so, to your point, I don't see that as --

DR. HUNT: I agree that, if we just had one, and it was isolated, that's complaints I've heard from EEJ people in the past, but, if you look at your inclusive governance slide, that's the problem. Look around this room. That's the problem. We have Eugene, and sorry that I am picking you out, Eugene, but, you know, we can't identify every EEJ, but we, as an advisory -- Every advisory panel should mimic our population, as best possible, to incorporate it, and that shows fairness to minority communities, and it's not we have a separate AP that is looking at diversity issues, and then we just turn all those things over to all-Anglo panel that -- Those kinds of issues are what I hear when dealing with diversity inclusiveness, with people that I have dealt with in the past.

DR. CROSSON: I guess one of the things -- Well, first of all, participation of women, where women are adequately represented in this process, is another, you know, community that's been brought up in this discussion, but I also -- I'm wondering whether an EEJ AP should actually be made up of members from some of the other APs, instead of just one group, and maybe it should actually be -- I'm just trying to look at the whole way the process is being incorporated into the council decision-making process, and it seems, to me, that perhaps that AP should actually be existing members of other APs that can see the commonalities across the decision-making process and where things could be better served. That would be one other option that I could imagine.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that's a great idea, and that's something we have done in the past, for sort of select issues that we think all APs should weigh-in on, but don't necessarily think it's effective to have a meeting of forty people in one room, and we'll ask for representatives to sit on a smaller AP, like we did for our allocation decision tool, and so that's something that the council has a framework to do already.

DR. CROSSON: All right. Next.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Next up, and we've talked about this a little bit, is making council meetings a more welcoming and safe environment, and, like I said earlier, it can be pretty intimidating to walk into a council meeting, and it's this, but blown-up, and so is there a way that staff can work, staff and council members can work, to make people that may be coming to participate in a council meeting for the first time feel a bit more comfortable and oriented into what is an intimidating environment?

DR. CRANDALL: I don't know if you all are doing this, but we've been playing with this at the state, and they've started a -- I forget what they call it, but basically greeters, that, when people come, it's like, hey, welcome, and this is what you do, and this is where you go if you have questions, and, you know, they have clear tags, and it helps if you're a first-timer, and someone is like, hi, I'm here, and what do you want to talk about, and I can put you in touch with people and let you know exactly what's going to happen, and where you're supposed to go, where the bathrooms are.

MS. WIEGAND: I would say we do that, to some extent, and, for the most part, we have a greeter, and her name is Kim Iverson, but we do usually have a table set up, with some, you know, council outreach materials, and then Kim is there to greet, but, for example, at a meeting where we may be getting a lot of public comment, Kim is just one person, and she can only do so much, as one person, trying to get people signed-in, and so it might be helpful for us to consider having other staff designated as greeters during public comment periods.

MS. PACKAGE-WARD: I don't know if there's anything to make like public testimony any less intimidating, but I was just at the Gulf last week, and so it's fresh in my mind, but like -- I mean even like as a, whatever, a NMFS employee presenting to the council, it's intimidating, and like just being able to like sit down made me feel better, and so like there's -- You know, they're standing up there, and like it's just so -- I don't know, but anyway.

DR. CROSSON: Yes, and, I mean, do you guys still do the thing where they have the discussion, where they have like Andy, and maybe Clay, and that used to be really interesting to watch, that sort of sit down and talk.

MS. WIEGAND: So we have not been doing those sort of fireside chats lately, and I feel like "fireside chat" is probably becoming a dated reference, but we have not been doing those at recent meetings. I will say, sort of as a quick shoutout to our outreach team, some of the newer staff, that have been, you know, seeing how public comment works at council meetings with fresh eyes, have suggested sort of a how-to public comment, or sort of a guide on how to help make your public comment effective, and so that's something that they are actively working on.

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Again, that might be a really cool, simple infographic, a thirty-second video, and that's a great idea. I'm glad you're doing that.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. We made it. I will say that I cannot exaggerate, and like that was a very, very small glimpse into some of the really great action items that came out of the work that the Regional Office did for the Southeast implementation plan, and so, if you haven't had a chance to go in and look at the full list of action items for the presentation that was given to the council in March, all of that is on our website, in the council's briefing book, and I can also send it out to

you, but the Regional Office really did some great work in gathering information, and so this was just a small snapshot, and I definitely encourage you to look at the bigger list of items, and, if you have any other sort of ideas on how the council can effectively integrate this stuff, please let me know.

