

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SEDAR COMMITTEE

**Charleston Marriott Hotel
Charleston, SC**

September 16, 2013

SUMMARY MINUTES

SEDAR Committee

David Cupka, Chair
Chris Conklin
Michelle Duval
Jessica McCawley

Ben Hartig, Vice-Chair
Dr. Roy Crabtree
Doug Haymans
Rob Beal

Council Members

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Anna Beckwith
John Jolley
Dr. Wilson Laney

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Charlie Phillips
Zack Bowen*

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Gregg Waugh
Mike Collins
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin
Dr. Brian Chevront
Kim Iverson
Julie O'Dell
Julia Byrd

Observers/Participants:

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Dr. Jack McGovern
Anik Clemens
Pres Pate
Phil Steele

Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. George Sedberry
Dr. Marcel Reichart
Doug Boyd

Other Participants Attached

*Appointed but non-voting or sworn-in until October 25, 2013

The SEDAR Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Blue Topaz Room of the Charleston Marriott Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina, September 16, 2013, and was called to order at 3:40 o'clock p.m. by Chairman David Cupka.

MR. CUPKA: We would like to go ahead and get started with the SEDAR Committee Meeting. Our first order of business will be approval of the agenda. Are there any corrections or any additions to our agenda? Seeing none; then our agenda stands approved. Next is approval of the minutes from our last meeting. Are there any changes or corrections to the minutes? Seeing none; then our minutes are approved. This brings us down to SEDAR Activities Update behind Attachment 1. I am going to turn it over to John at this time.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We give a regular update of where things stand, and one of the main things I want to bring to your attention is gray triggerfish. At the last meeting we talked about gray triggerfish having some potential data issues that were being investigated, and they have discovered some concerns with the age structure interpretation.

There has been a lot of trading of structures amongst the labs that have done the aging and some others that have worked on gray triggerfish in the Gulf of Mexico. It is my understanding they have gotten to the bottom of the problem. It is going to take a bit longer to work it out and could include rereading some of the structure.

We had a desk review planned for February 2014, but that is not going to be feasible. It is going to take a bit longer than that to get it worked out. We're not certain of the schedule, but I believe Bonnie may have some of the latest and greatest update on this for us, and I'm going to turn it over to her for this.

DR. PONWITH: Yes, there is some cross-calibration that needs to happen with those spines. What we need to do is we've had a chance to have an independent reader take a look at some of the readings that we got from Beaufort and from our state partners. What we need to do is get a workshop together; so not only are we looking at those spines together, but we're also annotating so we can get a better feel for the rationale behind the readings that are being assigned to them and understand – land on a better result by doing some side-by-side analysis.

We're in the process of scheduling that workshop right now. The workshop will lead us to one of two conclusions, either roughly 50 percent of the spines will have to be reread or it is possible that another conclusion of that will be that a hundred percent of the spines will need to be reread based on this analysis. At this point the workshop has not been scheduled. They're working on that right now; and so until we know when that is going to be scheduled, we won't know how long it is going to take to follow up on the recommendations from that workshop.

MR. CUPKA: Thank you, Bonnie, and that is certainly something we will have to keep in mind when we look at updating the assessment schedule. As we know, triggerfish are getting hammered pretty hard and we do need an assessment on them, but it is not clear exactly when we will be able to do it. Are there any questions for Bonnie? John.

MR. JOLLEY: Bonnie, just real quick, how many readings are you doing on each spine?

DR. PONWITH: In other words, do we have multiple readers reading one spine?

MR. JOLLEY: Yes, and are you reading three or four times and then you throw some out and keep the ones that are fairly consistent?

DR. PONWITH: The issue that we're running into right now is not within lab differences. It is between lab differences. There is a protocol that they're using and a certain number of the spines are read by a second reader; but even if those are fairly consistent, the problem that we're running into is inconsistencies in how a person from Beaufort is reading relative to a person from South Carolina.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, any other comments or questions? Do you want to continue, John, with SEDAR 32?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Other things have been proceeding along as planned. SEDAR 32, continuing with blueline tilefish, was reviewed and it is going to the SSC in August. They will be getting snowy grouper standard in August and mutton snapper from Florida, so other projects have proceeded along with quite a few assessments coming to the SSC for them to consider in August.

Remember, they got black sea bass in April, so it is a good mix of assessments that we're getting through the process for this current year. Any other questions on things that are underway? If not, I will move into the next item. All right, the next one is something I've put together about assessment planning and priorities.

You guys know that we spend a lot of time dealing with what we need to assess and when and trying to manage the workforce that is available and the limited amount of assessment resources that we can call on to get a lot of things done. There is usually more need than there is ability to complete assessments.

What I've tried to do is put together this Attachment 2 and went through this and tried to come up with really sort of three things: what are the top priorities to be assessed; how many assessments are we getting right now; and how can we best manage what we get with what we need to get done so that these assessments don't continue to get so old and so far out of date?

I think once you sort of solve that problem, you can look ahead to say, "Well, how many other stocks might I need to assess to cover the fishery or cover the ecosystem adequately?" It gives you an idea of what level of additional resources might be necessary to really get the council closer to getting what it wants assessed and not be so reactionary. I put this document together just to address some of those questions and hopefully generate some discussion from the South Atlantic's perspective as to what maybe is a long-term manageable assessment prioritization process.

First up here were the priority stocks. I really just relied on what is in our research plan that we do every year, and it has been reviewed now by the council and the SSC repeatedly. That lists

primary and secondary stocks for data collection and then this group that we've recently added, which is special needs stocks.

I looked at that and I looked at what has been assessed over time, and I came up with 18 under the primary, 11 under the secondary, 8 in the special category. I pointed out in the secondary there are some that have special concerns like blue runner – we discussed removing that from the management unit – and penaeid shrimp, which is a whole group, and shrimp brings their own sort of special assessment needs to the mix.

This was kind of a starting point. I looked at that, looked at what has been assessed and came up here with what I'm proposing as the core stocks that we should look at for regular, ongoing SEDAR assessments; ones that we want to keep up to date and not get more than, say, four or five years old. This worked out to a group of 23 core stocks, basically.

Then the next question was how well does this represent the resource that we have cumulatively, so this figure just shows for the recreational in red, the commercial in the green, and then the total fisheries' landings in the blue; just what proportion of landings is attributable to that group of stocks.

You can see overall commercial and recreational combined it is on order of 80 percent of the landings comes from that group of stocks in the snapper grouper fishery. I just focused on that here to start with; so the core stocks from snapper grouper, 80 percent of the landings of the snapper grouper fishery management unit is of those stocks.

I think this is important because we have a lot of stocks that we try to manage, many more than a lot of other councils. If we just look at what we assess against how many stocks we have, we might think we're not making that much progress. But if we look at what we have assessed against the landings, we're really dealing with a lot of the fishery; and arguably we're getting the ones that really are going to be the driving force within the fishery.

I think this is a good starting point. If there are any considerations for other things that might be stocks that perhaps could be bigger contributors or once were but maybe aren't now or things that maybe there is a niche in the ecosystem that we just feel like we're missing, and we might want to say let's try to get to where we can assess that down the road.

