

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

JOINT EXECUTIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEES

**Jekyll Island Club Hotel
Jekyll Island, GA**

March 2, 2010

DRAFT MINUTES

Executive Committee:

Duane Harris, Chair
Mac Currin
Robert Boyles

David Cupka, Vice-Chair
George Geiger

Finance Committee:

David Cupka, Chair
Dr. Brian Chevront
Mac Currin

Mark Robson, Vice-Chair
Duane Harris

Council Members:

Dr. Wilson Laney
Ben Hartig
Vince O'Shea

Dr. Roy Crabtree
Rita Merritt
Tom Swatzel

Council Staff:

Bob Mahood
Mike Collins
Rick DeVictor

Roger Pugliese
Kari Fenske
Kate Quigley

Observers/Participants:

Nik Mehta
Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. Jack McGovern
Jennifer Lee

Bob Gill
Phil Steele
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith

Additional Observers and Participants Attached

The Joint Executive/Finance Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Club Ballroom of the Jekyll Island Club Hotel, Jekyll Island, Georgia, March 2, 2010, and was called to order at 3:50 o'clock p.m. by Chairman David Cupka.

MR. CUPKA: I would like to go ahead and convene the Executive/Finance Committee meeting. Our first order of business will be approval of the agenda. Are there any additions or changes to the agenda? Seeing none, then our agenda is approved. The next order of business is our December 2009 Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes. Are there any changes, additions or corrections to the minutes? Seeing none, then the minutes are approved. Our next order of business will be to review our Calendar Year 2010 budgets and Activities Schedule. You will find the current year budget in Attachment 1A in your briefing book. I'm going to ask Bob to go over that with us.

MR. MAHOOD: Okay, I'll just go over this rather lightly. If anybody has any specific questions, there are a couple items in here that we may want to discuss further. As you can see, what we've done is we've compared what we received in 2009 as opposed to what we are receiving in 2010. We have finally gotten our numbers for this year, so we should be able to go ahead and approve this budget.

Some of the bigger differences, we got a bigger line item through the congressional budget. LAPPs remained the same. The NEPA funding remained the same as did the RSP funding level is very similar. Even though we are in the first year of a new five-year grant, as you recall at the last meeting we were trying to carry some funds forward from the previous grant. Initially they weren't going to let us do that, but ultimately they allowed the councils – and I think every council carried money forward, which certainly is going to help us a lot. We carried forward about \$317,000.

SEDAR funding this year, we received about an additional \$25,000. We got the same amount from the Center, \$483,000, and we got an additional \$25,000 over the \$100,000 we got last year from Headquarters. I'm still not sure whose hide that comes out of, Bonnie, but that's what we got. The SSC stipends were the same as last year.

Then there was a bigger category this year that the councils all divided and that was the ACL implementation. There is where we got the biggest bulk of our increase, and that was \$602,000. The total amount of funds received this year will be about \$3.867 million. The budget that we had initially built actually went to about 3.9 something. We had to come back off of that, and what we've ended up with based on the activities schedule and level of activities for the council's activities, which includes SEDAR in the budget, comes to about \$3.76 million. It's the bottom line of the second column. With that, Mr. Chairman, before I go on any further, I'll ask if there are any questions at this point.

MR. BOYLES: Bob, I really hate to make a big deal out of a thousand dollars, but can you explain to me the difference between the state liaison grants between my state and the state of Florida and the state of Georgia.

MR. MAHOOD: What we did is we had a base of \$45,000 for each state; and then based on the council's approval at I believe the last meeting, Mike went in and tried to determine exactly the activity levels of each of the states relative to their people on the SSC; the number of meetings, the number of people, and this is how it came out. I think that was how we did it; wasn't it, Mike? I can't think of anything else that went into that. Some states have more people on the SSC than others.

MR. BOYLES: And I recognize that point, but as it has been pointed out to this council, the state of Florida has but one SSC member on the SSC, and I believe that's the case in Georgia as well as in South Carolina. I don't want to derail us over a thousand dollars. It is just a question that I think needs to be addressed. We can talk about it offline.

