

COUNCIL COORDINATION COMMITTEE
MAY 2019 MEETING
FINAL TRANSCRIPT

May 14-16 -- Charleston, South Carolina

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1 **1. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

2
3 *Jessica McCawley:* My name is Jessica McCawley, and I'm the Chair of the South
4 Atlantic Council. I have actually never attended a CCC meeting
5 before, and so this is a new experience, and I do not know many of
6 you, and so if you will bear with me, because I can't see name tags
7 past about say Terry on this side, or past about Clay's name tag on
8 this side, and so I will be trying to learn everybody's name. By the
9 time we get to the end of the week, I might have it all down. First,
10 I am going to turn it over to my Vice Chair, Mel, to welcome folks
11 to Charleston.

12
13 *Mel Bell:* Good afternoon. I am Mel Bell. In my day job, I am the Director
14 of Marine Fisheries here for the State of South Carolina, for the
15 Department of Natural Resources, and then I'm also the Vice Chair
16 of the council, and I live here in Charleston, and so, on behalf of
17 Charleston, welcome to Charleston.

18
19 You will find that it's a friendly city, and we've been voted the
20 most friendly city in the United States several times. Tourism is a
21 big thing here, and there is lots to eat, and I think Gregg provided
22 you all with some information related to restaurants and all, but, if
23 you wander around down this way, you won't starve, but it's a
24 very historic city. If you're into history and you've got the time, I
25 would encourage you to go on a carriage ride or take a harbor
26 cruise or something, but there is lots to do here, and, again, we
27 love having you all, and it's good for the economy.

28
29 The College of Charleston had their graduation on Saturday, and
30 so, if you were here a couple of weeks ago, there would have been
31 college students all over the place, but it's a little more tame right
32 now, and so, anyway, if you have any questions about anything
33 local, feel free to find me and ask me, and I will be glad to try to
34 steer you in the right direction, but welcome to Charleston.

35
36 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Mel. Now I'm going to turn it over to Gregg to go
37 through some logistics.

38
39 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you, and good afternoon, everybody. First off, we've got
40 restrooms down to the right here, and you encounter the men's
41 restroom first. If you keep on going down to the right, you will
42 find the women's restroom. We will do a name voice ID, and I
43 would encourage people just to say your name when you're
44 talking. This will make the minutes much more accurate, and you
45 won't have your name attributed to someone else or someone else
46 attributed to your comments.

1
2 If you haven't picked up your name tag yet, do so. There is
3 padfolios out there for everyone. If there is anybody that doesn't
4 have a name tag out there, if you would see our staff, Kelly in the
5 back or Cierra, and they will get you sorted out. If you have any
6 questions, ask them. At the end, we've got a box out there to
7 recycle the name tags.
8

9 We will have breakfast outside here starting at about 7:30 in the
10 morning, and we'll have a break in the afternoon, and we'll have
11 some snacks. The Wi-Fi information is on the sides, and it's the
12 Carolina Ballroom. The sign-in code is 8881. As far as
13 presentations, if your material has already been posted, then we've
14 got it. For anything else, see Kelly, and Kelly will be operating
15 from this computer halfway down the table here. For your
16 presentation, we've got a remote control that you can operate from
17 your seat, or, if you prefer to be up by the computer, that's fine. If
18 you want to just tell Kelly next slide, he will operate it for you. I
19 think that covers everything.
20

21 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thanks, Gregg. I just want to come everyone, again.
22 I'm certain that we're going to have a productive meeting over the
23 next few days, and let's go ahead and start the voice recognition
24 down at that end of the table, I believe with Mike.
25

26 *Michael Rubino:* I am Michael Rubino, and I am the Senior Advisory for Seafood
27 Strategy, as of a couple of weeks ago. I started a couple of weeks
28 ago. Before that, I was the Director of the Aquaculture Program.
29

30 *Marc Gorelnik:* I'm Marc Gorelnik, Vice Chair of the Pacific Council.
31

32 *Chuck Tracy:* Chuck Tracy, Executive Director of the Pacific Council.
33

34 *Phil Anderson:* Phil Anderson, Chair of the Pacific Council.
35

36 *Bill Tweit:* Bill Tweit, Vice Chair of the North Pacific Council.
37

38 *David Witherell:* David Witherell, Executive Director of the North Pacific Council.
39

40 *Simon Kinneen:* Simon Kinneen, Chair of the North Pacific Council.
41

42 *Terry Stockwell:* Terry Stockwell, New England Council Vice Chair.
43

44 *Thomas Nies:* Thomas Nies, New England Council Executive Director.
45

46 *John Quinn:* John Quinn, New England Council, Chair.

1
2 *Warren Elliott:* Good afternoon. I'm Warren Elliot, Vice Chair of the Mid-
3 Atlantic.
4
5 *Chris Moore:* Chris Moore, Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic.
6
7 *Mike Luisi:* Mike Luisi, Chair, Mid-Atlantic.
8
9 *Dale Diaz:* Dale Diaz, Vice Chair, Gulf Council.
10
11 *Carrie Simmons:* Carrie Simmons, Gulf Council, Executive Director.
12
13 *Tom Frazer:* Tom Frazer, Chair, Gulf Council.
14
15 *Marcos Hanke:* Marcos Hanke, Chair, Caribbean Fishery Management Council.
16
17 *Miguel Rolon:* Miguel Rolon, Executive Director, Caribbean Council.
18
19 *Tony Blanchard:* Tony Blanchard, Vice Chair, Caribbean Council.
20
21 *Mel Bell:* Mel Bell, Vice Chair, South Atlantic Council.
22
23 *Gregg Waugh:* Gregg Waugh, South Atlantic Council, Executive Director.
24
25 *Jessica McCawley:* Jessica McCawley, South Atlantic Council, Chair.
26
27 *Chris Oliver:* Chris Oliver, NOAA, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries.
28
29 *Paul Doremus:* Paul Doremus, NOAA Fisheries.
30
31 *Sam Rauch:* Sam Rauch, NOAA, Deputy Assistant Administrator for
32 Regulations.
33
34 *Alan Risenhoover:* Alan Risenhoover, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NOAA
35 Fisheries.
36
37 *Adam Issenberg:* Adam Issenberg, NOAA Office of General Counsel, Fisheries and
38 Protected Resources Section.
39
40 *Roy Crabtree:* Roy Crabtree, Southeast Regional Administrator.
41
42 *Jim Balsiger:* Jim Balsiger, Regional Administrator, all of Alaska.
43
44 *Glenn Merrill:* Glen Merrill, SF ARA, Alaska Region.
45
46 *Sarah Hile:* Sarah Hile, SF ARA for the Greater Atlantic Region.

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Mike Pentony: Mike Pentony, Regional Administrator, Greater Atlantic Region.

Michael Tosatto: Mike Tosatto, Pacific Islands Regional Administrator.

Ryan Wulff: Ryan Wulff SF ARA West Coast Region, NOAA Fisheries.

Dean Sensui: Dean Sensui, Western Pacific Fishery Council, Vice Chair for Hawaii.

Kitty Simonds: Kitty Simonds, Executive Director.

John Gourley: John Gourley, Vice Chair, Northern Mariana Islands, Western Pacific Council.

Michael Duenas: Michael Duenas, Western Pacific Council, Vice Chair for Guam.

Jessica McCawley: All right. Thanks, everybody. Now I'm going to turn it over to Chris to give his welcome.

Chris Oliver: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's great to see everybody. It's been a busy, busy year since we last met in Sitka, and I just want to express my appreciation for all the work that you all, the councils, have done in the past year, and I just want to go through a few items.

First, I want to talk a little bit about some key leadership changes. Mike started off the introductions, and we created a new position called the Senior Advisor for Seafood Strategy, and Mike was selected for that position, and it's really to support our strategic focus on seafood production and trade, and I know Mike is most closely associated with aquaculture, of course, but this position was created to focus not only on aquaculture, but also two other -- Of our three-legged stool, two other pillars of Admiral Gallaudet's and our Blue Economy Initiative on the fish side, and that is maximizing the amount and value of our wild-caught seafood industry and also creating new markets and trade positions for U.S. seafood.

That's a priority, and all of those are priorities for the administration, and so Dr. Rubino is going to lead that charge, looking at development of new markets for U.S. fisheries products, facilitating a new and expanded domestic aquaculture production, and build partnerships with stakeholders across the entire value chain for both wild-captured and farmed seafood, domestically and internationally, and so this is the first senior-level position created

1 at NOAA Fisheries, and it's similar, I guess, to the three existing
2 senior scientist positions in the agency, and so we're excited to
3 have been able to create that new positions, and congratulations to
4 Mike for being selected to that position.
5

6 Another major development is, earlier this year, toward the end of
7 February, Secretary Ross announced that Dr. Neal Jacobs would
8 begin performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Commerce
9 for Oceans and Atmosphere, basically the NOAA Administrator.
10

11 As you know, Admiral Gallaudet had been serving in that role
12 previously, and he will continue to serve as Assistant Secretary of
13 Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and I expect that Dr.
14 Jacobs is going to be fairly deferential to Admiral Gallaudet, in
15 terms of being the main person on the fisheries side and overseeing
16 fisheries for NOAA, and so that will give the Admiral a greater
17 opportunity, I guess, to focus his time and effort on the wet side,
18 particularly on the Blue Economy priorities that we've identified,
19 not only for fisheries, but across all the other NOAA line offices,
20 and so welcome to Dr. Jacobs, and I don't know if any of you have
21 had the opportunity to meet Neal, but, like the Admiral, he's a
22 great guy, and I look forward to working with him.
23

24 A couple of priorities and milestones that I wanted to speak to. In
25 March, we released our 2019 priorities and guidance document,
26 and that's a short document that is basically the goal is to provide
27 guidance to all of our fisheries employees in executing our mission
28 responsibilities around the three primary strategic goals, and those
29 continue to be to amplify the economic value of our commercial
30 and recreational fisheries while ensuring their sustainability and
31 the sustainability of the coastal communities that depend on them.
32

33 Secondly is to recover and conserve protected species while
34 supporting responsible fishing and resource development, and third
35 is to improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency,
36 and just some comments on the regulatory efficiency and
37 regulatory reform. As you recall, the number of administration
38 executive orders aimed at regulatory reform and to alleviate
39 unnecessary regulatory burden. Since that began in 2017, we have
40 led the Department of Commerce in implementing deregulatory
41 actions. I mean, not surprisingly, and fisheries are among the most
42 prolific regulatory machine, and so hence the opportunity for a lot
43 of regulatory reform.
44

45 Sixteen of the Department of the Commerce's completed
46 deregulatory actions came from us, and I say "us" as from

1 fisheries, from the councils, and one of the most notable was the
2 New England omnibus EFH amendments, which opened areas off
3 the coast of New England to commercial sea scallop harvesting for
4 the first time in many years, and the overall result is approximately
5 \$50 million in total cost savings annualized, or roughly \$700
6 million in present value cost savings, and so we're pretty proud of
7 that. Those are largely due to actions done by the councils, and we
8 want to continue to lead the way on this initiative.
9

10 We asked you to review existing regulations and identify those that
11 were outdated or unnecessary or ineffective, and we received sixty
12 ideas in mid-2018 from the councils, and those translated into
13 twenty-four long-term rulemaking entries to what is called the Fall
14 Unified Agenda, and that's to inform the public about our
15 collaborative work in reducing burdens on fishermen and
16 improving our regulatory regime overall.
17

18 To assist in that effort, and I don't want to get too far into the
19 budget, because we have a separate discussion on budgets, but that
20 included, as you know, an additional \$2 million to the overall
21 council budget to support those efforts, and, because of the council
22 process, many of those deregulatory actions often happen
23 organically, and those include alleviating or reducing existing
24 requirements and increasing access and getting more economic
25 value out of fisheries and reducing costs and basically providing
26 flexibility, for example in targeting different fish stocks or fish
27 during different times of the year, and so a number of examples,
28 and we could go on and on, but I just want to encourage you to
29 continue to look at those opportunities and to reduce regulatory
30 burden, or, in some cases, we take regulatory action that has a
31 deregulatory effect, and so I would encourage us all to keep
32 looking at those opportunities.
33

34 I want to talk a little bit about the Modern Fish Act that passed
35 Congress in December of 2018. The purpose of that law is
36 essentially to expand recreational fishing opportunities through
37 enhanced marine fishery conservation and management that
38 requires us and other entities, including the National Academy of
39 Science, to produce a number of reports.
40

41 Let me back up. It includes several provisions that are focused on
42 state recreational fishery management registry and data collection
43 programs, and it highlights the importance of a variety of
44 alternative management measures to be used in recreational
45 fisheries, and those include extraction rates, fishing mortality
46 targets, and harvest control rules.

1
2 It basically reaffirms many of the actions that the Magnuson Act
3 already allows, and it does not supersede annual catch limits and
4 accountability measures, and we don't feel that, at this time,
5 additional NS 1 Guidelines are necessary. However, we will keep
6 that as an option, in the event that it becomes apparent there is a
7 need to do so, but, at this time, we don't see the need to do so.
8

9 One thing I would like people think hard about and encourage is,
10 while that act sort of reiterates existing authorities that already
11 exist to the councils, I think I would like to encourage all of us, our
12 agency leadership and all of you, to take a hard look at where those
13 alternative management measures can be successfully applied, and
14 I think that's part of the impetus for the act, is to sort of
15 reinvigorate that goal and seeking those opportunities.
16

17 I think that some of the councils, and I know particularly the South
18 Atlantic, has already undergone some work in that regard, looking
19 at particular fisheries that may, for example, lend themselves to
20 that type of management or pilot programs, pilot programs where
21 we can test some of these management approaches, and perhaps
22 low-risk fisheries, where there may be a high reward for a low risk.
23 I want to encourage everybody to continue looking at that, those
24 opportunities.
25

26 There are a number of reports, and there are two sections that
27 actually require us, as well as the National Academy of Science, to
28 take a hard look at our Marine Recreational Information Program,
29 MRIP, and I know -- I will talk a little bit about that, because
30 we've had a lot of concerns expressed from industry, folks in the
31 fishing industry, as well as from our state partners regarding the
32 differences in the fishing effort that is estimated by the new mail-
33 based Fishing Effort Survey versus the Coastal Household
34 Telephone Survey, and I know that some of those are not all that
35 surprising, frankly, because I think there is ample evidence that the
36 old approach was underestimating effort, although I will recognize
37 that, in some cases, some of the results appear to be somewhat
38 counterintuitive, or, as someone put it, defy logical belief, and so
39 we're going to be taking a hard look at those.
40

41 When we transitioned to the Fishing Effort Survey, we had a lot of
42 involvement of the state and regional partners in the planning and
43 implementation process, and we intend to continue that approach,
44 starting with a series of collaborative workshops. We are working
45 with the South Atlantic Council SSC to plan a workshop, likely in
46 August, that's going to more closely examine those FES-based

1 estimates as well as the impact of the Access Point Angler
2 Intercept Survey and calibrations on the behavior of those
3 estimates.
4

5 We're also planning a late-summer or early-fall workshop,
6 specifically with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
7 Commission, to better understand the differences between our FES
8 estimates and the Gulf Reef Fish Survey estimates, and some of
9 ours could be overestimating, and some of the Gulf Reef Fish
10 could be underestimating, and we've had that discussion with
11 Madam Chair, and so we hope to get a better reconciliation of
12 those two.
13

14 We're also looking to -- We have started communications with
15 some of the other states, Mississippi particularly, that has
16 expressed similar concerns as was expressed by Florida, and we
17 have also reached out to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
18 Policy Board as another way for the Atlantic state partners to
19 communicate concerns or questions, and so we intend to take a
20 hard look at that, and I'm glad that the Modern Fish Act
21 specifically called out those two reports and assessments, because
22 it really serves to keep our feet to the fire to make sure that we've
23 got the best estimates we can through the MRIP program.
24

25 A couple of other things of recent note, particularly with regard to
26 the recreational fishing community. In February, we signed, Sam
27 signed on our behalf, for NOAA Fisheries, a Memorandum of
28 Agreement between NOAA Fisheries, the Office of Marine
29 Sanctuaries, and four major sportfish-related organizations: the
30 American Sportfishing Association, the National Marine
31 Manufacturers Association, the Association of Fish and Wildlife
32 Agencies, and the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.
33

34 That MOA is really intended to help communities realize greater
35 social and economic benefits from sustainable recreational fishing
36 and boating, and so there are a number of provisions and
37 opportunities for collaboration through that MOA that we look
38 forward to working with the recreational fishing community on.
39

40 In March of this year, and I'll talk a little bit about wind energy.
41 When I came into this position a couple of years ago, I
42 immediately got a tremendous amount of interest and visits from
43 folks in the fishing community on the east coast who were
44 concerned about the speed and proliferation of wind energy
45 development and their concerns that, through the permitting
46 process that's run by the Department of Interior, BOEM, that

1 fishing industry interests were not getting enough attention or
2 appropriate consideration as this major wind energy development
3 EISs were being developed by BOEM.
4

5 We entered into an MOU between us, NOAA Fisheries, BOEM,
6 and the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance, which is a
7 new group that was formed last year, specifically to organize
8 fishing interests on the east coast relative to wind energy
9 development.

10
11 We want to be clear that it's not an anti-wind-energy initiative.
12 Obviously, we went into this MOU with BOEM as a partner, and
13 we saw it as a great opportunity for us to be able to help ensure
14 that, as wind energy is developed, fishing industry interests are
15 adequately and appropriately considered as well as our own
16 science and survey and research interests, because a lot -- When
17 you look at the overall potential footprint of wind energy on the
18 east coast, and I understand there is starting to be interest on the
19 west coast as well, it's pretty daunting, when you look at the
20 potential footprint as it will intersect with our own research
21 activities and certainly with fishing industry interests. We were
22 pleased to get that agreement in place.
23

24 Another item that I just wanted to touch on is, in May, we released
25 our Annual Status of Stocks Report, or, actually, we're putting the
26 finishing touches on it, but it shows continued progress. Stocks on
27 the overfishing list remain at near all-time lows, and the number of
28 stocks on the overfished list actually did increase, primarily due to
29 factors that are outside the control of our domestic fisheries
30 management, but we will keep you posted and give you a heads-up
31 prior to rolling out that report.
32

33 I will save some comments on other budget-related items until we
34 get to that agenda item, and I also know we have a -- I was going
35 to talk about our strategic planning initiative, particularly the
36 geographic plans that are being developed by the Regions and
37 Science Centers together, along with the relevant council input, but
38 I will save that, because we have a separate agenda item on that,
39 and we'll go into more detail on that when we get to that agenda
40 item, and so those were my introductory comments, the few things
41 that I just wanted to touch on, and I don't know if we have time,
42 but I would be happy to take any questions.
43

44 *Jessica McCawley:* Thank you, Chris. Are there questions for Chris? Tom.

45
46 *Thomas Nies:* Thanks, Chris. I've got a question on the Seafood Development

1 and Trade position. Will that also promote or provide the ability
2 for people to identify new wild-caught capture fisheries, which
3 seems to be lacking now?
4

5 *Michael Rubino:* Well, we're going to have an opportunity to talk about this a little
6 bit later, at greater depth, but absolutely. That's a key piece of
7 what we're looking at. We're identified some areas, and I look
8 forward to working with all the councils to that objective. That's
9 one of the things that we're certainly looking at very closely.

10
11 *Jessica McCawley:* Michael.

12
13 *Mike Luisi:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Chris, could you go back to your
14 discussion on the workshops for MRIP, and could you elaborate a
15 little bit on when they are being planned to take place?
16

17 *Chris Oliver:* Cisco is leading the planning on that, Cisco Werner, our Chief
18 Scientist, and so I don't have exact dates, but my understanding
19 was that they are looking at a workshop in August with the SSC
20 for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and we're
21 looking at either August or September for a workshop specifically
22 with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,
23 specifically to try to reconcile the differences between the Gulf
24 Reef Fish Survey and our FES survey. Then we're just in the
25 initial discussion phases for potentially a third workshop with the
26 State of Mississippi and/or any other interested parties that would
27 be involved, and so late summer or early fall, generally.
28

29 *Jessica McCawley:* Go ahead, Mike.

30
31 *Mike Luisi:* Thank you, again. I'm really happy to hear that -- You said a few
32 times, that's there going to be a hard look at some of these
33 estimates that have come out of using the recalibrated information,
34 and I hope that that look will get into the Mid-Atlantic and New
35 England region as well. We have stakeholders who are very upset
36 with what they perceive to be just unbelievable estimates that are
37 coming out of some of the recreationally-important species in our
38 region.
39

40 With that said, I think one of the concerns that I have is that we've
41 already begun taking management actions as a result of the
42 benchmark assessment that occurred last fall for summer flounder.
43 We have increased the quota by 40 percent as a result of new
44 estimates, and, if we are going back to re-look at these values
45 again, I just would have concern that, if something is found, or if
46 it's decided that we're now going to change things again, we're

1 going to have to take some type of corrective action, and not only
2 have the estimates influenced the stock biomass, which is
3 ultimately leading to considerations of quotas, but it's created -- I
4 guess tension is probably not a strong enough word, but it's created
5 a tension between recreational stakeholders and commercial
6 stakeholders in the commercial industry, given the splits in quotas
7 that they have as historical baselines.

8
9 I am not asking for any answers there, but those are some of the
10 concerns that we have if something is found and we have to take
11 corrective action, and it will be difficult to explain. Thank you.

12
13 *Chris Oliver:* I appreciate those comments, Mike, and I am -- This is a big issue
14 on my radar screen, and I can guarantee you that. I am very
15 concerned about some of the numbers, particularly when, in some
16 instances, they, quote, defy logic or defy belief, and I don't want to
17 sound too defensive of MRIP.

18
19 I think it's a very good program, basically. I am very concerned
20 about particular instances where those numbers don't make sense.
21 I am, overall, very concerned about everyone's confidence, or lack
22 thereof, in the program, and so I would like to maybe reserve
23 further discussion until Cisco gets here tomorrow, because he will
24 have some good input for that discussion, if we could put that off
25 until tomorrow, and we can circle back to it.

26
27 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Are there more questions? Then, Chris, I am going to
28 turn it back to you. Do you want to speak any more on NMFS
29 Updates or FY 19 Priorities?

30
31 *Chris Oliver:* No, I think we're going to cover a lot of those as we go through the
32 meeting agenda. If I didn't say it earlier, I just want to express my
33 appreciation for the reception that you all hosted last night. That
34 was very good, and to our friends at the Westpac for the after
35 party. That was a lot of fun.

36
37 *Kitty Simonds:* You know, I was going to make a couple of statements about some
38 of the things that you said, just to push you on the edge, but like
39 you talked about maximizing our wildlife, and so maybe I better
40 ask the question, and so is Mr. Rubino going to help us in the
41 Western Pacific maximize our wildlife when we can only fish in
42 17 percent of our EEZ? Should I have a plan with him, work on a
43 plan with him?

44
45 *Chris Oliver:* As great as Mike may be, there are some things that are probably
46 out of his control.

1
2 *Kitty Simonds:* But he might have some new ideas. We're always looking for new
3 ideas. The other thing is that we don't want to have any of those
4 energy mills, whatever you want to call them, out in our ocean,
5 because our fishermen are concerned, because that's all we have,
6 right, is our ocean, and that these things will turn into FADs, fish
7 aggregating devices, and then BOEM will come along and say,
8 well, we have to have some closures around these, and so the
9 fishermen won't be able to fish in fifty miles, and so it's always,
10 for us, is looking ahead at statements that people are saying about
11 plans and things like that, because, over the years, all these
12 wonderful plans have turned into not very good plans for our
13 fishery, and so, since you have an MOU with BOEM, you need to
14 make sure that you take care of our interests, which is don't bring
15 those things out to the Pacific.
16
17 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Do I see another hand up? John.
18
19 *John Quinn:* Chris, I just wanted to thank you for emphasizing the offshore
20 wind issue. As you know, on the east coast, it's a huge issue, and
21 we had a whole day dedicated to it at our last council meeting, and
22 the total out-build is in the thousands of wind turbines over the
23 next twenty years, and so I think it's really an issue that's got to be
24 addressed, both nationally, but, in particular, on the east coast.
25
26 *Jessica McCawley:* John.
27
28 *John Gourley:* I thought it would just pile it on a little bit more for Chris. Not
29 only -- In fact, I welcome Mike. I think he's got a hell of a job
30 ahead of him. Good luck. I hope you drink. We've got other
31 issues too that -- You want to increase the economic value of our
32 commercial fisheries, but yet we have groups in D.C. that are
33 passing laws that are basically destroying the economic valuation
34 of our fisheries.
35
36 A case in point is the recent passage of the Billfish Conservation
37 Act, where we used to be able to send our blue marlin to you guys
38 to eat. That market was taken away from us, under the guise of
39 conservation.
40
41 Right now, there is a law gaining a lot of traction in the house that
42 is headed by our congressman from the NMI that basically will
43 require us to throw shark fins into the garbage can rather than sell
44 it. Of course, after they land it, they will have to cut the fins off,
45 and at least us in the islands, we don't eat shark fins, and so we'll
46 throw them in the garbage can, because you can't sell them, and I

1 had heard rumors by the Florida people that you have some shark
2 fisheries down there, and I understand that, by them not being able
3 to sell the shark fins, it's going to devastate their fishery. It's like
4 everybody at this table is working towards sustainable fisheries,
5 and we've got another group of people that is undercutting what
6 we are trying to do, and so it's just a comment for you to consider
7 along with all the other things that Kitty is going to tell you today.
8

9 *Chris Oliver:* Like I said, some things are out of our control. I would note, and I
10 think you know this, that we, National Marine Fisheries Service,
11 NOAA, are on record and have testified essentially in opposition to
12 both of those bills, for all the reasons you --
13

14 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more comments? Before we go into Dave Whaley's
15 presentation, we have some time set aside for public comment.
16 Are there any members of the public that want to provide public
17 comment today? Since I don't see folks getting up -- Go ahead.
18

19 *David Witherell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to say, as we start the
20 meeting, that the North Pacific is very happy to have figuratively
21 passed the gavel on to the South Atlantic Council for running the
22 CCC meeting. One thing that we noticed, that I noticed, was that
23 there isn't an actual CCC gavel to pass, and so I took it upon
24 myself to make one. It's constructed of eight different species of
25 wood from each of the eight council regions, including Alaska
26 birch from the North Pacific, koa from the Western Pacific, claro
27 walnut from the Pacific Council region, sugar maple from New
28 England, American cherry from the Mid-Atlantic, sweet gum from
29 the South Atlantic, cypress from the Gulf, and American
30 mahogany from the Caribbean region.
31

32 Now, you might ask, well, how is NMFS contribution to the CCC
33 represented in this gavel? I like to think of NMFS as the handle
34 that supplies really the leverage and the power for the hammer to
35 get its job done, but I suspect that the NMFS staff sees themselves
36 more as the sound anvil during these meetings/ So, Madam Chair,
37 if you would accept this gavel as the CCC gavel and use it wisely
38 during your term, we at the North Pacific would be very honored.
39

40 *Jessica McCawley:* Well, we are honored to accept that from you, and I certainly
41 appreciate you master worker making this gavel for us. *(Applause)*
42

43 *Chris Oliver:* I want to know what the disc is made out of.
44

45 *Jessica McCawley:* I have Thor's hammer up here. No members of the public want to
46 comment? Then we're going to move on to the next item, and so

1
2

Dave Whaley is up, and he's going to give us the legislative outlook and MSA reauthorization report.

1 **2. LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK & MSA REAUTHORIZATION**

2
3 *Dave Whaley:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Greetings from Washington, where
4 everything is calm and everybody is working well together. I'm
5 Dave Whaley, and I work for the CCC. For those of you that I
6 haven't met before, I am the one who sends out the monthly report.
7 Before I give my report now, anybody who has any comments or
8 suggestions on the monthly report and how it can be more effective
9 for you, please let me know. Since I do work for you, obviously,
10 call me. If you have any questions and you don't know what's
11 going on and you need some answers, call me.
12

13 When I ask people mostly what they want to hear about, I always
14 hear politics. You will notice the monthly report doesn't have a lot
15 about politics, because it gets distributed far too widely, and I can't
16 put anything that might be controversial in there, and so, if you
17 have questions about politics, call me.
18

19 Since we met last time, we've gone through an election, and the
20 House of Representatives flipped. It's now controlled by the
21 Democrats. The Republicans picked up a couple of seats in the
22 Senate, and we have a lot of new members of the House. Also, if
23 you didn't know, there is an election coming up, the presidential
24 election, in 2020. By the time we meet next year, thirty-seven of
25 the states will have already held their primary, and so, even though
26 the election is not until November of 2020, by next year, early, a
27 lot is going to be decided, and so it's going to be a crazy year.
28

29 Obviously, with the change of the control in the House of
30 Representatives, the focus from the committees that govern
31 fisheries have changed. With the previous Congress, with the
32 Republicans in control, there were a lot of issues that you were
33 concerned about, including NEPA reform, ESA reform, restrictions
34 on monument authorities, that sort of thing. With the Democrats in
35 control, the focus so far as changed, and it is more on climate
36 change and more on restricting oil and gas and seismic activities
37 and strengthening the authorities under the Antiquities Act and
38 oversight over the Trump administration.
39

40 One other key thing that I will note is the House of Representatives
41 created a new select committee, and it's the Select Committee on
42 Climate Crisis, and it's being chaired by Congresswoman Castor
43 from Florida, and the ranking Republican is Garret Graves from
44 Louisiana, and so that's brand new. I don't know if they have held
45 any hearings yet, but, anyway, it's a new congressional committee
46 for this Congress.

1
2 As I mentioned, there is a presidential election coming up, and
3 there is one former Vice President who has thrown his hat in, and
4 there are three current or former governors, and there are seven
5 current and one former senator who are running for President, and
6 there are six current or former U.S. representatives of the House
7 who are running for President, and so a lot of politicians are
8 running for President, and, as you probably know, when we get
9 into presidential politics, things get a little -- What's a Midwest
10 term? Maybe hinky.

11
12 Where we left off last year, there were five fisheries-related bills
13 that became public law. We have talked about a couple of them
14 already. There was the Billfish Bill, and there was a bill that dealt
15 with state management of Dungeness crab, and there was a bill that
16 was titled "The Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act",
17 which deal with controlling marine mammal predation. There was
18 the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act, and
19 there was a Senate bill that became public law that talked about
20 coordinating the assessment and acquisition of unmanned maritime
21 systems, and so it could have an impact on ocean observing
22 systems.

23
24 A couple of big-ticket things that were left on the table were the
25 Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, and obviously that did not
26 become law. There was a House bill that went through the House
27 of Representatives, but it didn't make it through the Senate. There
28 was a major aquaculture authority legislation that was introduced
29 by Senator Wicker on the Senate side, and it did not become public
30 law, and there was also -- You may remember, at the very end of
31 the year, there was a draft Magnuson reauthorization that was
32 circulated by Senate Commerce staff, and that bill was never
33 introduced, and so some of you may have commented on that bill,
34 but it has not been introduced yet this Congress either.

35
36 Since we have some new faces around the table, let me give a
37 couple of basic things about Congress. We're in a new Congress
38 that started in January. Once a new Congress starts, everything
39 that happened in the previous Congress is gone, except for the
40 memories, and so all the bill numbers that we talked about last year
41 are all gone, and so we reset.

42
43 The other thing that I wanted to talk a little bit about is there is one
44 House committee and one Senate committee that are the primary
45 committees of jurisdiction that deal with fisheries. On the House
46 side, it's the House Natural Resources Committee. On the Senate

1 side, it's the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation
2 Committee.

3
4 Interestingly enough, they have different jurisdictions. For
5 instance, if a House bill talks about the Coast Guard, it goes to the
6 Transportation Committee and not the Natural Resources
7 Committee. If the same legislation is introduced on the Senate
8 side, it will go to the Senate Commerce Committee, and so words
9 mean things in legislation, and it can trigger funny referrals.

10
11 Since last Congress, there have been some changes. On the Senate
12 Commerce Committee, there was a change in leadership. Senator
13 Thune from South Dakota stepped down, and Senator Wicker from
14 Mississippi is now the full committee chair, and Senator Cantwell
15 from Washington State is now the ranking Democrat on that
16 committee.

17
18 There was also a change a little bit in the sub-committee structure
19 and Senate Commerce Committee. We used to have the Sub-
20 Committee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard.
21 That sub-committee is now the Sub-Committee on Science,
22 Oceans, Fisheries, and Weather. That sub-committee is chaired by
23 Senator Gardner from Colorado, and so obviously not a coastal
24 state, and he does not know a lot about fisheries. The new ranking
25 Democrat is Senator Baldwin from Wisconsin. That's a Great
26 Lakes state, but it's obviously not a coastal state.

27
28 There were big changes on the House Natural Resources
29 Committee. As I mentioned, the House flipped, and so now the
30 chairman is a Democrat, and it's Mr. Grijalva from Arizona.
31 Again, not a coastal state. The ranking Republican is Rob Bishop
32 from Utah, again not a coastal state, and so the leadership of that
33 committee does not get fisheries a lot.

34
35 Now, the sub-committee, we also had changes there. Congressman
36 Huffman from California is the new chairman, and he was very
37 active in fisheries last year, and some of you may have seen him in
38 action during some of the hearings. The new ranking Republican
39 is Congressman McClintock, also from California. That sub-
40 committee also has some jurisdictional changes. It's now the
41 Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Sub-Committee, the WOW Sub-
42 Committee.

43
44 At the sub-committee level in the House, and this is kind of
45 interesting, but twelve of the fourteen Democrats are from coastal
46 states, and eight of the ten Republicans are from coastal states, and

1 there are seven members from California, and so there's a big
2 block from California. The reason I bring this up is that the House
3 Natural Resources Committee in the past had been heavily western
4 inland members, and the issues they cared about were things like
5 grazing, like quail habitat, like reforming the ESA for grizzly bears
6 and wolves. Now we've got a very large number of members from
7 coastal states, and so we may see the interest in fisheries and ocean
8 issues raised a little bit.