But I think this is a pretty reasonable starting point. The next step really is to look at what has SEDAR been producing since it started; so what is the total assessment output? SEDAR started in 2002. The first assessment that was done was red porgy; ramped up and we got five in 2003, six in 2004. You see a gradual increase here, a little bit of a wonkiness here.

It just of came down to a timing of things and a lot being done in one year back in those years before we had increased the resources a bit; often had an offset of fewer things in the next year, and that was some particularly complex assessments at that time, too. But, in general you can see this thing increasing from a few stocks up to reaching eight to ten by 2010; and we've been pretty constant, between ten and twelve for the last four years.

This is SEDAR overall so this is Gulf, South Atlantic, Caribbean, HMS and the work that we do for the commissions, as well as now what Florida has done about an assessment a year coming into the mix, which has really helped us keep this productivity level up; I want to point out. The colors are just the updates, the standards and the benchmarks.

As you recall we have our three ways of doing assessments, and we see in some years getting updates and hopefully getting more updates as we move into the future and we've done the benchmarks of these core stocks. That is overall, and this figure focuses in on the South Atlantic and it is broke out to show what the Science Center and what the Florida Commission has done over the last few years.

As I said, Florida has been giving us an assessment pretty regularly with plans to continue that over the next couple of years, and the Science Center has been crunching along at getting four stocks, which is pretty consistent with what their current workload is. I also point out that the stocks that come in for the South Atlantic through the Southeast Center are done by the Beaufort Lab, and they also work on menhaden.

We have worked with the idea of having five slots and they've had one devoted to menhaden the last couple of years, which is an important issue as well. At any rate, we're expecting to get somewhere along the line of four to five stocks every year when we look at all of our resources. This was just a table that shows you what has been done and when looking from 2002 through what is planned for 2014 just to give you a sense of looking down how many we do in a year and what stocks have we done a lot; like sea bass, 2003, 2005, 2011 and 2013.

There are some that we have done a number of times. There is one I wanted to – greater amberjack you see we've done in 2007 and haven't looked at it since; gag we did in 2006 and plan to look at it here early next year. We have some things that – as we can see, we have this issue of assessments getting pretty old, and this is intended to work on some more regular process for getting these things to the assessment stage.

I think I will just go down with that. What this has is two proposals. One is based on having a four-year interval between stocks and the other is based on having a five-year interval between subsequent assessments. What that does is it affects whether you do four or five different projects in a year.

If you were to allocate this to those core stocks, can you maintain some resources to get some of the other things which might be of interest, some of the stocks that aren't part of that core group or things that people are interested in, particularly some of those special stocks that we might like to have some attention to.

That is a quick rundown of this and hopefully we can have some discussion and maybe we can sort of move ahead on what kind of timing we might look and desire. Maybe we will look at some of these and people think I kind of like the idea of doing it every five years, but this stock has to go before that stock, and I think that's certainly very manageable within this type of framework.

MR. CUPKA: Thank you, John. A couple of things I guess; the mackerel stocks, they're done by the Science Center, although they're not counted in the stocks that we get done.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, that is correct, David. The king mackerel is done through the Miami Lab. They're one of those jointly managed resources; so just for simplicity I didn't count them in here. Cobia and Spanish are done through Beaufort so they are counted with these stocks in that figure.

MR. CUPKA: And we have been very fortunate that the Fish and Wildlife Commission has been doing some. I think there are six different stocks that they have done in one year or another, which has been very helpful. We do need, I guess, to provide some input for the upcoming steering committee meeting on the frequency of these things.

As John has indicated, he has looked at a four-year cycle and a five-year cycle. If you subtract the number of assessments that we need done each year and the ones that Florida does and the mackerel, I think it leaves 19, John, or something like that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Twenty-three in total.

MR. CUPKA: Yes, twenty-three in total. The problem, as I see it, with the four-year cycle is everything has got to go just perfect, and even then there is no room in there for unforeseen events. If you've been on this council any period of time, you know that our efforts to try and prioritize these stocks on a regular basis, it is always getting changed because of unforeseen circumstances and whatnot. It seems to me like the five-year cycle would allow for a little bit of flexibility in there, which we've had to use I guess just about every year in the past. Anyway, I will open it up for discussion and see. Mel.

MR. BELL: I just have a question, and maybe this will take too long, but I was asleep during SEDAR 101 council training, but for the benefit of our new folks could you explain really quickly the difference between benchmark, update and standard, because that factors into the schedule and some being more difficult than others, whatever.

MR. CARMICHAEL: A benchmark is the most intensive. It is the three-workshop process. It goes through the independent peer review. You have the data workshop, the assessment process and then the peer review. You evaluate all the data and evaluate all the decisions. It is the time when you can come up with new models; you know, do first-time assessments of species.

The idea is that once you've got a benchmark and you've got this model framework that is approved by the peer review and accepted by the SSC, as time goes on there is more data added to each of those series. The standards and the updates really give you a way to bring that new data in.

The most restrictive is the update, which the definition of that is that new points of data are added to the time series and there is very limited flexibility to change model configuration and not bring in new data. I'm sort of going with the bookends from the complex to the simple. The updates are done by the Science Center; and they solicit the data, they follow terms of reference

that the SSC recommends and the council approves, but then they provide it to the SSC. The SSC reviews it and takes actions like we did recently on black sea bass.

Black sea bass recently was an update and the two that we got last year, porgy and vermilion, were updates. It is not that strict. Nothing is as simple as the sort of the turn-of-the-crank language that you hear sometimes. There are always things that they have to do with these models because they involve an iterative fitting process and everything else.

Basically, we allow the Science Center analysts for the Florida analysts, as it may be, to add the new data and run the model and give the SSC the results. They may have a few questions or sensitivities that they have run that they will consider. In between there is the standard, which was intended to not be as cumbersome and time consuming as the benchmark process and give them a little bit more flexibility, but to bring in some more folks to manage that flexibility.

Really, it has empowered the SSC to decide how much flexibility they will accept in a standard. They may accept if a model has fishery-independent indices and we've got a new index that covers multiple species, because it is the way our resource is, and it has been reviewed by a peer review panel, say, for another assessment and they're just applying that methodology to another species, we could bring that in.

They may have a lot of new research. Maybe there is some new discard mortality research or life history information. If they want to bring that in, they could do that in a standard. There are terms of reference on the standard which will specify their flexibility, and then the SSC provides the peer review of that also.

The biggest difference in the standard and update is there will be some types of workshops and discussions going on within the standards. Usually a data/assessment workshop is held and there may be webinars as well that come in after that. It is a little bit more rigorous than the update and involves a bit more of a public process and getting the SSC more in on the hands-on level than, say, the update.

MS. McCRAWLEY: That was a great report, and I just had a question about Table 5. I noticed in Table 4, at the bottom of it, it listed out the assessments that FWC was providing, but Table 5 did not list those assessments, unless I missed it. Can you tell me why they weren't on there or were they not factored in?

MR. CARMICHAEL: They're factored in on both. It was just looking at different groups of stocks, I believe. Right; so what I did in Table 5 was assume those stocks continue to get done by Florida and to try and get in and show like in the space of Table 5 – if you did it on the five-year plan, what might you do in addition; so for everything that is under SAFMC in Table 4, what else could you do, assuming that the AG things continue to go on; the things that you guys are working on, hopefully. We hope you can continue that.