MR. MAHOOD: I'm not sure why there is that thousand dollars. We'd have to go back and look at our numbers. If you note, North Carolina, which has a couple or three people on the SSC, is even a higher level. Now that doesn't mean we all need to cram the SSC with state people to try to get additional funding. We tried to do it in a fair manner; and if we get partway through the year and we find out there is more activity, then certainly we can adjust this.

DR. CRABTREE: Just to point out, too, that issue of geographic, whatever you want to call it, on the SSC is on the agenda for the SSC Selection Committee; so if you want to address that, you'll have a chance.

MR. ROBSON: Well, to the liaison information, yes, if you have state participation on the SSC and I guess if North Carolina had three or four people, that would affect your total participation, but I guess, Bob, your staff will continue to look at the liaison reports that we submit in terms of actual activities that we document, because that needs to be looked at if you're going to continue to tweak this or how often are we going to be able to reexamine that because we're constantly reworking our report to get more accuracy in what we're actually doing as a state for council business. We've probably been underestimating that for many, many years.

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, but the addition above the \$45,000 base only applies to the SSC and not the other areas of activity. That's the only that we have addressed relative to the direction of the council. As you recall, the reason we did that was that private SSC members get paid a stipend. We can't use the stipend money to reimburse the state for their folks' activity on the SSC, but the council made a determination to use administrative funds to try to – and, again, it may end up being a rough number. The number of days also depends on whether you have a chairman from your state or whether you have a vice-chairman, the amount of activity – I know Mike sat down and looked at it as closely as we could – based on the SSC's schedule for the year.

MR. ROBSON: I remember this now.

MR. MAHOOD: Okay, the other item is I think most of you realize that we get our administrative grant and we also get SEDAR funding. The SEDAR funding is the same grant number. In other words, it's mixed in with our administrative grant. You see that this year we got \$608,299 in SEDAR funding. We haven't gotten anything, but it has been promised to us, let's put it that way.

When we develop the budget we develop two activity schedules. We do the administrative activity schedule and we do the SEDAR activity schedule. Now, the SEDAR activity schedule is based on the SEDAR Steering Committee's priorities and what they've planned for the year. John and his staff then translate that into meetings, the number of people going to meetings and this type of thing.

Then it comes to Mike and myself to look at it relative to the funding available. Once that is determined, it is combined back in with the administrative funding. Now, one of the issues that Bonnie brought up is the fact that we have been paying for council member compensation and their travel to participate in SEDAR meetings.

Maybe I shouldn't speak for Bonnie, but Bonnie's question was should that money really come out of the SEDAR's hide or should it come out of the council's hide. Even though it's all one number here, when we track this internally we make a differentiation between where the money comes from; and when we build the budget we make a differentiation between where the money is coming from.

I guess that's one of the questions that we need to look at. I did a little survey of the other councils, and basically, except from the southeast region – obviously, the Gulf, the Caribbean and the South Atlantic are all the same because we're all under SEDAR, but we're the only area really where the council members participate much in the stock assessment process. Most of the other places I queried it was very rare that council members attend, and so it hasn't really been an issue of where they would be paid from.

The North Pacific Council, for instance, they only pay council members for actual days at council meetings or approved committee meetings that are noticed in the Federal Register. They don't pay their council members to go to any other meetings that they may want to go to on their own and this type of thing. Every council does it differently except in the southeast. We've tended to do it the same. Bonnie, did you have anything to say about that?

DR. PONWITH: Yes, thank you very much. It is a concern and, of course, it becomes a much larger concern with the addition of the stipends to the SSC. The stipends come directly to the council so in my mind creates an expectation that since that is where the money for that activity came, that the price of participation would come from the pot where the money landed. I've received on additional money to pay for SSC membership participation in activities that I've got going at the Center.

I welcome this discussion. We need to balance maintaining a highly participatory, very active engagement in the important work of peer review with how we can also manage our costs to make sure that we're not put in a situation where it mushrooms to the point where it's not manageable.

MR. MAHOOD: I think as far as the SSC goes, any compensation the SSC members get would come from the stipends. Now, in the past we have paid, when the SSC members travel and participate in SEDAR, that has come out of SEDAR funds, and so I think that would be the main issue relative to the SSC.