DR. CROSSON: Good. Very good discussion, I thought. Okay. All right, and so the Social and Economic Panel does not now need to discuss Item Number 9, because we've already taken care of it. What other business might we have, before we get to the new chair and everything? Okay. For the report, people should have been taking comments, hopefully, and, you know, if you haven't, trying to remember what was said, and the council staff, I'm sure, took a lot of commentary as well on the different items, but please take your write-ups, such as they exist, and get them to me, and to Jen, as quickly as possible, so that we can start working on it. I will try and get with Jen, and I will try and get a report draft done in the next week-and-a-half, but like, if you can get it today or tomorrow, your comments to me, that would be appreciated. I'm trying to drag this along, because I want to do the election, but I want somebody else to be here. Just hang on a minute.

Listen, and I have been doing this for a number of years, and actually twice, because I think John did it for a little while, and then I came back and did it again, as the chair of this committee, and so I'm stepping down as chair, and, now, the vice chair -- We never had a vice chair, did we? Are we supposed to?

ELECTION OF NEW CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

MS. WIEGAND: I believe we were supposed to have a vice chair, and Jen was elected vice chair in 2019, and it's new, but we should have a chair and a vice chair.

DR. CROSSON: All right. Well, I guess we might as well, and she's out of the room, and so we could -- Well, let me get to the second question. Who is potentially interested in being vice chair? Do we have anybody, any volunteers, for that, because that would be helpful. John, go ahead.

MR. HADLEY: If I could add to that, and so the chair and vice chair -- Ideally, it would be an individual that's on the SSC and SEP, just so -- A lot of times, you'll have review on the same item by both panels, and so it helps to kind of have sort of -- You know, to be able to update the SSC, during their discussion, on what the SEP said. You know, it's not a necessity, but that's kind of the way things have gone in the past, and so I know that narrows the pool.

DR. CROSSON: I don't know if Christina and Jason want to a Roshambo or something, but do you guys -- First of all, I'm opening the floor for nominations for chair, and do we have any nominations for chair of the Social and Economic Panel? Go ahead, Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I will nominate Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes for chair.

DR. CROSSON: Absolutely.

MR. WALSH: Seconded.

DR. CROSSON: It's seconded. Okay. Any objection? I'm sure there is not. All right. Congratulations, Jen. (Applause) All right. So, do we have any nominations for vice chair for the committee?

MR. STEMLE: I will nominate Jason.

DR. CROSSON: There you go. All right. Do we have any -- Go ahead, Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I will second it.

DR. CROSSON: You will second it. Okay. I don't see any -- I'm sure there's no objection to that, and so now congratulations to Jason. (Applause) I guess -- I assume that -- We never know between now and next spring. If you guys decide that we need to have an ad hoc meeting of the SEP, it would probably be a webinar at some point. Otherwise, we would be back here next spring, as usual. Like I said, get those meetings notes to myself and to Jen, and we'll put something together as quickly as we can. She has to brief the SSC, later this week, about what happened, and so she definitely --

DR. SWEENEY-TOOKES: Please.

DR. CROSSON: Please send them, all right, but we won't have the draft of the report done, and they never try to do that, or I've tried to do that a few times, and it's just insane, if you're sitting in an SSC meeting and trying to draft a report from the previous meeting, and you can't pay attention. So good. All right. Well, you know, we're done an hour early, almost an hour early, and so thank you, everybody, and, with that, the meeting is closed. Actually, you're the chair now. You go ahead and close it.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 16, 2024.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Amanda Thomas
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SEP April 15, 2024

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL OF THE SSC

April 16, 2024

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April 2024 Socio-Economic

Attendee Report: Panel Meeting

Report Generated:

04/16/2024 12:01 PM EDT

Webinar ID

535-883-403

Actual Start Date/Time

04/15/2024 12:36 PM EDT

Duration

4 hours 24 minutes

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

No

No

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Not applicable for staff

Not applicable for staff

Last Name

Council

Attendee Details

Attended

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Interest Rating

32

90

33

37

40

37

33

49

98

37

70

45

34

37

96

34

42

68

46

40

57

55

48

56

42

61

41

Last Name

Bianchi

Byrd

Carmichael

Curtis

DeVictor

Dukes

Fandel

G

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Helies

Hugo

Iberle

Iverson

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Mehta

Miller

Murphey

Oliver

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Scyphers

Smillie

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April 2024 Socio-Economic

Attendee Report: Panel Meeting

Report Generated:

04/16/2024 12:02 PM EDT

Webinar ID

535-883-403

Actual Start Date/Time

04/16/2024 07:36 AM EDT

Duration

3 hours 44 minutes

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

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No

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Not applicable for staff

Not applicable for staff

Last Name

Council

Attendee Details

Attended

Yes

Yes

Yes

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Yes

Yes

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Yes

Yes

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Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Interest Rating

38

40

35

34

98

36

37

94

86

92

62

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37

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98

61

98

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DeVictor

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