MR. CUPKA: So there are really two components to this assessment planning. One is the list of priority stocks and the other is the assessment output of whether we do things on a four-year cycle or a five-year cycle. I think we do things on a four-year cycle, we will just continue to do

the priority stocks, period, and we'll never have an opportunity to do some of the secondary stocks.

If we go with the five-year cycle, there may be occasions when we could do a secondary stock; or if we have to revise the schedule for some unforeseen reason on a primary stock, then we'd have the flexibility to do that. That's assuming a number of things; one, that Florida can continue to do the assessments, which we very much appreciate because we'd have an even worse schedule if they weren't helping out along those lines.

It also assumes that the Science Center is going to be able to retain their assessment personnel. I think at the last Gulf Council meeting you indicated, Bonnie, that you had lost an assessment member. Now, this is in Miami, which does the Caribbean and the Gulf assessments, so it didn't impact us, but that could happen at any time.

I don't know how long it takes to replace those people. It is certainly not going to happen overnight. We all know that we'd like to see more assessments done, and there is a need to have them done in a timely fashion. I think John obviously has put a lot of thought into this. This is about the best I think we're going to be able to do under the current set of circumstances that we have in regards the resources that are available to do these assessments.

I guess, John, what you would like to have for the steering committee meeting is maybe some indication of whether we were satisfied with what you had listed as priority stocks, and that comes out of the research plan; and, number two, maybe what frequency that we would run those stocks through the assessment process; is that correct?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I think, David, that is really the two key things; if you like the core stocks, if you like the idea of a five-year plan – you know, we may not be at the point of actually penciling everything in out the next ten or fifteen years at this stage; but if we had that and then maybe we could go to the SSC in October, get some feedback from them on the core stocks and the approach, and then maybe in December we could actually approve a table like this to give a sense of what we'd like to get accomplished over the next ten years.

MR. CUPKA: And if you've had a chance to look over the recommended species from the SSC, you will see there is a lot of emphasis on trying to do assessments on stocks that haven't been assessed up to date; whereas, in the past we've concentrated more on what we consider I guess priority stocks, stocks that really have been driving the process. Perhaps by going with the five-year schedule, we can accommodate both needs to some extent. With that, I throw I open for any discussion or comments. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Just two quick things, Mr. Chairman. First, John, the X's are planned – they're on the schedule now and the Y's are beyond, right?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay, and so when I'm looking – I don't know if this is a motion to come or something, but if we were to direct you guys to the five-year interval, right, that tells me there

are nine slots, nine opportunities where we can shuffle things over the next ten years if we had to do that? We have kicked the poor white grunt for so long, and maybe we're going to kick him again, but is that sort of the way to look at there are nine opportunities there with that schedule under current staffing?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, you can look at it and if you said you really wanted to get white grunt a little sooner, maybe you look at, say, 2015 or 2016; you know, maybe you do white grunt in 2015 and you do scamp in like 2017. You can do some tradeoffs like that with different stocks. The idea is that once you get that stock in there, you want to get it up again in another five years. Once you sort of get the first ones in there and you've got X number of Y's in a given year, then the rest starts to fall into place.

MR. HAYMANS: And that was sort of the SSC's preferred direction you'd like to go in is five years, right?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, the SSC hasn't really weighed in on this. No, this is all pretty new, but that's kind of within a rule of thumb of when you hear discussions and things that come out of headquarters and stuff about how old an assessment be five years as a common maximum. There has been some discussion since the last Act revisions of maybe five years too long; but when we've got stocks which are eight and nine years old, I think we need to maybe get to five years first and then we can look at shorter intervals.

DR. DUVAL: I like the list of proposed core stocks that John has up on the screen. Doug, I'm wondering if maybe you're thinking about some of the discussion the SSC had about projections, because we talked about three-year projections and five-year projections. I think with the black sea bass update, we had three-year projections, and so that's they indicated that they wanted to see another assessment or another update within X number of years to account for that.

I'm good with every five-year schedule as a way to work in some of these stocks that we have been kind of delaying for a while. This might be a Science Center question, but sort of – and I apologize, John, if this was in the text and I just can't remember it because it has been a while since I read it, but how many of those slots are a benchmark versus a standard versus an update? I think Doug had brought that point up earlier.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Right now they're running about half, I guess, the last couple of years with the South Atlantic stocks. The way it has gone down the last couple of years is that they're – you know, a slot is a slot whether it has been allocated to an update, a standard or a benchmark. We had hoped to be at a point where a slot could be two updates or a single benchmark, but we haven't sort of matured to that point, perhaps. We have not been able to get that part of program running.

MR. BOWEN: John, can you tell me how many species we're looking at if we go with a five-year interval versus a four-year interval; how many species we'd like to do in a year?

MR. CARMICHAEL: This is doing, say, four stocks a year through the Science Center and then one more from Florida. Both of them are working within that same productivity of five stocks; four the Science Center and one from Florida.

MR. BOWEN: Okay, my second part of my question is so for 2014 I don't see but three stocks being assessed.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, 2014 is those are X's because we're already underway. We already have an assessment plan in place for 2014. The plan for 2014 is to get a gag update, a red porgy and a red snapper benchmark. Then there is the Science Center resources working on a menhaden update. Florida has talked about doing – I think trying to do hogfish in here. Then there is also mackerel, which we will be getting; but as we've said that comes through the Miami Lab.

MR. CUPKA: Chairman Boyd from the Gulf Council; did you have your hand up? Are you going to give some of your slots?

MR. BOYD: No, I was just going to ask you for three of yours. John, I just had a question. Have you worked with the Gulf staff to apply our priorities to this same report template?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I have not, but I would hope if it is well received here I would want to share it with them and see if maybe it is something that might work well down there, also.

MR. BOYD: The chairman likes it.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, John; that's a lot of great work, and it really gives us something to look at and some teeth in what we're looking at. The question I had was similar to what Michelle had; you know, my concerns going to a lot of assessments and seeing some projections aren't more than three years old and what do you do in those circumstances.

The other natural thing to come out of this for me would be what are the tradeoffs in uncertainties between four and five years, and what does that cost fisheries in foregone catch? Because, every year you go out in your projection, you are giving up catch under your uncertainty umbrella. I would like to see those and weigh those uncertainties and those foregone catches based on the years that you go out. I understand if you only did it on four years, that you'd be really giving up trying to do anything else. But the cost, I think we should know the cost.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that's a good question. Black sea bass is shown to come in 2016 because we have the three years that we had the projections. One thought is, is it possible to get projections after a couple of years without getting a full assessment update. That certainly is one way of looking at that.

Another question is you're not always giving up yield because I think it kind of depends on what real recruitment is versus what you've projected. Some of our stocks, we tend to think maybe we have a very optimistic view of recruitment and we think we're going to get what we should

get or get the long-term average; but if a stock tends to have very episodic recruitment, you may go along and get sort of poor recruitment.

Then you get these great big year classes, so you could actually maybe have a more optimistic view of what your yield is going out five years if you're sort of in that period where you're not getting those better than average recruitment. I think the tradeoffs are really stock-specific. It is going to come down to where that stock is and its biomass trajectory and what we think it is doing in terms of productivity and then sort of how it is fitting in with the fishery.