MR. CUPKA: Does anyone have any suggestions or strong feelings? Mac.

MR. CURRIN: It seems to me, David, that it would be appropriate to pay council members, if they're to be paid for participation in SEDAR, out of the council administrative funds rather than the SEDAR fund. Keep in mind that if there are funds left over from SEDAR, they're carried forward. I don't think they're stuck necessarily – if they're carried forward, Bob, are they back into the SEDAR line item, but aren't they just used as general administrative funds where needed the following year?

MR. MAHOOD: No, we track them separately. When I present Bonnie with the budget of what we need, I also show what we're carrying over in SEDAR funds to subtract from that number. This particular year we had a pretty amount. That \$317,000 was SEDAR funding because we received \$100,000 right at the end of the year.

Part of it was to do the HMS SEDARs, which there was no way that we could conduct them, and part of them was to do a couple workshops that we have now carried into this year. We keep separate in house. Even though it's the same grant number we watch it very closely. That way, when I give the budget to the SEDAR Steering Committee, I have that separate SEDAR budget that they look at.

MR. CUPKA: Bob, are there any advantages or disadvantages of having it out of one or the other?

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, if you take, for instance, this year in 2010 and you look at that \$247,000 in council member compensation – help me, Mike, but I think we figured about \$38,000 of that comes out of the SEDAR funds, right?

MR. COLLINS: \$53,000.

MR. MAHOOD: \$53,000; was that just the compensation or was that compensation and travel? It's compensation so you have \$53,000 of that that is being paid for by the \$608,000 in SEDAR funds. If you didn't take it out of SEDAR funds and used that money for more SEDAR-related activities, then that would have to come out of the council's hide. The same goes for the amount of travel; I don't recall right offhand what the travel was, but it was 20 or 30-some thousand or something like that. It does make a difference.

That's kind of one of the reasons that we left a little over \$100,000 between what we are receiving and what we are proposing in the budget. There are a couple of reasons for that. Number one, as we'll get into next year's budget where the council doesn't have any significant increase at all, and so you can we're living on – we live on carryover every year. We're not sure what it will be this year so we wanted to build a little edge in there, but we do have some margin built in that hundred thousand-plus, and that's administrative money. That's not SEDAR money.

MR. CUPKA: Well, it has got to come out of somewhere or we've got to quit sending council members to the SEDAR workshops – you say we're the only region doing that, but I think there were some real benefits in that occurring – and I don't think we ought to do that. I guess that

would be one way if somebody wants to make a motion unless we're going to do it otherwise. I think we need to continue council participation in those workshops, so it has got to come out of somewhere, either SEDAR or the administrative grant. Mac.

MR. CURRIN: This is a question at this point. Do we anticipate deficits in the SEDAR budget this year because of increased activities? Are we anticipating a strain in the \$600,000 that we've got budgeted this year for SEDAR?

MR. MAHOOD: I don't foresee any deficit right now. Again, as long as we control the number of folks that go to the meetings; sometimes that has a tendency to get carried away. We're starting to crack down a little bit on that, because we're getting a lot of people at the last minute coming to us. Of course, you end up instead of a \$300 airfare you end up with a thousand dollar air fare. You get people wanting to change their schedule which kicks the cost up.

Just recently at a meeting we had two people drop out and so they wanted two people to take their place. Well, you lost the airfares except, of course, you can reuse them again if you have those people travel, and you pick up two more airfares. This kind of thing I've been pretty easygoing about, but we're going to start cracking down on that a little bit more and not allow for that.

MR. CURRIN: Well, I really don't have a strong feeling either way, and I think probably Bob and Mike and the staff could – John entering into it – could probably best decide, but if we need some input into this or a trial or some sort of way to start looking at where it should most appropriately come from, then perhaps splitting the baby in half and paying half of the council member compensation out of the council's administrative budget and half out of SEDAR for this coming year might be some way to give us a feel as to who is going to be pushed most by that. I don't know; it's just a thought.

MR. CUPKA: Well, I think the staff does need some kind of decision so they know how to track it. Bob.

MR. MAHOOD: Again, it's one grant. How you sort it out when you spend it is down the road. How about if I sit down with Bonnie and we look at this and then possibly at the next council meeting come back. We can work this out internally relative to what we have in SEDAR. Also, obviously, our council is just one of the three councils involved.