9
10 The House Appropriations Committee, I know somebody from
11 NOAA is going to talk about appropriations later, but, because the
12 House flipped, there is now a full committee appropriations chair
13 who is a Democrat from New York, and the new full committee
14 ranking Republican is from Texas, and so a little bit of a change.
15 No changes on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

16
17 Let's talk about this Congress. We're now in the 116th Congress.
18 So far, there is no Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization
19 legislation in either the House or the Senate. There is also no
20 overall aquaculture legislation, although I will come back to that.
21 As far as Magnuson reauthorization, as I mentioned, the new sub-
22 committee chair, Congressman Huffman from California, I spoke
23 to him early on this year, and I asked him about Magnuson, and he
24 said he is very interested, but, and this is a quote, everyone else
25 thinks he's nuts.

26
27 As I mentioned, at the end of the last Congress, the Senate staff
28 sent out a draft for people to comment on. The bill was not
29 introduced in the last Congress, and, so far, nothing has happened
30 this year.

31
32 There was also a hearing last week at the WOW Sub-Committee in
33 the House, and, at the very end of the hearing, Congressman
34 Graves made a comment that we really needed to look at
35 reauthorizing Magnuson, and we needed to fix all of the things that
36 were taken out of S. 1520 last year by the Senate. For those of you
37 who thought that that Modernizing Fish Act took care of what the
38 recreational fishing community was interested in, apparently not,
39 and so hang tight.

40
41 I understand we may have a couple of folks from Senate offices
42 who are here, and I apologize to them, but I'm a House guy. I
43 have a House bias, and, for those of you that don't remember, the
44 Magnuson-Stevens Act started in the House of Representatives. It
45 was a bill that was authored by Congressman Gerry Studds from
46 New England and Don Young from Alaska, and it actually passed

1 the House, and then the Senate took up the House bill, but the
2 senators got credit for it, and that's why it's Magnuson-Stevens.

3
4 Little known trivia is there is one member of the Senate currently
5 serving who was there when Magnuson passed originally, and that
6 is Senator Leahy, and there is only one sitting member of the
7 House of Representatives who was here when that bill was passed,
8 and it was the sponsor of the bill, Congressman Don Young from
9 Alaska. That's just a little interesting trivia, and, for those of you
10 that haven't heard the joke before, Mr. Young often mentions that,
11 because the bill was a Congressman Studds and Congressman
12 Young bill, that it shouldn't be Magnuson-Stevens and it should be
13 the Young Studds Act.

14
15 So far, there has been a lot of legislation introduced, and the key
16 issues for the House Resources Committee at least are climate
17 change issues and offshore oil and gas moratoriums. Those are
18 two of the biggest issues that have come up so far, and the trend on
19 fisheries so far this year, legislation that's been introduced, most of
20 it would go around the council process and congressionally either
21 restrict or ban certain fisheries, and that was mentioned earlier.

22
23 It's a little bit of a disturbing trend, and I went to the House
24 hearing last week that talked about the driftnet bill on the west
25 coast, and there were two witnesses testifying on that bill, and I
26 thought they were talking about completely different fisheries.
27 One was in favor of banning certain gear, and the other was in the
28 fishery and didn't want his gear banned. I did not know they were
29 talking about the same fishery, and so, anyway, some of those
30 initiatives -- Obviously, we talked about the shark issue, the
31 driftnet ban, and there is a bill dealing with fluke, and there is a bill
32 dealing with forage fish protection, and I'll come back to those.

33
34 If I can, real quickly, I will go through a couple of these bills.
35 Right now, there have been six bills introduced dealing with the
36 shark fisheries, four in the House and two in the Senate. Three
37 bills would basically prohibit the sale and purchase of either shark
38 fins or all shark parts, which is a little disturbing. One of the bills
39 exempts dogfish. Anyway, those are bills that would restrict the
40 fishery and do it through congressional action.

41
42 As I mentioned, there are bills in both the House and the Senate
43 dealing with driftnet restrictions on the west coast. I do encourage
44 everybody to look at it. I don't know if there are any other
45 fisheries in the U.S. that use large-scale meshes, but this bill could
46 potentially affect other fisheries. It's not drafted specifically to

1 one fishery.

2
3 There is a bill that was introduced fairly recently in the House
4 dealing with the protection of forage fish. It was introduced by
5 Congresswoman Dingell from Michigan, which is a little odd to
6 have a Michigan member introducing legislation for forage fish
7 protection, and I don't know which groups encouraged her to
8 introduce it, but it would require councils to develop a list of all the
9 managed and unmanaged forage fish species and prohibit the direct
10 catch of any forage fish not currently under an FMP. It would
11 require your Scientific and Statistical Committees to use the best
12 scientific information available to maintain sufficient abundance,
13 diversity, and localized distribution of forage fish populations and
14 support their role in the marine ecosystem.

15
16 It would require that, when you're setting ACLs for forage fish
17 species, you would have to assess, specify, and reduce such limits
18 by the diet needs of fish species and all other marine wildlife, such
19 as mammals and birds. It would require the Secretary to amend
20 the FMPs for the Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel, squid,
21 and butterfish fisheries for New England and the Mid-Atlantic to
22 add shad and river herring to those FMP, and it would require the
23 Secretary to reallocate existing resources to provide a minimum of
24 60 percent observer coverage for all relevant fishing trips, and that
25 could include observers or onboard electronics for any vessel using
26 mid-water trawl or paired mid-water trawl fishing gear in the
27 Atlantic herring and mackerel fisheries. That's very specific.
28 Again, it's sort of going around the council process.

29
30 There is also an IUU bill that was recently introduced by Senator
31 Wicker. I took a quick look at it, and I didn't see any red flags,
32 but, for those of you that are interested in the issue, I would
33 encourage you to take a look at it. There is a rumor that it might
34 be marked up tomorrow by the Senate Commerce Committee, but
35 it's not on the list that they distributed yesterday.

36
37 There is a bill dealing with albatross protection, and it implements
38 an international treaty, and I think it would primarily affect the
39 Western Pacific and North Pacific, and I would encourage you to
40 take a look at it. I didn't see any big red flags, but the one issue in
41 the past that concerned us was, if legislation along those lines asks
42 for future restrictions on bycatch or interactions, it may not take
43 into account actions already taken by the U.S., and so you get
44 penalized for all your good work previous to the bill being passed,
45 and so keep an eye on that.

46

1 Aquaculture came up earlier today, and there are six bills that have
2 been introduced dealing with aquaculture. Four of the six deal
3 with labeling, marketing, and the prevention of escape of
4 genetically-modified fish. One is kind of specific and deals with
5 injuries of workers at aquaculture facilities, and the last one would
6 prevent the Secretary of Commerce or Interior from issuing any
7 permits for offshore finfish aquaculture until Congress actually
8 passes a law that authorizes it.

9
10 I am running out of time, and so, real quick, there have been five
11 bills that have been reported out of committee so far that deal with
12 fisheries. There is one that is a bill that deals with offshore wind,
13 which would take the permitting fees from offshore wind and put it
14 toward coral reef conservation.

15
16 There is the American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act, which
17 would amend S-K to create new regions for approving or dealing
18 with grants under S-K. The Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act, that
19 was reported out of the Senate Commerce Committee, and the
20 driftnet bill that we talked about was reported out by the Senate
21 Commerce Committee, and the Fluke Fairness Act was reported
22 out by the Senate Commerce Committee.

23
24 Real quick, in the time I have left, there is a couple of things
25 coming up. I mentioned there's a possibility that the IUU bill will
26 be marked up this week. As of this morning, it was not on the list,
27 and so that may be a false rumor. There is going to be a hearing
28 next Wednesday, the 21st, by the House Natural Resources
29 Committee, and it's going to be on the NOAA and Fish and
30 Wildlife Service budget. I don't know if NOAA has been invited
31 yet, but they're going to be up.

32
33 Lastly, the first week in June every year, there is a thing called
34 Capitol Hill Oceans Week. It's sponsored by the Marine
35 Sanctuary Foundation, and it tends to have a little bit of an
36 environmental bias, and I would encourage you to keep an eye on
37 it. A lot of congressional staff go to it. They may follow-up with
38 you guys with questions about what they have heard, but it's a
39 fairly big deal on Capitol Hill. I don't know how much NOAA is
40 involved, and I don't know whether any of the councils are ever
41 invited to participate, but it's the week of June 4th, and so some of
42 you may be coming into town for the NOAA Fish Fry. If you are,
43 you may want to check the schedule and see if there are any things
44 that you want to go to. They often have a fisheries panel, and, as I
45 mentioned, sometimes it can be a little bit biased toward the
46 environmental side.

1
2 The last thing about that is, as you guys know, the councils are
3 prohibited from lobbying, but the Sanctuary Foundation is not, and
4 they encourage everybody who comes into town for Capitol Hill
5 Oceans Week to go talk to their congressman, and so you're at a
6 little bit of a disadvantage to those folks who are in town.

7
8 The next report is going to be Dave Witherell. Just, from my point
9 of view, dealing with members of Congress, the working group
10 report that Dave is going to talk about has been incredibly
11 valuable. It is a very good snapshot of what the key issues are in
12 fisheries management, and it gives a regional perspective on how
13 those issues are dealt with in each of the regions, and it's very
14 valuable, and so I'm glad that we're keeping it going, and I'm glad
15 that we're keeping it updated, despite the fact that we're back to
16 square-one on Magnuson, and it's a very valuable document.

17
18 The other thing that's very helpful with is, if a member of the CCC
19 or one of the councils is invited to testify, it makes writing
20 testimony a breeze, because we have it already done, and so do you
21 want to do questions before we turn it over to Dave?

22
23 *Jessica McCawley:* Yes, I would like to. Before we do that, I just want to introduce
24 two congressional staff folks that are here today, and so we have
25 Katherine Crawford from Senator Tim Scott's office, and she is the
26 Regional Director. Welcome, Katherine. We also have Daniel
27 Patrick Head, who is the Low Country Regional Director for
28 Lindsey Graham's office. Thank you so much for joining us
29 today, and we're happy to have you. With that, we will now take
30 questions for Dave Whaley. I am certain there is going to be a lot
31 of questions. Gregg.

32
33 *Gregg Waugh:* Dave, you mentioned that Senate working draft that was
34 distributed last year. I know some of the councils have already
35 commented, and we are in the process of drafting comments. Do
36 you know if that's something that we should continue to do and
37 provide those comments, or should we wait for a future
38 opportunity?

39
40 *Dave Whaley:* The short answer is I don't know. It probably wouldn't hurt to go
41 ahead and get them ready, but, at this point, I'm not sure whether
42 Senator Sullivan is still soliciting comments or not, and so I don't
43 know. I can find out for you though.

44
45 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more questions? Go ahead.
46

1 *David Witherell:* Dave, I have a question. It seems like the forage fish bill may have
2 legs, and I don't know, but my question to you is, is it likely that
3 some of the wording will get changed as it moves through the
4 process? I think our council will probably provide a comment on
5 the existing language as it stands, but my sneaking suspicion is that
6 it will get changed, and it only takes a couple of word changes in
7 that bill to turn something from okay to this causes us great grief.
8 My question is, one, do you think we should be tracking this
9 closely as a committee, and, two, is there anything we can do about
10 it to keep the language from changing to make this go --
11

12 *Dave Whaley:* In answer to the first question, I think, yes, it would be helpful to
13 have comments ready, and, the second part, yes, it's likely to
14 change. In the last Congress, I would have said that the chairman
15 probably would have lumped a lot of these together into a larger
16 Magnuson reauthorization, because it fits, and I don't know that
17 the new chairman will follow that. He may do things piecemeal,
18 and so, yes, it would be good to have comments, and, yes, you're
19 right to be worried that there could be one-word changes that could
20 be very detrimental.
21

22 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Dave. Adam.

23
24 *Adam Issenberg:* Thank you. As you have this conversation, I just wanted to
25 reiterate the need to be very cautious in terms of how you cast your
26 comments and your input. When you talk about letting Congress
27 know about things that cause you grief, I think it's important to
28 keep in mind that, as grantees, the councils are permitted to
29 provide technical input, but lobbying is not permitted, and I think,
30 depending on how you characterize that, I think you can explain
31 the things about a particular bill that give you concern and that
32 would make it difficult to carry out your business without casting it
33 as we request specific changes or we have certain problems with
34 this language, and please keep that in mind.
35

36 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Adam. Are there more questions? Go ahead, Chris.

37
38 *Chris Moore:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question and a follow-up to
39 Dave's question, which is timing. Dave Whaley indicated that we
40 need to really start thinking about the forage fish bill now, but
41 what's the timing? Given Adam's comments, when would we
42 provide just a council comment relative to some of the things that
43 are detailed in there?
44

45 *Dave Whaley:* I guess, from my point of view, the sooner the better. I don't know
46 what the timing is for movement of any of those bills in the House.

1 They haven't had any markups yet, and I don't know if they have
2 any scheduled in the near-term, but, if requested, it would be good
3 to have something ready, rather than trying to scramble and get
4 something ready in the short-term.
5

6 Again, those would -- What I am suggesting is that you guys as
7 individual councils or as the CCC have your comments ready, but
8 not necessarily send them in. Wait until somebody says, hey, this
9 is moving and what are your thoughts, but to have those
10 discussions now about what we want to think about them.
11

12 *Jessica McCawley:* Terry.

13
14 *Terry Stockwell:* Thanks for the report, Dave. Your mention of the forage bill
15 peaked my interest. As you well know, anything to do with forage
16 in New England and the Mid-Atlantic brings a lot of attention.
17 Both councils have recently gone through several management
18 actions that address some of the issues that are being proposed.
19 Your comment about end-run of the council process resonated
20 pretty clearly. What would you suggest would be the best way for
21 us to get our comments into the process as it develops? We have a
22 Herring Committee meeting coming up, and we have a June
23 council meeting, but, without a little bit more -- I mean, I don't
24 want to work with John and Tom to develop comments ahead of
25 time if they may need to be adjusted.
26

27 *Dave Whaley:* One option, obviously, is with the Legislative Working Group
28 paper, and that's to have a section on forage fish that just talks
29 about what is already going on in each of the councils, so that
30 information is available. It probably wouldn't hurt to have you
31 guys at the council level discuss it at a meeting, just so people
32 know it's out there, but, again, as Adam said, you can't lobby, and
33 so it puts you at a disadvantage until you're asked.
34

35 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more questions for Dave? Chris.

36
37 *Chris Moore:* I don't want to prolong the conversation relative to what Adam
38 said, but it just does bring to mind, after hearing Dave mention it,
39 if we put a bill on a council agenda for discussion, is that okay? I
40 mean, if we're just basically having conversation amongst council
41 members relative to the very specific provisions of the bill and
42 saying, well, that's something we've already done, and we've
43 already dealt with the shad and river herring issue, or mackerel is
44 something we thought about last month, and just have that as part
45 of the record, and is that a problem relative to what you said
46 earlier?

1
2 *Adam Issenberg:* I don't think that having general discussion about a bill is
3 problematic. I think the problem comes, potentially, if the council
4 were to take action. It could come in one of two ways. There are
5 two types of lobbying that are problematic. One is directly
6 lobbying Congress, saying, hey, Congress, we want you to do
7 something and we want you to change this. To the extent -- That's
8 what you need to avoid, is any expression directed at Congress that
9 says we don't like this and we want you to do something else or we
10 like this and we think you should go forward with it.

11
12 What you can say is in response to a request from Congress, and
13 that's the first requirement. It has to be a request from Congress
14 for input, and then the second requirement is that it needs to be a
15 technical presentation about how it would impact the performance
16 of the grant, and so, in the council context, that would be that this
17 would make it difficult for us to achieve optimum yield or
18 whatever, something like that.

19
20 The other thing that's problematic is what is called grassroots
21 lobbying, and so that would be the council telling constituents, or
22 telling stakeholders, that, hey, this is a big problem, and you go tell
23 Congress that it's a problem. That also is problematic, but a
24 general discussion about here is the types of areas that we're
25 concerned about, and this would be complicated for us, those types
26 of things I think are fine.

27
28 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. We had another hand up, the Western Pacific down
29 there, and I see both Dean and Kitty, and then we'll go back to
30 Dave Whaley.

31
32 *Dean Sensui:* Where we are, whenever we see legislation coming up regarding
33 fisheries regulations, we try to discourage our legislators, not as
34 council members, but as individuals, to let them know that it's a
35 really bad idea to legislate such rules, because of their inflexibility,
36 and, a lot of times, they're not based on anything even remotely
37 similar to science. In this case, we have some of these proposed
38 legislations that were brought up that either duplicate or contradict
39 MSA, and it seems like our members of Congress are unaware of
40 what MSA is or does. Maybe some sort of an educational outreach
41 would be needed to get them to become aware of that.

42
43 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

44
45 *Kitty Simonds:* Excuse me, Dean, but they're well aware. They just don't want
46 management under Magnuson, and so there. What I just wanted to

1 add is that, as you know, I get a lot of requests from Congress and
2 others, and so, when I testify or if I have any questions about how
3 I'm going to respond, I always run it through our General Counsel.
4 The General Counsel reviews pretty much everything, including
5 our newsletters, just because I am so high profile, and so he's very
6 good about telling me how and what and whatever, and so deal
7 with your lawyers. They're really good, and that's what they are
8 there for. Dave, I thought you should mention -- The other ladies
9 on my panel, what did they do that was just great?

10
11 *Dave Whaley:* Kitty brings us a very good point. On her panel before the House
12 Natural Resources Committee, there were a couple of ladies from
13 environmental groups, and the overwhelming theme from them
14 was how well the Magnuson Act works, and so well done.

15
16 Going back to Chris real quick, if I can, obviously somebody
17 talked Congresswoman Dingell into doing a forage fish protection
18 bill. It doesn't affect her constituents at all, and so it's somebody
19 who is just looking for a mouthpiece. She doesn't know how the
20 Magnuson Act works, because it doesn't affect Michigan, and so
21 having a one-pager that tells what your council is currently doing
22 to protect forage fish is informational.

23
24 If you have it ready, if somebody asks, you have it ready to go, and
25 so I would encourage -- I'm going to send out a note to everybody,
26 and we talked about this a little bit earlier, but a couple of key
27 issues that I would suggest that you have one-pagers on are what
28 your process timelines are, how long it takes to actually get
29 something done, what you're doing to protect forage fish, and what
30 you're doing to deal with shifting stocks and changing ocean
31 conditions. Those three would be great to have a one-pager ready
32 to go, because those are issues that are definitely going to come up
33 in Congress.

34
35 *Jessica McCawley:* Did I see another hand up over here? Go ahead.

36
37 *Simon Kinneen:* Thank you. If it's appropriate at this time, I would just recognize
38 that Mr. Whaley spoke to the long-standing service of
39 Congressman Don Young and his role in the drafting of MSA, and
40 so I would like to offer a motion, if that's appropriate.

41
42 *Jessica McCawley:* Sure.

43
44 *Simon Kinneen:* **That motion would be that I move that the CCC send a letter**
45 **to Congressman Young thanking him for his long service, his**
46 **role in developing the original MSA, and his continued interest**

1 **in improving fisheries management in the U.S.**

2
3 *Jessica McCawley:* Stand by. We're going to get it on the board. **The motion is that**
4 **the CCC send a letter to Congressman Young thanking him**
5 **for his long service, his role in developing the original MSA,**
6 **and his continued interest in improving fisheries management**
7 **in the United States.** Is there a second to that motion?
8

9 *John Quinn:* Second. Seeing that I'm from Congressmen's Studd's former
10 district, I will second the motion.
11

12 *Jessica McCawley:* Thank you, sir. Any discussion of this motion or additional
13 discussion? Gregg.
14

15 *Gregg Waugh:* Just to remind folks that the way this operates for the CCC voting,
16 it's just CCC members and not the NMFS folks, and you caucus,
17 and you have one vote per council, and that is offered by the Chair,
18 or, in our case, our Vice Chair.
19

20 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Is there more discussion on this motion? Simon.
21

22 *Simon Kinneen:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Just also going along with the motion,
23 if anybody has ever visited Congressman Young's office, he has a
24 large wall of hats when you walk in, and so I would like that we
25 would send one of these along to him as well.
26

27 *Jessica McCawley:* Wonderful, yes.
28

29 *Simon Kinneen:* That's the U.S. Regional Fishery Management Council hat.
30

31 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Is there any more discussion on this motion? **Is there**
32 **any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands**
33 **approved.**
34

35 Are there more questions for Dave Whaley? If there aren't any
36 more questions for Dave Whaley, we're going to move on to Dave
37 Witherell giving us the Legislative Workgroup Report, and so I'm
38 going to pass it over to you, and I believe that you have a
39 presentation.

1 **3. LEGISLATIVE WORKGROUP REPORT**

2
3 *David Witherell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I do. This is a report of the Legislative
4 Committee. The first slide is looking out of the front of my cabin
5 from the front window, and there is a wooden codfish that kind of
6 advertises what my target species is when I go fishing.

7
8 This is a list of the legislative committee members, and they
9 represent all the different -- They are from all the different
10 councils. At this point, we only have a chair, and we're looking
11 for a vice chair, as I will get to later in the presentation. Dave
12 Whaley also attends the committee as an ex-officio member. We
13 do allow alternates on the committee, and so, if some member
14 cannot attend, then they can have somebody sit in and take their
15 place on behalf of that council.

16
17 We did meet in September, under Gregg's leadership, and we went
18 over the current bills that were on the table at that time, and we had
19 agreed to do several things, and so what I'm trying to do here is
20 capture the major points from that meeting. The first is relative to
21 H.R. 200. The committee agreed to draft a consensus statement for
22 the CCC to approve on proposed requirements for comprehensive
23 stock surveys.

24
25 Secondly, under the Senate 1520, the committee decided to come
26 forward with some language to consider what the effects might be
27 if you change the rebuilding probability from 50 percent to 75
28 percent, and, when we looked at that later, we realized that it
29 actually needs to be addressed. That will change the consensus
30 statement of the CCC as well, and so we've come forward with
31 another draft consensus statement.

32
33 Additionally, we talked about the aquaculture bill, and we noted
34 that the courts have reached different conclusions about whether or
35 not NMFS or the councils can regulate aquaculture in the EEZ. So
36 we've decided to go forward and produce some language for you
37 to consider in a consensus that makes it clear that aquaculture is in
38 fact or should be included in MSA and be regulated by the agency
39 through the councils.

40
41 It's hard to read, but, under the Stock Rebuilding, we had a new
42 consensus statement, and I believe you have attached those, Gregg,
43 each one of them, so you can actually read it, but there are serious
44 concerns. The councils have serious concerns about the 75 percent
45 probability of rebuilding success. If that's it, it will obviously take
46 substantially longer to rebuild those stocks, and it will have

1 negative effects on communities. It will increase the uncertainty
2 and have negative effects on fishing communities.

3
4 Under Topic 14, we noted that we should revise our stock
5 assessment section topic in the working paper to include our
6 concerns about survey data, and, in this case, we noted that some
7 of the bills that require comprehensive, complete, peer-reviewed
8 stock assessments and surveys for all FMP species within two
9 years is entirely unrealistic. If you think about it, all the FMP
10 species from all the reef fish that we have that you would need to
11 do a survey for, it would just cost astronomical amounts, and it
12 would take away from resources that are important for our high
13 commercial and recreational fisheries. So we've suggested a new
14 consensus statement under that topic.

15
16 Under aquaculture, based on our discussion of the aquaculture bill
17 and the recent court findings, we have proposed revising the
18 consensus to read as the second paragraph here is in the
19 presentation, and the current wording is in the third paragraph, but
20 just to make it clear that the CCC believes that aquaculture should
21 be included in the MSA.

22
23 Just from a Legislative Committee working function, we don't
24 really have a process to nominate a chair and vice chair, and, last
25 year, I ended up volunteering to be chair, after a bit and some arm
26 twisting. So we have suggested that we do really a two-year term
27 for chair and vice chair, where the vice chair moves up to the chair
28 after two years, and every two years the CCC can nominate a vice
29 chair. You will see that both Tom Nies and Mary Clark Sabo have
30 volunteered to be vice chair, and I would very much appreciate
31 having a vice chair, to make sure that things don't slip through the
32 cracks in tracking this and organizing these meetings.

33
34 Lastly, I just wanted to say that we have some work to do. I
35 foresee having another Legislative Committee meeting between
36 now and our next CCC meeting to talk about updating the
37 legislative working paper. I noted that the introduction section is a
38 little bit out of date relative to our consensus statements, depending
39 on how the CCC either adopts the current consensus statements
40 that are being proposed by the Legislative Committee, and we
41 would include any updates, as well as some of the perspectives
42 from each of the regions.

43
44 Dave Whaley suggested that we update our perspectives on forage
45 fish relative to what we see in the current forage fish bill, and so
46 there may be some other updates, but that working paper is a living

1 document, and it's continually updated, and so I think that's a
2 reasonable course of action, and, of course, if we have other
3 legislation that we know about that gets introduced between now
4 and when we meet again, we'll talk about that too. That concludes
5 my presentation, Madam Chair.
6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Are there questions for Dave? Marc.

8
9 *Marc Gorelnik:* Thank you very much, Dave. Thanks for the report, and thanks for
10 your service as chair. I just have a question on the aquaculture
11 aspect. The comment on Senate Bill 3138 suggests that -- It
12 confirms our position that the ability to regulate aquaculture is
13 included, present tense, is included in Magnuson, but, in the
14 revised language for aquaculture, Topic 19, it says the CCC
15 believes that aquaculture should be included in MSA, and so I'm
16 a little confused as to whether our position is that it is there, that we
17 believe the authority is there now, even though the courts disagree,
18 or we agree with the courts and we think Magnuson should be
19 amended to provide that authority.
20

21 *Jessica McCawley:* Go ahead, Dave.

22
23 *David Witherell:* Marc, I'm not sure that we parsed it out in that detail at the
24 Legislative Committee level, but I note your concerns. If you've
25 got some wording to suggest to amend the current language
26 suggested by the committee, then I think that is perfectly
27 acceptable to do before the CCC takes action to adopt this as a
28 consensus statement.
29

30 Alternatively, these consensus statements kind of evolve as we get
31 new information and understand more about the topic and whether
32 or not new bills get introduced, and so we could do it now or we
33 could do it later.
34

35 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

36
37 *Kitty Simonds:* That court case doesn't include all of our areas, right, and it's just
38 for the Gulf. Is that right, Adam?
39

40 *Adam Issenberg:* Well, I think we're going to be talking about the aquaculture case,
41 about aquaculture generally in a little more detail, in just a few
42 minutes, and I think that will include some discussion of the case,
43 but the decision specifically addresses the Gulf aquaculture FMP.
44 The federal government is still deciding what to do about
45 appealing that case, and that decision about appeal could have
46 broader implications.

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Jessica McCawley: Are there more questions for Dave? Gregg.

Gregg Waugh: It seems to me that we may want to wait on that aquaculture wording and deal with that after we hear the aquaculture presentations, but, if there are no more questions on that, I had a couple of motions on the chair and vice chair that we could deal with.

Jessica McCawley: Go ahead.

Gregg Waugh: **The first is to establish a two-year term for the Legislative Workgroup Chair and Vice Chair, and the vice chair would move up to chair, and then a new vice chair is elected by the CCC.**

Jessica McCawley: Is there a second? It's seconded by Chris. Is there discussion of this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Gregg, did you have another motion?

Gregg Waugh: Yes, another one dealing with the nominations for the vice chair. Both Tom Nies and Mary Clark Sabo have volunteered, and Mary has done a superb job on the committee for a number of years, and she's a very valuable member.

I think it would be helpful to have an executive director in that role. I know, when I went up with Dave and we were talking with congressional staffers, it was helpful to be able to speak as an ED, and you carry a little more weight. **For that reason alone, I would like to offer a motion to elect Tom Nies as the Legislative Work Group Vice Chair.**

Jessica McCawley: Is there a second? It's seconded by Chris. That's under discussion. Any discussion of this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Are there more questions for Dave on any of the topics, the CCC working paper or the presentation that he just gave? Gregg.

Gregg Waugh: **If we come back to the proposed wording to revise Topic 1, I would offer a motion to add the text that was projected to the consensus statement for Topic 1, which is Stock Rebuilding. The motion would be to add the projected text.**

David Witherell: Just for clarification, that's the highlighted text, I believe, that's

1 attached to the agenda as well. The text that was included in the
2 PowerPoint presentation is also reflected in the yellow highlighted
3 text that is in the proposed revisions. It's another document that's
4 posted, Gregg.
5
6 *Gregg Waugh:* Okay.
7
8 *David Witherell:* If people wanted to see how it fits in with the current language.
9
10 *Gregg Waugh:* **So, it's to add the projected text to Topic 1 (Stock Rebuilding).**
11
12 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. If I can get a second, we can have some discussion on
13 this. Are people clear? This was the text that was in the
14 presentation, and it's also highlighted in the CCC working paper.
15 Is there a second to this motion? It's seconded by Tom. There is
16 the selected text.
17
18 Once again, this is for Topic 1, Stock Rebuilding, and this is to
19 address concerns with increasing the probability of rebuilding from
20 50 percent to 75 percent. Is there any more discussion on this
21 motion? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that**
22 **motion stands approved.**
23
24 *Gregg Waugh:* The final motion for this is to add the projected text to the first
25 paragraph of Topic 14 (Stock Assessment and Survey Data).
26
27 *Jessica McCawley:* Tom, are you seconding, or do you have a question?
28
29 *Thomas Nies:* I would like to play a little fast and loose with Roberts Rules here,
30 if possible. **In the last sentence, where it says, "substantial**
31 **increases in funding should be provided to NOAA Fisheries",**
32 **what if we made a friendly amendment to say, "a substantial**
33 **increase in funding may be needed to do this work"?** I am
34 trying to address Adam's concern about recommendations.
35
36 *Jessica McCawley:* I think that sounds good.
37
38 *Gregg Waugh:* **That's fine.**
39
40 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Is there a second? It's seconded by Simon. We're going
41 to edit that last sentence with that friendly amendment there. Is
42 there any more discussion on this? **Is there any objection?**
43 **Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**
44
45 Any more questions for Dave on the CCC working paper or the
46 presentation that he gave or any of the additional documents that

1 were posted on that item? All right. We're a little bit ahead of
2 schedule. Let's go ahead and take a ten-minute break.

3

4 *(Recess)*

4. AQUACULTURE UPDATES

1
2
3 *Jessica McCawley:* Next up, we have some aquaculture updates, and it's going to be
4 Sam, Paul, and Michael, and I'm going to turn it over to Sam, who
5 is going to give us an introduction on how they're going to work
6 this topic.

7
8 *Sam Rauch:* Thank you. The way the three of us are going to do this is I'm
9 going to provide an update on the litigation, although I think Adam
10 already provided a little bit of that, and on the regulatory issue that
11 we talked about at the last CCC meeting, and then I'm going to
12 turn it over to Paul and Michael, who will provide more generic
13 updates about our efforts, including some thoughts on the
14 legislation, perhaps, and then we'll take questions at the end, and
15 so if we could go through the full thing and then we'll take
16 questions.

17
18 The last time I discussed aquaculture with the CCC last year in
19 Alaska, we were talking about a rulemaking that we were going to
20 engage in which would clarify that, while aquaculture can be
21 regulated under the Magnuson Act, and the council certainly had
22 the ability to do so, unless the councils had affirmatively expressed
23 that ability to do so and undertaken an aquaculture regulation, we
24 would not presume that aquaculture was prohibited, and so the
25 presumption would be that aquaculture is allowed unless the
26 council did something, which could have included historically.

27
28 We were working on that rule, and that rule is currently in
29 abeyance while we address the court case, because that obviously
30 is relevant. For those who aren't as familiar, the Gulf Council has
31 a comprehensive plan for aquaculture in federal waters, and that
32 plan was challenged in a district court, and the district court said
33 that we had no authority under the Magnuson Act to regulate
34 aquaculture, which meant that indeed aquaculture is allowed
35 everywhere, and it cannot be regulated under the council.

36
37 As Adam said, we are currently evaluating whether to appeal that
38 case or not. The Solicitor General makes that determination. No
39 one sitting at this table makes that determination, and so we are
40 discussing that with him and waiting to see what the Solicitor
41 General will decide to do. That, obviously, depending on that
42 decision, will have some bearing on whether we continue forward
43 with our rulemaking and what that rulemaking might say.

44
45 At the moment, it's somewhat up in the air as to whether or not we
46 have the authority to regulate aquaculture under the Magnuson

1 Act, either in the Gulf, which we've clearly been told by the court
2 we don't, or more broadly. We are trying to work that out, but the
3 first thing we need to do before we make determinations about sort
4 of the national perspective is to determine what the Solicitor
5 General is going to do with that court case, and I do not know the
6 answer to that. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Paul and
7 Michael for a more broad update on aquaculture, and then we're
8 happy to take questions on that at the end.
9

10 *Paul Doremus:*

11 Thank you, Sam, and good afternoon to everybody. It's a pleasure
12 to be here. I am going to pick up on Chris's introduction of
13 Michael Rubino and his new position as our Senior Advisory for
14 Seafood Strategy and provide a little bit of the context for that, in
15 terms of policy and strategy in the department and the
16 administration and on the hill. Then Michael will pick up. He's
17 new to this position, and it's a new position for us, an externally-
18 facing position designed to work very closely with industry and
19 with all of you in working through issues associated with how we
20 can increase seafood production in the U.S.

