



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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OVERVIEW

SSC SELECTION COMMITTEE

March 3, 2010
Jekyll Island Club
Jekyll Island, GA

CLOSED SESSION

Items to be discussed at this meeting: (1) procedural recommendations from joint meeting with the SSC, (2) SSC Code of Conduct, (3) conflict of interest policies, (4) regional representation on the SSC, and (5) interaction between the SSC and IPTs.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

2. **Approval of Minutes**

The Committee last met June 2009.

3. **SSC Selection Committee and SSC Joint Meeting**

A. Overview

The SSC Selection Committee met jointly with the SSC on Thursday, October 29, 2009. The overview and summary report from this meeting are provided (**Attachments 1 and 2**). Motions were not passed by either Committee, as the purpose was to discuss procedures and expectations and develop recommendations for further consideration by the Selection Committee and SOPPs Committee.

B. Action

The Committee is asked to consider motions to address joint committee recommendations.

4. SSC Code of Conduct

A. Overview

The Council provides SSC members a detailed job description that clearly states the responsibilities of and expectations for SSC members (**Attachment 3**). This document does not, however, address standards of conduct that may be expected to apply during SSC meetings as well as at other times when members are representing the Council. Recent observers of SSC deliberations have raised concerns that the Committee may not always conduct itself and its deliberations in the most positive and constructive manner possible. Staff has not received any formal complaints and therefore has no documented proof of this problem to provide the Committee. Nonetheless, the Committee is asked to consider whether a Code of Conduct should be added to the Job Description to prevent future issues.

B. Action

Consider developing a Code of Conduct for the SSC. A number of items should be considered if the Committee believes this is necessary:

- Objective statement
- Contents and specific issues to address
- Location, whether as a stand-alone document or added to the Job Description
- Arbiter and consequences for violation
- Timing and Council approval

5. Conflict of Interest Policies

A. Overview

Revisions to the Magnuson-Stevens Act are bringing increased responsibilities for SSCs and increased scrutiny of members, their affiliations, and their activities. Discussions at the December SSC meeting indicated that consideration should be given to the Conflict of Interest policies and screening as related to SSC members.

SSC members are annually required to complete a financial disclosure statement (NOAA form 88-195) that is held on file with the Council. This form addresses financial interests related to fisheries. NMFS has another form, that specifically addresses conflicts of interest with regard to reviewers (Form CD 571, **Attachment 4**). This form does not require the detailed financial information of Form 88-195. It instead asks for a certification that the individual has no real or perceived conflict of interest with the information under review.

Form CD-571 seems most appropriate to a single instance review and may not prove a reliable indicator of potential conflict across the wide range of circumstances and situations faced by the SSC over a typical term, a year of meetings, or even a single meeting. The SSC clearly serves a peer reviewer role as referenced in the form, but the Committee should discuss whether it would be meaningful to have such a form completed before members know what issues they will face.

B. Action

Consider whether Conflict of Interest policy, including formal vetting of conflict of interest issues, is required for SSC members. If so, the Committee should consider:

- Frequency of disclosure and vetting
- Forms
- Screening or vetting process
- Levels of conflict, such as varying degrees of independence for varying topics

6. Regional Representation

A. Overview

A constituent raised an issue before Committee Chair Crabtree regarding the geographic location of SSC members (**Attachment 5**). This same issue was also raised in a recent letter to the Council (**Attachment 6**). These letters note that quite a few SSC members are located in North Carolina, that the representation by NC residents exceeds that of FL residents, and recommends that FL should have greater representation on the Committee.

Current SSC members' state of residence and affiliations are summarized in Table 1 below so that the Committee can make an informed judgment on this issue. While it is true that 7 SSC members reside in NC, only 3 of these are state agency employees. The other 4 include 3 university affiliated scientists and an SEFSC employee. Three individuals reside in FL, with one unaffiliated, one employed by the FL FWC, and one a University researcher. Finally, note that only 1 member resides in each of the states of GA and SC.

The SAFMC does not list any SSC seats as obligatory to any particular state or agency, and past efforts to fill seats on the SSC have focused on individual qualifications and the need to ensure critical areas of expertise are represented.

B. Action

Consider whether the geographic distribution of current SSC members is an issue, and if so, recommended measures for resolution.

Table 1. State of Residence and Affiliation of SSC Members.

Member	Residence	Affiliation
Carolyn Belcher	GA	GA DNR
Luiz Barbieri	FL	FL FWCC
John Boreman	NC	NCSU
Jeff Buckel	NC	NCSU
Alex Chester	FL	none
Matt Cieri	ME	ME DMR
Andy Cooper	British Columbia	Simon Fraser Univ.
Chip Collier	NC	NC DMF
Scott Crosson	NC	NC DMF
Christine Jensen	NC	NC DMF
Yan Jiao	VA	VA Tech
Sherry Larkin	FL	UF
Marcel Reichert	SC	SC DNR
John Whitehead	NC	ASU
Erik Williams	NC	SEFSC

7. Relation between the SSC and the IPTs

A. Overview

The Snapper-Grouper Amendment 17A IPT made the following request during its December 18, 2009 meeting: *“Rick will send John Carmichael a memo asking that IPT questions be brought before the SSC prior to their addressing issues associated with various amendments. The memo will also advise the SSC to engage IPT members who are present at the meetings in discussions before critiquing particular parts of the document.”*

This issue was discussed by staff directly in lieu of a formal memo. It is raised here for consideration as it potentially affects SSC operations which are the purview of this committee. It is staff’s understanding that the issue was raised in regard to the SSC’s comments from December 2009 on the social and economic analyses in Amendment 17A. An avenue exists, through the SSC roadmap, to direct questions to the SSC. There is nothing in current policies to prevent IPTs from developing specific questions for inclusion in the roadmap and consideration by the SSC.

B. Action

Provide staff guidance on addressing the IPT request.

8. **OTHER BUSINESS**
9. **TIMING and TASKS MOTION**
10. **ADJOURN**