That is pretty complicated, but I think the uncertainty is a big part of it. You add another year, you're going to add a bit more. Now I think the benefit of the five years is sort as David was saying that it does maybe give you some reserve capacity that if you see a good year class, you have the ability to say, oh, we need to get an extra assessment this year.

I think what we have seen is that when there is a good year class, we kind of know it with some warning a least. We certainly saw it in black sea bass. We saw it in red snapper a few years ago. In most cases you kind of know it is out there, and that could give you maybe opportunity to do as we did, say, in black sea bass recently where we came in late in the game and said let's get that assessment. I sort of see that as a way of moderating the uncertainty that you mentioned about extending everything else on average out five years.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm not on your committee, Mr. Chairman, but it looks like we're going to be running a really tight ship here. I've watched this for years juggling and putting out fires on assessments. I'm thinking about all the lionfish that everybody is telling me they're seeing, and I know that they've got to be making differences in the ecosystem and the productivity on probably a lot of stocks or a huge change in fishing activity or the way people fish, which has also caused us to move assessments around. What are we going to do when something like that happens when we have so little wiggle room?

MR. CUPKA: Well, we've got a lot less wiggle room with a four-year cycle I think than we do with a five-year cycle. Granted, it is not what we'd like; but given the resources that are currently available –

MR. PHILLIPS: We will deal with it.

MR. CUPKA: Well, some way or another we're going to have to deal with.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that's right; we have really been running this thing hard and trying to get more, and we tend to be very reactionary. What this is hoped to do is to recognize that and say that's simply the reality, but how can we better manage this so that we – as we're getting the most that we can out of it, we make sure we're getting what we best need to get out of it and we don't have these stocks that fall through the cracks and go eight and nine years on an assessment and kind of forget that maybe this one we have already assessed five time, but we haven't assessed this one in eight years. There is a lot of uncertainty in those ones we haven't done for eight years. If we can do that and leave us a little reserve, maybe we can sort of be better prepared to deal with the unexpected.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, there is a lot of uncertainty in the assessment from the assessment's point of view; but if the public is not hammering on you and telling you this fishery is going to hell, landings are doing pretty good overall, they're about average over time, you can be pretty assured that your stock is in pretty – in somewhat near what it was coming out of that last benchmark, at least in my opinion.

So you have some informed judgment about looking at your stocks just from basic landings and what you hear from fishermen. I mean, it has worked the other way. When you mentioned those two year classes on red snapper and black sea bass, we certainly heard that, that those are coming in. We hear right now it is about king mackerel; where are the king mackerel. We hear that now and we'll have a benchmark assessment on king mackerel coming up this winter. We hear about it.

MR. MAHOOD: I think the other positive part about every five years is that one of the things we heard at Managing our Nation's Fisheries 3 – and it wasn't just from the southeast; it was from a number of areas – was that we need to quit reacting. I think John started to touch on it earlier that if you have them every two years and you catch them in a down cycle and you have got to take some drastic measures; but then a couple of years later you may be on the up cycle or whatever based on recruitment and the other things going on out in the ecosystem.

I think five years is something we can do and plan on doing. I also think it has some positive aspects. Now, obviously, if you have a big crash in a resource, you might have some problems; but most of the species we're talking about are pretty long-lived. A five-year period out of a fish that lives 25 years lifetime gives you some time to react even if you have some negative things going on. We all saw how fast black sea bass came back.

Of course, I think we got lucky there with some good year classes. But you never know what Mother Nature is going to throw at you, and sometimes we don't know what is going out there, and we just have to do the best we can with the resources we have. I don't think, unless Bonnie knows something I don't, that we're going to have a lot more resources in the future.

I think we're going to – if anything, it is going to be a little bit bleaker than what we're looking at. I am not sure how we can do more than that. I think the chairman from the Gulf Council was right; we need to try to get every council on this type of a program, and I think it will be better for the resources we have available and managing those resources. We will probably talk about that in October at the SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting.

MR. CUPKA: Well, certainly, for the last couple of years at all our CCC meetings and whatnot, we've gotten the message that there is not going to be any increase in funding. Just last week when I was at the HMS meeting, Sam Rauch came by and that was a big part of his remarks is there is not going to be any big influx of new funds available to do some of these things. They're going to be lucky to hold what they've got. I agree with you, I don't think we're going to see a big influx in resources here in the next couple of years, unfortunately, but that is the reality of the situation. Bonnie.

DR. PONWITH: First of all, thanks very much, John. The document is really useful in helping to frame up the situation and what kind of choices we have before us. Many of them are not happy choices, but it is good to be able to see it visually and be able to do that kind of analysis. Also, I'd just like to extend a word of thanks again to our partners in Florida for the work that they've done in contributing to the headcount of stock assessments. This has been really critical.

I like this analysis of the four year versus five year; and as was already brought up, fish aren't the only thing that is potentially migratory and stochastic. The human beings that analyze them can be migratory and stochastic as well. We had a situation in the Gulf of Mexico of some unforeseen circumstances of people being physically present but not able to do an assessment and then ultimately having two of our lead assessment scientists leave in the same year.

That throws a huge wrinkle and, of course, the Gulf Council's first point was, well, get someone else in there to do this; you know, take every resource available. That is the tricky part of this. It is not someone pulling a haul net on a beach or filing papers. These are some of the most unique skill sets in the agency. In fact, the two most difficult positions in the agency for us to fill right now are the ones that are heavily, heavily quantitative; and that is the stock assessment scientists with a population dynamics background and our natural resource economists.

Those are the two skill sets that are the hardest to find. The other thing is the lag in getting them on board. We get them on board and then there is that one year kind of journeyman's status that it takes to get them up to speed to be capable of taking a lead role in an assessment. With that, the one question I wanted to raise is where you talked a little bit about 2014.

And, yes, 2014, according to our plan, is now history; and 2015 out are the years that we are talking about, but we've already brushed on the issue of there being a problem with the gray triggerfish assessment, and I wonder if the committee has an interest in taking a look at sort of a time-in-motion standpoint for 2014. I also understand that there were some concerns about the timing of the red snapper assessment for 2014. Is this a good time or do you want to postpone that until later in the discussion?

MR. CUPKA: Well, another thing we have to deal with, of course, is the assessment schedule, and I think that would be the appropriate place to deal with that. This is more a procedural issue and how we want to try and proceed. Are there any other comments? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Yes, just sort of a quick followup on Bonnie's review of the situation, in general, Bonnie, the assessment load that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center has; is it similar to or is it greater than the load at other science centers; and do you have the same resources? I mean, how do your resources to do the assessments compare to those of other science centers? I'm just curious and probably thinking more specifically of the northeast.

DR. PONWITH: The assessment load per scientist tends to be at or somewhat higher in the southeast than other places. The resources are difficult to do a side-by-side comparison. The reason is because what it takes to do a stock assessment for a stock that has a 70-year stable, one-source time series of multiple times per year seasonal data collections versus another stock that you're looking at doctoral dissertations and a project done by an NGO and a project done by a

consulting firm, basically dribs and drabs of data to try and cobble together to meet sort of the data-hungry appetite of that assessment, it is a difficult comparison.