21 This all started back when I had the pleasure of being a member of
22 the small transition team from the last administration to the current
23 administration, and the first person in the door was Secretary Ross,
24 and I was one of three people who had the pleasure of introducing
25 him to the department and to NOAA, and, in his first meeting, on
26 day two, after his Senate confirmation hearing, we spoke about
27 three things for several hours. We spoke about the Weather
28 Service Modernization Act, and we spoke about the cost of
29 recapitalizing our fleet of satellites, billions and billions, and we
30 talked about the seafood trade deficit.
31

32 He came in with just a thousand questions of why does the trade
33 flow in seafood look the way that it does, and his bottom-line
34 question to us was what can we do to reduce the seafood trade
35 deficit, and the basic answer is increase domestic production, and,
36 a long story short is that that interest of his has been framed up as a
37 departmental goal.
38

39 It has the three components that Chris mentioned in introducing
40 Michael. He has substantial responsibilities in this domain, and
41 not for everything, but for big components of it. Those three
42 pieces are to do what we can to improve the efficiency of our
43 management of wild-capture fisheries, and this is to Tom's
44 question earlier, whether it's underutilized species, areas where
45 we're catching under the quota, maybe broader seafood marketing
46 and promotion issues, and we're getting more tied into issues

1 related to seafood nutrition and overall guidance that the U.S.
2 government puts out about the percentage of seafood in people's
3 diets and all kinds of aspects of shaping the environment for an
4 understanding of U.S. wild-capture seafood and making sure we're
5 being as efficient and within our management regime, within our
6 whole guidance on sustainability, that we're doing as best as we
7 possibly can.

8
9 It has a major focus as well on aquaculture of all types, mariculture
10 and aquaculture and shellfish and finfish. Certainly, when you
11 back up and look at the seafood trade deficit, in my mind, the far
12 larger and more comprehensive strategic issue for us is a global
13 imbalance in the supply and demand for seafood. This has been
14 the case for decades.

15
16 We have had essentially relatively flat output from wild-capture
17 fisheries since the early 1990s, globally, and the increase in
18 demand since then has been met through farmed product, and
19 that's a substantial part, around half, of global output now, and it's
20 around half of the imports that come into this country and are part
21 of our seafood consumption profile. The U.S., given its science
22 and its technology and its sustainability agenda and its coastline
23 and the size of the U.S. market, is really batting way below its
24 weight when it comes to seafood farming, and that's another big
25 component of this initiative, is to look at that opportunity for
26 increasing U.S. production in that domain.

27
28 Then, third, and more the province of our International Affairs and
29 Seafood Inspection Division, which also reports to me as the DAA
30 for Operations, previously headed by John Henderschedt, and he
31 went back to the private sector in December, and we're recruiting
32 for that position now, and I'm currently acting in that capacity, but
33 we're also trying to do what we can, within our authorities, largely
34 technical authorities, around technical aspects of market access in
35 foreign countries, and we're trying to improve the trade
36 environment for U.S. exporters and to make sure, to the greatest
37 extent that we can, that we're promoting a fair and level playing
38 field for trade for U.S. producers.

39
40 There are lots of issues there, and we've got some different
41 resources within our agency to draw on, and I'm looking forward
42 to announcing, in a few months, I hope not too long, the new
43 International Affairs and Seafood Inspection Director, who will be
44 participating in this priority set that is well captured by the
45 administration and the department's strategic documents. They are
46 very clear on this priority, and it has also been a priority in the

1 interagency environment.
2

3 Admiral Gallaudet, as Chris was talking about earlier, and the Blue
4 Economy Initiative, and seafood production is a major component
5 of that, he had taken that forward in the interagency environment,
6 through the Ocean Committee, the administration's revised
7 National Ocean Council, and there's been a lot of discussions
8 there, and it has been put to, at the career level, the National
9 Science and Technology Committee to develop an interagency
10 strategy around aquaculture, and so what had previously been the
11 Interagency Working Group on Aquaculture has been revamped as
12 a sub-committee. I am one of the co-chairs of that sub-committee,
13 along with the USDA and the Office of Science and Technology
14 Policy.
15

16 That NSTC sub-committee is pursuing two things, improvements
17 in the regulatory environment, the interagency regulatory
18 harmonization, or clarification, and efficiency is a major focus, and
19 the goal there being to maintain our very high standards and
20 maintain all existing laws, but make it much more navigable by
21 industry and much more efficient and much more predictable and
22 less costly, and so high standards, but more efficient.
23

24 Then the second is a coordinated interagency strategy on
25 aquaculture research and development, and both of those things are
26 progressing, and Michael has been the head of the task force for
27 the first of those two priorities, and we're obviously participating
28 very closely in the USDA-led task force for the research plan.
29

30 There is a substantial interagency dimension to this, and there is
31 also, as Dave Whaley was talking about, there's a lot of
32 congressional activity. One of the major focus areas has been the
33 AQUAA Act, the Advancing the Quality and Understanding of
34 American Aquaculture, introduced by Senators Wicker and Rubio,
35 and everybody has got to get to an acronym, you know? That's
36 how they got AQUAA.
37

38 It was first introduced in the last session with that co-sponsorship,
39 and it was the first sort of foray into what would a regulatory
40 regime in federal waters look like and what would we like to do to
41 expand the availability of U.S. farmed seafood in the United
42 States, and it also authorizes a substantial research and
43 development program for all of aquaculture in the marine
44 environment, and so this is really a marine-oriented bill, and it's
45 got a regulatory clarification piece, but also a big focus on our
46 needs to improve the science base for seafood production, farmed

1 seafood production in particular.
2

3 Those are the kind of three things that are in motion in the policy
4 world, and we have been working very actively to respond to the
5 administration's priorities and respond to the environment that we
6 are now in and the broad, and I think growing consensus, that we
7 need to work harder and smarter to support the entire seafood
8 industry in this country.
9

10 Things are changing, and we have a great set of -- As you all know
11 and are part of and are the reality of, we have an extremely
12 sophisticated approach to managing wild-capture. We can get a
13 little bit better there, and we can get a lot better on farmed, and we
14 can work together, I think, to promote the consumption and the
15 understanding of all U.S.-produced seafood as sustainable and the
16 best quality in the world.
17

18 We are setting off down that path, and we're very pleased to have
19 Michael in this new capacity as our Senior Leader for Seafood
20 Strategy, and he will be working very closely with industry and
21 with all of you, and we'll take a few minutes here to introduce an
22 initial approach, our thoughts on what we can do in this domain,
23 and how we anticipate interacting with the councils along the way.
24

25 *Michael Rubino:*

26 Paul, thank you for that introduction. I wanted to start with a
27 couple of slides of photographs, if I could, if we could pull them
28 up. You have all heard about disruptive technologies. The other
29 day, I heard Cisco Werner give a great presentation about eDNA
30 and sail drones and the roles those could play in your allocation
31 decisions, in terms of stock assessment work on the science side. I
32 wanted to show you an onshore and an offshore disruptive
33 technology that we're all going to have to deal with going forward,
34 in terms of seafood markets.

35 The first one is a few miles from Miami. Last week, Atlantic
36 Sapphire raised another \$80 or \$90 million on the Onslow Stock
37 Exchange to build out this facility. It's a quasi-recirculating
38 aquaculture facility to grow salmon, and the initial phase is for
39 10,000 tons a year, and they are already saying that they're going
40 to accelerate to their full 90,000 tons a year with the new
41 investment that they have acquired. 90,000 tons of salmon is 10
42 percent of the U.S. market for salmon.
43

44 That's what it looked like under construction last December, and
45 they already had the eggs on the facility. I am standing where that
46 building is going to be extended. It's a twenty-two-acre facility,

1 just for the first 10,000 tons, and they have brought in enough
2 rubble to raise the site six feet. It's an \$80 to \$100 million
3 investment.
4

5 This is a video, and so I'm just standing and going 360, to give you
6 an idea of the construction site, and so these are buildings,
7 including processing and hatcheries and grow-out and tanks.
8 There are wells. It's all well water, in terms of groundwater,
9 withdrawal and discharge. It's not completely recirculating,
10 because the water goes through for about ten days and then goes
11 back into the ground.
12

13 On Saturday, Mike Rust, our Lead Aquaculture Scientist, and I,
14 with a couple of others, Danielle Rioux, who you may know, and
15 Paul had to come back to the U.S. early, but we were in Norway
16 for a week, and we got the chance to go out and see Ocean Farm 1,
17 and that's SalMar, the third-largest salmon country in the world,
18 and it has been in the water for the past year. You can't really see
19 the size, but the person is like a little ant on the top of that
20 walkway up there. It's the size of an oil rig, literally.
21

22 What you're seeing is Ocean Farm 1 in maintenance mode, and so
23 it's all out of the water. When it's stocked with fish, young
24 salmon, only about the first twelve meters or so at the top show
25 above the water. The other sixty meters are under the water. They
26 did a trial of one-million fish this past year, and they can go up to
27 three-million fish, and that's 5,000 to 15,000 tons a year from one
28 operation, and so it was built in China and towed to Norway, and
29 the Chinese have already built several others of these. SalMar is
30 adapting this to even improve the technology as we speak. They
31 have run out of licenses in Norway. They have run out of space,
32 and they want to go from a million metric tons of salmon a year to
33 five-million metric tons of salmon a year in the next fifteen years,
34 and so they either have to go further offshore or they have to come
35 on land to do that and go to other sites around the world.
36

37 Anyway, how are we, as the United States, going to play in this?
38 If we can go from one meal a week to two meals a week of
39 consumption, the way our federal nutrition guidelines recommend,
40 that's another six-million tons of seafood a year, and there's a lot
41 of room for wild-farmed and everything in between.
42

43 I think we all know the real competition for center of the plate is
44 not each other, in terms of wild or farmed seafood, but it's beef
45 and chicken and pork and other proteins. It's imports of seafood,
46 and so how is the U.S. going to play in all of this? Is there a role

1 for bringing the farmed sector and the wild sector together in the
2 United States to figure this out, to position ourselves for the next
3 twenty years or twenty-five years?
4

5 That is part of my charge in this new job, is to sort of ask all of you
6 leading questions for the next three or four months, and others
7 around the world, in terms of what we should focus on and how
8 we're going to figure this out together.
9

10 I come from a background of aquaculture and finance. Just a little
11 bit about me, I started out here in South Carolina, growing shrimp,
12 back in the days of -- Some of you may remember Paul Sandifer
13 was the Director of Fisheries here, and then at DNR, and Paul is
14 still with us, still going strong, and he was looking over my
15 shoulder when I was a graduate student, working with others, and
16 we turned a research project into a business and grew shrimp in
17 tidal ponds in the Carolinas for ten or fifteen years commercially.
18 We learned a lot about getting product to market and how to grow
19 things and how to bootstrap a company and make payroll and
20 processing and so on.
21

22 It didn't make us rich, but we learned a lot, and it always made an
23 operating profit, and then southeast Asia came online, in terms of
24 shrimp. I think, had we done it today, we would have been
25 growing oysters and not shrimp, but that was the early days of the
26 blue revolution.
27

28 I went on from there to the World Bank and the private sector side
29 of the World Bank called the International Finance Corporation in
30 the early days of sort of this environmental investment trend that
31 started back in the mid to late 1990s. How do you make money
32 and do good at the same time?
33

34 That led the World Bank to thinking about investments in
35 renewable energy and energy efficiency and sustainable agriculture
36 and tourism and so on, and I was part of the team that put together
37 a whole series of environmental investment funds for agriculture,
38 for energy, for carbon sequestration, and I learned a lot about sort
39 of the whole world of venture capital and finance. Some of it was
40 seafood related.
41

42 You can blame me and a couple other people for sending Claude
43 Boyd from Auburn University and Jason Clay from WWF to
44 southeast Asia right at the beginning of the Marine Stewardship
45 Council and the Forage Stewardship Council, and we
46 commissioned those two guys to look at shrimp farming. They

1 came back and said we need to start what is today the Marine
2 Stewardship Council and the Global Aquaculture Alliance's best
3 aquaculture practices, and so I've been looking at these things for a
4 long time.

5
6 As many of you know, globetrotting doesn't fit with raising a
7 family, and so, ten years, or a little bit more, ago, when NOAA
8 restarted an aquaculture program, I jumped at the chance to go
9 back to aquaculture, and I have had the pleasure of working with
10 many of you and my colleagues to build a program across NOAA
11 in marine aquaculture.

12
13 I am very much looking forward to this new challenge to look at
14 seafood more broadly again and not just aquaculture, but I do bring
15 a knowledge of seafood markets and what it takes to get product to
16 market and sell it to this position. I hope that I am given three or
17 four months to, as I said, ask leading questions before narrowing
18 down on a handful of topics. I am providing strategic advice to the
19 agency. I am serving as a liaison to industry, but my colleagues
20 are the ones that have to implement, in terms of executing for
21 programs.

22
23 Just as Paul said, I also, probably initially, will not focus on the
24 international trade questions. We have an International Affairs
25 Seafood Inspection Program which will continue to take the lead
26 on that, and I will certainly contribute to that as I can, but I think
27 my initial focus will be domestic markets.

28
29 I know already that Doug Lipton, who is our lead economist, and I
30 are planning a workshop this fall with economists and some market
31 makers to look at what happens if you bring on four-million
32 pounds of red drum in the Gulf, and what does that do to snapper
33 grouper prices, on the one hand? On the other hand, is there a way
34 to co-market farmed and wild, the way the processors and
35 wholesalers in the Gulf are asking us? In New Orleans, there must
36 be 20,000 or 30,000 pounds a week of frozen red drum fillets from
37 China coming in, and you have probably heard people like Harlon
38 Pearce, a leading wholesaler in New Orleans, complain that local
39 fish has lost its place at the table.

40
41 You are not getting the prices that you used to get for cod. Pacific
42 rockfish is back, but it's not getting the prices that it used to get.
43 Haddock, there is plenty of it. Again, it's not getting to market,
44 and so is there a way, like in the Gulf -- Maybe there is enough
45 snapper grouper for the menus on Monday, Tuesday, and
46 Wednesday, but, when you run out, maybe you can have red drum

1 and cobia and amberjack, all marketed as local, regional fish to
2 supply those menus and restaurants. Those are the kinds of things
3 we want to look at, and so let me stop there. Thanks.
4

5 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thanks, you guys. With that, we will take questions.
6 Miguel.

7
8 *Miguel Rolon:* How do you envision the closure of the gap between how much it
9 costs to produce a pound of let's say shrimp in Asia versus in the
10 states? A long time ago, when I was involved with this, that was
11 the number-one issue at that time, because you pay fifty-cents a
12 day to a person working on a farm, an aquaculture farm, and here
13 you have to pay \$7.50 per hour.
14

15 *Michael Rubino:* This is a personal opinion, and I showed you those pictures of the
16 recirculating aquaculture facility site. If I were investing money --
17 I looked actually, a couple of years ago, quite closely at shrimp and
18 recirculating systems. The time to production for shrimp has gone
19 from 200 or 180 days to market size down to eighty days or so. If
20 it can come a little bit lower, growing shrimp in tanks in the United
21 States is going to be as cost effective as growing shrimp in ponds
22 in Thailand, where it's already they've got world-class operations.
23

24 Yes, that's going to be a little bit more expensive than some new
25 entrants like India or other places that are using old technology, but
26 these production technologies are global now. Costs are global,
27 and, yes, we pay more for labor here in the United States, but it's a
28 small percentage of the overall cost.
29

30 *Jessica McCawley:* Terry.

31
32 *Terry Stockwell:* Thank you. Have you thought about or considered whether or not
33 these offshore rigs, such as you have up on the board right now,
34 would be operationally compatible in the areas where the
35 numerous wind farms are being sited? I mean, it seems to me that
36 you might be able to have this kind of passive fishing in an area
37 where the commercial mobile gear fishing was going to be
38 prohibited.
39

40 *Michael Rubino:* We couldn't go onboard that day, because the waves were actually
41 a little too, but this is the size of an oil rig. One of the questions
42 that we talked to SalMar about, and others in Norway, is, here in
43 the United States, we have a lot of concern about entanglement risk
44 with any kind of gear in the water, because of right whales and
45 because of other whales and turtles around the country.
46

1 The Norwegians haven't even thought about that, and a facility
2 like this doesn't really present an entanglement risk, but you
3 certainly would have to do all of the siting work, both from a
4 physical perspective from where you put these things as well as
5 conflicting uses and other uses through the marine environment,
6 just like you would have to do for wind farms.

7
8 One of the tools that the aquaculture program at NOAA has
9 developed this past year, based on some of the Marine Cadastre
10 work that NOS does and all the data that the Bureau of Ocean
11 Energy Management gathers, is something called Ocean Reports.
12 It's a GIS spatial planning tool that was rolled out just this past
13 month, and it's really pretty cool.

14
15 It's sort of like the Zillow of the oceans, where you can look at an
16 ocean neighborhood, and you can draw a square anywhere you
17 want to in sort of U.S. marine waters, and it will give you eighty
18 pages of information about that site, and it's a way to begin a
19 conversation about site utilization, and so it's maybe several
20 thousand data layers. It's already being used say through the
21 Marine Resource Education Program in discussions with
22 commercial and recreational fishermen about siting aquaculture
23 facilities. The Norwegians want to come to the U.S. with this
24 technology.

25
26 *Jessica McCawley:* Tony.

27
28 *Tony Blanchard:* Well, I think part of the issue here is about the money. The U.S.
29 has more regulations on how they handle seafood, as well as food
30 products, than the foreign nations. Now, I'm not saying that we
31 should drop on the standards, but there should be a balancing act.
32 What are you willing to give up to what you're willing to gain?

33
34 We're looking at, with the size of this structure, that we're putting
35 fish in a pen, and we all know that fish is farm-raised does not
36 have the quality of the meat as wild fish, just because of what they
37 feed off of, and so, just like organic chicken or organic meat, we
38 could demand a higher price for the wild-caught fish and try to
39 keep down the price on the farm-raised.

40
41 The other part of the scenario that I see here is we have fish in a
42 cage, and what is the effect of the fish living in that cage on the
43 environment, because they are penned in an area where they can't
44 go further, and as to where the waste falls on the bottom and the
45 environmental impact around the cage, and that would be my
46 second concern.

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Michael Rubino: As all of you know, all of these issues have been talked about and studied now for many, many years. We have thirty years of experience about what to do and what not to do in aquaculture. In aquaculture, and in commercial fishing, there is a wide variety of scales of production, from individual fishermen and individual farmers to large corporate groups that have fleets of ships and major installations like this.

The environmental and social and economic questions for those range of activities vary, and it's up to us, through our sort of legal regulatory structure and systems, to provide the right sort of rules of the game for both fishing and for aquaculture, and so these are things that I think all of us have thought about quite a bit, and it doesn't necessarily answer your question. Going into all of the different details about fish farming or other kinds of seafood production is sort of beyond today's discussion, but I am happy to discuss that further with you.

Jessica McCawley: Marcos.

Marcos Hanke: Two quick questions. One, we were discussing, prior to this, the windmills and the implication for the fishing industry, and is there any coordination with those developments with aquaculture, to use the same footprint used for aquaculture, and that's number one. Second, is there any effort on added value to the aquaculture on helping the restocking of wild stocks?

Michael Rubino: The two questions were wind farms and aquaculture and what we call stock enhancement, and so it's using hatcheries to enhance fisheries. In Germany, they've got a lot of work with mussel farming and wind farms, and it's certainly something that has been discussed here in the United States. Most of the wind farm developers here in the U.S. have their own troubles getting their wind farms sited and permitted. They, so far, don't really want the complication of another user working with them, but it's a logical thing to think about, in terms of how you would do that and what kinds of aquaculture you would do near wind farms.

The major opportunities in the U.S., in terms of going further offshore, is it might not necessarily be fish. It might be mussels and seaweed, and so we've been looking closely at technologies used in New Zealand say for mussel farming, in terms of adapting those here in the U.S., and the Department of Energy just put \$25 million into seaweed farming, to learn about seaweed farming technology through food or fiber, just because maybe someday it

1 might have an energy use, but imagine a giant seaweed farm at the
2 mouth of the Mississippi River. It sounds great, in terms of
3 absorbing all those nutrients, but what about fishing grounds and
4 what about whale entanglements and what about all those other
5 questions?
6

7 In terms of stock enhancement, we have major stock enhancement
8 operations in the United States, the largest of which is west coast
9 salmon. 40 percent of the salmon or so in Alaska and about 90
10 percent in the Pacific northwest start in a hatchery. The State of
11 Texas does some hatchery enhancement of red drum. The State of
12 South Carolina here is doing a lot of research on stock
13 enhancement, and NOAA Fisheries is looking at things like king
14 crab enhancement in Alaska, and we also use enhancement for
15 endangered species, like white abalone and pinto abalone on the
16 west coast.
17

18 A new stock enhancement program, in terms of the science and
19 working on that, can take eight or ten years to know whether or not
20 it works or not, and so, for a few species, we've got an experience,
21 but, for many, we don't, and we have to learn about the life cycle
22 and where they reproduce and what age to release them at and
23 where to release them and what the survival rate would be.
24

25 For salmon, they come back to where you release them. For
26 marine fish, do they stay on a reef, or do they scatter? It actually
27 varies species-by-species, and so it could be a put-and-take
28 program, or it could be you're just not having much of an effect at
29 all, and so there's a major stock enhancement conference that Mote
30 Marine Lab in Florida is holding this fall, and it's something that is
31 held once every four or five years, and all the world's experts on
32 stock enhancement are going to come and talk about this issue.
33

34 *Jessica McCawley:* Phil.

35
36 *Phil Anderson:* Thanks. Paul, I'm wondering what is your assessment of
37 congressional support for the objective of increasing domestic
38 seafood production, and the reason I'm asking is I'm thinking
39 about funding for, particularly on the wild-caught side, for things
40 like the Mitchell Act or funding for the basic stock assessment
41 surveys that the councils rely on for setting our current harvestable
42 amounts.
43

44 If congressional support for that kind of funding isn't there to
45 bolster, or at least maintain, current levels of wild-caught seafood
46 production, it sort of calls into question then does Congress really

1 support this overall objective of increasing domestic seafood
2 production.

3
4 *Paul Doremus:* Thank you. We'll have a chance to go over the budget in a little
5 bit more detail tomorrow, but, generally speaking, over the last few
6 years, Congress has maintained fairly steady support for pretty
7 much the broad array of programs under our fisheries research and
8 management, stock assessment, and our core business lines.

9
10 I think, as far as the prospects for broadening the lens on seafood
11 to include aquaculture, there is a pretty high expectation, I think,
12 for reintroduction of the AQUAA Act that Senator Wicker
13 introduced. We are hearing that there appears to be a strong and
14 growing bipartisan support for that in the Senate Commerce
15 Committee and there's a good prospect for it being reintroduced in
16 Senate Commerce.

17
18 As Dave Whaley indicated, it may take a little bit longer in the
19 House Natural Resources. They've got a lot of other issues that
20 they are trying to attend to first, but I think, somewhat true to our
21 experience with fisheries broadly, I think one of the things we have
22 benefitted from, and I associate this with the long development of
23 Magnuson, among other things, is that there is pretty strong, steady
24 bipartisan support for the underlying statutory direction that we
25 have and the programs that are required to implement that well.

26
27 Throughout very volatile budget environments since FY2010,
28 there's been ups and downs, and there's been a lot of headwind,
29 but we've had a lot less down than many other parts of the
30 domestic non-defense discretionary budget, and so I think we have
31 fairly strong support, given what it is that we do and the broad
32 range of communities that depend on what it is that we do, and I'm
33 talking collectively, all of us, in the management of these public
34 resources, and I think that there's strong acknowledgement that the
35 world is changing and fisheries are changing and the environment
36 that we're living in is changing. Coastal communities that depend
37 on ocean and coastal resources under increasing stress, they need
38 more diverse sources of economic activity.

39
40 This is getting more and more attention, and I think we are at a bit
41 of a turning point, in terms of our national policy discussion.
42 Whether that will result in new legislation and when is anybody's
43 guess, and we're going into a new election cycle, and it's a
44 challenging policy environment, from a law-making point of view,
45 as you all are well aware, and so I'm not going to predict, but I do
46 think that there is broad-based support, and I think there's growing

1 interest.

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Jessica McCawley: Dean.

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16

Dean Sensui: Thank you for your presentation. I've got a couple of comments and a couple of questions. In what we've been doing in aquaculture in the way of fish ponds, and what the Hawaiians would do, is take an existing environment and protect it and optimize it, and the way that worked is the mullet would feed on the algae that naturally occurred in freshwater seeps along the shoreline, and so you've got this big fish pond and thousands of mullet that didn't need to be fed, and so, when you're looking at your net gain, as far as what you're producing, it's basically 100 percent, or pretty close to it, because it didn't require any additional inputs.

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Michael Rubino: Those are two questions. The first one is, broadly, the question of feeding fish to fish, and the second one is about escapes and genetics. Feeding fish to fish is a bit of a red herring, pardon the

1 pun. The world's supply of fish meal and fish oil has been roughly
2 constant for thirty years. Fed aquaculture, in terms of fish and
3 shrimp, has increased dramatically during those thirty years, and so
4 the efficiency of the use of fish meal and fish oil, which is sort of
5 the perfect nutrition package for fish and shrimp, has become far
6 more efficient. Because of the cost and the limits of forage fish out
7 there, the industry has gone to all kinds of other alternatives.
8

9 Fish and shrimp don't need other fish. They need forty essential
10 nutrients, just like you and I do, and those can come from a wide,
11 wide variety of sources, and so one of the advances of the past
12 twenty years has been to sort of put the Rubik's Cube back
13 together again in terms of all of those other ingredients, and so
14 you're seeing a lot of soy and insect meal and algae and yeasts.
15 Probably a third or a half of the fish meal and fish oil already
16 comes from trimmings, but this will continue to be a key cost and
17 supply constraint for aquaculture going forward.
18

19 Because wild fisheries are limited, there are going to be increasing
20 pressures, and the traceability issues of what kind of forage fish
21 and fisheries management questions around forage fish, and so I
22 think there will be a lot of innovation continuing in this field.
23

24 In terms of escapes, the irony about the two examples that you
25 mentioned -- The one in Norway, they did talk about their escape,
26 and this was a trial, and they are learning things, and Norway still
27 has problems with escapes, mostly through handling of fish. They
28 have got a thousand fish farms in Norway, and they still have runs
29 of Atlantic salmon, and so they are taking their escape issue and
30 sea lice issue, which are the two key environmental issues, quite
31 seriously, in terms of management practices, containment,
32 treatment of sea lice, and so on. In Norway, my understanding,
33 and I'm not a genetic scientist, but the escapes of Atlantic salmon
34 have affected, or can affect, the wild stock of Atlantic salmon that
35 are still there.
36

37 The curious case of Atlantic salmon on the west coast of the
38 United States is sort of the exception that proves the rule. In
39 general, I think most scientists would say you should use native
40 species in aquaculture. In the United States, NOAA's policy has
41 been to encourage native species, since we've had a policy. Even
42 using native species presents some issues.
43

44 If you're doing stock enhancement, like with salmon on the west
45 coast, or red drum in Texas, you want to stay as close to the wild
46 stock as possible, so you're not affecting the genetics of the wild

1 stock with releases. In aquaculture, or any kind of farming, you
2 want to do selection work for fast growth and disease resistance
3 and fillet yield and so on, and so, essentially, you're producing a
4 domesticated fish.

5
6 The further you get from the wild fish, the scientists tell me, the
7 less likelihood there is of interbreeding with the wild, and so you
8 have to be careful about aquatic health and parasites and
9 pathogens, but, in terms of the genetics, it's less of a concern. It's
10 sort of like, as my colleague said, a dairy cow in the Serengeti.
11 They really aren't fit to survive in the wild.

12
13 Back to Atlantic salmon in the Northwest, the exception that
14 proves the rule, federal and state agencies tried to release Atlantic
15 salmon deliberately for years and years, and there were some
16 major escape events in British Columbia and Washington State ten
17 years or so ago, and Atlantic salmon have never established
18 themselves on the west coast. Go figure, and so, yes, it's
19 regrettable that there was that escape, but all those fish have died.

20
21 I think the company was quite chagrined, and they had just bought
22 that facility, or those facilities, and they had applied for permits to
23 switch out the cages, and they thought they could get another crop,
24 and they got caught with old equipment, and so that's where we, I
25 think, as a seafood regulatory community and policy community,
26 at the state and federal levels, need to stay vigilant about
27 monitoring and enforcement and having proper equipment in the
28 water to prevent these kinds of things, so that everybody stays as
29 good actors. That's probably more than I needed in an answer.

30
31 *Jessica McCawley:* We'll allow a couple more questions, because we're a little bit over
32 time. Carrie, go ahead.

33
34 *Carrie Simmons:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had a question, and I appreciate
35 the presentation, but do you guys have any suggestions for the
36 councils as far as these groups, these companies, are coming to the
37 Gulf Council, and they want to do offshore aquaculture, but we
38 don't have the AQUAA Act, and we don't have the authority with
39 our FMP, and what do we tell our stakeholders?

40
41 I mean, we have the Army Corps process for siting, but how do we
42 reduce interactions, or potential interactions, with other fisheries?
43 I just see this kind of imploding if we don't get some regulations
44 on the books or some type of authority here in the near future, at
45 least in the Gulf of Mexico, and do you have any suggestions or
46 any recommendations on how the councils should look at handling

1 that until we have some regulatory authority or some regulations?
2

3 *Sam Rauch:* Well, as you know, at the moment, the court has said you do not
4 have that authority, and so your role would be to facilitate, much
5 like our role is in general, which is to facilitate them going to other
6 authorities that may deal with -- There is nothing to prevent the
7 council from having views on it and to try to, much like the wind
8 folks are doing, to try to use the council as a forum to engage
9 fishermen to try to minimize those things, and so you can clearly
10 do that.

11
12 As I indicated though, until we get some resolution on whether or
13 not we're going to appeal that court decision, it's unlikely that we
14 will know -- The regulatory structure in the Gulf is certainly
15 uncertain right now, and hopefully that will clear up shortly, but,
16 until then, that's all that we can say. Absent legislation or some
17 reversal of that court decision, you have no regulatory authority to
18 do that, but you can look at the way the councils interact with wind
19 and try to provide a forum for the potential aquaculture producers
20 to hear from fishermen, to the extent that that's relevant, to try to
21 minimize conflicts, but it would be not in the context of regulation.

22
23 *Jessica McCawley:* Anything else before we move on to the next topic? Thanks, Sam
24 and Paul and Michael. We're going to move on to the EBFM
25 Regional Implementation, and I will turn it back over to Sam.

5. EBFM REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

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2
3 *Sam Rauch:* Thank you very much. We have talked with the CCC and the
4 various councils for a number of years about EBFM, ecosystem-
5 based fishery management, and this is something the councils have
6 been doing since I believe the councils were created, trying to look
7 at the various interactions between trophic levels and looking at the
8 social and biological and economic tradeoffs between various
9 fishing regimes, and so, although I think the label is somewhat
10 new, the system, the considerations, are not new, and they are
11 things that the councils have been dealing with.

12
13 We have, as we've discussed with this group, tried to put our
14 efforts, the Fisheries Service efforts, into some sort of structure, to
15 both be supportive of the council efforts and also to look at non-
16 council-related activities in the EBFM forum that we may work
17 for, and we put out a policy and a roadmap some time ago, and,
18 under that, in those two documents, we indicated that we would be
19 working on regional implementation plans to take some of the very
20 high-level concepts in those two documents and provide a little bit
21 more specificity, and I am pleased to say that we did recently
22 finalize and upload nine EBFM implementation plans to our
23 website, which you can find. Those are the seven regional plans
24 and then a plan for Headquarters and Atlantic HMS.

25
26 In doing that, we worked with the councils, and we appreciate the
27 input that we received from the council and the council staff to
28 help create those plans. Those plans themselves, which I would
29 refer you to, but they do provide a framework for science and
30 management coordination, and they talk about how we were going
31 to use existing resources to address the growing demand for
32 ecosystem-based information and tools to manage the fisheries
33 with an ecosystem approach.

34
35 They coordinate the implementation of the November 2016
36 roadmap, and they have priority actions and milestones that we
37 intend to undertake in the next five years, and so they briefly
38 outline the current EBFM approaches that are being undertaken
39 within that region, whichever the region is, including how our
40 current efforts support our management needs, and that's our
41 collective management needs, in the region, and it outlines some of
42 the steps that we've already taken to implement EBFM.

43
44 They don't commit us to new projects or new resources. We don't
45 have that, but they do tell us how we're strategically using our
46 current resources to pursue EBFM, and they do talk about how

1 we're coordinating between the science and the management
2 function to provide the information that managers need to increase
3 the resilience of fish stocks and fishing-dependent communities
4 and protected species. They also talk about an engagement
5 strategy that indicates how the regions are going to engage
6 stakeholders and partners.

7
8 The process that we followed was that we invited council staff to
9 participate in the creation of plans back in October of 2017. While
10 council involvement varied, many councils were very involved,
11 and we appreciate that, and others were not quite as involved, but
12 that was okay too. We did then post the draft plans online last
13 June, with email announcements that we sent out to the councils
14 and the commissions and MAFAC and states and the Marine
15 Mammal Take Reduction Teams. Then we updated the plans
16 based on feedback that we received, and, as I said, we have just
17 now posted the final ones.

18
19 We had comments from a number of entities, including the
20 councils themselves and the environmental NGOs and industry
21 groups and state agencies and tribes. In general, the comments
22 were very positive. The councils' comments generally requested
23 increased emphasis on the council/NMFS partnership and
24 stakeholder input, which we tried to incorporate, and the
25 environmental comments generally requested that the plans go
26 further than we had put forth, and they did ask that we provide
27 more clarity on specific priorities and actions. The industry
28 comments were typically more concerned with optimization and
29 the influence of marine mammals on the ecosystem.

30
31 Priorities common across the various plans include improving the
32 ecosystem status reporting, either by a separate report or within
33 current existing assessments, utilizing management strategy
34 evaluations to look at ecosystem issues, accounting for climate and
35 changing conditions, and engaging partners and stakeholders.

36
37 You can look at those plans on our website. The next steps include
38 -- They all lay out various milestones, which we'll be
39 implementing with existing resources over the next few years, and
40 they are there for cross-regional discussions and learning related to
41 EBFM, so you can look at what another region is doing and maybe
42 have some sharing of lessons learned and things like that, and there
43 are tools for promoting the various EBFM accomplishments. As I
44 said, the councils have been doing this for many, many years, and
45 it's good to put those efforts into a framework.