We could say, well, we're going to pay our council members out of our administrative grant and that may not mean anything to the Gulf or the Caribbean. This is going to have to go before the SEDAR Steering Committee and that may be more appropriate, which will happen before our June meeting. Maybe let me work with Bonnie; we'll go to the SEDAR Steering Committee and maybe it will get sorted out there, and we'll come back.

MR. CURRIN: Yes, that sounds like a very reasonable approach to me, Bob. I just don't want to see SEDAR and the necessary demands that we have for SEDAR and the enhanced role and the activities that they're increasing; I just don't want to see them suffer for lack of funding this year or in the future.

MR. MAHOOD: One of the things, Mac, is that our people are becoming more interested in participating, we're having more meetings. Initially when we started doing this the cost was relatively insignificant and wasn't that much, and now it has gotten to where – well, you're talking about 70 or \$80,000 – it's starting to get significant. Let us work on that and then I don't think the council has to make a decision.

It's probably going to be a decision of the SEDAR Steering Committee. Again, like I said, we've got to keep together to where the Gulf and the South Atlantic and Caribbean are all going to have to be the same. We certainly can't dictate what the Gulf Council wants to do or the Caribbean.

DR. PONWITH: I just wanted to reiterate the promise that I made to the SEDAR Steering Committee when we originally made the initial proposal to modify the SEDAR review process, and that was that any efficiencies that we gained by going away from the traditional three-meeting suite for a benchmark and going to the webinars for both the benchmarks and the updates, any cost savings we generated through that and the efficiencies that we gained in that I would plow back into enhancing the stock assessment staff and into biological sample processors so we could meet some of the data demands that were faced here in the region. I just wanted to make sure that I had an opportunity to reiterate that promise. That is the promise that is on the table; any savings left would go immediately right back into enhancing the science.

MR. GEIGER: Bonnie, I have a question; it just kind of struck me. Are there costs associated with changing the SEDAR schedule?

DR. PONWITH: The costs would be incurred. The cost of doing an update is different than the cost of doing a benchmark because of the number of – well, first of all, the benchmark, you have a face-to-face data meeting. In short, yes, there are costs. Often what we have to do is expedite the age reading, engage the state, move samples from –

MR. GEIGER: But it's just in regard to a benchmark versus a full update or an update versus a benchmark.

DR. PONWITH: I'm talking off the top of my head and I would say even if you bump a stock assessment and say, hey, let's do this one instead of that one, because what it does is alters the schedule of the age readers to play catch-up on the species that gets bumped up in time. Often what we'll have to do are calibration sessions where you get the age readers together and cross-validate and things like that.

MR. HARRIS: Bonnie, what you're saying is it's not the salaries because the salaries are the same. It's simply travel. If you have to bring people in to validate age reading and those kinds of things, that's the only additional cost because you're not paying people overtime; are you?

DR. PONWITH: No, we wouldn't be paying people overtime. There have been situations where we brought on pulsed extra help.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, if there are no further questions, we'll move ahead and try and keep it on schedule. Behind Attachment 1B you'll find the activity schedule. Bob, do we need to briefly go over that?

MR. MAHOOD: I'll just ask if anybody has any specific questions. This is based on what the council has scheduled to do this year. Again, for those that aren't aware of the process, once the timeline sheet that we developed is completed, then Gregg and the technical staff sit down and look at the number of meetings it will take to accomplish that. They then transmit that to Mike and me and we sit down and put the – well, used to be we; Mike sits down and puts the dollars on it now. He comes in and we sit down.

Generally we're way over where we need to be and we call Gregg back in and say, okay, what can we do and what can't we do? That's kind of the process that works out what the activities will be, but the activities is the baseline of what the council is doing. If you want to do more – say in six months you decide you want to do something else, well, then something has got to go, and that's kind of what your activity schedule is for.

Plus, during the year Cindy goes through, as the bills come in and the meetings are completed, she puts in what the actual costs were, and that gives us a plus or minus where we are during the year. That coupled with Deb keeping track of the fixed costs and where we are there pretty much – and the table we'll go into in a few minutes talking about where we are in 2010 – that's how that is generated. That is how we know and keep track of where are during the year, whether we have money, we're running out of money and so on and so forth.