Looking at it from a financial standpoint, it can be beneficial in one sense, but it also can be really not totally meaningful because the costs of doing assessments can be so varied based on the life history of the species, the availability and stability of the data.

MR. HARTIG: I appreciate that, Bonnie, and I understand that to some degree. But then if you have figured out the resources that those other councils had dedicated to those 70-year-old time series of data compared to the resources that we get to do our sampling; how would you compare those?

DR. PONWITH: That's a tough one. Allow me to say for us to be on a stable five-year or four-year cycle that still retains enough flexibility to deal with the unforeseen – and that is the unforeseen in the fishery, the unforeseen in the ecosystem and the unforeseen hiccups that you can have with human beings who are doing the data preparation and the assessment – we need more.

That I think is the most simple solution or answer to the question. The problem is so does everybody else. I think realistically we are looking at a time of best-case scenario is status quo, and we should be preparing ourselves for that as a budget outlook. Things could be worse than that; we don't know yet. I think that is sort of the framework we should be establishing our planning in.

MR. CUPKA: Are there any other comments on this? Well, I think John has enough to kind of get the feeling of the committee. Of course, we'll bring it up at Full Council. I guess the next step would be to run some of this by our SSC and then also the steering committee, who meets after the SSC. I think it is a good attempt to get some more planning involved in this and try and make sure we're utilizing the resources we have as best we can. Again, thank you, John, for your thought and efforts on this and it has been useful.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay, thanks, David; and, yes, I've got a sense that there is approval for the core stocks and probably the five-year schedule, so we will take that out to the SSC and get their comment on it. Then the other thing I will do is work with Erik Williams at the Beaufort Lab to kind of try to refine this table of just what goes where, because there are going to be personnel issues with who the lead is on a particular stock. It would be nice to be able to get some of those to look ahead on that for the few years and be able to then come back in December with something that all parties sort of think is a manageable schedule.

MR. CUPKA: It sounds like a good plan, John. All right, do you want to move ahead on our next agenda item?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I will move ahead on the next one, and we kind of alluded to this. It is talking about sort of what we're doing in 2014 and getting the guidance for the steering committee that will meet the first week of October. As we have kind of said 2014, we want the

schedule to be finalized, but there are some questions about what gets done when and the order in which things are going to occur and the general timing of things.

What I have here basically is the first table that shows what is going on in 2013. We know gray triggerfish is going to cause a bit of an issue for being pushed down the road a little bit further. We have a red snapper and red porgy benchmark plan, and those are planned to run together; a gag update; and Florida working on – we said black grouper in 2014, but I think that was the plan at one time.

Really, we appreciate what Florida does and we don't try to tell them too much what they're going to do for us, so sometimes these things change and Luiz usually keeps us pretty well briefed on what they're working on and when. But I want to focus in on 2014, so the proposal was to do the red snapper and red porgy once the data is available from the video survey to include through 2013, and that gives us three years' worth of data from the full implementation of the program.

And using 2013 data in a benchmark means you can begin it some time in, say, July at the earliest of 2014, so the plan for red snapper and red porgy was to begin that with the data workshop in August 2014 and initially scheduled for a March completion so that the SSC got it in April 2015.

Due to the complexity of this assessment – and no one has to really think too hard to remember the regulations that we have in place – and the stock assessment models are keyed on kills and fishery-dependent data. They're about counting the kills. When we have very restrictive regulations that greatly reduce that, we greatly reduce our data. There is a very valid concern I think on behalf of the analysts about what this assessment is going to take.

We have the very restrictive regulations and a limited fishery now that they're going to have to try and calculate in there and factor in what the removals are as well as this brand new survey; this video survey and getting in, too. So, what they're looking for is a little more time to work out that benchmark and have suggested to hold a review workshop in, say, June of 2015, which means it would get to the council in December of 2015, say, for the October SSC meeting instead of the April 2015 SSC meeting.

That is sort of the proposal that is on the table now. As we know, we've got the draft schedule which went out to people in our SEDAR Technical Committee, which are representatives from the SSCs and the regional office and others that look at the original initial draft schedule of what is going to go when, that balances things like the data deadlines for the limited data team the Science Center has; and then from that detailed schedules are prepared.

So we're in the stage now of getting the detailed schedule for the red snapper and red porgy benchmark, which would go to the SSC at their next meeting coming up in October. The gag update is planned to start early, so they would be starting that in like February or March and get that out of the way and then be able to focus on red snapper and red porgy.

We also have now this gray triggerfish rolling on that is going to have to come back into the mix at some point. Bonnie may want to comment some more on this, but that is the status of the schedule in 2014 as far as I know it so far.

MR. CUPKA: Bonnie, do you have anything on triggerfish? Obviously, it is not going to happen when it was supposed to, and I'm not sure when we're going to be able to have to try and fit it in.

DR. PONWITH: You're correct, Mr. Chairman, it will not happen when we originally anticipated. The Science Center; my recommendation for the committee's consideration is to move the gray triggerfish stock assessment to 2014 and bump red porgy with it. By doing that and including the gray triggerfish as a legitimate assessment in 2014, it gets some benefits.

One of the benefits is that you get two more years worth of landings' data for inclusion in the assessment. But the other benefit is that time series of fishery-independent data that red snapper will benefit from can be applied to the gray triggerfish and make that a much more robust stock assessment.

Our recommendation is to bump red porgy and put gray triggerfish in '14 and potentially move red porgy to 2016. The timing of the red snapper, I think you did a good job of kind of articulating the situation there. We've been waiting a long time for this, but it has been waiting for those data to accumulate.

One of the things that we want to be careful about is that we have time for the 2013 data to accumulate, to be properly analyzed, QA-QC'd and ready to be used for that stock assessment, so that we can take full advantage of the work that we've put into getting that time series. I think the goal is to walk into the data workshop with some alternatives to be able to do probing of those data and some pre-analysis of those data so that we're not walking into that data workshop cold and starting from scratch; that there are some options on the table of how best to handle that brand new index; where we've got some data analysis done already and some diagnostics on those analyses done already.

That will make the data workshop I think go a lot more smoothly. Another recommendation is that we consider making red snapper an in-person assessment workshop. Again, the reason is because red snapper is a very special case. I think in light of the newness of this index and understanding how it fits with the time series for the fishery-dependent data we relied so heavily on before, it would benefit from a face to face for the assessment workshop.

Those are just a couple of thoughts on that. The point for red snapper is again we've waited a long time for these data to accumulate. My interest in this, of course, is to get an assessment done as quickly as we possibly can so that the industry, who has paid dearly for waiting for these data as well, actually reap some high returns, and that is by managing the risk of this stock assessment, of stepping back and taking a measured risk-averse approach to the analysis of these now pretty precious data.

MR. CUPKA: So the recommendation from the Science Center would be to move red porgy from 2014 to 2016. That would give us a chance maybe to get data on them through 2015. The last time they were assessed was with data through 2011, so that is four years, which is pretty close to what we've been doing on a number of them.

We also know that gray triggerfish are really getting pounded and we do need an assessment on them. I would be curious to see what people thought about the recommendation. I think it is a good one, and I think we need to move ahead on gray triggerfish, if we can, in 2014, but I'd be interested in what the other committee members have to think about this. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, David makes great points. The only thing I had about red porgy, in looking at gag, if we're looking at the fishery-independent indices on red porgy, they were trending down and the rebuilding plan had stalled out, and that was why the benchmark was actually slated for that time. If we look at the gag landings every year, we're closing that fishery earlier and earlier, which anecdotally would mean that the stock is getting better.