1 I wanted to thank the councils for the involvement and support
2 through the entire process of creating these implementation plans
3 and moving forward with EBFM, and I'm happy to take questions.
4 Thank you.

5

6 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Sam. Are there questions? Chris.

7

8 *Chris Moore:* Thank you, Sam, for the presentation. How do you think the
9 implementation plans will help the councils that have their own
10 EBFM or EAFM plans?

11

12 *Sam Rauch:* As I said, these should have built on those efforts. Various
13 councils call it different things, and you can talk amongst
14 yourselves, but all the councils do this in some fashion or another,
15 look at not just the fishery that you're regulating, but look at how
16 that fishery interacts with the ecosystem and what the social and
17 economic dynamics are of that, and so this should have built up on
18 the various councils, and I did not go back in and review the
19 Northeast one in particular to see how yours did operate, but this
20 should build on that and highlight that those efforts are part of our
21 ongoing EBFM management process.

22

23 *Chris Moore:* As a follow-up, I think you know that, and I've said this before,
24 probably at a CCC meeting, that there should be ten
25 implementation plans and not nine. Even though we love our
26 brothers to the north, we would like our own implementation plan,
27 but we're done with that discussion.

28

29 It's interesting, in terms of how that document actually deals with
30 the different approaches that each council has, and I think you
31 know that we have an EAFM document that is basically driving
32 our ecosystem-based discussions. New England is working on
33 another approach. Probably, if John Hare were here, he would
34 probably say that we're driving him nuts, because we have these
35 very different approaches, but they seem, at least in my
36 conversations with John, they seem to be blending together, to
37 some extent, at least from the Science Center perspective, but I'm
38 not sure that this implementation plan recognizes those differences.
39 What do you think?

40

41 *Sam Rauch:* Well, we just posted it, and so I would encourage you to look at
42 that and take that up with John Hare and Mike Pentony, and Mike
43 is sitting right here.

44

45 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there other questions? Mike, did you want to respond?

46

1 *Mike Pentony:* Yes, and thank you, Madam Chairman. Chris is correct that we
2 developed -- We made a decision to develop a single
3 implementation plan that represents our region, between the Center
4 and the Regional Office, and we coordinated with both our
5 councils, who, as Chris mentioned, have very different approaches
6 to EBFM, EAFM/EBFM, but I think what we were trying to
7 recognize is that we have one Regional Office and one Science
8 Center that are providing support to both of our councils and
9 providing support to both of our councils that have different
10 approaches, and so what we need is a coordinated way to do that.

11
12 That's what we tried to reflect in our implementation plan, how
13 we, GARFO and the Science Center, working together, working
14 with our two partner councils, can implement the overarching
15 agency framework for EBFM, recognizing those differences. To
16 have had a Mid-Atlantic implementation plan and a New England
17 implementation plan, our concern is that we would come across as
18 sort of a split personality and trying to, organizationally and
19 structurally, support the Mid-Atlantic Council's efforts and then,
20 with the same group of people, but characterized differently,
21 support the New England Council efforts and trying to then look at
22 those two different plans and see how the same people and the
23 same organizational structures are providing both sets of support.

24
25 We were concerned that the risk would be that it would be unclear
26 how one Regional Office and one Science Center were supporting
27 and implementing both plans, and so, by joining them into a single
28 implementation plan and trying to recognize the differences
29 between our two councils, we felt that was a better place to be able
30 to focus in on how we can best support both councils and the
31 different approaches with a single Regional Office and a single
32 Science Center.

33
34 *Sam Rauch:* I would like to strike my earlier response and adopt that one.

35
36 *Jessica McCawley:* Got it. Noted. Any more questions? Chris.

37
38 *Chris Moore:* One last one for Sam. Twice, you have said we're going to do this
39 with existing resources, very quietly, but, in terms of -- If you look
40 at the scope of the work and what we do now, it seems like we
41 might need some additional resources to do some of this stuff, and
42 so what's been the thoughts within the agency about that?

43
44 *Sam Rauch:* I didn't mean to be quiet about that. Currently, the entire effort,
45 from the beginning, has discussed using existing resources. I think
46 it highlights things that you could do, the potential that could come

1 if there were additional resources. I do note that there was more
2 resources that went to the council, but we did not get any for
3 additional ecosystem-based management to do those kinds of
4 things, and so it provides a structured way to deal with this
5 approach, which we embrace, with existing resources, and it
6 indicates what might the possibilities be if additional resources
7 were to be applied, but there's no commitment, as there cannot be,
8 because we don't have those to actually grow those resources at
9 the moment, but, if they were to come, this would provide a
10 template for how you might use them.

11
12 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more questions? If not, I'm going to move on to the next
13 topic. The next topic is Electronic Technology Policies and
14 Implementation Plans, and we have it listed as Brett.

1 **6. ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY POLICIES &**
2 **IMPLEMENTATION PLANS**

3
4 *Brett Alger:* Thank you. My name is Brett Alger, and I'm the Electronic
5 Technologies Coordinator for NOAA Fisheries. I think you all
6 have maybe seen me at the past few CCC meetings. I have a lot to
7 cover, but I want to save time for questions, because that actually
8 is the time where I reflect and learn more about sort of the impacts
9 that a lot of these policies have on our different fisheries, and I also
10 recognize that I am sitting directly between you all and enjoying
11 Charleston, and so, with that, we'll get started.

12
13 I think it's important to start off with just sort of a reflection of
14 terms that we're using when we talk about these different policy
15 documents and different terms of technology, and so the idea that
16 electronic monitoring, for the purposes of talking here, are where
17 we talk about maybe camera-based programs, as opposed to the
18 term "electronic technologies" is sort of inclusive of all types of
19 technologies for reporting and VMS and observer technologies, et
20 cetera.

21
22 I use a capital "P" and a capital "D" to talk about the policy
23 directive, as a kind of overarching parent document, if you will,
24 whereas the procedural directive, in the lower-case, is sort of the
25 child document of how you execute to the goal you're after, and
26 hopefully these things don't start having grandkids.

27
28 As an overview of what I'm going to go through, I'm going to talk
29 about a couple of final policy documents that you have in front of
30 you, and I do want to apologize. They were finalized and
31 completed early last week, and I sent them out to a whole bunch of
32 people, but I was out of the country last week, and I completely
33 forgot to get them forwarded on to the CCC, and so I take full
34 responsibility for that, but we're going to go through a final policy
35 directive on electronic technologies, and we're going to walk
36 through a final procedural directive on EM cost allocation. Then
37 I'm going to walk you through a couple of future policy documents
38 that are going to touch on video storage and data retention from
39 our EM programs, and I will talk about our regional ET plans and
40 then a project that we're working on in terms of developing EM
41 guidance and best practices.

42
43 In terms of the ET policy directive, it's probably better to call it an
44 update, as opposed to some final document. This is a document
45 that you would have seen as early as, I believe, 2013 or 2014, and
46 so it sort of set the stage across all of our programs of how we're

1 going to develop electronic technologies, and it was due for
2 renewal in the fall of 2018, and so we made what I would say are
3 some sort of small, kind of modest changes in the course of sort of
4 just doing that update after five years.
5

6 We changed a little bit of the reporting structure, in terms of
7 myself, the ET coordinator, our internal national working group,
8 our headquarters programs, the regional staff, and we're now sort
9 of hierarchically authorized by Sam and Cisco, although, the
10 different products and reports and policies that we develop, our
11 signatory is Chris.
12

13 We tried to clarify a few objectives and definitions. We wanted to
14 add observer technologies as a key component of a whole suite of
15 tools that we're using and developing. We wanted to provide a
16 little bit more guidance on how we update the regional ET plans,
17 and a think a big change, maybe too many of you, would be that,
18 rather than doing ET plans twice a year, we're now just going to do
19 them once a year.
20

21 In terms of the EM cost allocation procedural directive, this is
22 something that's been on your radar for several years now.
23 Recognizing that we have flat or even slight increase in budgets for
24 a bunch of our programs, there is still an ever increasing demand
25 on monitoring and data collection from fisheries. In some cases,
26 those programs, if they are created in a certain way, can exceed the
27 capacity, in terms of resources available.
28

29 We wanted to make sure that we noted that we're not going to
30 necessarily approve a program if it creates an unfunded or
31 unsustainable cost, both to the agency and to the industry, and that
32 program should consider a whole range of funding authorities, and
33 recognize there is a number of existing cost recovery provisions
34 that are available to fisheries as well.
35

36 We laid out that the procedural directive should specify -- Each
37 program should specify the cost of a program and the monitoring
38 functions and then, in certain cases, some programs may need to
39 develop a transition plan from their existing programs. From
40 where I sit, I would say that, over the last few years, we have
41 generally, in this room and all of the different people that are
42 developing electronic monitoring programs, this has been on our
43 radar enough that our EM programs are far closer to being at a
44 state that addresses this directive, as opposed to being at the
45 starting line.
46

1 What we did is we laid out what we call sampling costs. The three
2 primary, or most expensive, bins would be the hardware itself, the
3 video review and the storage of those records, and then an
4 administrative set of costs, which would be the agency's program
5 support and certifying and auditing providers and doing data
6 analysis and storing federal records. The table that you see in front
7 of you is listed -- I can't remember what page number it's on, off
8 the top of my head, but it's listed there, and it's meant to capture
9 sort of what is the lay of the land as we speak today.

10
11 There is an example where the North Pacific has a landings fee,
12 and so, in that example, they're using a fee to collect costs to pay
13 for sampling, and we have an example on the west coast where
14 they have a cost recovery fee as part of a LAPP that would be
15 paying for administrative costs, but, by and large, the idea here is
16 that we've binned it so that the industry would be responsible for
17 sampling costs and the agency would be responsible for
18 administrative costs.

19
20 I want to point you to the third bullet in the sampling bin, and it
21 says NOAA Fisheries would pay for sampling costs for specific
22 federal programs. What we're trying to say there, and it's a little
23 bit of a hypothetical, is there may be instances or cases down the
24 road where the agency would identify that electronic monitoring
25 could be used to augment a federal observer program, for example,
26 and maybe that's to meet ESA or MMPA or SBRM, as examples.

27
28 We received seven letters on the original draft cost directive, six
29 from councils and one from EDF, and so what we tried to do is bin
30 -- We went through all the comments, and I would say they were
31 all -- All of which helped us revisit not only this directive, but
32 some of the other policies that we're working on as well and to
33 rethink kind of how the pieces all fit together, but some of the ones
34 that we felt were directly in scope and directly responsive I have
35 listed here.

36
37 We tried to clarify the terms when we talk about EM video versus
38 data, because that can be a set of terms that can confuse things
39 really quickly, recognizing that there is both storage costs for
40 sampling the video itself and storage costs for administrative
41 functions as well, and so we've tried to articulate that a little bit
42 better and then recognize that we do have some forthcoming video
43 and data retention policies that I will get to in a moment.

44
45 We wanted to clarify a little bit that the fee collection language for
46 LAPPs, that NMFS is authorized and required under Magnuson to

1 collect fees, but that we may collect them to support an EM
2 program. We wanted to clarify the range of EM applications, and
3 there was a little bit of ambiguity in the document originally, and
4 we also wanted to clarify that, when we talk about electronic
5 monitoring, we're talking about sort of the camera-based programs
6 and not necessarily VMS. I recognize that VMS, in some circles,
7 that people will call that electronic monitoring, but we tried to re-
8 focus and re-define what we mean by this directive, and then,
9 lastly, a note that there was a range of comments that we received
10 from councils, and we're happy to follow-up, as appropriate.
11

12 In effect, the cost allocation directive is finalized. I think it got
13 posted to the website this morning, and we'll make sure that you
14 all have copies of that, if you haven't gotten them yet, but the idea
15 is that, from this moment forward, that each program should
16 establish provisions within two years of how they're going to
17 apportion out the cost and the different monitoring functions
18 within a program and that, within an additional three years, and so
19 five years total, a program would have the ability to transition from
20 sort of the status quo to a future state.
21

22 In doing so, the provisions, like I said, must include the allocations
23 by category and the step-wise transition, if appropriate. Where we
24 would like to house these transition plans would be in the regional
25 electronic technology implementation plans, which I will get to in
26 a moment. Again, from where I sit, I will just give you a quick
27 assessment. I think the two fisheries that maybe are in place right
28 now and have regulations in place would be the Alaska fixed gear
29 EM program and the Atlantic HMS.
30

31 Of course, there is the west coast programs that are under EFPs
32 and the New England programs that are under EFPs that are
33 working their way towards full implementation. Again, these
34 conversations and these topics have been on the forefront for a
35 long enough time, and I think those programs are closer to the
36 finish line than they are to the start line.
37

38 This is a slide that I created, and I had a slide like this at the Pacific
39 Council last fall, and I'm sort of regretful that we didn't create
40 something like this sooner for explaining sort of what we mean by
41 sort of third-party electronic monitoring programs, and this is
42 going to set the stage in the next few minutes on what we talk
43 about with video storage and data retention.
44

45 What I have in front of you is effectively what a trip would look
46 like, and so a trip would begin, and, over the course of that trip,

1 you're collecting imagery, and it could be video, and it could be
2 still images, but, effectively, those are the MP4 files that you see in
3 front of you, the raw video that comes from the vessel. Then that
4 video is reviewed, the imagery is reviewed, and you get some type
5 of summary data from that one-to-one sort of direct review. The
6 idea here is, the concept that I think most programs are working
7 towards is, that data is then sent to the agency, and the data is
8 being used for a different set of purposes.

9
10 Then, if you go down below the line, the idea there is, when we
11 talk about auditing or certifying an EM service provider, which
12 would be in red, the agency may take possession of or review
13 certain portions of video, to make sure that the electronic
14 monitoring provider is identifying species correctly and getting
15 weights properly and lengths properly and all the different things
16 that you may require in your program.

17
18 If you go down a line, you see an MP4 file that maybe is
19 enforcement took possession of a certain piece of video for their
20 purposes, and so the basic construct here is that industry is
21 collecting and sampling raw video and turning that into
22 summarized data, and then the agency has a role in using that data
23 and auditing and using the video for enforcement or auditing
24 purposes, and that's just a basic framework that I wanted to talk
25 about.

26
27 When we think about the information that comes from these
28 programs, we have tried to bin them, I guess, into -- We call them
29 buckets, data product buckets, and the first one would be this is the
30 primary purpose of your program, and you might be using the
31 video to audit self-reported data, and you might be implementing it
32 for compliance monitoring, and you might be implementing it for
33 bycatch, and so this is the primary purpose of the program.

34
35 The secondary bin would be if you are collecting video for
36 enforcement reasons and the third bin being if you wanted to
37 collect the video for scientific and research purposes, and the thing
38 that I would want to point out on this slide is that the second two
39 bins, the key word in all of what you're looking at there is
40 "opportunistic", the idea that you wouldn't have this information
41 available if you didn't develop a program in the first place, and so
42 if we can at least step off from this slide with the idea that you
43 have developed a program for a primary purpose, and the reason
44 you're collecting these data and these other bins are sort of
45 secondary and opportunistic in nature, and hopefully we can at
46 least walk through the next couple of slides.

1
2 What I have in front of you now is effectively what it would look
3 like over the course of a fishing year, and so let's just assume the
4 fishing year starts on January 1 and goes through December 31.
5 The idea is that, as your fishery progresses, you are collecting data
6 in each of those three bins, the programmatic bin, the enforcement
7 bin, and sort of a science and research bin. Just like any fishery in
8 the U.S. where we have annual catch limits, the fishing year ends,
9 and the local experts and the Regional Office and the Science
10 Center and all the different folks go through some amount of
11 QA/QC process to sort of close the books, if you will.
12

13 In some fisheries, that may take days, and it may take weeks, and I
14 think that it usually takes more on the order of months, and, of
15 course, we want to shorten that period at any time that we can, but
16 the idea here is that you have a fishing year that lasts twelve
17 months, some amount of QA/QC that lasts some amount of time,
18 and then the question that we're all sort of wrestling with is then
19 how long do you store the video at the end of that period.
20

21 I will maybe pause to note that, through this exercise, one thing
22 that we're trying to do, and we heard this from the cost allocation
23 directive, is we're trying to do two things. We're trying to be
24 flexible, and we're trying to provide equity, in the sense of we
25 recognize that each region has different abilities and capabilities to
26 close their books and process information, but, at the same time,
27 we also want to have a retention policy that reflects sort of the
28 national level scope of how long we're asking people to pay for
29 and store data.
30

31 This first slide here on what we are going to be proposing for a
32 third-party video retention procedural directive, which is, of
33 course, a mouthful, but, currently, video is retained indefinitely.
34 There is nothing on the books that says how long people should
35 store video, and, in effect, it's mostly just been on a handshake that
36 we've asked our different programs to store video until we develop
37 a directive, and so what we're working on in the future is a new
38 procedural directive and guidance to the regions on how we would
39 work within those programs, and I think the process would be
40 similar to what we did with the EM cost allocation procedural
41 directive.
42

43 That is, hopefully after this meeting, shortly after this meeting, we
44 would send a draft directive out to you all and allow you an
45 opportunity to review and comment, as necessary, for some
46 amount of time, and we would take those comments and develop a

1 final directive. What I have in front of you below is basically the
2 same as you saw on the slide before, the idea that there is a twelve-
3 month fishing season and three months, for example, on the
4 backend of the fishing season to close the books, and what we're
5 proposing is that each program would retain their video for an
6 additional twelve months.

7
8 If we walk back and do the math on this, that means video that was
9 created or developed or sampled on day-one of a fishing year
10 effectively is held for twenty-seven months, but video that is
11 maybe held or created or sampled on day-365 of a fishing year is
12 actually only held for about fifteen months.

13
14 The second process that we would work through is with the
15 National Archive and Records Administration. Currently, all video
16 that is created is considered to be observer records, and so it's
17 retained indefinitely. We would work with NARA to do a new
18 retention schedule for video and images and data collected under
19 EM programs, and the process is that NARA publishes an FR
20 notice that has a forty-five-day comment period.

21
22 Now, a couple of notes on this. One is it starts to get a little bit
23 outside of our territory, in the sense that we're working with
24 NARA and we follow their process, but I know it's extremely
25 important that our councils have the ability to comment during the
26 comment period for this, and so, as we learn more with how
27 NARA will develop this and when the forty-five-day comment
28 period would be, we would certainly get that out to you as quickly
29 as we possibly could, and, actually, in another few weeks, we'll be
30 meeting with NARA to get an update on where things stand.

31
32 The idea that the diagram below shows is that we would expect
33 that, for different reasons, that the agency would hold onto federal
34 records much longer than we would expect maybe the industry to
35 hold on to them, and so proposed here would be on the order of say
36 five years that we would retain the federal records.

37
38 As I mentioned, from the very beginning, you have had regional
39 electronic technology implementation plans that you have been
40 developing and updating for several years, and we wanted to take a
41 moment, sort of in the lineage of time here, and sort of revisit what
42 are we getting out of these and what's included in them and what is
43 not and sort of provide sort of updated guidance, and even a new
44 template out to the regions, to make these more of an exercise that
45 the regions can use, that are regionally driven, as opposed to them
46 being an exercise of the regions reporting to headquarters.

1
2 We have been working with a lot of our regional staff to sort of
3 figure out, okay, what are the things that were maybe included in
4 the original plans that aren't being included now, and we also want
5 to have a document that somebody from the public or somebody,
6 even if they are very informed, can pick up and say, I know, or I'm
7 going to find, what the South Atlantic Council is doing on Fish
8 Rules or some application, and I can pick up that same document
9 from the Alaska programs and figure out where I can find that
10 same piece of information.

11
12 We don't want to standardize it to the point that the process is a big
13 wet blanket, but we want to develop plans that can speak to one
14 another and people can look at them and have the same sort of
15 experience of what they're looking at, and so we laid out the
16 different parts of these plans that we're going to be hoping to put
17 forth in the next six or seven months, the idea of a regional five-
18 year vision and set of priorities, and it should reflect council
19 actions, R&D, pilot projects, the idea that data integration and
20 interoperability are extremely important, what are the impediments
21 to implementation and the resource needs, what are some different
22 ways to track progress over time, and then, as I mentioned about
23 the EM cost allocation procedural directive, we would see those
24 transition plans being housed here.

25
26 We are going to formally announce this initiative, so that all of
27 your stakeholders have the opportunity to engage and coordinate as
28 you develop your regional plans with the Regional Offices, the
29 Science Centers, the councils, the states, the commission, and on
30 and on and on, and the idea that we want to encourage as much
31 cross-regional planning as possible.

32
33 Then, lastly, I wanted to make a quick note that we are working on
34 developing national EM guidance and best practices and trying to
35 learn from what we've done in the U.S. already, what's being done
36 abroad, in the sense of how do we build out a pre-implementation
37 program for EM, how do we get to full scale, what are the
38 minimum standards and best practices across vessel systems, video
39 review and data management, and data standardization, and
40 provide some case studies for folks, just to learn from what has
41 been successful or maybe what not to do as well.

42
43 With that, I want to thank you. I would make a quick note that we
44 are hoping to have a national EM workshop in the fall of 2019 in
45 Portsmouth, New Hampshire and also a second one in Seattle,
46 Washington in early 2020. You might ask, well, Brett, why are

1 you doing two of them instead of one, and you can't really call it a
2 national workshop, and I think the experiences we've had in a lot
3 of these conversations and doing EM workshops is that it's a lot of
4 the same people in the room, and we want to engender more
5 participation from fishermen especially, and so traveling cross-
6 country and getting off the water is extremely difficult, and so our
7 hope here is that, if people want to, they can go to both and get that
8 national-level exposure, but, if we hold them in ports where we can
9 attract more fishermen participants, that's what we're shooting for.

10
11 With that, I just want to thank you for your time and let you know
12 that I'm always available on these topics, because I know they are
13 quite sticky, and that's it. Thank you.

14
15 *Mel Bell:* Thank you, Brett. Any questions for Brett pertaining to the
16 presentation? Tom.

17
18 *Thomas Nies:* Thanks, Brett. I think I've got two questions, with the Chair's
19 permission here, but the first one is on your Slide 7. I guess I don't
20 understand the establish provisions within two years and
21 implementation within five years. What do you mean? Is that for
22 every fishery or for -- I don't quite understand what this slide is
23 saying.

24
25 *Brett Alger:* I think what we're trying to say is that we were trying to forecast
26 that there may be programs that have been developed and they are
27 implemented that don't necessarily meet what we've proposed or
28 what we've finalized here, and so we're giving that fishery two
29 years to come up with their sort of structure and then an additional
30 three years to implement that structure. Now, in your case, or in
31 New England's case, there isn't really a program that is
32 implemented, so to speak, and so it puts it into a little bit more of a
33 gray area as to how you develop your structure and your
34 implementation plan over time.

35
36 *Thomas Nies:* To follow-up on that, we do have a program that was approved, but
37 that's not implemented yet. Do we now have to go back and
38 change that program before it gets implemented? It may actually
39 comply with much of this, and I'm not sure. I haven't compared it
40 to the new published directive.

41
42 *Brett Alger:* I would want to go back to the Region and figure out if what was
43 developed complies or fits this. Before I left New England, and
44 knowing where like the IFM amendment was heading, it's
45 probably quite close to this, if not already in place.

1 *Thomas Nies:* My second question sort of bleeds over into the budget issue, and I
2 realize we're not the council to complain about getting money for
3 observer programs, but is this tied in with -- Is this policy directive
4 tied in with any agency plan to increase funding for electronic
5 technologies, because our program that is not implemented -- I
6 believe one of the reasons that implementation is proceeding
7 slowly is because of lack of funding for part of the program.
8

9 *Brett Alger:* I would say generally yes, but I would look to Sam and others
10 more specifically on what is being done in terms of an overall
11 initiative to increase funding for ET.
12

13 *Sam Rauch:* The agency has been a strong supporter of these various programs
14 over time, and they do come with expenses, and we have worked
15 within the congressional appropriations to try to do that. As you
16 know, there has been congressional appropriations for various
17 electronic programs in the last few years, and we have tried to
18 tailor those -- A mix of sort of developmental opportunities, but
19 also the implementation plans for these various things as they
20 come online, because we recognize that there is both a cost to us,
21 to the industry, to the councils and everybody, as we try to bring
22 these online.
23

24 We are trying to do that generically with the funds available, and I
25 can't answer it specifically with regard to yours. I mean, we are
26 looking at what may be on the horizon for the New England
27 Council and figuring out what the funding opportunities for that
28 might be, and the same is true for like the West Coast Region.
29 That's becoming a federal program, and how is that going to be
30 funded? Those are issues that we are bringing online, and we
31 continue to work with Alaska about how those things are funded,
32 and so there's not a simple solution, but there is money in the
33 budget, or there has been money in the budget, for electronic
34 programs, and we're trying to tailor that so that we can bring these
35 online.
36

37 *Jessica McCawley:* Bill.
38

39 *Bill Tweit:* Thanks. Brett, one of the things that we've really been struggling
40 with is, given our funding stream that is now going to be for both
41 human observers and EM, our inability to control costs as a council
42 and our inability to implement measures that help us manage costs
43 of the program in a way that we can actually get a program that we
44 think is really adequate within the revenue stream that we have or
45 even if we raise the revenue stream some.
46

1 I am wondering what kinds of tools -- As you're thinking about
2 cost allocation for EM, what kinds of tools you're going to
3 provide, and I didn't see any real description in here, but the kinds
4 of tools that you're going to provide to the councils to allow the
5 councils to control the cost side of the EM equation. At this point,
6 we're just handing EM implementation, in terms of costs, over to
7 the same federal contract and the same federal contracting process
8 that's already doing the human portion of our fishery monitoring
9 program, and we're finding it really difficult to control costs within
10 the human part, and we don't know yet about the EM part, but
11 we're really concerned that we're going to have the same
12 difficulties controlling costs on the EM side, and so, while we get
13 the cost allocation need, without cost control tools, I am not sure
14 how we're going to be able to deliver our part of the cost allocation
15 bargain.

16
17 *Brett Alger:*

A couple of things on that, Bill. I mean, I think the -- In my mind,
18 the two big cost drivers in EM are review and storage. I am
19 hopeful that what we are going to articulate from a policy
20 perspective on the retention and data storage will be somewhat
21 responsive to your concern, in terms of how much does it cost for
22 these things.

23
24 I would fully agree with you that the agency has probably not done
25 the best job of going down the road of how do we do video review
26 and how much video do we need and how often do we need to
27 audit the video, and those are huge cost drivers in EM programs.
28 If you go around the country, I think all of our programs review
29 everything, whether the agency is paying for it or the industry is
30 paying for it, and I think we have some lessons learned, in some
31 instances, where we can bring that information to light and provide
32 that to councils about how specific programs chose and made
33 decisions on whether they be data driven or for whatever they may
34 be to bring down the cost of video review. I think that would be a
35 place that we could start from.

36
37 I think there is some technical choices that programs could make
38 that could bring down cost, and so I don't have, sitting here today,
39 like a menu that I can just show you and say these are how we
40 bring costs down, but it's always on our minds as well. I am
41 hopeful that -- If I skip to our end here, this is a place where we
42 can provide some information, maybe a bit more of a menu for
43 programs to choose from and how to bring costs down, and I
44 would hope that we could have this out by the end of the year,
45 early 2020, but the video review one is a super sticky one that I am
46 in constant contact with our programs, but what are we doing? We

1 don't need to review everything, do we? Maybe we do and maybe
2 we don't, but how do we bring those review costs down?
3

4 *Jessica McCawley:* Sam.

5
6 *Sam Rauch:* I would add to that that our whole approach to these electronic
7 monitoring systems is largely cost driven by taking the program
8 and setting -- As opposed to setting specific federal top-down
9 measures, we are trying to have performance standards and letting
10 the industry select -- As long as they can meet the performance
11 standards, let them do it in the most cost effective way possible,
12 and so, if you look at the approach to federal records, where we're
13 trying to adopt an approach where there is very few federal records
14 in the system, because that becomes a cost issue that we can do,
15 and so, by making the records -- Most of them are not federal.
16 They are industry records, and they can store them and retain them
17 within certain performance standards, and that decreases the cost.
18

19 This program, unlike many of our data collection programs, is
20 intended to be an industry-funded program. That, in and of itself,
21 gives them the incentive to decrease cost, and we tried to minimize
22 the amount of federal interaction to this very limited monitoring
23 and oversight role, but it is limited. This is not the similar kind of
24 programs where the federal government is doing all the data
25 collection, and that's where the costs really rise.
26

27 *Bill Tweit:* Madam Chair, can I follow-up on Sam's point?

28
29 *Jessica McCawley:* Yes.

30
31 *Bill Tweit:* That makes a lot of sense. I am highly certain that what you have
32 just described though, with the industry's ability to interact directly
33 with providers, is not at all where we're headed in the North
34 Pacific under the federal contracting environment, and that's what
35 I am really worried about, is that, if the monies are going through a
36 federal contract, and, at this point, particularly if it's just a single
37 contractor, our experience in the human observer side is the
38 difference between a full coverage category, where individual
39 industry groups are able to contract directly with human observer
40 providers, versus our experience within partial-coverage
41 categories, where it's all done through federal contract, is we see
42 extremely different costs.
43

44 Now, some of that is systemic and understandable, because we're
45 asking, to some extent, for them to do two different things, but
46 some of it -- It's such a large difference that most of us believe that

1 some of that is also due to the lack of market forces that are at play
2 there, and I hear you describing sort of a market-force-driven
3 approach to EM, and that's not where we're going. If the federal
4 contract for EM is with a single provider, which we haven't heard
5 yet, or if there are even two providers, it's hard to see how market
6 forces are going to do what you're suggesting, and that's what
7 really concerns us. In that environment, we have very little ability
8 to control costs or assume that market forces are going to naturally
9 control costs on our behalf.

10
11 *Jessica McCawley:* Dean.

12
13 *Dean Sensui:* A question for Brett. What's the turnaround time for the data?
14 Can it be used for like active management, in terms of like, for the
15 Western Pacific, it would be interactions with protected species
16 and those sort of caps that affect our operation?

17
18 *Brett Alger:* I will answer your question in a couple of ways. We have some
19 programs, and I'm just sort of generally speaking, where a captain
20 fills out a logbook, and that data might be ready like that, and the
21 EM itself is being captured on the vessel, but that might not be
22 reviewed within let's say a few days or a several days or a week,
23 and so you have some amount of information in real time, and, if
24 you can trust that initially, with sort of a period of time where the
25 EM data can come and reconcile that self-reported information, I
26 would say you have data pretty much in real time, and that's sort of
27 what the west coast program does, and it's sort of what New
28 England is trying to do, is use EM to sort of have oversight of what
29 the self-reported data is.

30
31 I think there is some technical means that people are trying to
32 advance to try and have EM information readily available, in the
33 sense that it's being processed on the vessel in real time, if the
34 computer power is high enough, that you can have it in real time,
35 but, generally speaking, I think it takes usually days, or maybe
36 even weeks, to get the video off the vessel, either from human
37 retrieval or through FedEx, to somebody that is sitting at a desk
38 several states away, and, in your case, maybe a long way away,
39 before it's reviewed and you have actionable data.

40
41 I think, right now, we're in a pretty diverse environment, but I see
42 the timeline shrinking quickly, especially with a lot of sort of the
43 machine learning and AI kind of applications that are happening.

44
45 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more questions?
46

1 *Unidentified:* Getting back to Bill's issue and the federal contracting business,
2 our electronic monitoring program is on the verge of being in
3 regulation, and we're looking at having to start vessel owners to
4 contract with providers to do third-party review, and so there is
5 some concern about cost from that standpoint, and so I guess one
6 of the things that our council is I guess curious about is that there
7 might be some opportunity for us to establish some sort of program
8 like the North Pacific has for its observer programs, and I know
9 that that's authorized through the Magnuson Act, and that's not a
10 provision that would apply to us at this point, but, just sort of in a
11 hypothetical situation, I guess I would just wonder if NMFS would
12 be supportive of having another program for those purposes for our
13 council, for our EM third-party provider, or if you see that as
14 something that is to be avoided at all costs, or is there somewhere
15 in between there?
16

17 *Jessica McCawley:* Sam.

18
19 *Sam Rauch:* I think that your initial statement, which is if you were to replicate
20 the North Pacific approach, you would need a legislative authority
21 to do that, that currently does not exist, and so the North Pacific
22 has a special legislative provision that doesn't exist for the other
23 councils. There have been discussions, were the Magnuson Act to
24 be reauthorized, that that provision would be broadened to include
25 other councils.
26

27 I believe the 2006 administration bill, and that's several
28 administrations ago, proposed language that would do that. This
29 administration has not taken any such position one way or another
30 on that issue, and so I can't answer that question, because you're
31 asking whether we would propose a legislative fix. We have not
32 done so yet. It doesn't mean that we wouldn't, were the issue to
33 arise, but, currently, we have not taken any such position on
34 expanding the North Pacific authority to other councils. That's the
35 best I can answer.
36

37 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more questions? All right. Thank you, Brett. Before we
38 end today, I am going to turn it over to Gregg, who is going to
39 wrap-up some of the action items from today.
40

41 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you. We will have a document that we can share starting
42 tomorrow, but I just wanted to recap that, in Dave Whaley's
43 presentation, he suggested that the councils prepare three one-page
44 documents of what the councils are doing on forage fish, timelines
45 for documents, and addressing the shifting species, and so the
46 Legislative Workgroup will take a shot at that. He also suggested

1 to have comments ready in case we get asked to provide comments
2 for the Wicker bill or something very similar to the Wicker Bill,
3 MSA reauthorization, and the draft Senate language, to look at
4 those issues and be prepared to offer some comments.
5

6 Then the Legislative Workgroup brought a number of items to that.
7 Well, before that, we approved a motion to send a letter to
8 Congressman Young, and we will have that prepared for
9 everybody to sign here at this meeting to send to him, and we
10 approved a motion for the Legislative Workgroup to set two-year
11 terms for the chair and vice chair, with the vice chair moving up to
12 Chair. Tom kindly volunteered and got elected as the vice chair.
13

14 We approved adding wording to the Topic 1, which is Stock
15 Rebuilding, and Topic 14, which is Stock Assessment and Survey
16 Data. We left aquaculture to come back to after we had the
17 aquaculture discussion, and so maybe, Dave, if you could take a
18 look at that, and I think Adam expressed some concerns, but get
19 that wording and just see what we can bring forward on Thursday
20 to finalize that aquaculture one. I will be glad to help work with
21 you as well. I think those were the main items, and we'll have,
22 like I said, a document, so that, once we get to Thursday,
23 everybody can leave with a document showing what the take-
24 aways are and what is left to be done.
25

26 *Jessica McCawley:* Thank you, Gregg. Any other final comments before we close out
27 today? Thanks, everybody. We will start at 8:30 in the morning.
28

29 *(Recess)*

1 **7. SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**

2
3 *Jessica McCawley:* We're going to go ahead and get going this morning, and we're
4 going to have a series of presentations from South Atlantic Council
5 staff, and I'm going to turn it over to Gregg to tell us a little bit
6 more about that.

