

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council:
DRAFT Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery – COMMUNICATION
July 2015**

**Communication – Strategic Goal:
Snapper Grouper Fishery, Draft Vision Blueprint**

Background:

In December 2012, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) began its Visioning Project to construct a long-term vision for the snapper grouper fishery through development of a strategic plan for the fishery that would guide management actions into the future. The foundation of the project has been the engagement and involvement of fishery stakeholders throughout the region and across all sectors in the development of the long-term plan. This strategic plan, called the *Vision Blueprint*, consists of four strategic focus areas – *Science, Communication, Management, and Governance*. Each focus area will have a specific goal and associated objectives and action strategies that will be used by the Council to guide future management of the snapper grouper fishery.

Following an approach similar to what the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council used to draft a strategic plan for its managed fisheries, the Council sought stakeholder input early in the process and held a series of 26 informal meetings to solicit stakeholder input in coastal communities throughout the South Atlantic region. Because stakeholder needs and perceptions can vary widely, the Council has been careful not to exclude any input pertaining to the management of the snapper grouper fishery. Therefore, at this stage of the process, items that have been considered in the past as possible management tools but have not been developed further, will continue to be included among the many tools the Council may consider for long-term management of the snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic region. As such, the table below encompasses management actions/strategies as suggested by stakeholders in the fishery as well as those brought forth by the Council members themselves. The goals and objectives are not in order of priority and are all considered draft at this time. As the draft Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery takes shape in 2015, the Council will provide their rationale for management strategies that are eventually excluded from further consideration.

Communication

GOAL: Employ interactive outreach strategies that encourages continuous participation and supports two-way engagement between managers and snapper grouper fishery stakeholders while building a greater understanding of science and management.		
Objective 1. Develop communication approaches that provide streamlined and timely information to increase awareness and engage stakeholders.	Strategy 1.1	Expand the use of innovative technology to improve stakeholder participation and to communicate the Council process.
	Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Expand the format for public hearings through the use of web-based hearings facilitated by staff. B. Utilize remote listening stations for public hearings and educational meetings to increase participation from remote groups of stakeholders. C. Change the format of in-person public hearings to

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		<p>match the format of the visioning port meetings (interactive, less formal, less staff).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D. Utilize web-based tools (webinars, video conferencing, etc.) and other technology to collect public comment and provide educational workshops. E. Provide a comment box on the website for stakeholders to submit comment after viewing the recorded scoping presentation. F. Continue Q&A webinars with Council staff to discuss upcoming amendments for public hearings and scoping. G. Consider hosting webinars just for snapper grouper permit holders on various topics. H. On the Constant Contact sign-up form, add a check-off box for indication of the sector they participate in.
	Strategy 1.2	Utilize the Council’s website as a clearinghouse for easy to access information on Council news, regulations, fishery management plans, and management actions.
	Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Consider use of staff-moderated chat boards for each sector on the Council website. B. Incorporate a real-time calendar that displays current fishery closures for each sector. C. Create a separate page for educational resources/materials produced by the Council on various topics. D. Establish a comment and suggestion box on the website that allows users to provide comments on a specific topic or constructive comments on the Council’s activities and process. E. Track website analytics on presentation downloads and other documents to evaluate effectiveness and access of materials on the website.
	Strategy 1.3	Consider use of alternative outreach approaches to further engage stakeholders in the management process.
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Consider using Public Service Announcements via VHF radio and/or local radio stations for meeting/issue announcements and regulation changes. B. Consider an advertising campaign highlighting Council activities and success stories. C. Consider use of informal polls/surveys to take input on a specific management action or direction being considered by the Council (<i>before Council starts to develop and take action</i>). D. Work with existing on-line fishing forums to collect input on a specific topic. E. Send posters/flyers to fish houses to announce meetings/issue announcements and regulation changes. F. Consider creation of an incentive rewards program for stakeholders that remain active in the management 	

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		<p>process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Consider using recorded telephone messages to reach active stakeholders about Council activities. H. Determine how to use web-based surveys to solicit input on specific management topics. I. Support expansion of the Marine Resource Education Program SouthEast (MREP-SE) to other areas of the region. J. Collaborate with local port agents to serve as community liaisons to convey management information to stakeholders. K. Participate in area festivals on a regular basis. L. Consider using paid angler focus groups to solicit input on specific management issues. M. Support more informal port meetings for educational purposes on relevant fishery issues/topics to include current and upcoming management issues. N. Diversify the locations of in-person meetings (public hearings, scoping, etc.) to allow for one-on-one interaction with Council members. O. Expand the Council’s social media efforts to include use of YouTube and a blog. P. Consider the use of an outreach tool for polling the public about needs for habitat improvements as it relates to the snapper grouper fishery.
<p>Objective 2. Ensure that Council communication encourages and supports engagement with a diverse audience of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Strategy 2.1</p>	<p>Use targeted communication strategies to maintain and increase stakeholder engagement with the Council.</p>
	<p>Actions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Consider use of direct mailings/other communication strategies targeting snapper grouper permit holders for significant management/regulatory actions. B. Develop a list of key industry stakeholders in the snapper grouper fishery and basic community profiles for the region. C. Develop and maintain a database of snapper grouper fishery related contacts for use in communication and outreach programs to include: <i>recreational fishing focused groups (fishing clubs, bait/tackle shops, dive clubs, etc.), seafood dealers/retailer and other commercial fishing businesses.</i> D. Develop 1-page fishery management resources (print and electronic) for distribution to targeted audiences/sectors. E. Consider use of appropriate outreach materials that meet the needs of a wide generational range of stakeholders. F. Continue traditional means of communication
<p>Objective 3. Improve awareness and understanding of fishery</p>	<p>Strategy 3.1</p>	<p>Support collaboration with academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations and agency partners on development of fishery-related outreach programs and materials.</p>

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science and research and how these inform management.	Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Develop recreational angler education programs about how to reduce discards (i.e., barotrauma, best fishing practices for handling/releasing fish, descending devices, etc.). B. Consider developing youth outreach materials (electronic) and educational field trips related to fisheries and fisheries management. C. Consider outreach strategies related to the connections between habitat and fisheries.
	Strategy 3.2 Support outreach programs that address the process of a stock assessment and how results are used in management.	
	Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Develop targeted outreach programs aimed at all sectors about the Council process, including the role of the Scientific & Statistical Committee. B. Develop angler education programs about fisheries science, stock assessments and data collection. C. Expand the use of educational webinars to convey information about stock assessments, data collection, and other fishery science concepts.
	Strategy 4.1 Work with agency partners to provide stakeholders with information on seafood and fishing business marketing strategies that may increase profits.	
Objective 4. Improve awareness and understanding of how social and economic issues are linked to fisheries management measures.	Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Add information to the website about seafood marketing strategies for commercial fishing businesses (i.e., traditional model, direct marketing, etc.) B. Work with MREP partners to add a seafood and fishing business marketing module to the annual MREP-SE Management Workshop. C. Provide informational resources to fishermen about marketing of alternative/ underutilized species.