The only other thing in red porgy we did see – it would be interesting to look at this year again – was the very last year of the red porgy fishery-independent indices from MARMAP showed an uptick, which was good news. If that continues, I certainly don't have any problem bumping red porgy for the next two years; but if that doesn't – I mean, I would like to see the latest year of the MARMAP stuff to see what they got out of red porgy – I'd bump gag, to be honest with you. That is just using an informed stock-type condition to make your decisions.

MR. PUGLIESE: As part of our effort to try to really build and expand our ability to integrate other information into assessments, we had pushed to work with SECOORA, Ocean Observing Association, and fund some work where we are actually working between Mitch Rauffer's Group, Barbara Mueling, the MARMAP and SEAMAP Programs, with the intent of looking at red porgy – and actually have refocused that project to look at red porgy with the idea to come to the next data and into 2014 to look at trying to make that step of connecting the oceanographic information, the variability and begin to go down that road.

And that was kind of – since red porgy was slated for 2014, we had a number of species on the slate, and that was one of the ones that seemed to be – especially with a lot of the uncertainty about what the population was, it seemed to be appropriate to move and to support and fund that iteration.

So, just a point that we are trying to take those next steps is something I've been trying to make sure that we began to bring the oceanographers into this discussion, to bring some of that capability into the discussion and just a little bit of food for thought about shifting red porgy at this time.

MR. CUPKA: Yes, that's a good point, Roger, and I wasn't aware of that before. I think the important thing here is that we agree to go ahead and do gray triggerfish in 2014, if we can; and then if we want to move either red porgy or gag – and it sounds like maybe in some ways it would be better to move gag than it would red porgy, but again I'm interested in your comments.

DR. PONWITH: First of all, I'm aware of that kind of marrying of the biological with the physical, and I applaud this. This is the direction we all need to be going. I don't necessarily think that a delay in red porgy would be a show-stopper for beginning that work. In fact, from a timing standpoint, it actually might be beneficial because it gives a little more of an opportunity to look at those relationships in advance of the assessment.

With respect to bumping gag instead of red porgy, the downside of that, all else being equal, is that puts four benchmark stock assessments in one year, one of which is red snapper, and that worries me. I think that creates a pretty darned heavy, heavy lift and again adds an element of risk into the schedule.

MR. CUPKA: It would also be ten years in the difference in the data sets from the last time it was done by the time it got done. Bob.

MR. MAHOOD: John, you may need to refresh me. I'm trying to remember – this is something I looked at the other day, but red porgy, the projections actually – although they take a hit and there is a decrease this year, the projections allow more harvest going through I think 2016?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I don't recall; that might have been the case. I haven't looked at it in quite a while.

MR. MAHOOD: I had to give a talk and I was trying to make it positive; and since we were cutting red porgy, I was looking at what the out-years were, and I think it showed – and I was able to say it will increase during the next three years, so I think that's right.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Red porgy is one of those where it was suffering from a less than expected recruitment; so as you do the projections and you factor in expected recruitment, well, that is what happens in these stocks is that I look out five years and I put in the model that I'm going to get the recruitment my SSB is expected to provide; and so it tends to go up relative looking back six years and not seeing recruitment that we have expected that we should see.

That very likely is the case with red porgy. I will point in this Table 2, the year in parentheses is the terminal data year, so gag had a 2005 terminal data year. You have to recall that we haven't even done projections or P-star analysis or anything on gag. There are things that we do for assessments now, which gag didn't have the benefit of any of those requirements or any of those technological advancements in stock assessments that really we're doing for everything now. It is one of our oldest assessments and is certainly a reason to do an update just for that.

MR. CUPKA: Yes, that is what I was trying to point out. If we bumped it to 2016, 2015 would be the terminal year, but the last terminal year was ten years ago, 2005, which is not good. Well, we need to move on here. Are we in agreement, then, that we want to do gray triggerfish in 2014. I am not sure what we're going to do in terms of red porgy or gag, but I think you wanted some input also on 2015, John?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, for the steering committee we would like to discuss what gets done in 2015. What we have so far is that the preference is that gray triggerfish stay at the forefront

and take the place of starting something new, ala red porgy, and that we do red snapper and gray triggerfish together as a benchmark project. As I said, this would be to the SSC in October of 2015, so this would start those with the data workshop in August of 2014, get through peer review about a year later. That means that is going to have an impact on 2015 stock assessment slot availability to us.

DR. PONWITH: To the extent that is agreed upon, by dancing over the line into the fiscal year, it does impact the schedule for the next fiscal year. Right now if you take a look at 2015, there are quite a lot of B's on that list; there are a lot of benchmarks. Our recommendation going forward is to modify 2014, as we've already talked, and then modify 2015 to focus on a lower headcount of benchmarks and a higher headcount of updates, which would enable us to get back on cycle rather than having a perennial domino effect by having those late-breaking benchmarks.

The recommendation of the Science Center for 2015 is to go with the gray snapper benchmark and the scamp benchmark, but then complement that with an update for triggerfish, red grouper and vermilion snapper.

MR. CUPKA: I would point out, Bonnie, that those B's are what the SSC is suggesting we do in 2015; whereas, the next column is kind of our draft prioritization which is somewhat different. I think one of the things we need to decide is whether we're going to go with our prioritization or the SSC's or some combination thereof. If you look at ours, we've got three updates.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Bonnie, what was the third you mentioned for updates?

DR. PONWITH: The three updates were triggerfish, red grouper and vermilion snapper. I'm sorry, tilefish.

MR. CARMICHAEL: She might have said tilefish and I wrote trigger. I guess my question would be with red snapper and gray trigger rolling over into the June review workshop, when would you envision sort of the timing if these being – would the updates come earlier in 2015 or would everything start once that is done; like would the gray snapper/scamp benchmarks start like after red snapper and gray trigger is completed?

DR. PONWITH: That is a good question. I think the driver on that would be once we've decided what happens in '14, making the actual assessment assignments, and then have those assignments inform the order in 2015. If we've got someone working on a benchmark for red snapper, we're likely not going to want to schedule them for a benchmark the following year because that is what is going to cause the conflict and get us out of cycle. I can consult and get an answer to that for you, but I think the answer is it will be driven by the assignments.

MR. CUPKA: So where does that leave us, John? I understand what Bonnie is getting at, and that is an important part is who is assigned as to what can get done.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think one thing it leaves us is a priority the council had for 2015 of greater amberjack is not addressed. I guess the biggest question to me is whether the council would rather have a greater amberjack update than the gray snapper/scamp benchmark in 2015;

or is it possible greater amberjack could get done in early 2014 since we've got three resources on red snapper and gray trigger, which isn't going to really get started until August; you know, eight months of the year through 2014. If greater amberjack could be done in early 2014 along with gag, then I think we have a real good schedule here that gets the council a long ways towards what it wants to do despite the delay in red snapper.

MR. CUPKA: Well, I think there is interest in having greater amberjack done and probably the sooner the better. It has been a while. The terminal year is 2006, and I know we've had some comments on that during the public meetings down in Florida, particularly, and I think Ben was interested in that, also, weren't you?