7
8 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you, and good morning, everybody. Dave mentioned that,
9 on parts of the agenda, it gives you a chance to showcase what
10 your particular council is doing. Since we don't have any big
11 vessels that we can take you on, we figured we would show you
12 some of what we're doing, and so the presentations link off of a
13 Story Map, and there's a link on the agenda and the website for
14 you to go to this, and this Story Map is a newer technology that we
15 are using more and more. To me, it's like the next step beyond
16 PowerPoint. It gives you the opportunity to engage people a lot
17 more and keep people's interest, and hopefully you will see that.

18
19 If you want more details on Story Map, talk to Cameron and Chip,
20 but we're using this for meeting reports, and we're starting to use it
21 in our briefing book for our council members, and we use it for
22 scoping and public hearings and with our AP, and it really seems
23 to work well, and so we have a number of our staff that will give
24 short presentations here, and we're going to hold all questions until
25 the end, and, depending on how much time we'll have at the end,
26 we'll entertain some questions, and then they will be available
27 outside. We have some computers set up, where you'll be able to
28 see some of this information in more detail.

29
30 It's mostly staff giving the presentations. For our habitat and
31 ecosystem work, we have partnered with the State of Florida, and
32 Kathleen O'Keefe from FWRI is going to be presenting along with
33 Roger. Some of this will be updates, and the CCC has seen Fish
34 Rules before. When citizen science started, you all encouraged the
35 South Atlantic to sort of step out and make all the mistakes, and
36 you guys would then learn from us, and so we've done that. There
37 is quite a bit of information available on our website, and we're
38 kicking off two projects now, and so that's very exciting.

39
40 We've got a number of activities dealing with data improvements,
41 and we have worked with partners to produce a charter boat
42 reporting app, and that's ready and waiting to go, and we're
43 awaiting our final rule, which we expect any day now, and we have
44 worked on a private recreational app. Our council is going to be
45 talking about private recreational reporting and permitting, and so
46 that app will be there, should they decide to go forward with that

1 for implementation.
2

3 One of our big, big problems is recreational discards and the
4 discard mortality, and so we've been working a lot on best fishing
5 practices, and you will see information about that. We've got a
6 number of managed areas, and we started with some habitat areas
7 of particular concern, and we've got MPAs, and we've got special
8 management zones, and we've got spawning special management
9 zones, and we've got coral HAPCs, and so we're coming up with
10 an overall plan to monitor the effectiveness of those.
11

12 Finally, we have tried to involve students, to get some useful
13 products out of them that the council can use, but also to expose
14 them to the council process and how they might be able to do
15 research that's useful for management, and so I'm very excited to
16 turn it over, and Kathleen is going to lead off, and, again, this is
17 using the Story Map, and so you can follow along. There are a lot
18 of links to go to additional materials as you're interested at your
19 leisure, and so thank you.
20

21 *Kathleen Howington:* Hi. My name is Kathleen, and so, like Gregg was saying, you can
22 follow along with the Story Map. If you go to this meeting's
23 webpage for Wednesday, we have the link to the Story Map
24 presentation right underneath our agenda.
25

26 I am currently a SEDAR Coordinator here, but, until last month, I
27 was actually working on the for-hire electronic reporting outreach
28 project, and so, to give you a little bit of history, in December of
29 2016, the South Atlantic Council approved an amendment that
30 would require for-hire fishermen to report their fishing efforts
31 electronically on a weekly basis. This was then approved by the
32 Secretary of Commerce in June of 2018, and we are currently
33 waiting on the final rule.
34

35 In preparation for this upcoming requirement, the South Atlantic
36 Council actually started two different projects. The first one we're
37 going to go over is an outreach project, and this started in June of
38 2017, and it's actually going to end in June of this year, and the
39 goal of this was to go and teach charter fishermen about electronic
40 reporting and kind of get some of these electronic reporting tools
41 in their hands and teach them all about it and then get their
42 feedback, as well as just educate these fishermen on the council
43 process and try and get their feedback on what we can do to be
44 able to communicate with them better.
45

46 The other project that I'm going to go over was a pilot project that

1 was conducted from September of 2016 to October of 2017, and
2 the goal of this project was to actually go out and get fishermen
3 that are current charter fishermen in the South Atlantic and give
4 them tablets and say, go report and help us adapt this app, so that
5 way it's personalized for the South Atlantic.
6

7 The reason why the outreach project was such a high priority is
8 because South Atlantic charter fishermen actually don't have a
9 reporting requirement right now. Headboats do, and they currently
10 report to the Southeast Region Headboat Survey, but the charter
11 fishermen themselves don't report, and so we're taking them from
12 zero to a hundred in about 0.2 seconds, and so it was very
13 important for us to be able to go out and communicate with them
14 about why it was important for them to not only report accurately,
15 but honestly, and there are some difficulties in the South Atlantic
16 that are a little bit different just for our region.
17

18 The majority of these fishermen don't have technology on their
19 boats. Most of them use center-console boats, and they are pretty
20 small, and they don't have a deckhand to be able to keep records of
21 what's going on, and the majority of them don't use marinas. They
22 actually use landings, and so being able to identify the sector was
23 one of the important goals of being able to figure out kind of who
24 we needed to reach out for.
25

26 There were three different main ways that I was conducting this
27 outreach. The first one was webinars. Thirty-two have been
28 offered, as of right now, and we had sixty-five attendees, not
29 including staff, and I have to put this parentheses in there because
30 we've discovered that webinars are really great for government
31 officials and interested parties, but they're not so great for
32 fishermen, and so we only had about sixty-five fishermen attend,
33 but I had plenty of people from the Mid-Atlantic, or sometimes I
34 would see people from over in California, and I'm able to identify
35 their emails, and so that was really great of just kind of letting
36 them know what was going on in the region.
37

38 Our most successful was actually in-person trainings. We have
39 held twenty-eight, with 176 attendees. There were twelve trainings
40 in Florida, five in Georgia, six in South Carolina, and five in North
41 Carolina. Our attendance has ranged from -- We have had a few
42 goose-eggs here in South Carolina, and then, in Islamorada, we
43 made our way all the way up to thirty, and so that one was really
44 great, and we were able to go out and just start a communication,
45 start a conversation, with these fishermen.
46

1 The other way that we've been able to try and communicate is the
2 webpage, and this has been really important. We've been keeping
3 the webpage up-to-date constantly, and so, when the notice of
4 availability came out and the proposed rule came out, we were able
5 to actually send those links out and send out the webpage and say,
6 fishermen, please give your public comments.

7
8 We have also developed multiple permit graphics for the different
9 regions, being able to say, if you're fishing here, you need this
10 permit, as well as an app that charter fishermen can go in and say,
11 if I catch these fish, what permits do I need. With all of that,
12 ultimately, and this is my crowning achievement, is I've actually
13 been able to make up a captain contact list of 405 different captains
14 who have given me their phone number, their email, and
15 permission to contact them when anything happens that impacts
16 the charter sector.

17
18 This has been really great, but, also, that's the minimum. I know
19 for a fact that I have actually communicated with more fishermen,
20 because I have now gained a very strange skill of being able to
21 figure out when I'm on speaker and people aren't telling me. I
22 have had multiple times where I answer a very non-descript
23 question and suddenly hear multiple unique voices in the
24 background that I didn't know I was talking to these people, and so
25 it's been really great to go out and just kind of learn what these
26 fishermen like, and the project is not over.

27
28 We're still going to be going out and doing some law enforcement
29 outreach and talking with law enforcement, and we've actually
30 developed a law enforcement compliance app, where law
31 enforcement can pull up the vessel ID and actually see what their
32 last electronic record was, and I'm also going to be developing
33 some educational videos that are going to go on that webpage, and
34 so, even if a fisherman doesn't read the emails I send or doesn't
35 read one of the letters, they will be able to go on the webpage and
36 learn about the final rule and learn about any new electronic
37 reporting tools that are coming up, as well as I'm going to keep
38 communicating with these guys. It's been really nice learning -- I
39 discovered that bow-and-arrow is a thing that they do in north
40 Florida. I did not know that was a gear for fishing, and now I do,
41 and I really need to go out and do that.

42
43 The other project was eTRIPS, and so, like I said, it was very
44 important to try and personalize this app for the South Atlantic,
45 just because our region is pretty unique. eTRIPS was actually
46 originally created in the Mid-Atlantic by charter fishermen who

1 were having a windfarm built where they fish, and so they
2 contacted Harbor Light and said, Harbor Light, please help us
3 develop this app, where we can track where we're moving, where
4 we can show where we're fishing.
5

6 Harbor Light did, and they realized that this is actually a really
7 great app for logbooks, and they have since expanded now, where
8 now they also have an app for the smartphone, and so it's mobile
9 friendly, and it's computer friendly, as long as you have Microsoft
10 10, and so, if you would like to play around with this, I'm going to
11 actually have a demonstration set up outside, along with all the
12 other apps that you're going to be hearing about today. You can
13 go outside and play around and ask questions. eTRIPS, SAFIS, is
14 actually -- They are ready to go for commercial, and they're ready
15 for private recreational, and they're trying to make this app a
16 reporting app for all sectors. They are ready to go, and so they are
17 very excited.
18

19 If you don't want to go outside and mess with any of these tablets,
20 you can actually download it on your own. It is free. The user
21 name is safmc, and the password is redsnapper. Now, that's a test
22 evaluation, and so any reports you turn in are not going to be
23 official, and so you can just go willy-nilly and say however big the
24 fish you caught was, but you can go and test it on your own if you
25 would like.
26

27 If you would like to learn more about for-hire reporting in the
28 South Atlantic, please feel free to contact me, or you can go to our
29 webpage, like I said, and it's a really useful tool, and we're
30 constantly updating it with whatever new information we can,
31 because this is a really great way of contacting fishermen. With
32 that, thank you very much, and we're going to move on to citizen
33 science.
34

35 *Julia Byrd:*

36 Good morning, everyone. My name is Julia Byrd, and I am the
37 South Atlantic Council Citizen Science Program Coordinator, and
38 so I know you all been given a little bit of information about our
39 Citizen Science Program, and so what I wanted to do today is give
40 a little bit of background on the program, what's been going on
41 with the program infrastructure, and then we're getting ready to
42 launch our first two citizen science projects, and so I just wanted to
43 give you a little information about that as well.
44

45 As many of you guys may know, the South Atlantic Council first
46 started to get interested in citizen science and wanted to pursue it
as a potential tool to help address some of our kind of long-

1 standing data needs, and the council's approach to citizen science
2 is we want to see if citizen science can be used as a tool to help fill
3 some of the data gaps in our region and try to address some of the
4 research needs that we have kind of prioritized, and we really want
5 to make sure that this program complements existing data
6 collection programs and partnerships. We don't want to compete
7 with them or replace them. We really want to complement and
8 help fill some areas where there isn't a lot of information.
9

10 How the council's efforts first kicked off in the citizen science
11 world is, back in January of 2016, we held a workshop here in
12 Charleston with over sixty participants from around the South
13 Atlantic region, and we brought them together to try to discuss
14 what a citizen science program could look like in our region.
15

16 We had representatives from state and federal agencies and a
17 number of fishermen and SSC representatives and university
18 researchers and NGOs, a very diverse group of people, and we
19 were also really lucky to have guidance from Rick Bonney from
20 the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Dr. Jennifer Shirk, who is with
21 the Citizen Science Association now, and they are kind of citizen
22 science gurus, and they have been in the field and practicing
23 citizen science for a long time, and so they have kind of been with
24 us, helping guide this workshop, and they are still advising us
25 today, and so we feel very lucky about that.
26

27 From this workshop, the participants were able to give us a lot of
28 recommendations, and we took those recommendations and made
29 them into what we called the Citizen Science Program Blueprint,
30 and so that was basically kind of a framework for building a citizen
31 science program in our region, and so, in December of 2016, which
32 is a little less than a year after we held this workshop, the council
33 actually improved the initiation of a Citizen Science Program, and
34 so we kind of got underway and started developing program
35 infrastructure.
36

37 One thing that the council did kind of intentionally is we decided
38 to take the time to develop program infrastructure before launching
39 individual citizen science projects, and the reason the council
40 decided to do that is they felt that, if program infrastructure was in
41 place, that individual projects would have a better chance of being
42 successful.
43

44 There are a lot of examples of some citizen science projects that
45 had taken place where the data weren't necessarily used in
46 management and science decisions, and so we felt that, if we

1 developed program infrastructure first, that may help our projects
2 succeed, and so the way we did this is we put together five
3 volunteer action teams, and they developed program infrastructure
4 in five topical areas: Finance and Infrastructure; Projects and
5 Topics Management; Data Management; Volunteers; and then
6 Communication, Education, and Outreach.

7
8 These A-Teams were composed of a variety of folks, from
9 fishermen to NGOs to data managers and outreach specialists and
10 scientists and researchers, basically anyone who had an interest in
11 fisheries. From 2017 to 2018, they held over fifty virtual meetings,
12 and they developed a number of best practices and
13 recommendations, and this table here showcases all of the different
14 products that they developed, and all of these are available on our
15 website, and so, if anyone wants to see those, they can.

16
17 This group's work kind of culminated in the council approving the
18 SOPPs, the standard policy and operating procedures, for the
19 Citizen Science Program, and that happened last December of
20 2018, and our SOPPs are available on the website as well, and
21 there's a link to check it out right here.

22
23 That is a quick overview of the Citizen Science Program
24 infrastructure that's been developed over the past couple of years,
25 and now we're getting ready to launch our first couple of citizen
26 science projects, and so I wanted to quickly walk you through
27 those, and the first one is called Scamp Release, and this is a pilot
28 project that is going to collect information on released scamp
29 grouper using a mobile app called SAFMC Release.

30
31 Information on released fish is a priority research need for the
32 council, and so, in particular, this app is focusing on collecting
33 lengths, depth, and location information for released scamp
34 grouper from all sectors of the fishery, the commercial, for-hire,
35 and recreational fishermen. The idea is that the data collected from
36 this app could be considered for use in an upcoming SEDAR stock
37 assessment for scamp grouper that will get underway later in 2019
38 and 2020.

39
40 Our partners on this project are the Pew Charitable Trusts, ACCSP,
41 and Harbor Light Software, and the Citizen Science Association
42 has served as a fiscal sponsor. We have tablets, as Kathleen
43 mentioned, set up outside, and so, if anyone wants to check out this
44 app, you are more than welcome to come out there, and we can
45 kind of walk you through it, and then we're hoping to launch this
46 project later this spring, in the next month or so.

1
2 The second pilot project that we're going to be working on is what
3 we're calling FISHstory. This is a pilot project that is using
4 historic photos from the 1940s to 1970s from a headboat fleet in
5 Daytona Beach, Florida to try to document historic species and
6 length composition estimates using electronic data collection and
7 crowdsourcing platforms.
8

9 This project is funded through a NOAA Fisheries Information
10 Systems grant, and all of the photos that are being provided for this
11 project were courtesy of one of our Snapper Grouper Advisory
12 Panel members. They are his family's historic fishing photos from
13 their headboats that operated during those time periods, and so the
14 idea with this project is that these historic photos will be uploaded
15 to an online crowdsourcing platform called Zooniverse, where
16 training and tutorials will be developed, so that participants and
17 members of the public can come online and be trained to identify
18 the species in these photos.
19

20 Then we'll have a team of fish ID experts that will help validate
21 the species identifications made by participants, and we're also
22 hoping to do length analysis on one species, and I'm using an
23 open-source software called ImageJ and try to kind of pilot the
24 methodology to do that, to see if it can be expanded more broadly
25 to more species.
26

27 What we're hoping with this project is that the data will actually
28 help fill a historic data gap kind of extending back in time, the time
29 series of recreational for-hire information before we actually had
30 fishery-dependent surveys in our region, and so this project is just
31 getting underway now, and we're hoping to launch the project on
32 the Zooniverse platform later this fall.
33

34 That is just a quick update on where we are with our program and
35 the two projects that we're hoping to launch later this year.
36 There's a lot more information on our website that you can check
37 out, or I would love to talk with any of you longer about the
38 program or the projects, and I will be around all day, or you're
39 welcome to contact me anytime afterwards at the contact
40 information here, and so thanks for your time, and I will now hand
41 things over to habitat and ecosystem web services, and so I think
42 Kathleen and Roger will be doing that.
43

44 *Roger Pugliese:*

45 Good morning, everyone. I would like to open up our session on
46 habitat and ecosystem web services and introduce Kathleen
O'Keefe, the GIS Coordinator for the Fish and Wildlife

1 Commission and the Wildlife Research Institute. We have had a
2 long-term partnership with them in supporting essentially all of our
3 habitat and ecosystem activities throughout the years, going all the
4 way back to Ken Haddad, a former director serving on our Habitat
5 Advisory Panel, with the insight of how GIS can provide input into
6 both the state as well as into the council process.

7
8 We have evolved significantly, and Kathleen will get into some of
9 the details of how this is continuing to support our activities at the
10 council level, through the implementation of our ecosystem plan
11 and advancing information on species, habitat, and ecosystems in
12 our region.

13
14 *Kathleen O'Keefe:* Good morning. I am happy to be here and to talk to you about this.
15 As Roger said, we go way, way, way back, and, as a GIS
16 coordinator who started in this field thirty years ago, I have
17 watched this technology change drastically, and so, the things that
18 we only dreamed about twenty years ago, we're excited that they
19 are actually coming to fruition today, and so it's finally here.

20
21 The purpose of all of what we do is to help support the council in
22 their decisions both on species and management of our natural
23 resources, as you know, and so the first project that I want to talk
24 to you about is called the Ecospecies Database, and we're very
25 excited about what this is going to do not just for this council, but
26 probably for other councils as well.

27
28 Many, many years ago, NOAA had a program called ELMER,
29 where they collected species life history profiles and, at some
30 point, Florida created their own version of it called FLOMER, and
31 that was a series of species life history profiles that were in Word
32 Perfect, I think, way, way back when. Some years ago, the council
33 funded us to take all of those species life history profiles that
34 existed, and there was a hundred of them, and put them in a
35 database, and so, today, those -- It was quite an endeavor to do it,
36 and it took us a couple of years, but, today, those sit in a SQL
37 server database with a nice frontend, and you can query that, and
38 we're going to show you some examples of that.

39
40 In fact, it has continued to fund that effort, so that we have a
41 dedicated biologist who is actually doing research and populating
42 this for all the gaps that are in that, and so, at some point, this
43 should enhance stock assessment, and it should enhance your
44 regulatory activities. You will be able to search on this and find
45 out all kind of information really simply about particular species,
46 and so this is something that we're really excited about. It kind of

1 looks a little -- This didn't come out properly, the way that this
2 went into the Story Map, and so I'll just kind of click on it real
3 quick, just so you can see it, but I will show you this outside if you
4 are more interested.

5
6 You can search by organism, and it will bring up all of these
7 various species, and you can do this by common name or however
8 you want to search for various things, and then you can decide that
9 you want to report on this particular species, and you can choose
10 your species, and you can say to show me only the stuff that really
11 has content, because we have a lot of stuff that we're doing
12 literature searches on now to fill in these gaps, and so let's say you
13 just wanted to see what the content was. It will spit out for you a
14 report pretty quickly that will tell you what we know about the
15 range, the region, what we know about the migration and so forth.

16
17 Over time, in a series of meetings, the council has refined this, to
18 add things on predator-prey relationships and diet and such like
19 that, so that the diet composition particularly is also informing the
20 Ecopath models that the council is interested in, and so we see this
21 as a very exciting database that is going to enhance the work that
22 you all do.

23
24 Going on for many, many years, we've a staff member, Tina
25 Udouj, who many of you may know Tina, who does wonderful
26 work in GIS and to support a variety of not just data download and
27 data management, but also GIS applications, and so she has created
28 a digital dashboard, which we can show you, and she has created
29 various web interfaces, and this is one that just looks at essential
30 fish habitat, and you can sort it in any number of ways.

31
32 She has created an operations dashboard, and this particular one is
33 looking at the Pamlico Sound and some of the different areas for
34 longline and what abundance there was in these various surveys,
35 and she also looks at and analyzes the SEAMAP data and a variety
36 of data sources, the coastal survey, for example.

37
38 She has created some Story Maps, as you're looking at this type of
39 thing today, and some of the Story Maps that she has done for this
40 one is, for example, to explain why you would do marine protected
41 areas for the public. A lot of times, people don't understand, and
42 so this is a nice way to explain regulatory regulations and
43 regulatory information in an easy-to-digest way for the public, and
44 so she's done a number of these, and, again, we will have
45 examples of this at the break area if you want to see any of it.
46

1 This is the South Atlantic Fisheries Viewer, and, again, you can
2 look at the MARMAP data and the SEAMAP data, and it looks at
3 abundance of various species. More recently, she has been doing
4 hotspot analysis on these data, and so sometimes it's important to
5 know where the fish are and sometimes it's important to know
6 where they aren't, so that you can analyze things in two ways, and
7 so this also is important and feeds into some of the models that
8 have been developed for this region.
9

10 That is a really, really quick overview of what we have been doing
11 over the years, and there is many, many more projects, but, in the
12 interest of time, we just thought we would just highlight just a very
13 few of them. Thank you.
14

15 *Chip Collier:*

16 Good morning. My name is Chip Collier, and I'll be going
17 through a few things that the council staff have been working on.
18 One of the first things that we've been looking at is evaluation of
19 managed areas. The South Atlantic Council has developed several
20 different managed areas, and they are designated to be protecting
21 certain things, whether it's coral, important adult habitat, important
22 juvenile habitat, or important spawning habitats.

23 In the image to the right, it's actually a Story Map, and so you can
24 go in there and look at some of this information in better detail and
25 actually figure out the regulations in these managed areas, why
26 they were created, the CFRs, and different things like that,
27 whatever you want to find out, and this is the actual Story Map for
28 the managed areas that Kathleen was talking about.
29

30 In order to evaluate these areas, we have essentially taken the
31 IUCN document "How is Your MPA Doing", and we have
32 developed system management plans to really evaluate some of
33 our newer MPAs, and what we've done is developed a system
34 management plan for the spawning special management zones, and
35 that link is provided to you for that system management plan as
36 well as for the deepwater MPAs.
37

38 We have also created a workgroup to do the evaluation for the
39 council, and what this workgroup is going to do is, annually, it's
40 going to go through a system management plan and review some
41 of the different areas. The first task that this workgroup was given
42 was developing an outreach document for the spawning special
43 management zones, to essentially let the public know exactly
44 where these are and what the regulations in the areas are and why
45 they were developed. Hopefully this is going to be presented to
46 the council in June for their review and be sent to the advisory

1 panels for additional comments.
2

3 Next year, the group will be working on the Oculina Experimental
4 Closed Area evaluation, and this area is one of the first areas
5 protected under the MSA, and it's protecting important coral
6 habitat.
7

8 The next project that I want to talk to you guys about is
9 MyFishCount. MyFishCount is a recreational reporting app that
10 was created by the South Atlantic Council in conjunction with
11 several different groups. What this app is doing is collecting
12 information from private recreational anglers. The reason that this
13 is important is, when you think about the snapper grouper
14 complex, 55 percent of the ACL is given to the recreational
15 fishery, and so that's pretty significant, and that was prior to the
16 FES adjustments. Those FES adjustments are going to increase the
17 recreational catch by three to ten times, and so it's likely that this
18 recreational catch is going to -- The proportion of the ACL is
19 going to increase significantly. We need to get better information
20 on this fishery and have really good data in order to manage it
21 properly.
22

23 Another important consideration for this is the PSEs for many of
24 the snapper grouper species are very high. Given this high PSE,
25 there is a lot of uncertainty. What we need to do is provide better
26 information on different things like bag limits, size limits, and
27 seasons to improve management for our recreational fishermen.
28

29 This project couldn't have been developed without the input of the
30 Angler Action Foundation. They have developed several of these
31 apps, and they're great at developing recreational apps. ACCSP,
32 they're going to be our data storage partner, and they've been
33 providing great guidance on how to develop an app and how to get
34 it into a regional database. National Marine Fisheries Service is
35 keeping our goals in check as well as providing funding for the
36 project, and, finally, the council has been providing important
37 comments on what they want to see in recreational reporting and
38 permitting.
39

40 The most important part about this is fishermen, getting the
41 fishermen involved and keeping them involved. We started this
42 project -- As you can see in this figure here, we started in 2017, in
43 late 2017, and we have a web portal available for the recreational
44 fishermen to report during the red snapper season. The red snapper
45 season was a six-day season that year, and fishermen were very
46 excited to let us know about their fishing trips.

1
2 One of the very interesting things that they were excited about
3 telling us, the private recreational, was they weren't able to go
4 fishing. There's a little button on there that they can say that I
5 wanted to go fishing, but the weather did not allow me to go, and
6 this information was used in the consideration of adding three
7 additional days to the recreational season, because the weather was
8 actually really bad during those days, and I believe 95 percent of
9 the people weren't able to go out fishing.

10
11 In 2018, we didn't have a huge increase in the number of users,
12 and the main reason for that is we wanted to develop the app and
13 get it tested and make sure there were very few bugs prior to it
14 going for a full release to the public. Since then, it became
15 available, essentially right before the red snapper season, and we
16 did a huge outreach push, and we got a lot of people involved, and
17 you can see the blip of the red snapper there in 2018.

18
19 Since then, we've been continuing outreach and try to grow the
20 number of users of MyFishCount, and we're going to continue that
21 into 2020. If you would like to find out more about MyFishCount,
22 you can either visit our webpage at the South Atlantic Fishery
23 Management Council, under Recreational Reporting, or you can
24 visit the MyFishCount website.

25
26 Some of the results we've had so far, we've had over 2,500 fish
27 reported from over 800 trips. Fishermen have been reporting a
28 variety of information, whether it's length, depth, treatment of
29 released fish, whether they went out fishing or not, and so the
30 graph that I have portrayed here is from the red snapper season in
31 2018, and you can look at the depth distribution of where red
32 snapper were caught, and, also, you can look at the release
33 treatment for fish. This is some crucial information when you're
34 thinking about estimating discard mortality for a species that
35 suffers barotrauma, and they are able to get improved estimates for
36 that.

37
38 If you would like to see some information that we've developed
39 for the users of MyFishCount, we have our reports that can be
40 viewed. If you scroll down into our webpage for the recreational
41 reporting, we have several different tabs about why to report, what
42 to report, but we also have the actual reports that were sent to the
43 recreational anglers, and this is something that's very key when we
44 talk to our Information and Education Advisory Panel. We want to
45 get feedback to the anglers to let them know that people are
46 actually using this and that we are listening to them.

1
2 We have also created a data portal for MyFishCount. This is a
3 Shiny app, and what they can do is fishermen can go into this
4 Shiny app and begin to look at some of the information that's been
5 collected, and so what we have selected here is black sea bass, and
6 what we're looking at is a length plot, and you can look at the
7 length distribution of the kept fish, or you can look at the length
8 distribution of the released fish, and you can also look at the
9 reasons why some of the fish were released. There is a variety of
10 tools that have been developed within this MyFishCount, and so
11 people can look at that in more detail, and, if they have any
12 suggestions on what I should include in that, we can adjust this app
13 for that use.

14
15 Another project we've been involved in is a best fishing practices
16 tutorial. What this best fishing practices tutorial -- How it
17 developed was the South Carolina Wildlife Federation received a
18 grant through the Bycatch Reduction and Engineering Program,
19 and they wanted to partner with the South Atlantic Council in
20 order to get a consistent message out about best fishing practices,
21 and what we've decided to do is really follow what FishSmart has
22 done throughout the country and also targeted in the different
23 regions on some of the best fishing practices.

24
25 The South Carolina Wildlife Federation developed this tutorial in
26 order to inform fishermen about best fishing practices. If you go
27 through this tutorial, what you will see is a pledge, and what the
28 pledge is trying to do is get 500 fishermen pledging that they will
29 use best fishing practices. If they submit to that, they will be given
30 a SeaQualizer, and, if you guys would like to go through the
31 tutorial and get a -- Well, I don't think many of you could get the
32 SeaQualizer, because you have to have a mailing address in the
33 South Atlantic region, but you could do the pledge and see an
34 example of what it looks like. The tutorial is available on our
35 council website, and it's also going to have some in-person classes
36 in the South Atlantic region.

37
38 In addition to the tutorial, the South Atlantic Council is developing
39 Amendment 29 to the snapper grouper fishery, and that is going to
40 be considering requirements for some of these best fishing
41 practices, and, if you would like to look at that, we have a link to
42 Amendment 29 in the Story Map, and then you can also contact
43 Christina Wiegand with the South Atlantic Council. She is the
44 staff lead for that project.

45
46 The final thing I'll be going over today is student research. Over

1 the past few years, we've been working with several different
2 universities in order to improve some of our information on the
3 fisheries in the South Atlantic region.
4

5 The first one we have presented here is trip satisfaction in the for-
6 hire fishery, and what Stacey was looking, Stacey Weinstock from
7 the College of Charleston, was she was looking at trip satisfaction
8 in the black sea bass for-hire fishery, and what she wanted to
9 figure out were some of the factors driving satisfaction in this
10 fishery. If you look at the summary, you can look at all the
11 information that's provided as well as the methods that she used,
12 but, in summary, fishermen want to go out and catch fish. They
13 don't want to go out and keep all the fish that they catch, and the
14 final conclusion that she came up with was low bag limits of black
15 sea bass would not affect trip satisfaction in the for-hire fishery,
16 and that's just for the South Atlantic region.
17

18 Another project that was done was looking at perceptions of
19 electronic reporting, and this was done by Erin Spencer with UNC
20 Chapel Hill, and this was done mainly looking at MyFishCount
21 and what were going to be some of the perceptions and attitudes
22 towards private recreational fishing. You can look at her
23 background, her methods, and results, and there is a ton of results
24 and methods here, and it's pretty interesting, and what she tried to
25 do was match it up with a University of Florida study, so the
26 information could be comparable, but we'll go down to essentially
27 her final thoughts, and I think these are pretty important.
28

29 Recreational snapper grouper anglers who took the survey seem
30 very optimistic about the use of electronic reporting as a way to
31 improve data quality, and I believe there was 80 percent of the
32 recreational anglers that indicated that they believe that that was
33 true. Anglers say that they are more likely to participate if they see
34 similar anglers participating. If you can have a champion in the
35 fishery presenting that this is a good way to do it, you're going to
36 do much better with some of these electronic tools.
37

38 The final project we'll talk about today is effectiveness of
39 recreational management measures. This was done by Allyson
40 Iberle with Johns Hopkins University, and what she was looking at
41 was looking at the changes of landings and fishing mortality rate
42 over time due to different regulation periods. I will scroll down to
43 something that I think is pretty important, and there is a ton of
44 results in this one as well, but this one slide I want to present to
45 you guys is red snapper, and it's a big fishery in the South Atlantic
46 region, and it can be one of our drivers, or at least we hear about it

1 the most, and fishermen definitely have been voicing their opinion
2 on this.

3
4 In this graph, I have four different graphs. We have the landings
5 on the top left, and the landings are -- You can look at the landings
6 over three different regulation periods. Essentially, the first
7 regulation period was when there was a twelve-inch size limit for
8 red snapper, and the second regulation period was when there was
9 a twenty-inch size limit and a two-fish bag limit, and the third
10 regulation period is what we're in now, where it's a very limited
11 season with no size limit.

12
13 You can see that regulations have been very effective at reducing
14 landings, and, if you go down to the plot below that, you can see
15 that regulations have also been very effective at increasing the
16 number of discards, and this is important, because, if you follow
17 this over to the right side and you look at the fishing mortality rate
18 from discards, this fishing mortality rate in the third period is
19 actually exceeding the fishing mortality rate from the landed fish,
20 and so, essentially, we have a fishery, discard fishery, that is
21 exceeding the kept fishery, and we need better information on that,
22 and that's why the South Atlantic Council is really developing
23 some of these apps, such as Release and MyFishCount, to improve
24 our information on these things. With that, that's all I have to say,
25 and we will move over to the Fish Rules with Cameron.

26
27 *Cameron Rhodes:* Good morning, everybody. I am Cameron Rhodes, and I'm the
28 Outreach Specialist at the South Atlantic Council, and I'm just
29 going to talk a little bit about Fish Rules, and I know that many of
30 you are probably already familiar, and so I'm going to look around
31 the room. How many people have Fish Rules on their phones? All
32 right, and so I've got a new target audience here, and I'm going to
33 try to recruit some of you in the next couple of minutes.

34
35 We are really excited about this Fish Rules partnership. We had a
36 mobile application before we came onboard with this one, and it
37 was really outdated, and it wasn't working on the modern
38 operating systems, and so it was time to make a change, and Fish
39 Rules was already available, and so we went ahead and decided to
40 enter into this really great partnership with them, and it's been
41 super positive.

42
43 If anybody has any questions whatsoever, please feel free to come
44 chat with me about it, but I'm just going to walk you through some
45 of the plugs for why I think this app is such a great resource for us
46 in the South Atlantic and for anyone else in other regions as well.