Mr. Chairman, unless somebody has got some specific question; you'll note that there is some variation between the costs of major meetings. If you look at Charleston, we estimate this year will be about 50K; whereas, Jekyll Island is estimated about 66. Key West, generally when we meet there is one of the more expensive ones. It just depends on the location of where you are.

MR. GEIGER: It's just a minor point, but a while back we did away with or we eliminated some committees. I think bluefish and scallops were two of them; weren't they, Bob? We did away with the committees that were no longer active and we didn't anticipate were going to be active in the future. We have a couple of those still listed on your activities schedule, if you want to get them off.

MR. MAHOOD: I don't think there are any dollars listed with them. Yes, you're right, we probably should go ahead and drop them off there. At some point we may be drawn back into bluefish, but there is not anything going on there now; and at some point we may actually do a scallop plan, you never know, but we will remove those.

MR. CUPKA: Any other comments? If not, what I'd like to do, if there aren't any changes, is go ahead and approve our 2010 budget for this year, so I'd need a motion to approve that.

MR. GEIGER: I make a motion that we approve the 2010 budget plan.

MR. CUPKA: We have a motion by Mr. Geiger; seconded by Mr. Harris. Discussion on the motion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved. Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: If I could, Bob, we're sort of in unusual circumstances in the South Atlantic right now red snapper and the issues that are going on; and so if we get in a situation where we need to do some things and we don't have the money to do it, let me know and we'll figure out a way to deal with that. I don't want to see us not get some things done that need to be done in a timely manner because we're short some money.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, our next item of business is a briefing on the no-cost extension request.

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, I touched on that. It was kind of an interesting process because when you do a five-year grant like that, we were told by the NOAA grants people that you cannot carry money beyond the end of that grant. We had kind of resigned ourselves that we probably weren't going to be able to do that.

Then the council folks started raising so much grief about it, and that coupled with the fact they realized we weren't going to get our money on time, to have any money to operate on, I think may have been one of the major factors for them letting us carry it over; plus, I think they knew that we had the need. Now, we had to have a specific description of what that money would be used for and it has to be used in this first year, so we are proceeding with that and we're tracking that very closely sure that money is utilized this year.

We were very grateful to NOAA Grants for letting us do that, because you can see from our budget if we didn't have that carryover we would be in pretty bad shape. Plus, like I said, we got \$100,000 to supplement SEDAR right at the end of the year when we didn't really have time to use it, especially with the length of time that it takes to set up SEDAR programs, so that was very helpful.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, thanks, Bob. The next order of business is the status report on this current year's budget. That's behind Attachment 2 and it basically just reflects expenditures through the first month of this calendar year. Bob.

MR. MAHOOD: Again, if anybody has any specific questions, I'll be glad to answer them. We were pretty frugal because actually we were down – we made our last payroll we could make and we were out of money. There was a major holdup this year up in NOAA Grants because they had a lot of new people looking at the council grant, and it was a new year of a five-year grant. I don't even know if all the councils have their money. A couple of them didn't the other day.

We've got some good friends up there. I guess Roy has got a lot of influence or something, I don't know, but when we got real tight, Mike was on the phone saying, we're going to have to send everybody home and we can't pay our bills, they expedited things somewhat and we were able to get that through.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, any questions for Bob? All right, next is the status of the President's and Congressional Budget for next year. That's behind Attachment 3.

MR. MAHOOD: Again, I went through and marked this up for everybody with a little star to show the areas of major interest to us. It's really hard sometimes. Maybe Roy or whoever can chime in here, but on the page that's 7-149 where you get to fisheries research and management, you look at it and the first line item is a NMFS line item, and there is a reduction of almost \$7.7 million, which is kind of – why is that you might ask yourself? But then again you look at the next line item and it's National Catch Share Program and there is \$54 million of new money in there.

Now some of that may bleed back to the fisheries research and management programs; I don't know. Again, as you go down those stars you'll see the regional councils and fisheries commissions basically got a cost-of-living increase across the board or maybe inflation. That does not bode well unless congress adds more money in which we're not real sure that's going to happen next year.