MR. HARTIG: Greater amberjack; I mean, it is tool right along. The size structure of the population has approved over time. It looks pretty good. The landings are pretty stable. It looks pretty good, but it still would be nice to have an update done on greater amberjack from the assessment point of view. It has been a long time.

Having said what I said before and then looking at the age of the gag, that all tempers your thought processes. I think you could probably firm up 2014 right now by just bumping red porgy to 2016 and then you've got your list. But if you could do greater amberjack along with gag, that would be great.

DR. PONWITH: The thing that is transparent on this schedule is that in 2014 there also is an Atlantic menhaden benchmark, and so that is actually taking – it is a significant slot and commitment of time. Again, it is a logical request; I just want to be really careful that we don't create a risk factor here by jamming '14 too heavily.

MS. McCAWLEY: I was also going to note on Table 4 here, it looks like FWC is slated to do the yellowtail snapper assessment in 2015, if you wanted to add that to the list.

MR. CUPKA: Are there any other comments? John.

MR. JOLLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on your committee, but I see the SSC has recommended dolphin for a benchmark in '15 and wahoo. Then I see the council is looking at dolphin in '16, or at least it was at one time. If we've got other really serious concerns, why are we too worried about dolphin? I don't understand; that is almost like an annual crop. Hell, they're more like shrimp than they are some of these fish.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, the SSC reviewed what the council had as priorities and basically added a few comments on it. Dolphin is one the council has talked about and wahoo a number a years maybe because of their importance within the fishery and wanted to get an assessment done. I agree, it is largely an annual crop and I think that any assessment efforts are going to be extremely problematic.

The lack of an assessment doesn't necessarily come because no one has tried. There have been some efforts along the way to do an assessment. Mike Prager, probably ten years ago, tried to

apply production models to it, tried to look at tagging models. When I worked at NC DMF, we had high hopes of doing tagging estimates of mortality on dolphin.

We have seen what Don Hammond has done for years and years of tagging. A lot of these things are just not panning out. There was research done into the life history of them and trying to get ages off of otoliths, and you're down to reading daily rings. A student of Jeff Buckel's quite a few years ago did that.

I think dolphin is an extreme challenge to an assessment, especially with the methods that we're accustomed to. Yes, it is something that should probably not maybe come front and foremost as we're trying to deal with of these older assessments, which is why the prioritization that I did kind of booted those two out and kicked those cans down the road, so to say. I think you make a good case for doing that, also.

MR. CUPKA: So 2014 is pretty much set; and 2015, you've got input on those; so what if anything beyond that do you need so we can move on?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that's good for now.

MR. CUPKA: Does anyone have any heartache with any of that? This is all subject to I guess change once the steering committee meets, too, with what the other needs are. I think it is a good list at this point and hopefully we can get it done. All right, do you want to take us to our next item, John?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, just a couple more items. One is the SEDAR process is continuing with steering committee recommendations. The steering committee always talks about process. One of the things we have dealt with in the last couple of years is shifting from the assessment process being a workshop approach to doing a webinar approach.

That has proven kind of problematic actually. Anywhere from six to fifteen webinars are being scheduled to try and do this assessment process. The reason that is done that way is because SEDAR is a council process, and these meetings are public meetings and the guiding principle that we're operating under now is that when the analysts want to make a decision about the assessment like should I use 0.15 for natural mortality or 0.2, they need to make that decision with this public discussion over the webinar, and they can't move ahead with a base run that makes some of those decisions without having that discussion.

So, what happens is a bunch of webinars are scheduled in hopes that a webinar occurs at a time when these guys have to make a decision. Typically what happens is they probably come up against a challenge the day after the webinar and have to wait like three weeks for the next one that is to be scheduled. It doesn't work well from their approach. What else we're seeing now is what I want to call the "webinar fatigue". When there are 15 webinars for a fisherman to choose from, he doesn't know which one is important.

He is going to go fishing when the weather is good and he is going to be on the webinar when he can, and a lot of times that means is we've been faced with webinars where we have to make a

critical decision and the fishermen aren't there because it is one of fifteen. They recently cancelled one for SEDAR 33 in the Gulf because no one showed up except for the analysts.

We have dealt with this a lot and the fishermen have asked me when they want to get involved, well, which webinar should I be there for? They know which one is important. I can make a point to be there for one if I know which one is important. Otherwise, I'm going to go fishing. We have as a next agenda item to get someone to participate on the recreational side for king mackerel, and we're struggling to find anybody.

One of the things that Michelle shared with us is people look at this schedule and it is extremely intimidating to tell someone this is the commitment. They don't want to do it. The realization we have come to with the SEDAR staff and hearing from the people all involved in this is that this is supposed to be public and transparent, and that is the intent; but in doing that, it has become so burdensome that it is really not and it is defeating its own purpose.

These meetings need to be noticed in the Federal Register. That means we have a four-week window for planning a meeting. That means if they, like, hit something and say, "Man, you know, we need like three days to work this out and then we can come to you with alternatives:" we can't do that.

We have no flexibility and it has been recognized that the assessments are a very dynamic process. This is cutting-edge stuff. They don't know what the challenges are when they get into it, but we're trying to come up with a schedule 15 months in advance to decide how you're going to manage it.

I think if we look over the last two years and we are now, we have to say that it is really not working. It's just really not working. What I'm going to propose at the steering committee and hope to get a little feedback here is that we need to find some way to let this assessment group, this panel that we appoint, the SSC members and maybe other scientists and the constituent representatives, the fishermen that provide important advice on interpreting CPUEs and all of that stuff and this analytical team, which is the Science Center folks, to be able to interact a little bit more informally.

I think the model for that is the IPT. I recognize that the IPT is different. It is not a recognized council committee like these SEDAR panels technically are, but it seems like there must be some way to let those guys meet informally so that as the analysts decide, okay, I've got three choices for natural mortality, I've evaluated them, these are the decisions; can they put that out to the group over e-mail or something and get feedback and say, okay, now I've got guidance from this group, and they could work through their problems as they arise.

Then we have a number of set points where we still do the webinars, but they're based on reaching a particular point of progress and not this idea that every decision that has to be made has to done in that process, in that framework. The thought is that you could have one early on when the continuity run, which is if you're doing, say, a second benchmark – you know, you did a benchmark five years ago, we're doing a new one.

That would be take all those decisions, add the new data and see where that gets you and sort of a test that your model is still working. The continuity run and maybe the responses to recommendations from the data workshop; you could do that early on and give these guys like two months to work and then hold another webinar where you say, okay, on this webinar we're going to review the base run, we're going to review the recommendations, we're going to get this group in this public format now to review all of the decisions that have been made where the public can actually see it and have some opportunity to know what is going on, but let them do the work leading up to that point first.

I think by freeing them up to – you know, it may not take anymore time. It may take a little bit less time because they're not stopping every three weeks, every four weeks to prepare a presentation and go over all the stuff for the upcoming webinar, and they're also able to deal with problems as they arise and not have to sit on them sometimes for two weeks while they, like, well, we can't really move ahead and get the runs going because we need everybody to weigh in on this.