1
2 If you take a look here on our Story Map, you will see that the Fish
3 Rules app features many different things and not just regulatory
4 information, but it also really breaks down kind of what the
5 definitions are for bag limit, size limit, how aggregates are
6 structured, and it tells the fishermen exactly what that means, so
7 that, if they're offshore, they still have access to all of this
8 information.

9
10 It also includes state regulations, in addition to federal regulations,
11 and so it's not just unique to the South Atlantic. It stretches from
12 Maine all the way through to Texas, and I know that the Gulf
13 Council is also recently onboard, with a very similar partnership to
14 what we have in the South Atlantic.

15
16 In addition to all of that, it also lets you know if you're fishing in a
17 closed area, and so a red screen pops up and lets you know that
18 you shouldn't be fishing there, and all of this occurs while out of
19 cell range, and so, as long as you've opened up the app before you
20 go offshore, you have access to all of this information at your
21 fingertips, which is pretty crucial, considering that a lot of
22 fishermen aren't really all that familiar with the details of our
23 regulations.

24
25 Who are our users? Our users are certainly not just recreational
26 anglers. We also include commercial regulations in the South
27 Atlantic version of the app, and I think the Gulf does the same.
28 They are just in the additional information section for each of the
29 unique species that we manage, and we have also heard from
30 multiple different law enforcement agencies that they rely heavily
31 on this mobile application, not only when they're trying to get up-
32 to-date on the current regulations, but also when they are
33 encountering people in the field.

34
35 They are using it as an education tool, and so, if there is an issue,
36 some kind of fishery violation, they go ahead and tell the
37 recreational or commercial fishermen, whoever they might be, to
38 go ahead and download the app, so that it doesn't happen again.

39
40 Just a little background information is I am responsible for
41 updating our version of the app, and so the South Atlantic federal
42 regulations are all updated in-house by me, and I believe Emily
43 does the same in the Gulf Council, but there are a whole bunch of
44 different unique partnerships that are established. GARFO is
45 actually the first group that came onboard with this mobile
46 application, and they're really the ones who got the foot in the door

1 to help build it and expand it, and it's currently expanding well
2 beyond what we had initially expected. It's getting a lot of clout in
3 a lot of different regions, which is super exciting.
4

5 It has just now added California state regulations, and it's
6 stretching all the way to Hawaii. We also have the Highly
7 Migratory Species Division is actively updating their regulations
8 on the app as well, and so it's really garnering a lot of support from
9 a lot of different organizations that are involved in fisheries
10 management, and it seems to be well received by members of the
11 public. They always can comment and let us know if there are any
12 kinds of issues with it, maybe a bug or something is not working,
13 but both the app developers and the folks at the South Atlantic
14 Council and other regions that are participating in the development
15 of this app are super eager to hear from the public and make any
16 kinds of changes that might be necessary to help the fishermen get
17 the access to the information that's pretty critical when they're on
18 the water.
19

20 Just to give you my real final plug here, which is the stats, and so,
21 in the first three months of this year, there were over 1.5 million
22 regulation views using Fish Rules, and that's pretty impressive,
23 given that, particularly in our region, really only the State of
24 Florida is actively fishing at that time, and so our North Carolina,
25 South Carolina, and Georgia -- Typically, January through March,
26 they are not that active. Seeing that 1.5 million regulation views,
27 that was pretty great, and, specifically to the South Atlantic region,
28 over 800,000 views took place in that quarter.
29

30 This heat map really illustrates where most of our views are
31 coming from, and you can see that south Florida is definitely a hot
32 spot, and much of that probably stems from the fact that Fish Rules
33 is actually based in Florida, and so they initiated a lot of their
34 outreach there when the app was first launched, but it's definitely
35 stretching up the coast, and you can see that people are using it
36 when offshore, which I like to see. I mean, that's pretty exciting to
37 know, that people are actively accessing the information that they
38 need while they are out of cellphone range.
39

40 Just a note that I want to reiterate that all of this information is
41 aggregated, and so fishermen don't need to worry that we're giving
42 away their honey-hole. This is just to give an idea of where most
43 of these regulation hits are stemming from.
44

45 If any of you would like to learn more about our partnership, if
46 you're interested in expanding the app, maybe to include your

1 regions, if you have any questions about how this works, the
2 workflow that takes place, the efficiency of it, please let me know.
3 I'm happy to speak with any of you about it. I love this app, and
4 it's made my life a lot easier, and I think it's made fishermen's
5 lives a lot easier. It gives them the access that they need, and it's
6 been a really great tool for all of us at the South Atlantic Council,
7 as well as to a lot of our partners across the coast.

8
9 With that, I am going to take a really brief little bit of your time
10 before I go ahead and step away. I'm going to walk you through
11 the app real quick, so you can see what it actually looks like, if you
12 haven't already taken a peek at it.

13
14 One key thing that many fishermen had voiced to us was that they
15 didn't feel like they knew how to go about accessing state
16 regulations versus federal regulations, because the app
17 automatically assumes you're in state waters, based on your
18 location, and so the app developers took that and realized that that
19 was something that they really needed to fix, and so, if you go into
20 -- Let's scroll up to greater amberjack.

21
22 As you can see on your screen here, it's showing us that we're in
23 South Carolina state waters, which is great. That's reflecting some
24 accuracy, but there are a lot of different ways that you can go about
25 finding out what the federal regulations are off the South Carolina
26 coast. If you just click -- There is a button here at the very top left,
27 and it says, "see local" versus "see federal". You click that, and it
28 tells you the federal regulations. If you want to toggle back to see
29 what your state regulations are, then just go back to "see local".

30
31 That's great that it has that in there now, and so it's a lot easier for
32 fishermen to access that without having to go back and plug in a
33 map or plug in a coordinate, but there are ways that you can do
34 that, and so, if you want to see if this special spot that you want to
35 go fish in is a closed area, you can just go ahead to the very
36 bottom, where it says your location, and you can click on that, and
37 it gives you the option to either put in your degrees and minutes
38 that you're interested in, or you can actually use a select by map
39 tool, which is really nice, and so it's actually putting us smack-dab
40 in downtown Charleston, and so that's good. I'm liking this
41 accuracy today.

42
43 You can go ahead and drop it offshore somewhere, and now it's
44 registering as South Atlantic federal waters, and it's going to give
45 you that federal information, and so there are many different ways
46 that people can get the stuff that they need.

1
2 If you wanted to go take a look at let's say one of our snapper
3 species that we have, and so let's take a peek at mutton. Mutton is
4 a tricky one for us in the South Atlantic, but, if you wanted to see
5 the federal regulations, go ahead and click "see federal", just like
6 we talked about before, and, as you can see, all the way to the
7 right, all of these buttons that are along the top here showcase the
8 season, bag limit, minimum size limit measurement, and all of
9 those are clickable, and so you can click on that and get more
10 information.

11
12 If you want to know what the definition of a bag limit is, you click
13 that, and it pulls up the definition of a bag limit. If you want to
14 know, which is the really tricky one, what's in the aggregate, so
15 that you know exactly what species are in the snapper aggregate,
16 all the way to the right, it says "ten-aggregate limit". You can
17 click on that, and it breaks down which species are included, which
18 is pretty huge for us, because our aggregates are probably the
19 trickiest thing that we have, not only to explain to fishermen, but to
20 also make sure that they remember when they are actively fishing,
21 and so this is a great tool for them. You click on one of these
22 species, because I did catch a lane snapper, and then it pulls up the
23 regulations for that species.

24
25 It's a pretty user-friendly setup. If anybody needs help with it,
26 we're always open to getting a phone call and chatting about it,
27 but, if you have any questions, come find me after this little chat
28 today. I'm going to be outside with the rest of the app people, and
29 we're happy to walk you through anything that you might be
30 concerned about or want to know about.

31
32 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. We're a little bit behind schedule, but let's go ahead and
33 take a couple of questions. Dave.

34
35 *David Witherell:* On the citizen science development, that's really impressive. I am
36 pretty excited for what you've been able to accomplish, and the
37 staff is really doing a great job, and so thank you very much.

38
39 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Dave. Tony and then Chris.

40
41 *Tony Blanchard:* I've got a question. Is there any place on the app that records the
42 age of the users?

43
44 *Kathleen Howington:* We're going to need some clarification. Which app are you
45 discussing?
46

1 *Tony Blanchard:* The fish app that we have here, Fish Rules.

2

3 *Cameron Rhodes:* To some extent, yes, based on demographic information, and so
4 you can learn about people from their phones, and so, to some
5 extent, yes. I would assume that they have that kind of ability to
6 draw that information, much the same way that we can do things
7 like that for our Google analytics, when it comes to our website,
8 but we don't actively have people inputting their ages when they're
9 using the app. They can set up a profile, and I don't think the
10 profile asks them for an age range. Is that something that you
11 would be interested in collecting, or is that just something you're
12 curious to know who are these users?
13

14 *Tony Blanchard:* Well, the point I'm trying to make here is I believe there is only a
15 specific age group that is using the app, and I'm going to tell you
16 from experience, because I am a fisher, and I wouldn't use the app,
17 because people have a tendency to stick to what they know, and,
18 for some of us, technology and putting that information out there is
19 not really what we do. We have a certain way of thinking, and so
20 I'm pretty sure, at some point in time, a certain age group that is
21 using this app is between such and such an age, and it will not
22 exceed a certain age.
23

24 In other words, the older guys, and I'm not saying seventies, but
25 the older generation will have a tendency to not want to use the
26 app, because of lack of understanding and lack of trust and
27 probably not just feeling comfortable using it.
28

29 *Cameron Rhodes:* To that point, I think that's fair, and I think we've seen that
30 majority from our commercial fleet, especially the elderly
31 gentlemen who aren't as thrilled with the idea of using something
32 like that, but we do have other alternatives for them, and so, if
33 they're not super comfortable with the mobile application, there
34 are other ways that they can get their information, but what this
35 really is is a tool for those that are interested in having something
36 like this available on the water.
37

38 *Jessica McCawley:* Chris.

39

40 *Chris Oliver:* I had a question about the MyFishCount, and it's whether you have
41 any way of knowing or tracking what percentage of anglers are
42 using it.
43

44 *Chip Collier:* We do not know the universe of anglers going out in federal waters
45 and targeting red snapper, but it's definitely a lot more than 800.
46 The last red snapper season, there were reports that gas stations

1 were running out of gas, and so that's not going to happen with just
2 800 anglers, I don't think.

3
4 *Jessica McCawley:* Tom.

5
6 *Tom Frazer:* I have a question actually about the fish app again. I thought it
7 was very cool, but I'm wondering if the user data that you have,
8 the number of times that people actually access the regulations, if
9 that could be related in some way or correlated with the FES data,
10 to see if that kind of confirms where the effort really is.

11
12 *Cameron Rhodes:* That would be cool. I don't really know enough about that to
13 speak to that accurately, but that's certainly something that we
14 could look into pursuing.

15
16 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

17
18 *Kitty Simonds:* I want to echo David's comments. I think it's really fabulous, and
19 what's really good is that I just learned that the State of Hawaii's
20 Division of Aquatic Resources is interested in or actually using it,
21 and are they actually using the app?

22
23 *Cameron Rhodes:* This is a brand-new partnership, and it's pending, but it's pending
24 positively, and I'm pretty sure we're rolling in that direction, and
25 it's the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources.

26
27 *Kitty Simonds:* Right. Exactly, because they have very few fish staff, maybe one
28 or two at this time, and it's quite sad, and the other issue they have
29 about learning what the catches are from not the commercial, but
30 the subsistence and recreational, is that they have to go to the
31 legislature to get approval to begin a permit and reporting program,
32 and, for three years, they've been going to the legislature, and they
33 haven't had much luck, even with Conservation International
34 trying to help them, and so all of these are important and useful
35 and practical for them to adopt. Thank you.

36
37 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any more burning questions?

38
39 *Bill Tweit:* I am just wondering if -- You presented, I think, four or five
40 different apps, and I was losing count there a little bit, and I'm
41 wondering if you're starting to get angler confusion about which
42 app to use when and if you're sort of thinking about, in the next
43 generation, beginning to weave some of these together or what the
44 plans are.

45
46 *Cameron Rhodes:* We have definitely experienced quite a bit of frustration and

1 confusion, not only from users, but also from our Information and
2 Education Advisory Panel, just trying to keep track of what it is
3 that we're trying to do with these different apps. At this time, I
4 don't think there's really much of an effort to try to kind of weave
5 them together right now, since they're isolated projects that we're
6 really trying to flesh out and develop, particularly for
7 MyFishCount and Citizen Science. Those are two distinct things
8 right now that are likely heading down very different paths.
9

10 When it comes to how we've tried to alleviate some of those
11 frustrations, we've developed a couple of different outreach tools
12 that we'll be publishing on our website to help guide people to
13 which app best suits you, like eTRIPS, and that's an app that's
14 really specific to the charter fleet right now, and we're trying to
15 guide people, and we actually have a copy of that here, if any of
16 you would like to take a look at it, and it's just a real brief one-
17 pager, and it's nothing fancy, but it outlines everything, but I think,
18 in the next couple of years, we're going to have to tackle that and
19 figure out how we can weave these things together a little bit better
20 and make sure that those connections are in place.
21

22 MyFishCount and Fish Rules do link to each other in some ways,
23 and not when it comes to data, but when it comes to directing
24 people to the appropriate app that will provide you regulatory
25 information. Down the road, I certainly think that will be a
26 priority.
27

28 *Jessica McCawley:* Mike.

29
30 *Mike Luisi:* Thank you. I just want to mention that there's a tremendous
31 amount of interest in the Mid-Atlantic for these types of
32 applications for collecting what I consider kind of volunteer
33 information on fishing behavior and catch and release information,
34 and, as important as the information is, and as it helps, whether at
35 the state level the biologists and staff at the different agencies
36 come up with plans for management or fill data gaps on biological
37 information, I think what the stakeholders truly -- What their true
38 interest is, at the end -- As you're weaving all of this together, at
39 some point it would be really nice if this information could start to
40 enhance and supplement and groundtruth the MRIP estimates that
41 are being used for management, because all of the other parts of it
42 are great, but that, at the end of the day, is when the rubber hits the
43 road and we need to use these estimates for the management that
44 we have. As this all develops, and I know we're working on things
45 in the Mid-Atlantic as well, I hope we can all find a common path
46 to help supplement or enhance the work that's being done at that

1 federal level. Thanks.

2

3 *Jessica McCawley:* Michael.

4

5 *Michael Tosatto:* Thank you. My question is regarding citizen science and how to
6 get it to the level required to stand up to be able to be used in a
7 stock assessment.

8

9 *Julia Byrd:* I can try to address that a little bit. Our first pilot project is the
10 scamp release app, and we chose this project as kind of our initial
11 project because there was a data gap. There is very limited length
12 information on a lot of our species for stock assessment, and so
13 there's very little information to characterize the discards or
14 released fish, and so we wanted to see if we could use citizen
15 science as a tool and this app as a tool to see if we can collect the
16 data that we need going into the assessment, and we know that
17 there is very little information available now, and so we're hoping
18 that any information we can collect -- Hopefully, if we can get a
19 large enough group of anglers from a large geographic region, that
20 it will be useful for the assessment.

21

22 This is a pilot project, and we're going to be launching it hopefully
23 in the next month, and then the data workshop for the SEDAR
24 scamp stock assessment is late March of next year, and so we'll be
25 kind of presenting the information that we will be able to gather
26 and put it forward at the data workshop, and they will be able to
27 tell us whether they think it will be able to be used in the
28 assessment. We know that it likely won't be competing with
29 another data source, and so we're hopeful that whatever
30 information we collect will be able to be used.

31

32 One other thing that I think may be helpful to mention is that,
33 when we were designing this project, we had a project design team
34 made up of fishermen, council staff, the app developers, data
35 managers, and representatives from the Science Center, and so
36 someone from the assessment group in Beaufort, North Carolina
37 participated.

38

39 The goal was to try to design the project in a way that the
40 fishermen kind of grounded everybody in the truth of what
41 somebody would actually be willing to collect while on the water,
42 and the stock assessment scientists kind of led the group to say
43 these are the critical data elements that you need to collect and
44 don't collect a lot more information that what we actually may be
45 able to use in the assessment.

46

1 I think having that group together designing the project as a whole
2 will really hopefully help make the project more successful, and I
3 know, in talking with the representative from the assessment team,
4 since there is very little information available, if we can get thirty
5 folks consistently participating over time, that may provide enough
6 data that it may be able to be useful for the assessment, and so I
7 guess that's a long-winded way of saying this is a pilot project, and
8 we'll report back and let you guys know what happens with the
9 results of this project and whether or not it's used in the
10 assessment.

11
12 *Jessica McCawley:* Anything else? Miguel.

13
14 *Miguel Rolon:* Very quickly, I will also add our name to David's and Kitty's
15 comments. This is an excellent job, and thank you for sharing. I
16 already wrote to Cameron, but do you have any ballpark figure of
17 how much, because, every time I come here, I copy, or let's say
18 adopt, what you guys do, for the last thirty years, and do you have
19 any ballpark figure of how much it costs at the council level
20 running the Fish Rules application?

21
22 *Cameron Rhodes:* Any idea how much it costs? We have a contract that outlines
23 exactly what our fees are, and it's a five-year contract at this point,
24 and I can show you that later today, but we don't actually run the
25 app, and so we're not operating based off of any kind of server,
26 and we just pay those fees to help it keep going, but we're not
27 paying any kind of maintenance or anything like that for the app
28 directly. It's charged to us via the contract, but I will show you
29 that contract today. I have it on my computer, and we can walk
30 through it.

31
32 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Anything else? I'm glad folks are excited about it.
33 We're definitely excited about the programs that are coming out of
34 the South Atlantic Council, and don't be shy at the breaks. Our
35 folks will be out there, and they can walk you through some of
36 these things, and so don't be shy about not knowing how to work
37 some of these products. That's how it all gets started, is learning
38 how to use these different tools and how we can ultimately get
39 better data, and I'm afraid to ask what Cameron thinks how old
40 "elderly" actually is, and I heard her mention that elderly people
41 might have trouble with some of these apps, and so I'm kind of not
42 sure what defines someone as elderly, but staff will be out there
43 and will certainly welcome the opportunity to show you these
44 items.

45
46 We're going to keep moving through our agenda. We'll do one

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more item, and then we'll take a break when we get through that item, and so, next up, we have Mike Cahall with ACCSP, and he is going to give us a presentation about the unique trip identifier, and this presentation is on the website, and there's a couple of other items on there.

8. UNIQUE TRIP IDENTIFIER

1
2
3 *Mike Cahall:*

4 Good morning, everyone. When I walked in this morning, I was
5 surprised to realize that I know a lot of you, and I expected this to
6 be a crowd that may or may not know that much about us, and so,
7 if I give you more information than you need, I apologize.

8 I'm going to talk a little bit about what ACCSP is. We are the
9 Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Information Network. The acronym
10 ACFIN was already taken, with a K, and so we got a different
11 name, and it was first established in 1995 by an MOU on the
12 Atlantic coast and authorized as the Atlantic FIN in the 1998
13 Report to Congress as part of the Magnuson reauthorization.

14
15 Our first data was loaded into our data warehouse from Florida in
16 1999, and electronic dealer reporting deployed in 2003 to support
17 the GARFO requirements, and then electronic trip reporting first
18 deployed in 2010, and these were both web-based applications.

19
20 We are more than just one piece. We don't do just systems. We
21 work with our program partners to standardize data collection and
22 methodology, and so the very first thing that we did, and there are
23 a few people at this table who were part of that process, Gregg and
24 Mike, to standardize what we call things, standardize the coding
25 that we use, the locations, the gears, all of that. That took a very
26 long time to get the very first set of data standards completed.

27
28 To work on providing access to the data through a data warehouse,
29 which was part of ACCSP's original mission, developing tools to
30 assist in providing reporting capabilities, and many agencies, as
31 you're certainly aware, are strapped financially, and IT resources
32 are always at a premium, and, if we can spread things around, so
33 that they can provide services to more than one program partner,
34 we're better off, of course, and we support new initiatives through
35 an annual RFP process. ACCSP has just short of \$1.5 million that
36 we dole out to our program partners to help them move things
37 forward.

38
39 We have two database systems, primarily, to collect and store
40 fisheries-dependent data, the Standard Atlantic Fisheries
41 Information System, which got mentioned a little earlier, and our
42 data warehouse. This is an overview of the data streams into our
43 data warehouse. We accept partner data streams from all of the
44 partner reporting systems that don't use SAFIS. SAFIS is -- I will
45 talk a little bit more about that in a minute, because it is at the core
46 of the concept that we're talking about here.

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Data that are collected through SAFIS are transferred directly into our data warehouse at regular intervals. The partner data streams are basically data that we get from partners that do not use SAFIS or don't use SAFIS for 100 percent of their reporting, and so we have states, for example Connecticut, where we provide some of the data directly through SAFIS, and other data are submitted to us by Connecticut, and we merge those data, as part of the spring and fall data loads, into the data warehouse. We also use that to provide the data that's used for the Atlantic Coast and Fisheries of the U.S., and we provide prior year data for stock assessments, usually by the end of March or early April is the deadline that we work against.

For recreational data, we are currently running, on behalf of the MRIP Program, the APAIS survey, and we pull the data into the system. They are also available for our data warehouse, and we do have a limited set of biological and social and economic data in a few fisheries, which are all put into our data warehouse in a consistent format using the same coding schemes.

To our knowledge, the data warehouse holds the most complete set of fisheries-dependent data for the Atlantic coast at this point. We have commercial data all the way back to 1950, and I should have updated this slide, but we have that data through 2018 as well, and the same is true for recreational and biological, and, again, these are data from all of our program partners, state and federal feeds, and anything that is submitted through SAFIS. We also have, in a sideways way, data for HMS.

We just rebuilt our query interface and updated our automated confidentiality. This system has the only automated confidentiality system in the fisheries enterprise. Essentially, end users who need access to confidential data submit an application online, and it is transmitted automatically to the folks who are responsibility for data security for whichever partner's data they have requested. When that access request is approved, it automatically grants access to the user's account for the specified period of time that the application had. Obviously, if it's declined, it doesn't happen. We can track who has confidential access to the system and to what agencies they are allowed to see and when it's going to expire, because it's all built and driven inside the database.

We have done a lot of work on the query interface. It's a lot more intuitive than it used to be, and it's a lot more flexible, and, with the changes in confidentiality policy, we had to rebuild the non-

1 confidential queries, to ensure that they were consistent with the
2 standard that we all agreed upon.

3
4 SAFIS is a unified fisheries-dependent data reporting system that
5 houses live data collected via the various SAFIS apps. The first
6 application that was rolled out for SAFIS was electronic dealer
7 reporting, initially for Rhode Island, and then, when the Northeast
8 Region, now GARFO, mandated electronic trip reporting, frankly,
9 we were the guys that had a tool that worked, and so we modified
10 this tool to be able to collect those data, and it was deployed in
11 March of 2004 to collect all dealer data for the Northeast Region. I
12 can tell you that the first couple of months of that were quite an
13 undertaking. I didn't sleep very well for a while.

14
15 The data, again, are stored in exactly the same codes that everyone
16 has agreed to use as a standard, and it has now expanded to the
17 point that it's in use by virtually all of our program partners for
18 dealer reporting, and not all of them, and there are some mix-and-
19 match, as I said before, and it supports traceability. We have a
20 traceability API that is in use now, and it has multiple routes of
21 entry, and so, the online application, there are a couple of different
22 of those. There is the tablet-based application that we're working
23 on to migrate to more modern, so that it will run on phones. We
24 accept flat file transfers, which have to be updated soon to API-
25 based, but, for large fisheries dealers or from the Bluefin product,
26 which is in use by a lot of the Northeast dealers and a couple of the
27 states, and then we have an API standard that can be used by
28 anybody to transmit the data to the system.

29
30 We also do a lot with recreational data collection, and we're
31 managing the MRIP APAIS right now, and have about 165 to 170
32 folks out in the field, and we have completely rebuilt the data
33 management system, which also lives in SAFIS. It's part of the
34 SAFIS system and the SAFIS database.

35
36 So far, and a lot of you who have participated in ACCSP have seen
37 these numbers before, the numbers of intercepts are rising, because
38 we have not only overhauled the data management, but we provide
39 tablet-based intercept surveys, which are increasing productivity
40 and speed. The turnaround time on the survey data has dropped
41 from twenty-one to two days, and so we'll be able -- That allows
42 us to do better quality control and all that sort of thing.

43
44 Then, finally, we support the for-hire logbook reporting, which
45 was rolled out -- I knew that I should have checked these slides,
46 but we supported the March Mid -- The last year Mid-Atlantic

1 mandate, and we are now collecting the for-hire data for all of the
2 GARFO-permitted vessels. We are getting ready to do the same
3 for the SERO, in the SEFHIER process, and we're likely going to
4 also be doing the Gulf of Mexico as well, when that happens, and
5 the goal here is a single, unified for-hire repository. In theory, we
6 should have all of the for-hire trip reports from Texas to Maine that
7 are submitted for NMFS by the time all the processes have
8 completed.

9
10 We do also provide tailored services for our partners, and we
11 worked hard with HMS, and we provide the unified data flow for
12 HMS, which gets them data from SAFIS, the Gulf States trip ticket
13 system, Florida and North Carolina internal systems, as well as the
14 HMS e-dealer system, and so those are all merged into a single
15 data stream, which we provide back to HMS.

16
17 We also do -- This was an interest project, because we had to unify
18 federal vessel permits and state individual licenses for lobster trap
19 tag management, which allows for transferability, and the main
20 reason I'm providing this information is to give you the
21 background on what we do generically, and this is what we look at
22 for the Northeast, and I think all of you who have complex data
23 interchange see spaghetti that looks like this, the data going up,
24 and, actually, this was a NMFS slide, and I don't know who wrote
25 it, and I'm deeply grateful to whoever did, because it really does
26 outline how complex the data streams can be.

27
28 The goal, always, is to try and simplify these things, and so we saw
29 that as an opportunity. SAFIS is old. I mean, it was first written
30 and deployed in 2004, and it's based on the data warehouse design
31 that we had that was originally rolled out in 1998, and it needs an
32 overhaul. The design is old, and it has worked, but there are a lot
33 of new technologies that are available, and there are other
34 approaches, and so we did an initial review of the system, and we
35 had some functional recommendations from our Information
36 Systems Committee, and this is where we get to the universal trip
37 ID.

38
39 We had an integrated reporting workshop, and integrated reporting
40 has been around. The concept has been around for a very long
41 time, but no one has done it, not yet anyway, and so we had an
42 integrated reporting workshop, where we brought together a lot of
43 documents that had already been created and had a lot of different
44 people talk about how we might go about doing this and what kind
45 of principles we had to do.

1 We had a follow-on meeting with the technical stakeholders to talk
2 about how the nuts and bolts would work, as opposed to the
3 functional principles, and they met in October of 2017, and we
4 have a general systems spec finished. It will use a universal trip ID
5 and create a virtual integrated trip reporting system, and it will
6 have the ability to integrate electronic monitoring and VMS using
7 a much more flexible database design. I am not going to go into
8 details about how we're going to manage the database design, but
9 it's going to be using a vertical database system that allows for us
10 to add and subtract data elements pretty much on the fly.

11
12 It does provide us with some opportunities. As you can see, the
13 requirements are getting tighter. They are merging, because the
14 states are collecting more data, and the demands for the federal are
15 also rising, and it's all converging to a single point. We have all
16 this different stuff, traceability and VMS and electronic reporting,
17 and the external NGOs want the data, and there are any one of a
18 number of different federal data visioning projects going on, and,
19 of course, the for-hire mandate as well, not to mention the net
20 yields report, which has stirred up quite a bit of interest as well.

21
22 What we're looking at is creating integrated reporting on the
23 Atlantic coast, and this is what we want it to look like when we're
24 done. Essentially, all of the data will be doing to a single place or
25 are virtualized, so that they appear to be in a single place, so that
26 everything is available through the ACCSP data warehouse using a
27 universal trip identifier.

28
29 How that would work is, essentially, you have an integrated report.
30 Every single entity that contributes to the report, whether it's a
31 VMS or a vessel trip report or a dealer report or an observer trip
32 report, electronic monitoring, or biological samples, will receive a
33 universal trip identifier based on the trip. You have to be able to
34 identify -- Every one of those pieces there can relate back to a trip,
35 and the way that you do that, and the reason that you do that, is
36 that you want to be able to improve your accuracy, because one of
37 the reasons that you do all of these pieces is to validate one
38 another. You use the dealer reports to validate the trip reports, and
39 you use the observer reports to make sure the captains are telling
40 you the truth and get your samples, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

41
42 If you can connect them all together, then you have better data,
43 essentially, and so it facilitates business planning, and it makes it
44 easier to look at what's going on and verify your numbers, and it
45 builds trust, because you will be able -- Once data are validated
46 and people can believe the numbers, it's only helpful. I mean, how

1 many of us here hear the I don't trust your numbers, and I heard
2 MRIP validation earlier today, and it's the same thing.

3
4 Here is the basic principles that underly integrated reporting. The
5 unique identifier is absolutely key, and every single transaction
6 that's presented to the system has to have one. It would be
7 generated automatically based on the trip report, and it's connected
8 to every relevant piece of data. The tricky bit here is you have to
9 get the VTR first. The good news is that almost everybody who is
10 implementing electronic reporting requirements makes them cough
11 them up pretty quickly. In the places where they don't, and those
12 are mostly in the for-hire fisheries, where we won't have an
13 associated dealer report.

14
15 Human data entry generates by far the most error, and we
16 absolutely want to validate as many fields as we can in our trip
17 reporting tools. We provide the ability to pre-fill most of the fields
18 based on field codes, where, essentially, you're only answering
19 times and numbers for what you caught and where you caught it
20 and that sort of thing.

21
22 We want to use as much automated location, dates, permit
23 numbers, et cetera, so that we don't have to mess around with folks
24 manually entering things that they can put in wrong or whatever,
25 and GPS locations, which are absolutely available on virtually
26 anything you're going to use to write a report, whether it's a phone
27 or a tablet or a computer, we want that, and it will help, and then
28 only enter first-hand data, because, of course, as soon as you get
29 the story from somebody else, it has changed, and you want to
30 have validation checks and provide immediate feedback.

31
32 For example, the way that we're doing that in the eTRIPS mobile
33 tool is that the API that transmits the data to the database server
34 has data checks, and, if you do something wrong that causes that
35 report to fail, you will be told right away. You will be told what
36 the error was, and it will not be submitted to the database. You've
37 got to go back and fix it and try again.

38
39 Of course, then there are background validation checks once the
40 data are in the system, and those are dependent on the program
41 partners to whom that data belongs, and so I'm looking right at
42 Mike. For example, if we're collecting data for Maryland,
43 Maryland would tell us how they want that data validated once it's
44 onboard, and we would work with their data people, probably
45 Connie, and figure out what fields you want to check and what are
46 the valid ranges and that sort of thing, and so there would be some

1 kind of auditing process that's carried on after it's completed.

2
3 We're working with folks to get this done. In GARFO, it's the
4 FDDI, Fisheries Data-Dependent Implementation. In the
5 Southeast, it's SEFHIER, and we're working inside our own
6 modernization efforts to kind of merge all of this together. Our
7 goal is to have a complete comprehensive data structure that can
8 support federal and state data requirements in a single system, and
9 so there are some obvious benefits.

10
11 It will provide more complete and comprehensive data, because, of
12 course, the fish do not care under whose jurisdiction they fall, and
13 so striped bass inside three miles might get caught by one reporting
14 system and outside by another. We want consistent and reliable
15 data products, and we want to have easier and standardized access
16 to the data, and, obviously, timely availability of trip-level data and
17 especially efficient use of resources. There are so many different
18 programs that are out there, and I sit on a lot of the different panels
19 that review different proposals coming in a lot of different
20 directions, and it still looks a lot like a buckshot approach, when
21 you start looking at things. I mean, there are people doing the
22 same thing four different ways, sometimes, and we're trying really
23 hard to keep this as -- Use our resources as efficiently as we can.

24
25 So how is it going to work? The first change is the adoption of the
26 universal trip ID. Our systems have always had a unique trip
27 identifier at the core of our trip reporting. For ACCSP, it wasn't
28 that tough to make a modification to the database design to use
29 universal trip IDs. What we are going to do is -- We stole this idea
30 from GARFO. We have gotten about three-quarters of the way
31 through building this for our trip management system.

32
33 If you think of a system that is sort of a switchboard, that's what
34 the trip management system is. It will be, and actually already
35 exists, a module within SAFIS that keeps track of all the reports
36 and automatically links them together. We call it the brains,
37 because what it does is it will get a subset of each trip report,
38 assigning a universal trip ID, hold those data elements there, and
39 then, as the dealer reports or other pieces come in, it will connect
40 them together and maintain a cross-reference onboard. It already
41 was conceived by the Northeast visioning process, and it will work
42 with our existing SAFIS design, and we need to expand this
43 concept to meet everybody's requirements.

44
45 Right now, folks haven't really thought this through all that much,
46 but here's an example where it could make a big difference. If we

1 create universal trip IDs for all the for-hire trips and we are able to
2 use the Logic TMS to associate an APAIS intercept with a for-hire
3 trip, we can validate one off of the other. In fact, we have a
4 workshop scheduled in June to talk about how to make that work.
5 If we pull that off, it will solve a lot of problems, and it should
6 improve the reliability of both the for-hire and the intercept
7 estimates.

8
9 This is how it works. It gets all these different pieces, whether it's
10 an observer report or a trip report, or even EM, although the issue
11 with EM right now is there is no consistent standard across the
12 enterprise, and so you get all this EM data and how do you connect
13 it to a trip, and I foresee that as a challenge two or three years
14 down the road, as we get more standardized with EM, and we
15 basically push this all into the TMS system, which generates a
16 universal trip ID, which will create a virtual consolidated report,
17 and so it could be across two or three different computer systems,
18 or it may all live in one, and it just depends on how it all works
19 out, and then the concept of a transmitting system is something that
20 we're also working on, right now mostly with the Northeast
21 Fisheries Science Center.

