

Overview of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Visioning Project

Finding a Way Forward: Shared Vision and Strategic Planning for the Snapper Grouper Fishery



This overview provides background information on the process that the South Atlantic Fishery Management SAFMC (SAFMC) is using to develop a shared vision for the future of the snapper grouper fishery in the region. The overview includes a summary of why the SAFMC is pursuing a visioning process, work on the project to-date, upcoming plans for stakeholder meetings, and how the public can get involved.

What is visioning and why is the SAFMC pursuing this project?

Creating a vision for an organization typically means crafting a long-term plan and a roadmap for the future of the organization. The SAFMC is developing a long-term “vision” for managing the snapper grouper fishery into the future. A visioning project can include a strategic plan for the fishery with management goals, objectives and strategies to meet each goal for the long-term. The current system of management sometimes leads to measures that stakeholders view as reactionary and focused on an immediate crisis instead of managing fisheries for long-term biological, social and economic success. Stakeholders have expressed concerns about this approach and have asked the SAFMC for new solutions to address the long-term viability of fisheries in the region.

To meet these needs, the SAFMC initiated a Visioning Project to evaluate and refine current management goals and objectives for managing the snapper grouper fishery. Using a transparent, stakeholder-driven process the SAFMC will work cooperatively to create a long-term vision for the snapper grouper fishery; a vision that is shared between the SAFMC and all stakeholders in the South Atlantic. The SAFMC also views this as an opportunity to improve stakeholder engagement, make use of the best management tools available, and develop a pro-active plan for the future of the region’s snapper grouper fishery.

What has the SAFMC accomplished so far?

The SAFMC initially discussed undertaking a visioning project at its **December 2012 meeting**. All SAFMC members participated in this first discussion on visioning. The goals of the initial discussion were:

1. What are the overarching, thought-provoking questions that will elicit the stakeholder input and information needed to build/define a vision for the snapper grouper fishery?
2. What is the desired product/outcome? (i.e., a strategic plan, blueprint for the fishery, etc.)
3. What kind of process does the SAFMC want to follow to achieve the desired outcome, and within what timeframe?

At the **March 2013 Council meeting** the visioning discussion continued and staff presented the SAFMC with a list of decisions to be considered about the visioning process in order to develop a road map for moving forward.

During the **June 2013 Council meeting**, SAFMC staff facilitated discussions that focused on crafting a draft vision statement, reviewing existing management objectives and drafting new ones, and discussing next steps for the September 2013 Council meeting visioning discussion and possible port meetings in Fall 2013 and Spring 2014.

Prior to the June 2013 SAFMC meeting, staff requested that each SAFMC member submit their personal vision statement for the snapper grouper fishery based on some guiding principles to consider. These principles included:

- Achieving the maximum economic yield from the fishery
- Maintaining the long-term sustainability of stocks
- Maintaining the integrity of fishing communities
- Achieving the most equitable allocation of the resource

Summary of Workshop Outcomes – Guiding Principles and Roadmap for the Visioning Project

The Council established the following guiding principles for the visioning project.

- The visioning project should involve ***close communication with all stakeholders***.
- The visioning project would ***focus only on the snapper grouper fishery*** at this time.
- The SAFMC recognizes ***several challenges to current management*** and the need to address these during the visioning process.
- A ***framework for carrying out the visioning process*** (timeframe, costs, desired outcomes) needs to be developed.
- The framework and planning of the process should be carried out by a ***Visioning Workgroup***.
- The SAFMC needs to ***develop a process for gathering stakeholder input*** that allows for full participation.
- A ***strategic plan for the snapper grouper fishery*** is a desired outcome of the visioning process.

Below is a table of the SAFMC’s roadmap for the visioning project.

QUESTION	ANSWER
Decision #1: What fisheries will be included?	The SAFMC will develop a vision and strategic plan for the snapper grouper fishery only at this time.
Decision #2: How does the SAFMC want to refer to this process?	“Finding a Way Forward: Shared Vision and Strategic Planning for the Snapper Grouper Fishery”
Decision #3: How does the SAFMC want to approach evaluating existing objectives?	The SAFMC will undertake evaluation of objectives before soliciting input from stakeholders.
Decision #4: Which stakeholders will be involved?	Invite involvement of Snapper Grouper AP members as well as “key stakeholders”
Decision #5: How would the stakeholders be involved?	Stakeholders will be involved at all stages of the visioning process. All visioning workshops are open to the public and the SAFMC plans to conduct regional port meetings to solicit input from all stakeholders.
Decision #6: Does the SAFMC want meetings to be facilitated?	SAFMC staff will be providing facilitation for the workshops and port meetings.