The other things, if you look at about the third page, enforcement got a small increase; cooperative research, which is a program where they enlist fishermen to help collect data, that was cut from \$17.5 million this year to \$10.5 next year. This is a recommendation. Marine Resources, the MARMAP was level funded, which we all know is our only fisheries-independent program, which we were really hoping that would be funded at a higher level. I'm not sure what regional studies are, but that picked up an addition \$5 million. Maybe that will help MARMAP.

MR. BOYLES: Bob, my understanding – and I'll defer to Roy and Bonnie, perhaps – my understanding is the regional studies includes the SEAMAP Program.

MR. MAHOOD: Okay, and I do believe SEAMAP contributed some money to the MARMAP Program this year; didn't they?

MR. BOYLES: Yes, we are moving whatever resources we can to get better data out there and we have enjoyed a good partnership with SEAMAP to that effect.

MR. MAHOOD: That's the major areas, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, any questions for Bob on the proposed budget for next year? Bonnie.

DR. PONWITH: I do want to elevate to your attention that drop in the cooperative research line. That is very bad. It is one that I view with extreme concern because there is a lot of the work that we do at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center that is absolutely dependent on that funding line. This is true for all the science centers to be able to conduct work in cooperation with the fishing industry and the universities. This isn't warm, fuzzy science. This is science that we rely on to be able to provide sound advice to the management process. That one is of grave concern.

MR. HARTIG: Bonnie, do you put out like S-K and MARFIN; do you put out a cooperative research brochure at the end of the year telling you what you've done or where can I find that information about all the things that the southeast has been able to accomplish under your program of cooperative research.

DR. PONWITH: Probably the most comprehensive, easiest place to look is the Grants Online Process because all of that is run as grants, and through the eCommerce initiatives you can actually go in there and query by state, by grant and by key words and thing like that. The bottom line is, no, I don't put out an annual brochure, but that is one I'll take a note on.

MR. GEIGER: Ben, to that point on MARFIN, at the last MARFIN Selection Panel there was a discussion about video taping, and I had suggested this a couple of years ago as taping the MARFIN presentations. When I went to the last one, it was exemplary and it was very informative as to what type of research is being done and how it's being done. I think it would be beneficial and hopefully we'll be able to have a video tape of that for council members to take and view from MARFIN, anyway.

MR. HARRIS: Bonnie, going back to the cooperative research line item, how much of that would be Southeast Fisheries Science Center money to put forth in grants. After that, I've got a followup.

DR. PONWITH: Because the budget hasn't gone through the full process yet, the allocations haven't been done, so it remains to be seen whether that burden of the deficit would be shared evenly across the science centers. What I would say is a best-case scenario might be divide that cut by six and that's the situation we could be in. But, again, it remains to be seen whether they have one science center share an uneven burden.

MR. HARRIS: I guess the followup, then, is given my discussions with Steve Murowski and the additional money he said that is going to be made available for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center; does that mean that you expect an increase or does that mean that you're going to be level funded; what does that mean?

DR. PONWITH: I was going to save discussion of this for the Snapper Grouper Committee meeting and then also the full council report, but I will share with you that in FY 2010 the voice you gave to your concerns about the lack of fishery-independent data, the pace at which we're able to chug out stock assessments, the through-put, has been heard.

In FY 10 there was about a \$9 million increase in the expand annual stock assessment line. Over half of it is coming to the southeast region to be shared among the South Atlantic issues, Gulf issues and Caribbean issues. Of that, \$1.5 million is slated to go directly into the acquisition of fishery-independent data. Of that \$1.5 million, a pretty big chunk of it is going to be going to the MARMAP effort to expand the geographic scope of those collections and also to add some additional gears.

In FY 11 those budget lines – the answer to that question is a very complex answer because there are several budget lines that we feed the science enterprise out of. Cooperative research is the one that enables us to engage in grants with the academic institutions and our industry partners. That increase that we got this year, barring the unforeseen, will be a permanent increase, so it doesn't go away next year. Next year we'll have \$1.5 million going to fishery-independent data collections as well.