22
23 Some of the systems require pre-trip notifications. Right now, the
24 Northeast uses a pre-trip notification system that's online, where
25 they basically log-on to the system online and do a pre-trip
26 notification, and then that sends the notifications out to VMS or the
27 Office of Law Enforcement or whoever, and then they have to
28 write the trip report.

29
30 In our concept, the pre-trip notification will be integrated into the
31 vessel trip report, so that they go ahead and kick off the trip report
32 and it sends out the pre-trip notification to TMS, when then sends
33 that to whichever pre-trip notification systems are required. Right
34 now, the only one that we're directly working with is in the
35 Northeast Region. That is mostly because most folks don't really
36 have those requirements yet, although we know that SERO is
37 going to need them, and we're working with them to figure out
38 exactly how that's going to work, and, right now, we don't have
39 any states that are requiring that, but I do know that some of our
40 states are looking at integrating VMS, especially with the issues
41 with lobsters and right whales and wanting to make sure they know
42 where the boats are and where the whales are, and so there may
43 come a time when we're going to have to send those out to the
44 states as well.

45
46 TMS maintains a cross-reference, and all events are tracked in its

1 database, and each event has a unique ID, and each event has a
2 universal ID, and so, by cross-referencing the universal ID to the
3 unique ID, we can build a consolidated record. That would be a
4 function of our data warehouse, and we are already doing that, to
5 some degree. The TMS system is up and running in its very first
6 iteration, where it's basically taking VTRs and generating unique
7 IDs and storing the data, and, as we move forward, we will begin
8 to link the different modules together, and that's it. Any
9 questions?

10

11 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Let's go ahead and take some questions for Mike.
12 Terry.

13

14 *Terry Stockwell:* Hi, Mike. It's good to see you again. A couple of questions. Is it
15 the intent to implement universal trip IDs in state-water fisheries?

16

17 *Mike Cahall:* Anything that comes through our systems, we'll generate a
18 universal trip ID for, and so it may not impact anything. We may
19 just assign one and it sits, but, yes, right now, we are assigning
20 universal trip IDs to everything that comes into us.

21

22 *Terry Stockwell:* For individual harvest or including lobster vessels?

23

24 *Mike Cahall:* Yes. For any VTR that comes to us, we create a universal ID.

25

26 *Terry Stockwell:* Well, they're not all VTRs.

27

28 *Mike Cahall:* Those we don't have, and so we can't do that for those, but
29 anything that comes through our systems, we can create a virtual
30 ID for, and, in fact, it is a lynchpin that we have to be able to get
31 the trip report electronically in a timely enough way to be ahead of
32 the dealer reports or the observer reports, and so it will only work
33 in an electronic reporting scenario.

34

35 *Terry Stockwell:* Thank you. The second question is how much progress are you
36 making with the states to expedite the data input? My own home
37 state is notoriously slow, and there are others that are even slower.

38

39 *Mike Cahall:* I would say that we're making good, steady progress. Many of the
40 states, New York and New Jersey, are putting their data into our
41 VTR system, and we're working directly with your staff right now
42 about how we're going to track the lobsters, and I anticipate that,
43 whatever solution comes out with that, that those trip reports will
44 be going directly to SAFIS, whether it's through our own eTRIPS
45 tool, which we modify to do lobsters, or we use somebody else's
46 that uses an API to send us the data, and so we are making -- I

1 think we're making good, steady progress, and I think what's
2 happening is everybody is realizing the value of having data all in
3 one place, and, also, frankly, the cost avoidance, because we're
4 already funded. I mean, we're already getting paid one way or the
5 other, and, if we're getting paid, you might as well use us.
6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* Chris.

8
9 *Chris Moore:* Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks, Mike, for the presentation.
10 Just a couple of things. The reason that we're talking about unique
11 trip identifiers, or universal trip identifiers, and I guess we have to
12 decide on the terminology at some point, but "unique" is the term
13 that we've used in the Mid-Atlantic. We started talking about
14 unique trip identifiers three or four years ago, when we started
15 talking about eVTRs for the party and charter fleet, and, as I got
16 involved with folks like you and discussions with other data folks,
17 it became apparent that this unique trip identifier was like the holy
18 grail or golden key or silver bullet, however you want to describe
19 it, for data collection on the east coast.
20

21 The problem has been not only do we have folks that are still, or
22 had been still, reporting with a paper and pencil, but also that a
23 person on an individual trip, depending on where they were and
24 when they were and what kind of species they were fishing for,
25 would have multiple reports that they would have to submit to
26 different multiple entities, and so it became apparent, obviously,
27 that a unique trip identifier was something that we really needed to
28 push, and so it's good to hear that we're actually making progress
29 to a point in time where we can use them.
30

31 I am confused about a couple of things, and I'm confused in this
32 sense, and it sounds like we already have unique trip identifiers,
33 and so we have to stop saying we need them, because we do have
34 them, right, but we need to implement them in a way that works
35 for individual reporters, individual fishermen that are actually
36 reporting, and so how do we get to the step, where someone from
37 GARFO or SERO or ACCSP or ASMFC or whoever, the State of
38 Maryland, can look at a unique trip identifier and not have to
39 worry about all this multiple reporting?
40

41 *Mike Cahall:* Well, I can -- Maryland presents an interesting challenge, because
42 they have a mix-and-match of how the reports are accomplished.
43 Some of their Maryland dealers are actually using SAFIS to report
44 some specific species, but Maryland has its own VTR system,
45 essentially, and so I can comment on how we would envision that
46 that might work in the long term, and, actually, it kind of points out

1 some of the benefits.

2
3 We are working with Maryland's contractor to develop an API,
4 and so we'll receive their trip reports immediately. Once that
5 happens, we'll be able to automatically link their trip reports to the
6 dealer reports, which are actually federal dealer reports, and so
7 we're crossing jurisdictions to say this Maryland trip resulted in
8 this federal dealer report, and the step for how you're going to link
9 these two pieces together is what you're talking about.

10
11 There are a couple of different ways that we can do that. In some
12 cases, and, for example, I can speak most clearly to the GARFO
13 trip reporting requirements, because I know them pretty well, they
14 require that you declare your dealers that you're selling the
15 individual catches to, and we can automatically link those to the
16 dealer report, based on the information we get from the VTRs.

17
18 Other ways that we might be able to do this, and we've had some
19 committees go round-and-round about it, and we can't, right now,
20 provide, for example, the dealer with too much information from
21 the VTRs, and so, if you were a dealer and got ready to write a
22 report, you could, in theory, pull your data from a suite of VTRs
23 that they said that they sold to you, and we could, in theory,
24 populate the system with some of the data elements, depending on
25 what we get around with confidentiality, and so that's one
26 approach that we could take.

27
28 We also have been discussing potentially modifying the
29 application to say -- There's nothing preventing ACCSP from
30 saying, hey, you've met your minimum requirements, but would
31 you like to help us out and do this better and give us this, this, and
32 this, or let us give that to somebody else, and that would be a
33 voluntary thing, and so there's a couple of different ways we can
34 do it. The best way, by far, is we would be able to present enough
35 data to the dealer to definitively identify the trip and then link them
36 together, but that's fraught with peril, because of confidentiality.

37
38 *Chris Moore:* Just a follow-up. What I'm getting at is what can we expect in
39 terms of our ideal of one-stop reporting? When do you think that's
40 going to happen, and how do we make that happen on the east
41 coast?

42
43 *Mike Cahall:* The one-stop isn't actually necessarily directly related to the
44 universal trip ID. We can do one-stop in a lot of fisheries right
45 now, and so a trip report -- In fact, we're already doing it, and a
46 trip report that we receive for some Mid-Atlantic species in the for-

1 hire fisheries, and even some commercial trips, because some folks
2 are providing us with commercial trips, our system knows what
3 jurisdiction holds permits for that vessel and/or who this person
4 was that submitted the trip report and under which permit they
5 submitted the trip report and under which permit they submitted
6 the trip report, and we automatically do data distribution to all of
7 the entities that own, and I put that in quotes, own that report.

8
9 For example, if we have a dual-permitted person who submits a
10 trip report for a GARFO commercial trip, the Southeast Region
11 gets it if they also are permitted in the Southeast, and so we're
12 already implementing that, and, in some states, in Massachusetts,
13 for example, they are able to pull all of the federal VTRs that are
14 against their permitted fishermen, and so it's evolving already, but
15 it's just not 100 percent yet.

16
17 *Jessica McCawley:* Gregg.

18
19 *Gregg Waugh:* Thanks, Mike, for that presentation. You talked about validation
20 for the for-hire. Would that be a similar way that we could
21 validate private recreational app reporting, as long as they can have
22 access to that universal trip ID number?

23
24 *Mike Cahall:* You know this is my last week, right, Gregg? Maybe. As soon as
25 we start talking about statistics, it takes time, and the concept of
26 how to validate the for-hire and APAIS pieces with one another is
27 going to take a few years to iron out and groundtruth and get
28 approved. I think these private angler reporting apps -- Most of
29 you have heard in the other presentations that we were involved in
30 those development projects, and we're providing database services
31 and working with the folks to make sure that it provides data using
32 the same coding scheme that we're using for everything else.

33
34 Being able to associate that private angler trip, most of the apps
35 you have right now don't collect enough data for us to be able to
36 say definitively that this person went out on this boat and caught
37 this in this place, which is basically what we're trying to do.

38
39 I couldn't comment without knowing a lot more about how it
40 would work, other than I don't see why we shouldn't at least look
41 at it, and it all depends on -- All that recreational stuff is kind of
42 under our friends at MRIP too, and they are cautious, for good
43 reason, and so I think that it's hard to say yes to that, and it's also
44 that I wouldn't say no, either.

45
46 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

- 1
2 *Kitty Simonds:* So, you can't retire, because I am going to invite you to a data
3 workshop that our Science Center is holding later this year, and
4 we're trying to bring all of our datasets together to discuss how
5 we're going to proceed in the future, because our FIN is different
6 from everybody else's FIN. It just collects the information, and
7 the staff does go out to help support the territories, but what the
8 council had to do, several years ago, was to form a Fisheries Data
9 Committee, which all the fish directors belong, and the Center is a
10 signatory, as well as the Fish and Wildlife Service, because they
11 mainly support the territory staffers and not any other agency.
12
13 I think that this would be good for us, to start at least with our
14 pelagic fishery, and I don't think it would be that complicated, and
15 so we would like you to come out and talk to us about that
16 workshop. I will talk to them about inviting you.
17
18 One of the reasons why we should pursue this identifier thing is
19 that, when our staff was reviewing observer data, as we were
20 drafting a review of the current shallow-set longline bi-op, we
21 found that, in the different queries, they came out with different
22 answers, and so it took us a long time to connect up the fishermen
23 with the catch and with the whatever, and so that database would
24 have to be fixed, but it's all doable, and so I think that, for us, this
25 is a great way to develop a system that includes VMS and
26 everything else that we have going on out there and just start with
27 that fishery, and so you can't retire, because, if you don't retire,
28 then I don't have to pay for you, right? But, if you retire, I will
29 have to pay you consulting fees, which I don't want to do.
30
31 *Jessica McCawley:* I don't know how anybody is going to follow that, but are there
32 more questions for Mike? Mike.
33
34 *Mike Pentony:* Thanks, Madam Chairman. I just wanted to take the opportunity,
35 since I think this is your last public meeting, Mike, to thank you
36 for your leadership of ACCSP over the last however many years.
37 As his presentation describes, ACCSP, under Mike's leadership,
38 has been a critical partner with GARFO, helping us modernize and
39 improve our data systems. I wrote the rule that created your
40 sleepless nights for the electronic dealer reporting action fifteen
41 years ago, and I have been following the progress that you have
42 helped us with over the last fifteen years, and so thank you very
43 much.
44
45 *Mike Cahall:* It's been a pleasure, and data guys don't get to do this kind of thing
46 very much, and so it's been a great ride, and I have really enjoyed

1 myself, and I will be glad to come to your workshop. We'll work
2 it out.

3

4 *Jessica McCawley:* With that, we would like to ask Mike to come up to the front. We
5 have a little something for you to recognize you for your
6 retirement.

7

8 *Gregg Waugh:* Mike, as indicated, has worked with ACCSP, and the original ops
9 committee, speaking of where you define that older folks, but there
10 was a group that I worked with, John Mason from New York, and
11 some of you may remember John "the Bulldog" Mason and Bill
12 Cole from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Charlie
13 Anderson and Maury Osborne from NMFS, and Dee Lupton from
14 North Carolina.

15

16 Mike has been a big partner, and certainly in all of these projects
17 that we work on that involve data, it's been ACCSP and working
18 with Mike, and he has left a great team there that will continue that
19 work, and so, with that, I will turn it over to Madam Chair.

20

21 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Gregg. I just want to say thank you for all of your service.
22 I know that it's been a lot of tireless nights, and, when I was going
23 to ASMFC for the FWC, I got to work with you a lot more, but I
24 agree with what everybody here has said. We wouldn't be where
25 we are today without the efforts, and we are sorry for your
26 sleepless nights, but we thank you for all that you have done, and,
27 on behalf of the council, we want to present you with this clock,
28 and it says: "To Mike Cahall for his twenty years of exemplary
29 service to improving fishery data collection, storage, and
30 availability through ACCSP, 1999 through 2019."

31

32 *Mike Cahall:* Thank you. *(Applause)*

33

34 *Jessica McCawley:* With that, we'll go ahead and take a ten-minute break.

35

36 *(Recess)*

1 **9. NET GAINS ALLIANCE/UPDATE**

2
3 *Jessica McCawley:* Next up, we have Net Gains Alliance, and this is an update, and the
4 update will be provided by Dorothy Lowman and George
5 Lapointe, and they are going to show us a PowerPoint presentation,
6 and I believe that same PowerPoint presentation is on the website.
7

8 *Dorothy Lowman:* Thank you, Madam Chair. It's good to be back in front of you
9 guys. If you recall, Kate Wing and I came and talked with you last
10 May. I think, last May, when we were talking with you, we
11 focused a lot on this Fishing Data Innovation Task Force 2017
12 report, and this Net Gains Alliance sort of grew out of that, and it
13 builds on those recommendations. As we discussed then, we are
14 thinking about data modernization through all of the phases of the
15 data value chain, from collection on through and through some of
16 the efforts, such as Mike talked about in terms of data integration,
17 and he actually set us up great for this presentation.
18

19 In 2018, the Walton Family Foundation did provide us some
20 additional support for the next two years that provided a
21 foundation to work to further data modernization efforts as an
22 alliance, and we're in the process of also adding to that, and we've
23 been having discussions with other funders, and so we officially
24 launched the Net Gains Alliance in February of 2019, and it is an
25 initiative committed to accelerating the modernization,
26 implementation, and adaptation of robust information systems to
27 support sustainable fishery management of ocean resources. I
28 think included in that is how to meet the needs of both science and
29 management and industry.
30

31 We have three initial goals, and one is to work to help to
32 strengthen the relevant NOAA Fisheries policy and accelerate the
33 pace of modernization. Second is to provide regional
34 modernization projects that might be a piece that isn't being
35 covered with other funding sources that will work in a synergetic
36 way to kind of make sure that the whole is greater than the sum of
37 the parts and that we can get to our mutual goals faster. Finally,
38 it's to expand the constituency in support of fisheries information
39 system modernization.
40

41 In part, that's also just sort to build data literacy within the fishing
42 sector and to make sure that we have a good alliance that can help
43 bring and articulate the needs and build support for funding, et
44 cetera, and so we'll talk about each of these areas now in a little
45 more detail, and then George and I are sort of team-tagging on this,
46 as members of the leadership, and we're going to first talk a little

1 bit about who is involved, and we do have sort of a core leadership
2 team, which includes myself, George, Kate Wing, who all of you
3 met last year, and I know they work on a lot of projects around the
4 country. Then Scott Burns and George Chmael, who you may not
5 be as familiar with, and he's the CEO of Council Fire, which is a
6 consulting firm that I think some of you do work with, and he's
7 sort of the lead and is helping to manage this project.

8
9 We wouldn't be able to do this work without a very strong
10 advisory panel, and so some of the people who are expressing
11 some angst about Mike Cahall's retirement should draw some
12 comfort in that he is a key member of our advisory panel and that
13 we plan to not let him feel much of a sense of retirement at all, and
14 then we strive to have some geographic diversity as well as folks
15 that will look at involvement in the recreational and commercial
16 fisheries as well as management of some service provider
17 expertise, and Gregg Waugh is another one of our important
18 advisory panel members, and, as was evidenced by the earliest
19 presentation this morning, he has his finger on a lot of the
20 important projects.

21
22 We have been trying to keep the advisory panel to a size that it can
23 work well together, but, at the same time, we recognize that we
24 may need a few additional members, and so we're wanting to -- If
25 you see a void and that you would like to have some expertise
26 from your region that isn't sort of represented here that might be
27 on the overall advisory panel or important for specific projects,
28 we're certainly wanting to hear from you on that.

29
30 Then the alliance -- Part of making an alliance is to ensure that we
31 can have participation from a wide swath of organizations that are
32 interested in advancing information systems, and so we're kind of
33 working on the details of what does it mean to be an alliance
34 member and how to do that, and we'll probably be rolling that out
35 in a couple of months.

36
37 How do we hope to engage, in terms of the national policy arena?
38 One of the things that we feel very appreciative is that we have
39 some good, regular communication with key decision-makers, and
40 we're setting up quarterly calls with some of the NOAA leadership
41 that are working on some of these, and we also are in the position
42 that we can help sponsor some workshops that could help inform
43 some procedural directives and best practices, and we're working
44 on one for June to look in more detail about some of the issues
45 surrounding data and data management.

1 It kind of feeds directly into some of the issues around video
2 retention, in terms of the policy that's in development and is
3 starting, and it's trying to look at how the legal framework that we
4 operate under -- What are those implications for design issues and
5 some of these other issues, but also engage some of the fishing
6 industry leaders too and thinking about what are some of those
7 design elements that sort of have to work within that framework
8 and how do we make sure that they work well together and have
9 the most cost-effective systems, et cetera, and so I think several of
10 the people in this room are going to be participating in that, and we
11 will then be writing a report for that too afterwards.

12
13 Another way that we're able to sort of work and help with that is
14 Kate Wing on our team is part of the planning committee for the
15 NOAA Fisheries Data and Information Management
16 Modernization Workshop that Alan Locklear and Frank Schwing
17 have been working on developing for this fall, and so we're hoping
18 to be able to leverage our network to help inform that discussion as
19 well as to communicate the meeting results.

20
21 We also are interested in talking with you about how we can best
22 support collaborative regional implementation plan development.
23 In my mind, councils are very good at working to bring all of the
24 important key stakeholders together in developing and working
25 with NMFS on this regional implementation plan development, but
26 if there is a piece of support or a way to help facilitate a convening
27 that the Net Gains can help, we want to talk to you about that.
28 Finally, when it's appropriate, we would submit formal
29 recommendations to the agency on related issues related to
30 national policy.

31
32 In terms of expanding constituency support, we have a
33 communication expert, Jonathan Webster, who has been working
34 as part of the team, and we're working to try to have active
35 communication and outreach to both build awareness and to
36 generate interest and then to promote engagement in these
37 activities. Jonathan is working very closely with people like EM
38 Information and with NOAA's outreach folks and NFWF and
39 seafood harvesters and other NGOs that are involved in this thing
40 to be sure that there is a good coordination and an understanding to
41 be able to cross-pollinate some of these communication efforts.

42
43 We are in the process, as some of you may have looked at, to
44 develop a porthole, an information hub. It's pretty sparse right
45 now, but we hope that it will grow and be able to, again, be a way
46 to link these different efforts and these different ways of

1 communicating about those efforts in an effective manner. Finally,
2 Jonathan is working to actively engage people on the social media
3 and different platforms. If you have questions about that, maybe
4 George can help you, or I can't.
5

6 One of the big focuses is on the issue of being able to see if there
7 are ways that we can support -- It is an area of regional
8 grantmaking, and so I want to turn it over to George now to talk
9 about this, because this is one of the areas that we're really actively
10 working on right now.
11

12 *George Lapointe:* Thanks, Dorothy, and thanks, everybody, for your time this
13 morning. One of emphases is on regional grantmaking, and that is
14 providing grants to various efforts over the next couple of years.
15 Right now, we're targeting six to eight grants, about a third of
16 which we anticipate will be awarded by this fall, and, if we get
17 additional funding, it will lead to more grants.
18

19 This isn't an open solicitation process. It's a process that we're
20 using to talk to other funders, like the National Fish and Wildlife
21 Foundation, and we've talked to the agencies, and we certainly
22 want your input on this, and we're trying to develop proposals that
23 add to other efforts, and you're going to hear me talk about
24 integrated fisheries reporting, and so it's like I'm Mike Cahall Jr.
25

26 It isn't to replace those efforts, but it's to build on them, to find a
27 component where we can help and plug into that, and that will
28 leverage the work of other organizations. The grants can include
29 federal or state agencies, councils, or industry. We have a lot of
30 flexibility.
31

32 The criteria for selecting projects are building capacity and data
33 literacy in regions, councils, and Science Centers and meeting a
34 core need, like stock assessments, identified by a council or region,
35 taking pilots to scale, building on existing work, and that's really
36 our big emphasis, informing national guidance or actions that
37 smooth paths for broader advancement, and projects that span
38 regions or fisheries, building on, again, what Mike said, and I think
39 somebody else mentioned, but we don't want to rebuild Project A
40 in Region C. We have all seen too much of that, and so projects
41 that share across regions or fisheries are really important.
42

43 Our initial areas of interest come from when we had a workshop a
44 couple of years ago, and one of the things that Dorothy and I did
45 was talk to people around the country, including many of you,
46 about what projects that you thought were important for data

1 modernization, and that resulted in an extensive table that was
2 grouped by regions. Now, it's way too old, and it's as stale as can
3 be, but it still has good stuff in it, and so we pulled some things out
4 of this, and one of our interests is for-hire electronic reporting, and
5 I've got a contract with the Southeast Region that I'm working on
6 in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, but there is efforts in the Mid-
7 Atlantic, and the efforts in the Mid-Atlantic affect New England,
8 and California has electronic reporting, and Alaska has electronic
9 reporting, and so finding a spot where we can help with that
10 process, and two things come to mind with this.

11
12 One is, as electronic reporting develops in different areas with
13 different requirements, trying to compare across regions is
14 important, and what happens in one region can impact somebody
15 else, because they are permitted in multiple regions, and so one of
16 our ideas is to get leader captains, leader for-hire captains, from the
17 various regions together to talk about what's working well and
18 what isn't and how we might improve those systems.

19
20 One of the other interests that I hear from a number of for-hire
21 captains is we would like these electronic reporting systems to
22 provide some business benefits to us, but defining what that is is
23 not clear, and so I've been thinking about, and we'll talk to people
24 about, a potential workshop to get some captains together, to get
25 some managers together, to get some service providers together, to
26 see what kind of improvements we can make in those systems.

27
28 Integrated fisheries reporting, Mike talked a lot about that, and our
29 interest here, and I'm having lunch with him later, is this has been
30 a slow process, and, as Chris said earlier, I think that this has been
31 like the holy grail that we've been looking for for a long time, and
32 what we would like to do is find out what additional -- If there's a
33 component that's being unmet, how we can help that need, because
34 there's people who are a lot smarter and who have been working
35 with this a lot more than us, but, if we can help, that's what we're
36 interested in there.

37
38 One-stop reporting, I think Chris also mentioned that, and there's
39 an effort on the west coast, some FIS funding, to do one-stop
40 reporting, and there is also interest on the east coast, and so we
41 want to help the people on the west coast and probably, in year-
42 two, move to the east coast, bringing what's been learned on the
43 west coast to the east coast, because that is a goal, and then the last
44 project that we have identified is Pacific-wide pelagic data
45 integration, and I also mentioned earlier that, where we have two
46 regions, the data integration would be really important for

1 management.

2

3 Then other ideas, we're already talking about year-two, and so
4 we're really interested in your ideas about how we can help other
5 efforts as well, because, again, we're quite broad in our interest.
6 We're interested in answering any questions you have, and we're
7 interested in your views on how we can best engage in those goals
8 of national policy and regional strategies, regional grantmaking
9 and constituency building and other ideas. That is what we would
10 really like your input on today, and that is it, and we thank you for
11 your time, and we would be happy to answer any questions that
12 we're capable of answering.

13

14 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, George. Thanks, Dorothy. Are there questions? Bill.

15

16 *Bill Tweet:* Thanks. Is there interest in projects that would occur in state
17 waters only under state jurisdiction, or is this really -- Are we
18 really aiming at a federal or regional?

19

20 *Dorothy Lowman:* No, we are interested in states too, and the idea is -- Because they
21 may only occur in state jurisdictions, but, often, it gets fed in, and,
22 also, the tools, or the lessons learned, could be then used both in
23 other states or in a federal fishery, and so I think those are certainly
24 possible, and, if we didn't do a good job, we should have
25 mentioned that certainly contributing to state entities as an option,
26 too.

27

28 *Jessica McCawley:* Dale.

29

30 *Dale Diaz:* Just to the point that George made a minute ago, and, by the way,
31 thank you all for your presentation. The State of Louisiana did a
32 presentation for us, and it's been several years ago, where they
33 rolled out a charter boat data collection program, and they did have
34 a way for charter boat fishermen to have a back door where they
35 could put notes for themselves, and they could keep track of who
36 took charters when, and so, the following year, they could contact
37 them again, if they hadn't already booked a trip with them, but
38 they also could keep track of when fish showed up, whatever they
39 wanted to put in their notes, but they only had access to that part of
40 the page. Louisiana hasn't discussed it again since they rolled it
41 out, and I don't know how it went or anything, but I always
42 thought that was a good idea, to give businesses a reason to want to
43 participate, and so I like that concept. Thank you.

44

45 *George Lapointe:* Thanks, Dale, and can I talk to you offline just about who I might
46 contact in Louisiana to follow-up more on that?

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Dale Diaz: Sure.

George Lapointe: Thank you.

Jessica McCawley: Marcos and then Terry.

Marcos Hanke: A follow-up on the same line of thought. One benefit that can be added to those efforts is an emergency button, in case the person has -- Any system created, if the fishermen don't have an EPIRB, but they have a problem on the ocean, they could press it with a code, and not to have a false report or something designed on that matter. For the Caribbean, and probably for the people in Hawaii, that would be something that would be very useful.

Also, for the captain to collect socioeconomic information, or on the same line of what you just expressed, and there is another layer of information that in my case is important, and I can see many other people engaging or needing an area or a note or an area where you can -- If you are participating in some research, cooperative research, you can include that into your system. Instead of having one board on the boat you are doing it on paper, you can do it electronically. That just adds value and simplifies the engagement of the captain in many different layers on the system. Thank you.

Jessica McCawley: Terry.

Terry Stockwell: Thanks, George and Dorothy. I just wanted to drill down a little bit more into the timeline for the grants. I am thinking specifically the bullet you have on taking pilots to scale or build on existing work, and Mike and I have been going back and forth a little bit. As you well know, we're under the gun to get Amendment 23, the groundfish amendment, out the door, and would it be probably better to talk offline on how to perhaps use this as a way to help fill in a few of the kinks as we try to develop this amendment and get it out the door?

George Lapointe: Absolutely.

Dorothy Lowman: The original money from Walton has about \$800,000 for regional grants in it, just to give you a little more information, and our idea was to have about a third of that in the first year and two-thirds in the second. Some might span two years, but, also, we are not -- We can be flexible, and our goal is to get the first out in the early fall, and so we have an advisory panel meeting here coming up

1 next week, and we're going to try to begin to hone-down on the
2 first year ones, so that we can work with potential grantees in
3 developing the grants and stuff, too.
4

5 When we go to the second year, we don't necessarily have to wait
6 until the same time, and we can do them earlier and so on and so
7 forth, and so I think that is one nice thing about us. We're also
8 trying to work and coordinate with some of the granting from
9 NFWF and from FIS, so that they can work well in concert, and so
10 that's also feeding into that.
11

12 *Terry Stockwell:* Just a quick follow-up. My angst was when you said you were
13 going to focus on the west coast first. We have a real burning need
14 here on the east coast as well.
15

16 *George Lapointe:* When we mentioned that, it was because the -- I think, when
17 people talk about one-stop reporting, they -- I had this conversation
18 with Beth, and they talked about doing it nationally, and I just
19 think that the west coast was in the batter's box before other people
20 were, and so we're trying to start there first and, importantly,
21 because their starting is not -- If we had other regions or other
22 components, it's not slowing down their work, but just having
23 some degree of separation.
24

25 *Jessica McCawley:* Gregg.
26

27 *Gregg Waugh:* Thanks to both of you for the presentation. We all know funding is
28 not increasing, and so we're going to have to be more efficient in
29 what we do, and certainly electronic reporting lends itself to that,
30 and, from our council's perspective, we were very happy to see
31 that, within the first round of projects, for-hire electronic reporting
32 and integrated fishing reporting and one-stop reporting are three
33 things that are very important to us. We're trying to get our
34 fishermen to where they hit that "send" button one time, and so we
35 welcome the additional support and effort to address some of these
36 problems, and we appreciate the help.
37

38 *George Lapointe:* Thanks, Gregg.
39

40 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more questions?
41

42 *Chuck Tracy:* Thanks, Dorothy and George, for the presentation. The South
43 Atlantic's presentation this morning was really interesting, and
44 there was a lot of interesting things that they're working on, a lot
45 of electronic reporting, and so are those the sorts of things that
46 would be of interest to the alliance for helping fund some of those

1 sorts of projects elsewhere in the country, or were you talking
2 about some other larger database sorts of issues?
3

4 *Dorothy Lowman:* I think they could be. I mean, I think we had a slide with some of
5 the guiding criteria in making these selections, and we're kind of
6 wanting to look at things that are applicable, perhaps, across
7 regions, or lessons learned across regions, and that can create that
8 extra -- How does this fit into the piece of the puzzle for the
9 overarching goal of where you want to get with your data
10 modernization, and certainly some of those projects and how did
11 they integrate well and then get there, so that we can start to have
12 the different -- These apps and these apps, but how do they work
13 together to get to the goals, and all of this is really about, well, why
14 do you need this and then how is it contributing to your
15 management needs or your science needs.
16

17 *George Lapointe:* We would very much like to have the conversations just about
18 what those follow-on projects might be, because I think that's how
19 the best projects will develop, particularly in year-two of our
20 current project.
21

22 *Dorothy Lowman:* Maybe I can add to that. It would be helpful for us to -- I mean, I
23 know a council meeting is always packed, but, if having a
24 presentation or a small working meeting in the evening hours in
25 your council regions, we would love to know if that's something
26 that you would like us to do. Also, if there's a key staff person
27 who should be our contact person -- If we don't know who that is,
28 let us know, so that we can have that communication going on.
29

30 Then, finally, we talked about the -- As NMFS is developing, in
31 coordination with the councils, the regional implementation plans,
32 I mean, we have a selfish motive for wanting that to be pretty
33 collaborative and comprehensive, but we also see them as great
34 tools, so that, as we see these regional needs, they will help us
35 hone-in on those, and, also, they could help us maybe go find you
36 more support, because we could take them and use them to go to
37 funders and say, look, here's some specific ones, and are you
38 interested, and it could flow Net Gains and then out, and for that
39 too, and so just to kind of expand on that interest.
40

41 *Jessica McCawley:* Marc and then Kitty.

42
43 *Chuck Tracy:* That was me again. Just maybe a little bit of follow-up on that. I
44 think it would be helpful to maybe understand a little bit more
45 about the process for forwarding ideas to the alliance and how the
46 process goes for awarding a grant, and, secondly, how the council -

1 - I noticed you mentioned in there talking about funding to the
2 councils, and we've got a little bit of a unique funding mechanism,
3 and so I was just wondering how that mechanism might work for
4 the councils to see some direct financial support for some of those
5 things.
6

7 *Dorothy Lowman:* I think that there's a couple of ways. If there's a council role and a
8 regional project that's identified, that's maybe one way, and
9 another way is if there's a need in some of these other areas, as
10 you're developing your programs, where a convening would help
11 that you think some of the expertise that we could bring together or
12 bringing people who are working on similar issues from other
13 regions that might help you when you're talking about -- Even as
14 simple as if that would help to have travel support for them. I
15 mean, there's different ways, and so I think, if there's not a -- We
16 don't have a set formula or anything like that, but I think it's
17 something we would like to discuss with you more and figure out.
18

19 We're kind of at the initial parts of these, and we're also soliciting,
20 and we have another grant proposal out there that is interested in
21 helping support and helping support within the regions too that
22 we'll know about in June, and so we hope this is a really iterative
23 communication, and I don't know if that really answered your
24 question, Chuck.
25

26 *Jessica McCawley:* Sorry, Chuck. Sorry, Mark. Kitty.

27
28 *Kitty Simonds:* In my earlier remarks about pelagic data integration, I'm glad that I
29 see mentioned here the Pacific-wide pelagic data integration, but
30 we would want to start with our own pelagic fishery first, because
31 that's what needs to be integrated, as I said, with VMS and with
32 the observer program and other data collection. We're looking
33 forward to talking with you and George this week, before we
34 leave. Thank you.
35

36 *Jessica McCawley:* Yes, George.

37
38 *George Lapointe:* Just following up on Kitty's comments, we're here through
39 tomorrow with you, and so, if you have additional questions, or if
40 you want to sit down with us, we're happy to meet with anybody
41 who wants to. Thank you.
42

43 *Jessica McCawley:* Thank you. Anyone else? All right. Thank you, Dorothy. Thank
44 you, George. We're going to move on to Implementing NS 1 with
45 Alan and Stephanie.

1 **10. IMPLEMENTING NS 1/UPDATE**

2
3 *Alan Risenhoover:* Thank you, and good morning, everyone. As you know, a couple
4 of years ago, we started a little bit of a process and a number of
5 workgroups to work on a couple of issues coming out of the 2016
6 National Standard 1 guidance, and so Stephanie Hunt, who is the
7 Chief of our Policy Branch in Sustainable Fisheries, is going to
8 walk you through what those three workgroups are doing and who
9 is on those groups doing that, and so, Stephanie, whenever you're
10 ready.