Proposed Timeline for Visioning Roadmap –

Roadmap Tasks:	Jun 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014
Snapper grouper advisory Panel provides specific comments on visioning.										
SAFMC develops a draft vision statement.										
SAFMC reviews and revises snapper grouper goals/objectives.										
Conduct region-wide port meetings with stakeholders.										

KEY CONCEPTS FOR VISION STATEMENT

- AVAILABILITY (FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS)
- SUSTAINABILITY
- HABITAT
- HEALTHY FISHERIES (FISH POPULATIONS, FISHERMEN/FISHING COMMUNITIES, HABITAT)
- ACCESSIBILITY
- ABUNDANT
- CONFIDENCE (MONITORING, DATA COLLECTION)
- STAKEHOLDERS (DIVERSITY)
- ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY
- BALANCE
- “LEGACY” FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
- FISHERY = FISH, HABITAT, FISHERMEN, FISHING COMMUNITIES

DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

“THE SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY IS A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE FISHERY THAT BALANCES AND OPTIMIZES BENEFITS FOR ALL CITIZENS.”

DRAFT GOAL THEMES

- HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM AND HABITAT
- STOCK THAT CAN REPLENISH ITSELF
- PROFITABLE COMMERCIAL AND FOR-HIRE TRIPS
- RECREATIONAL FISHING OPPORTUNITIES
- STABLE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE
- PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COOPERATION
- MINIMAL WASTE
- SOUND SCIENCE
- ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT
- INCENTIVIZED COMPLIANCE, AND EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT

DRAFT STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Science
2. Management
3. Communication
4. Governance

What Are the Next Steps?

The next step is to further refine the draft snapper grouper goals/objectives and strategies with stakeholder input. The SAFMC invites all stakeholders to be involved and to participate in the visioning process. The draft vision statement and draft goal statements and objectives outlined in this document are exactly that – a DRAFT. **The SAFMC wants to involve stakeholders at all points of the visioning project and to get public involvement at an early stage in the visioning process.**

Proposed Port Meetings with Fishing Stakeholders

To receive input from stakeholders, the SAFMC will conduct region-wide port meetings in 2014. The structure for the port meetings is still being discussed and the SAFMC welcomes your input. The hope is that stakeholders with fisheries interests would help organize and promote the port meetings in their own backyards. The outcomes of the meetings would be:

- Input on the draft goals/objectives for the snapper grouper fishery developed by the Council. Note: *These are framed around four strategic goals – Science, Management, Communication, and Governance.*
- Specific strategies for implementing the four strategic goals and objectives.
- Dialogue with fisheries stakeholders to improve communication about management of the snapper grouper fishery

Suggestions for Port Meeting Structure

- *Conduct facilitated meetings in key coastal communities where all stakeholders with fishing interests are invited to participate. Stakeholders might include fishery representatives from private recreational, for-hire, and commercial sectors; conservation groups; and seafood dealers/restaurants.*
- *Conduct facilitated meetings in key coastal communities where only one sector participates. Individual sector meetings could last two hours and would focus on the needs of one sector at a time.*

Suggestions for Port Meeting Organization

- *Timing of the port meetings relative to fishing seasons.*
- *SAFMC members would all be encouraged to attend port meetings to listen.*
- *SAFMC staff would facilitate the meetings.*
- *Key community stakeholders would assist with organizing and hosting port meetings.*
- *Detailed notes would be recorded during the port meetings and then compiled into a summary report for each meeting.*

How Can You Get Involved?

- 1. Talk to Us** - Submit your comments and ideas about the visioning process, draft vision statement, draft goals and objectives. Comments can be submitted via e-mail to: safmcvision@safmc.net. This is our first attempt to take informal public comments from fishing stakeholders and is not recorded as a formal comment. We welcome the public's ideas!
- 2. Attend a Visioning Workshop at a SAFMC Meeting** – All visioning workshops are open to the public and are scheduled for the Monday morning of each SAFMC meeting week from 9am – 12pm. The next workshop will be on December 2, 2013 from 9am – 12pm in Wilmington, NC.
- 3. Volunteer to Organize/Host/Promote a Port Meeting** – The SAFMC needs help organizing and promoting the port meetings. Do you have skills in gathering up fellow fishermen or are you an officer in a local fishing organization? Consider volunteering to help organize and/or host a port meeting in your fishing community. SAFMC staff will assist with organization and meeting details. Send us an e-mail about your interest in volunteering to safmcvision@safmc.net.

Feel free to contact members of the Visioning Workgroup:

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