MR. BOYLES: To that point, Mary Galatkin, the deputy undersecretary, was in Charleston for a budget rollout for FY 11. Bonnie, I did ask her specifically about closing the credibility gap in the South Atlantic specifically and asked whether the FY 11 budget did include plus-ups for fishery-independent monitoring. She very artfully told us no, so I pass that on to the rest of the council for your information, understanding that the FY 11 budget has just been submitted and congress will be saying grace over it over the next several months. Unless I misunderstood her, it was an artful no, but the impression I was left with was we've taken care of you in FY 10. I was talking about increases, right.

DR. PONWITH: Just to reiterate, the amount of money that we got this year doesn't go away. Barring the unforeseen, that \$1.5 million for fishery independent is a permanent transfer that never goes away.

MR. HARRIS: Bonnie, we're appreciative for any increase that we see down here in fishery-independent monitoring and stock assessments and all that, but I have to say I am disappointed that's all there is and that you're taking cuts in cooperative research on top of the increase that you get because it's not what we expect at this council. I'm fairly sure I speak for all the council when I say it's not what we expect.

MR. CUPKA: Other comments? If not, then we'll move on to our next item. This is develop details of council and SSC member compensation policy relative to webinars. Behind Attachment 4 is a copy of the recent Gulf of Mexico Council position on compensation, but it's just I guess for – it's for more than webinars. It's conference calls and everything.

MR. MAHOOD: This all came about because of our move to handle as much of the SEDAR process as we can with webinars. At our last meeting our council voted to allow council members and eligible SSC members to receive compensation for participation in webinars, but that's a pretty open statement.

When we got back and we were looking at the budget ramifications of that, we decided that maybe the council needed to give us a little further clarification on what means. A webinar is my understanding, in talking to John, it could go the whole week, but they may be only on with each other an hour or two or day and then maybe four hours the next day and so and so forth as they produce work and get it up for everybody to look at. I think we need some sort of direction.

I queried the other councils, and as it turned out the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council addressed the same issue. I have provided a copy of what they came up with. Mr. Chairman, if you can give us some further clarification of how you would like to handle this. Again, a webinar, all you do is you sign on and you're there, so what we've had to do in the budgeting process, unless we're told differently, is we basically have allowed for one paid member to be involved in those SEDAR webinars.

MR. CURRIN: It would seem very reasonable to me to just break that out to per hour of participation. If the council member so submits an expense form for participation in webinars, conference call, whatever, like the other electronic meetings, and just do it on an hourly basis if

the council member chooses to submit those expenses rather than a four-hour block as the Gulf did. That would seem the most efficient.

MR. CUPKA: I tend to agree. I was going to ask Bob that we do designate council members to participate on these and will you be sending them a form to fill out for compensation just like we normally do that we could use?

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, when a council member is named to participate in a SEDAR, they would receive the payroll sheet that they fill out. We've talked about travel, too, but I don't that there is going to be any need for that. We've got to have some way to track it, though, and we'll have an internal document that we may send out with the pay sheet. It wouldn't be a travel order but it will be a way that will help us track it when we get it back.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Not having attended one of these webinars or anything yet; is there some way that whoever is hosting the webinar is actually able to see who is online? You know, if there is some way to capture that information, that would be sort of the verification as opposed to when you normally attend a meeting you sign an attendance roster. Obviously, there is not going to be a way of doing that in this case. I like Mac's idea of sort of the hourly approach to this.

I think while the Gulf of Mexico's statement is fine, I think we need to be careful and make sure we clarify what we mean by eligible in terms of SSC and council members. I think we mean very specifically those people who have been appointed to attend that meeting by the council, because who is to say who else – you know, I'm a council member and I was compensated, but if somebody did, they would say, "Well, I'm a council member; why didn't I get paid to get sit in on that webinar?" I don't know.

MR. CUPKA: That's why I asked the question about the paperwork because to me that would be kind of an authorization and an expectation that you're eligible. If you don't get that, then you're not eligible. Bonnie.

DR. PONWITH: To that point, Mr. Chairman, when the Gulf Council had this discussion, they had this very same discussion. The way they landed on it was that the council would vote on who their official representatives were, and those official representatives would be submitting for reimbursement via the council. There would be a record of that, but that did not preclude any other council members participating on a voluntary basis.