That is sort of what we're going to propose, and I guess I would like to see if people here are comfortable with that and make sure everybody understands it is not about taking the public out. It is about giving the public a better opportunity to comment in a more manageable way that is more efficient and not so daggone intimidating.

MR. CUPKA: Yes, and it is not trying to circumvent transparency in any way, but it is trying to balance it and get the work done at the same time. Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I fully support taking that to the steering committee. I've had conversations with a couple different fishermen in North Carolina in the for-hire industry trying to encourage them, persuade them to participate in the SEDAR 38 process. These are two really good guys, and they both expressed concerns about just the magnitude of the time commitment.

I impressed upon them where their input is most valuable is really during sort of that data workshop kind of thing when we're looking at all of that information. They absolutely agreed, but said even a week in December, which might be a slow season for folks, still impacts their bottom line; and taking that time away not just from business but also family is difficult.

When I mentioned sort of an alternative approach such as this, that enthusiastically received. One of these guys said that is exactly – “Please take down my name and my information; that is exactly how I would love to be contacted. I want to be involved that way. Someone can send me an e-mail and say, ‘Hey, could I get up with you for a phone call or send you some information, some graphs or something that you could look at. We're wondering why this trend is going up or going down at this particular time. You know, were there regulations that maybe impacted that or whatever?’”

That is the kind of input that these guys wanted to be able to provide. They absolutely agree that getting involved at the beginning of the process is the most important because it affects all the decisions that are made thereafter. However, they need a little bit more flexibility in there, too. You've got my support.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: John just started talking to me a little bit about this late last week. I'm going to talk with others about it at my office because one potential big issue is the Magnuson Act requirements for notice and those sorts of things and how that will work given the scheme that John is proposing. We are going to look at it and see if we can try to offer whatever we can to figure out perhaps a better way of doing this while still meeting all the legal requirements.

MR. CUPKA: Yes, that would be good because obviously what we're doing now is not getting the job done. We need to try and think outside the box, which John has been doing, and come up with something that will balance, like I say, transparency but get the work done and get it accomplished so we can move on.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and those that haven't been around as long, all this is set up under the council process. These panels that we create, an assessment panel, when you read the Magnuson Act and it talks about the council creating the SSC and any other committees, advisory panels that it needs to do its work, these panels are considered one of those committees.

It says all these committees can meet and these are the requirements about the notice and all that stuff; that applies to these. That's why we are under this requirement that we have the Federal Register Notices and we can't just get together with these guys and have this meeting. It is going to take some sort of – you know, maybe changing something or some other way of going about this perhaps and hopefully we can find a way to make this happen. I think this is the first step and we will definitely hear from Monica and her folks, I'm sure, as we work through it.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just a quick question for John since we're talking about this; what is the requirement that the Service has in terms of the timeline in which they want you to have a meeting notice up there so that it can be published in the Federal Register; how far in advance of your meeting should that be?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I believe the bare minimum is 14 days published before the meeting can be held and like 21 days before the meeting to get it to them to be published – 26 days, yes; okay, 26 days, so we usually work on like four weeks. We're like we've got to get it in four weeks because then if there is a holiday or something, we can work it out.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I knew about the 14 days, obviously, from the Act, so it is 26 days, then?

MR. MAHOOD: That's they want. We try to get it to them about 30 days in case there is a problem. Yes, and if it is going to be a shorter time than that, then we've got to call in special favors from the folks up there.

MR. CARMICHAEL: And with all the webinars and notices, we don't really have any special favors left within SEDAR.

MR. CUPKA: In fact, you probably owe some people, right? All right, does that bring us down our next item?

MR. CARMICHAEL: It does and since the people are supportive of this idea that we find a way to make it happen, and we're all well aware of what the issue has become over the last couple of years in trying to work through these webinars, so I appreciate that. The final thing was to bring if there are any approvals.

At the last meeting in June 2013, we made appointments for SEDAR 38, king mackerel. I indicated at that time that we'd like to find a recreational representative from the South Atlantic. I don't believe that we have for reasons that Michelle basically laid out. I think that is going to be increasingly a problem with folks, that this webinar burnout is a pretty real issue; and we've become so intimidating that we're kind of becoming counter to our intent.

MR. CUPKA: Yes, and I think Doug contacted some people, too, and I guess got the same reaction; so the bottom line is we don't need a closed session to appoint anybody because we don't have anybody that stepped forward from the recreational fishery to be appointed. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I asked John Jolley to see if he found someone. He did and he e-mailed me and I e-mailed him the commitment and I never got a response back. We tried.

MR. CUPKA: Seriously, though, this is getting to be more and more of a problem, and it is one we have got to find a way around because that participation is so vital to what we're trying to accomplish here. All right, is there any other business to come before the committee? Seeing none; then we will adjourn.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 o'clock p.m., September 16, 2013,)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

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October 21, 2013

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting:
SEDAR Committee
Monday, September 16, 2013

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Conklin, Billie	beachbumbillie76@yahoo.co...	517 min
77	Bonura, Vincent	sailraiser25c@aol.com 412 min
53	jenkins, wallace	jenkinsw@dnr.sc.gov 7 min
52	DeLancey, Larry	delanceyl@dnr.sc.gov 143 min
48	michael, merrifield...	mikem@wildoceanmarket.com... 249 min
48	holland, jack	jack.holland@ncdenr.gov 53 min
47	Shertzer, Kyle	kyle.shertzer@noaa.gov 47 min
42	Waters, James	jwaters8@gmail.com 43 min
39	Thompson, Robert	capt.thompson@gmail.com 535 min
36	Smith, Mason	mason.smith@myfwc.com 3 min
35	holiman, stephen	stephen.holiman@noaa.gov 139 min
34	DeVictor, rick	rick.devictor@noaa.gov 461 min
34	Michie, Kate	kate.michie@noaa.gov 385 min
32	Tsao, Fan	fan.tsao@noaa.gov 32 min
32	sandorf, scott	scott.sandorf@noaa.gov 457 min
32	E, A	annemarie.eich@noaa.gov 443 min
31	Williams, Erik	erik.williams@noaa.gov 441 min
31	Bresnen, Anthony	anthony.bresnen@myfwc.com... 509 min
30	raine, karen	karen.raine@noaa.gov 178 min
30	c, m	mec181@yahoo.com 482 min
29	Ballenger, Joseph	ballengerj@dnr.sc.gov 480 min
29	Merrifield, Jeanna...	jeannam@wildoceanmarket.c... 505 min
28	Takade-Heumacher, ...	htakade@edf.org 180 min
27	Wyanski, David	wysanskid@dnr.sc.gov 31 min
26	Baker, Scott	bakers@uncw.edu 315 min
25	sedberry, george	george.sedberry@noaa.tov 27 min
25	Gore, Karla	karlagore@gmail.com 207 min
25	crabtree, roy	roy.crabtree@noaa.gov 15 min

23	MacLauchlin, Bill	billmac@charter.net	26 min
20	L, I	captaindrifter@bellsouth...	0 min
20	Stevens, Charles	iamcstevens@gmail.com	0 min
20	Amick, Steve	steveamicks@aol.com	0 min
20	Neer, Julie	julie.neer@safmc.net	0 min
20	Ponce, Charlene	charlene.ponce@gulfcounci...	0 min