MR. HARRIS: I just wanted to agree with what Mac said. I think aren't we paid based on a two-hour increment now for the time that we work. You cannot submit for one hour; you had to work two hours before you can get paid. I thought there was a two-hour thing. Am I going back a long, long time?

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, I think you might be.

MR. HARRIS: Then help me understand what I'm supposed to –

MR. MAHOOD: Well, I think the Act says any time you are serving as a council member that takes a substantial part of your day you're entitled to eight hours of –

MR. HARRIS: You're entitled to eight hours but you're not entitled to twelve hours or sixteen hours.

MR. MAHOOD: And some council members break it down to four; some break it down to the actual hours; and some put in for eight.

MR. HARRIS: Okay, I thought there were some SOPPs on that, but I don't remember. Maybe Ben can straighten me out or Mac.

MR. HARTIG: I'm going to have to speak from a commercial fisherman's standpoint who has taken place in three of the SEDARs. If I'm going to take one hour of my day, it's half my day, period. I can't get back on the water and recoup any of my money without missing a half a day's fishing. If you want my expertise on a SEDAR, basically that's what I need to get paid for. I've given up a lot of resources to attend these things.

It's very, very important and I've become a pretty good part of the process. After going to three, I've actually learned how to participate a little bit. I'm the only commercial fisherman on this council, and that's from my perspective in fishing. It's hard to take an hour out of my day. I'm going to lose at least half a day in that venue.

MR. CURRIN: I appreciate Ben's comments and am certainly very sensitive to that. I raised my hand to offer a motion to the effect that council members should receive hourly compensation for hours of participation, but sitting here now trying to figure out how I can deal with that in view of Ben's comments, and maybe by something along the lines of may submit hourly compensation for no more than four hours per day and leave it up to the individual council members to submit it as they would.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, do you have a question? Well, you didn't make a motion yet; did you? You were thinking about it?

MR. CURRIN: No, I was just thinking out loud at this point.

MR. MAHOOD: There are two things here. If you look in the Gulf's, one deals with SEDAR and one deals with conference calls and that type of thing. Bonnie, I think, again, this is something that the SEDAR Steering Committee really needs to look at relative to the budget available, because I don't want to see us doing it one way, the Gulf do it another way, and the Caribbean do it another way under SEDAR. It seems like we all should be doing it the same way when it comes to SEDAR. Now, obviously, if the council is going to pay, then it hasn't anything to do with SEDAR.

MR. CUPKA: Yes, I think the one issue really ties into the other and it's going to be addressed by the steering committee. The steering committee, as was pointed out, is scheduled for May, which is before our next meeting, so maybe we ought to defer action on this until the steering

committee has had an opportunity to discuss it, if that's okay with everyone. All right, that brings us down to other business. Is there any other business? Mr. Geiger.

MR. GEIGER: Mr. Chairman, under the executive part of it, I would just like to report back that when I was at the Gulf Council meeting I had an opportunity to have a very long discussion with Dr. Bortone, who is the new executive director of the Gulf Council, who waxed almost poetic about Bob and his assistance to Dr. Bortone in terms of assisting him in coming on board and understanding issues and how the council works and providing copies of our SOPPs to him in an effort to try and make some changes that he thought were necessary in the Gulf.

I just can't tell you how many times and how much praise he heaped on Bob and Bob's assistance to him. Again, Bob, you're not listening to all the praise you're getting here, but you were well recognized by Dr. Bortone in terms of how you've supported him in his new role as executive director. It even went so far as to the fact that I noticed while I was there that they've changed the Gulf Council logo to look very, very, very similar to the South Atlantic logo. Thank you, Bob, for your help there.

MR. GILL: I don't think that was the motivation, George.

MR. MAHOOD: Steve is a good guy. One thing I'll say about Steve, he has really reached out to other people to try to help him understand the process and what works and what doesn't work, and I think he's going to be a very good executive director for them over there.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, any other comment or business to come before the committee? Seeing none, then we stand adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 o'clock p.m., March 2, 2010.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Graham Transcriptions, Inc.
April 3, 2010

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