11
12 *Stephanie Hunt:* As Alan mentioned, my name is Stephanie Hunt, and I am the
13 Chief for the Policy and Guidance Branch in the Office of
14 Sustainable Fisheries, and my branch covers things like tracking
15 stock status and preparing the annual Status of Stocks Report to
16 Congress and National Standard 1 guidance, and so our branch did
17 the rulemaking in 2016 that Alan referenced.

18
19 We have talked to you guys about the work of the National
20 Standard 1 Technical Guidance Workgroup a few times, and so
21 this is just an update and letting you know where we are now. As
22 Alan mentioned, we revised the guidelines in 2016 and introduced
23 a variety of new provisions to create more flexibility in fisheries
24 management, and so we formed this team, mostly of Science
25 Center reps, and also Regional Office folks, folks from
26 Headquarters, and we invited council staff to participate to identify
27 areas that needed more guidance, more detailed guidance, than was
28 in the rulemaking and to produce that guidance.

29
30 The last technical guidance that has been associated with National
31 Standard 1 was in 1998, and it was this Restrepo et al. document,
32 and that was a comprehensive technical guidance document. We
33 have looked at that, and we think the guidance is still good, but the
34 science and research has progressed significantly since 1998, and
35 so the idea is that this workgroup has split up into a variety of sub-
36 groups to produce work products that will supplement that
37 comprehensive guidance. We don't plan to do one big technical
38 guidance document, and we'll be putting products out as they are
39 ready and available, and so we plan to keep you informed, through
40 this group, and we also plan to engage your SSCs and others that
41 you would recommend that we consult with.

42
43 The sub-groups are here, and I will go into the work products of
44 each of the sub-groups in the following slides. The first sub-group
45 is chaired by Rick Methot and also coordinated by Melissa Karp.
46 Melissa is in the back, and she's going to be talking to you later

1 about climate, but, if you have questions about the work of this
2 sub-group, she is a great reference for you. We also have some
3 great staff, council staff, participating in this workgroup, and we're
4 really pleased to have them.
5

6 The first product that the Sub-Group 1 is working on is a tech
7 memo related to the estimation of FMSY, BMSY, and their
8 proxies, and so you all know that these are really important
9 reference points in fisheries management in the United States.
10 Calculating FMSY and BMSY can be challenging in certain
11 fisheries, when there are data limitations, and so we often use
12 proxies.
13

14 There has been a lot of research about these topics since 1998,
15 when Restrepo et al. came out, but none of that research has been
16 summarized, and so the idea here is that this sub-group is going to
17 summarize the research that has been done, and they are going to
18 provide guidance and lessons learned for direct estimation of
19 FMSY and BMSY, and they are going to provide guidance on
20 calculating proxies, and they have some additional considerations,
21 such as spatially-explicit reference points, and so that's one
22 product. They have created an online, a really robust outline, and
23 now they're filling in the content.
24

25 I think we hope to be able to -- We should be able to provide more
26 details at your November meeting, if you would like to have it on
27 your agenda, and I don't know that we will have the document to
28 share at that point, but we should have it soon after, to be able to
29 share with you and your SSCs, and so that's the first product.
30

31 The second product, still under Sub-Group 1, is a white paper
32 about best practices for catch accounting, and so there is a variety
33 of ways that people do catch accounting around the country, and
34 this paper is meant to describe the issues related to catch
35 accounting and also to provide best practices in accounting for
36 total catch, both in developing stock assessment models and also in
37 harvest specifications. This one is at an earlier stage of
38 development, and it was developed by a couple of folks on this
39 workgroup, and now the larger sub-group is looking at it, and so I
40 think this is still in the early stages, and we may have more to say
41 in November though, if you're interested.
42

43 Sub-Group 2 is chaired by Dan Holland from the Northwest
44 Center, and Deb Lambert from my office coordinates the group,
45 and we have a couple of staff from the councils that participate,
46 and this group is the furthest along, and they have developed a tech

1 memo on some new provisions that we put in the 2016 rulemaking
2 on carryover and phase-in, and so the guidelines now allow
3 councils to carry over a portion of unused ACL to the following
4 year, and they allow changes to catch limits to be gradually phased
5 in over a period of no more than three years, as long as overfishing
6 is prevented.

7
8 The goal of this group and this tech memo is to provide
9 recommendations and best practices on how to use that new
10 flexibility, and they have developed and compiled a bunch of
11 examples from around the world of techniques to do this, and they
12 are looking at and recommending different approaches for how
13 these two provisions can be used, and they are identifying
14 characteristics of fish stocks, fisheries, and management that may
15 impact the benefits and risks of using carryover and phase-in.

16
17 This draft, as I said, is the furthest along. It's been through a lot of
18 internal review already, and we're trying to address the comments
19 that have come in, but I think that we'll be ready to share it within
20 the next couple of months with you all and your SSCs, and that
21 will allow us to have a good conversation about the details at your
22 November meeting.

23
24 The third sub-group is co-chaired by Jim Berkson from the Office
25 of Science and Technology and Marian Macpherson from our
26 office. We have a couple of active council staff on this group as
27 well, and they are looking at managing data-limited stocks under
28 the National Standard 1 ACL framework, and so you will recall, in
29 the 2006 revisions, in recognition of some of the challenges we've
30 been having with our severely data-limited stocks, like in the
31 Caribbean and the Western Pacific, we added a provision, and we
32 call it (h)(2), and it's under 600.310(h)(2), that clarifies that
33 councils can recommend alternative approaches for developing
34 management measures and reference points for data-poor fisheries
35 while still complying with the mandates of Magnuson.

36
37 This group is looking at how they would do that and how this
38 flexibility would work with respect to ACLs, and they have
39 identified stocks, or they are looking at identifying stocks, where
40 setting and managing to an ACL under this framework has been
41 particularly challenging, and they are looking at alternative
42 approaches for defining and managing to an ACL that would still
43 comply with Magnuson and prevent overfishing, and they are
44 looking at identifying assessment approaches that may be used to
45 generate more valid estimates for certain types of data-poor stocks.
46

1 This guidance is under internal review, and General Counsel is
2 looking at the feasibility of it. We hope to make more progress
3 before the November meeting, and we certainly can provide more
4 details then. I'm not sure yet whether we'll have a draft to look at.
5

6 In summary, there is a lot going on, and we expect several different
7 work products to come out for your review over the next year, and
8 we look forward to your feedback. We have really appreciated
9 council staff's participation in these workgroups, and we look
10 forward to getting additional feedback once you have a chance to
11 look at the documents.
12

13 *Jessica McCawley:* Thank you for that presentation. Are there questions? Tom.
14

15 *Thomas Nies:* Thank you, Stephanie. I've got a couple of questions, if you will
16 bear with me. Just to make sure that I am interpreting your
17 statement, when you say you will share these documents with me
18 and seek feedback, it sounds to me like they will be shared with the
19 councils in some sort of draft format before they are finalized?
20 Great. Thanks.
21

22 I've got questions, and I think both of them address the first sub-
23 group on reference points. I didn't notice it in the slide, but I'm
24 curious whether this will address the concept or difficulties in
25 establishing ecosystem-based reference points in a fisheries
26 ecosystem plan, perhaps for a functional group or a stock complex.
27 There are some scientists who argue the concept of MSY in that
28 construct is somewhat meaningless, because it depends on how
29 you structure the fishery, and so I'm wondering if these things are
30 going to be addressed in that technical manual.
31

32 *Stephanie Hunt:* The Sub-Group 1 has a long list of projects that they would like to
33 do, and that project -- I didn't list them all, because they had a hard
34 time prioritizing and making progress, and we're very proud of
35 them for going forward on these two projects and actually getting
36 some words on paper, but one of the projects they are interested in
37 is along the lines of what you are talking about.
38

39 I don't know the status of it, and I don't think it has made a lot of
40 progress yet, but the idea is that, once they get through especially
41 this FMSY proxy one, the ecosystem would be on their list, and I
42 don't know, Melissa, if you have anything else to add. That's not
43 to say that -- There is various members of the sub-group, and folks
44 can go off and do separate projects, but the priority right now has
45 been the FMSY and BMSY proxy reference point project.
46

1 *Thomas Nies:* If I might follow-up a little bit on that working group, and I don't
2 know if it applies to that working group or the data poor working
3 group, and it might apply to both, but, as you're probably aware,
4 we have a number of stock assessments in the region, a number of
5 stocks, where the analytic assessment has failed, and it's been
6 replaced by some form of empirical approach of various types,
7 ranging from theory of biomass to some sort of survey to other
8 approaches, and we struggle a little bit when working with Science
9 Center, because, when we have asked them to identify reference
10 points for those stocks, they tell us that they cannot, typically a
11 biomass-based reference point for BMSY.

12
13 This, of course, causes us problems when we go to the region,
14 because we get a stock assessment that says the reference points
15 are unknown, and then the region and the agency have difficulty
16 getting that past their attorneys, and so I guess my question is will
17 this working group solve that problem for us?

18
19 *Stephanie Hunt:* I think that the products that they are developing will help. I can't
20 say for sure. I mean, clearly, if you don't have the data to directly
21 estimate FMSY and BMSY, the Sub-Group 1 will provide
22 recommendations of appropriate proxies, and so that should be
23 helpful. Then the data poor group also could be helpful, depending
24 on where that ends up. Right now, what they're looking at is
25 really, really, really data-poor stocks, which you have data, and it's
26 kind of falling apart, and so, whether your stocks would kind of fit
27 into the category, I'm not sure, but they will provide some
28 recommendations for methods to use for data-poor stocks, which I
29 would hope would be helpful.

30
31 *Thomas Nies:* My last question is could you elaborate a little bit on the catch
32 accounting workgroup? What exactly are they looking at?

33
34 *Stephanie Hunt:* I can try.

35
36 *Thomas Nies:* Maybe an example of the type of topics.

37
38 *Stephanie Hunt:* This one is fairly new, and I'm not as familiar with it. It was
39 developed by Karyl Brewster-Geisz from Highly Migratory
40 Species and Grant Thompson from the Alaska Center. Basically,
41 they are looking at accounting for all sources of fishing mortality,
42 and different regions do that differently, for example bait, science,
43 research, state-water fisheries, and their goal is -- I don't really
44 have a whole lot on it, but it's, again, to describe best practices for
45 accounting for that in the assessment models and the harvest specs,
46 and so this one is really at the early stage, and so I can give you

1 more later. If you have any initial issues that you think we should
2 address, by all means let me know, and we can feed it into it.

3

4 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

5

6 *Kitty Simonds:* The NMFS approved an amendment of the councils to move
7 certain species as ecosystem components, so that ACLs wouldn't
8 have to be determined for them, but they would still be managed,
9 in that we are going to find different ways to collect information,
10 and so the downside of this is the coral program, funding program,
11 and so those species that we have in there for projects, we were
12 told by the funding program that they were not going to fund those,
13 because we weren't managing them.

14

15 I forget what portion of our grant that amounted to, but I said that
16 we're still managing these species, but they're just -- We're just
17 not doing ACLs for them, and so they reduced our grant, and then
18 my brothers over there are able to go in and request money for
19 projects using our money, and so what is that? I mean, that's
20 ridiculous. Following all of these programs, trying to make it
21 efficient, we lose money, and so Chris has his head down, and I
22 haven't talked to him about it yet, but something needs to be done
23 about this. Every time I lose a dollar, it infuriates me. Pay
24 attention, Chris.

25

26 *Jessica McCawley:* John, did you have your hand up?

27

28 *John Gourley:* Kind of related to the ecosystem component, we have literally
29 hundreds of reef fish species that, prior to the transformation into
30 EC -- There is no way that you can manage them through ACLs.
31 There is just too many of them, and it was interesting that I got a
32 comment from a fed, and it was kind of a snipe, basically saying
33 that the council doesn't care about managing the reef fish species,
34 because we moved them into EC, and it seems to be kind of
35 backlash simply for us to go to a different management approach,
36 and it's a little bit disturbing coming from the feds. Thank you.

37

38 *Kitty Simonds:* It's ridiculous.

39

40 *Jessica McCawley:* Phil.

41

42 *Phil Anderson:* Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks, Stephanie, for your
43 presentation. On Sub-Group 3, the data-limited stock group, will
44 they be addressing or providing any guidance on setting of sigma
45 values or P* values associated with scientific uncertainty and those
46 instances?

1
2 *Stephanie Hunt:* I don't think so. I think they are kind of looking at it at a higher
3 level than that. I think, if anybody was going to be looking at that,
4 it would be more along the lines of Sub-Group 1, but I have seen
5 their paper, and I didn't see anything related to that.
6
7 *Phil Anderson:* Okay. Thanks.
8
9 *Jessica McCawley:* Terry and then Carrie.
10
11 *Terry Stockwell:* Thanks, Stephanie. Last year, we had a bit of an issue with some
12 research catch, and I am wondering whether Sub-Group 1 is going
13 to have a discussion on any best practices as related to reporting on
14 research catch.
15
16 *Stephanie Hunt:* I think that, yes, that's included.
17
18 *Jessica McCawley:* Carrie.
19
20 *Carrie Simmons:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Stephanie, for your
21 presentation. I had a question again on timing, and I wasn't quite
22 clear on that. When do you plan to bring, or when would you like
23 to try to bring, some of this information to the SSCs? Is that going
24 to be before we see this again in November? The reason I'm
25 asking that is we're trying to plan a workshop-style format to look
26 at some of these status determination criteria proxies and bring in
27 some experts that have written some papers and try to really get
28 down into the nitty-gritty of this with our SSC, and so I think some
29 of the information that that working group is working on, that Sub-
30 Group 1, it would be really great if we could get something at our
31 July SSC meeting, and so could you explain the timing on that
32 again?
33
34 *Stephanie Hunt:* That's really interesting, and thanks for raising that. We would
35 definitely like to learn more about the workshop. That work
36 product is nowhere near ready for release. The one that's furthest
37 along is Sub-Group 2, the carryover and phase-in. We could talk
38 about how to participate, and, if we can participate, to share what
39 we have gathered, but we won't have anything in writing.
40
41 *Alan Risenhoover:* Just to add to that, I don't think we have set hard deadlines or
42 schedules for any of this. It's just been more as the folks have
43 been able to move ahead on these, but maybe, if we can look
44 toward what are some potential times to use the information, that
45 may be able to stimulate a little more progress or focus on it.
46

1 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more questions?
2

3 *Stephanie Hunt:* I would add, to Alan's statement, if there are -- I mean, I wasn't
4 aware of that, and I know that the Pacific Council is looking at
5 phase-in, which we just learned about, and so, if there are council
6 actions or workshops coming up, it's really helpful to know,
7 because it does help drive our deadlines, and we can try to speed
8 things up.
9

10 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. If there aren't any more questions, thank you, Stephanie,
11 and thank you, Alan, and we're going to move over to Paul, who is
12 going to talk about NOAA's strategic plan and the development of
13 the regional plan or geographic plans.

11. NOAA STRATEGIC PLAN

1
2
3 *Paul Doremus:* Thank you, Madam Chair, and it looks like we might have a little
4 bit of time to make up, and so we'll be brisk here. I am going to
5 review some key elements of where we are and council
6 engagement on the strategic planning process, and then I will hand
7 it to Chris for some comments before opening up for questions and
8 discussion.

9
10 I was, interestingly, on the break, talking with Gregg yesterday,
11 after aspects of what has become a theme in much of our
12 discussion yesterday and today around how do we deal with a lot
13 of change and the changing composition of needs and interest and
14 pressure.

15
16 Strategic planning, for any organization, is a way to manage these
17 kinds of issues, and all organizations have to deal with the tension
18 between running the business and changing the business and
19 dealing with today and preparing for tomorrow, and we also have,
20 in our organization, the challenges of dealing with geographic
21 distribution and having different levels of the organization, the
22 national level and regional level and having very complex
23 partnership structures that are involved in shaping strategy and
24 executing strategy.

25
26 A big part of what we intended and set out to do here is to really
27 use a combination of national and regional planning to align the
28 whole organization around priorities rooted in our mission,
29 statutory mission, drivers and rooted in what the administration is
30 asking us to do at the national level, but remain flexible and
31 adaptive to how those strategies, how those priorities, manifest
32 themselves at a regional level and help us to respond.

33
34 Councils, at both of these levels, are obviously central to how we
35 do business, and your participation in this whole process is, by
36 definition, a priority for how we go about handling the
37 development of the content in our national and regional plans and
38 how we use input at both levels to achieve these objectives of
39 strategic alignment and of focus.

40
41 First off, at the national level, thank you. That plan is out, and it's
42 done, and it frames what we are setting out to do over the course of
43 2019 to 2022. We have very clearly cast our goals around these
44 three core areas of amplifying economic value of commercial and
45 recreational fisheries while ensuring sustainability, ultimately
46 rooted in Magnuson. The second is conserving and recovering

1 protected species while supporting responsible fishing and
2 resource development, rooted in ESA and MMPA, accordingly,
3 and the very, very significant focus that we have on improving
4 organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency. The
5 regulatory technology components of that are short, but very
6 significant, which is all about how we function in this context, and
7 so thank you.
8

9 You all provided extraordinary and very helpful input, and it's
10 reflected in the plan at multiple levels, and I think we also have a
11 very good expression from Chris, at the outset, of the central role
12 that the councils play in our execution of our mission, and so that
13 is key.
14

15 This is setting us up for this time period. It is, again, not
16 describing everything that we do, and it is not describing what
17 we're going to do in any given year. We have an annual process
18 for specifying actual priorities at the national level, our priorities
19 and annual guidance documents, and our activity plan
20 prioritization, which gets into the connection of strategy to
21 resources. That is a big development, and thank you for your
22 contribution to that.
23

24 That also frames our efforts. We are stepping now into geographic
25 plans, and this is a new thing, having our Science Centers and our
26 Regional Offices work together on what does the execution and the
27 sort of strategic context, the strategic landscape, as we talk about it
28 in the overall document, what does that look like at the regional
29 level and how do the goals that we've set up to do the priorities
30 and strategies that we've set out in the national plan and how do
31 they manifest themselves at the regional level and how would we
32 cast those issues in ways that speak to the national level objectives,
33 which are themselves driven by the overall department strategy for
34 us, but also reflect regional realities.
35

36 We're stepping forward with these five plans in each region this
37 spring and summer, and we're seeking your input on those top-
38 level issues of the strategic landscape, how we're positioned to
39 respond. Our staff, working jointly across the science and
40 management sides, will use that input, much as we did at the
41 national level, and put together a plan, and we'll cycle that in
42 August and September for council comment, formal comment,
43 much as we did with the national plan, and that will get us into a
44 position for having effectively regionally-sensitive plans for
45 aligning with national-level priorities at the outset of the fiscal year
46 in October. That is the basic goal in moving this forward.

1
2 As cast, the context is this whole issue for us organizationally of
3 achieving strategic alignment, of having national focus with
4 regional differentiation. The national plan and the regional plan
5 are all designed to articulate why and what we are setting out to do,
6 in terms of priorities. They are not meant to catalog everything
7 that we do and everything that we need to respond to and
8 everything that is important to the organization. These are plans
9 that are not catalogs. They are efforts to focus us on a limited set
10 of things, where we are committed to making demonstrable
11 progress over this time period, and so it's selective, and that is a
12 key element.

13
14 Again, the councils, I think, are going to play a very, very key role,
15 and your input and feedback will be very valuable to us at the
16 regional level, and we're looking forward to seeing how we can
17 kind of manage that regional instantiation of the national-level
18 strategy persuasively, region by region, in ways that ultimately
19 integrate our science functions and our management functions
20 around those objectives.

21
22 As a final note here, before turning it over to Chris and opening it
23 up for discussion, this is related to how we think about resource
24 management, but it is not a budget document. It's really about
25 how we are orchestrating leading and managing the organization,
26 our people, the resources that we have, the scientific assets and
27 technologies that we're developing and trying to deploy, and it's
28 how we put all of those pieces together to achieve some stated
29 goals of ours, some observable, measurable progress around those
30 goals.

31
32 It is structured in a way that allows us to tie in, at detailed annual
33 levels, our resource choices, and certainly how we talk to the
34 administration and how we ultimately talk to our budget and policy
35 stakeholder community about why we need to be funded and what
36 increases in funding could be used for and how we're managing
37 our base resources to the greatest impact, and that's what this
38 document ultimately is designed to help us do, but I just wanted to
39 say that it's about a lot more than setting us up for budget asks.
40 That's, again, a kind of time-honored use of strategic documents in
41 the public sector, and the federal sector in particular, and we're
42 using this much more self-consciously as an organizational
43 development and strategic management tool that relates to, but
44 isn't just about the budgets, how we're running the organization.

45
46 Thank you for your -- Already for the contribution to date, and also

1 in advance for your participation with our Science Centers and
2 Regional Offices at a regional level on this next step of the process
3 over the course of the spring and summer, so that by, outside of the
4 fiscal year, we're in a good place to have everything laid out
5 moving forward.
6

7 I think the final comment I will make before moving the mic over
8 to Chris is, like all strategies, these are not fixed forever. It is a
9 reflection of our thinking and our collective efforts to date, and we
10 will learn and grow and modify as the world around us changes
11 and as we learn through implementation and as our priorities have
12 to modify to take into account the realities that we face. We can't
13 predict a lot of things coming forward. We can't predict our
14 budgets, and we can't predict scientific and technological
15 evolution, and we can't predict big problems that we don't foresee
16 yet, but we do need to have focus and know, if we're going to
17 adapt, when, where, and why. Chris, do you want to --
18

19 *Chris Oliver:*

20 Just a few general comments to add to Paul's, or maybe reiterate
21 some of what Paul said. When we started talking about the
22 strategic planning process, it just made sense to do something that
23 specifically links the regions and centers geographically along with
24 the relevant councils that occur in each region, just because they
25 needed to reflect the nuances, the differences, the local flavor, and
26 so it made sense to do it this way.

27 We don't envision them as big, lengthy documents, and some may
28 be a little longer than others, and we have a council region that
29 deals with multiple councils, but I see it sort of as Paul alluded to
30 the cascading. The Commerce plan is, to me, a 100,000-foot level,
31 and our national plan may be a 60,000-foot, and these are a little
32 more where the rubber meets the road, at say 30,000 feet, but I
33 want to just reiterate two things that Paul said, that we shouldn't
34 view this as a wish list to get every single item that may be on your
35 radar screen included and, again, not see it as an opportunity
36 specifically as a budgeting exercise.
37

38 They are agency documents, and we've got the pen on them, but I
39 want to make sure that they very robustly and adequately reflect
40 the council's input on these, and I think -- We don't want to be too
41 prescriptive on how each center or region accomplishes that or
42 interacts with their councils. Some have different relationships,
43 and some can operate more effectively through the staff, depending
44 on timing and other factors, as opposed to directly with the
45 council.
46

1 We don't want to be too prescriptive on that, but I do want to make
2 sure that, at the end of the exercise, you all felt like you were fully
3 included in the exercise and that we were responsive, holding the
4 pen, response to your input, and particularly I see a minimum of
5 two points of contact, at a minimum, and that is, prior to us
6 drafting these plans, to get your input, in terms of local issues and
7 the challenges and risks, and we've got a template drafted for these
8 that sort of lays it out in that context, similar to the national plan.
9 The second point would be, subsequent to us drafting a plan, for
10 you to have review and input on that draft before it gets finalized,
11 and so I see those as two minimum points of interaction, at a
12 minimum.

13
14 We have an aggressive timeline. We're looking at fall, but we
15 want to make sure that we get it right, rather than rush it, and so,
16 while we're seeking to get this done, and I think October is the
17 timeframe, there is some opportunity for that to slip, I suppose, if
18 necessary, to make sure that we do get your input into the
19 documents. That was all.

20
21 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thanks, Paul. Thanks, Chris. I know it looks like we're
22 over time, but we had a little extra time budgeted in for lunch
23 today, and so I think that we certainly have some time for
24 questions right now, and so don't hold back. Miguel.

25
26 *Miguel Rolon:* Just one question. The way that you envision the interaction with
27 the council will vary from region to region, or it will be the same?
28 For example, will we have a contact person, like Andy Strelcheck,
29 for the three councils in the Southeast? I imagine there will be one
30 for each, and can we receive information regarding the draft of
31 those regional plans before June or July, or do we have to wait
32 until June or July?

33
34 *Paul Doremus:* We are trying to maintain some degree of flexibility with the
35 different state of development of the regional plans within each
36 region. We want to make sure, as Chris indicated, that there is, at a
37 minimum, these two phases of interaction with the councils, and so
38 we want to make sure that there is a clear point of contact and that
39 those phases are orchestrated, hopefully within this time period
40 that we have laid out, to be finished with the process by the outside
41 of the fiscal year, and so the point of contact should be the person
42 that could give you the schedule for exactly when documents can
43 be exchanged and what the review period would be, but we're
44 trying to not be overly prescriptive and have everybody do the
45 exact same thing at the exact same time. We want to make sure
46 that the intent is met, with some variation by region.

1
2 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

3
4 *Kitty Simonds:* I was so excited about this, because I'm a fierce proponent of
5 strategic planning. Just to give you a little background, sixteen
6 years ago, the NMFS moved from the Southwest Region and
7 established a new region, and that's the region that we have now,
8 the Pacific Islands Region. In that year, the three of us got
9 together and developed a strategic plan. We decided, and we had
10 every employee of each of the three offices involved in this, and
11 so, looking back, I can see where, under the national strategic plan
12 and the huge strategic plan and our strategic plan, that the elements
13 are pretty much the same, and so I was really happy when Chris
14 started all of this, and so the council kind of jumped in at our
15 March meeting and discussed this, and so I have been in touch.
16 Our staffs have been in touch with -- We have our points of
17 contact.

18
19 We are also working together on the geographic plan for us, and
20 we're, as I said, really working together, which we have a
21 document that we share, and we're inputting, and so we're moving
22 along that way.

23
24 *Chris Oliver:* I just want the record to reflect that Kitty is not infuriated by this
25 process.

26
27 *Kitty Simonds:* Even though there is no money in this.

28
29 *Jessica McCawley:* Mel.

30
31 *Mel Bell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I mean, I fully understand the value in
32 strategic planning, and I appreciate it, and you guys are doing a
33 great job, and I understand the top-down direction in this as we
34 move forward, and I appreciate the flexibility that perhaps we'll
35 have at the regional level, because we're all a little different, in
36 terms of how we might approach some of these things, but one of
37 the things that I want to make sure is that, as we kind of move
38 forward with this concept of a blue economy and some of the
39 things we're bringing onboard, in terms of priorities, things like
40 aquaculture and the importance of maximizing our current wild-
41 caught markets and those sorts of things, that we have the ability to
42 kind of balance what that looks like at our level.

43
44 Meaning that some of these things that we're dealing with now,
45 like aquaculture and ecosystem-based management concepts and
46 climate change issues, they're all data driven, and they all require

1 money, and there's only so much money. We can't make any
2 more money, but we're struggling right now, I know in my own
3 council, with making sure, I think, that we have adequate funding
4 to deal with things like the flow of information necessary for stock
5 assessments, fishery-independent and dependent, but fishery-
6 independent data collection programs and things.

7
8 That's a big priority for us. That also feeds into one of the
9 important strategies, which is maximizing wild-caught markets and
10 all for the fisheries, and dealing with market issues too, and so I
11 just wanted to make sure, as we sort of take on new things, and
12 they're directed from on-high, and I get that, that we're sensitive to
13 the needs we have, and maybe this is more of budget discussion
14 later on, but we're able to kind of adjust what we need to do, or
15 what our participation in those areas might look like based on our
16 ability to keep doing what we're doing now.

17
18 I know there are some things, and we've discussed some things
19 that may fall out that we're not funding and some things we may
20 fund, but keep in mind for us, again just in my -- I'm only familiar,
21 really, with my region, but we are highly dependent upon these
22 stock assessments being conducted, and the stock assessments are
23 highly dependent upon data flow, and the data flowing in are
24 dependent upon the programs we have in place to acquire those
25 data, and so, as we move forward and priorities shift a little bit, I
26 just want to make sure that we have the flexibility to kind of deal
27 with that.

28
29 It may look different in each region, and I get that, but for us, and
30 I'm speaking just for the South Atlantic that I am familiar with, I
31 know that's always a big factor for us, is, gosh, we really can't
32 keep some of the programs funded to the level they need to to get
33 the data in to feed the stock assessments, and the stock assessments
34 feed our ability to manage the species, and we've got a pretty
35 diverse menu of fisheries that we deal with here, and so it sounds
36 like we've got some flexibility as we work on what the regional
37 plans look like, but that's a sensitive point, I think, for us in the
38 South Atlantic, for sure.

39
40 *Paul Doremus:*

41 Than you, and that's indeed why we structured the process this
42 way, is to get that kind of flavor embedded into the plans, and,
43 ultimately, yes, the next step, and one broad way to think about
44 this, is the strategy and strategic documentation like this talks
45 about what we should do, budget proposals and what you can do at
46 a specified level, and, ultimately, a budget allocation and a spend
plan, which we'll do, but it gives us a reference point here about

1 really what those overarching imperatives are, like our core stock
2 assessment work and the like, and so thank you. Indeed, that's
3 what we're hoping to get out of this.
4

5 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more comments or questions? Gregg.
6

7 *Gregg Waugh:* Thanks for the presentation. It seems to me that this geographic
8 plan is going to be sort of step-one, because it's going to get
9 councils and the regions and the centers working together and
10 talking together about this, and, in our region, in addition to the
11 fishery-independent data that's so critical, is our Center has the
12 equivalent of five councils, and it's got three councils, HMS, and
13 ICCAT.
14

15 When we work on this geographic plan, it's going to be kind of
16 high-level, but then, after that, there is going to have to be some
17 nuts-and-bolts work, as you just talked about, and I would hope
18 that, within the regions, the regions will work with the councils, so
19 that we can have some input at that level as well, because that's
20 where the details are going to be hammered out.
21

22 *Jessica McCawley:* More questions? All right. If there's not any more questions,
23 thank you, Paul, and thank you, Chris, and I believe that that's our
24 last item that we had before lunch, and so we'll go ahead and break
25 for lunch, and please be back here at 1:30. Also, at some point this
26 afternoon, we're going to take a big group picture, and so just to
27 give you a heads-up that sometime later in the day we'll be taking
28 a photo. Thanks.
29

30 *(Recess)*

1 **12. MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET UPDATE**

2
3 *Jessica McCawley:* First up is Paul is going to give us a presentation on the budget
4 outlook and an administrative update.
5

6 *Paul Doremus:* Thank you, Madam Chair. It is time for our favorite topic, the
7 perfect post-lunch topic. It will ward off the post-lunch haze.
8 We're going to cover a little bit on where we are with 2019, and
9 focus on council funding in particular, and then 2020 and looking
10 ahead.

11
12 As is true with every point in time, we're always managing three
13 budget cycles at once, at a minimum, and our strategic focus is out
14 to 2022, but, right now, we're executing 2019. We are responding
15 to congressional questions about the President's budget for 2020,
16 and I will talk to you about that, the structure of that request, and
17 we are internally formulating, with NOAA, our planned
18 submission to the department, typically in mid-summer, for our
19 FY21 budget request.
20

21 All of that was pushed a little bit to the right because of the
22 shutdown, and that shutdown had a lot of impacts on our actual
23 FY19 execution, and I won't digress on those now, but I did want
24 to note that it's the gray bar right here in our January timeframe
25 where things kind of went dormant, with a few exceptions, and
26 that's had kind of a cascading effect across the organization.
27

28 Let's focus on 2019, and get to the council and commission line in
29 particular, and we'll provide detail on that, but, as you know, as is
30 customarily the case, all of our budget information is readily
31 available online, and I will be providing just the highlights here. In
32 FY19, we were very pleased to see a continued pattern of
33 congressional attention to our needs across all of our major
34 program areas.
35

36 We're looking here at Protected Resources, Fisheries Science and
37 Management, Enforcement, and Habitat as our major budget
38 buckets, if you will, totaling \$908.8 million in our operations,
39 research, and facilities line, and that is \$25.9 million increase over
40 the 2018 enacted amount, and it's \$98.3 million above the
41 President's budget request. We remain in a space, as we have with
42 2018, of a very big gap between where Congress ended up and
43 where the administration proposed, and that's kind of continuing
44 with 2020, and we'll get into that in a minute.
45

46 One thing that I do want to note with these increases here, 2017 to

1 2018 and 2018 to 2019, is related to a topic that we've touched on
2 briefly, and I've had some side conversations with some of you
3 about, but a lot of these increases that we have seen, and they've
4 been reasonable over this two-year time period, and it's over a 6
5 percent increase, that is kind of keeping up with inflation.
6 Inflation has been averaging around 2 percent, CPI has, over the
7 last several years, and 2019 is trending in the same direction.
8 Right now, it's around 1.9.

9
10 We made a request in the President's budget for 1.3 percent of
11 adjustments to base, which is essentially inflationary increases, and
12 those were not provided, but other increases were that were highly
13 specified, and so part of what we're seeing, as we go through this
14 budget cycle, is very directed increases, and so we can have, at the
15 same time that we're seeing our budget go up, we can have
16 program areas that are, as we were talking about with data
17 collection issues, for both us and our state partners that we fund,
18 we can still have some core functions feeling stressed, from a fiscal
19 point of view, and so that's just part of the reality of how the
20 budget is racked and how there is generally insufficient attention to
21 rising costs of doing business, not even to the consumer price
22 index. In most cases, research science-intensive functions have a
23 rate of inflationary increase that's much higher than the CPI, and
24 so we continue -- Despite a growth environment, we continue to
25 struggle with that issue, all of us, I think, collectively.

26
27 A bunch of different increases directed to our ESA and MMPA
28 consultations, North Atlantic right whales and Pacific salmon, and
29 it's very specific areas where those increases have been allocated,
30 and I wanted to focus, for obvious reasons, on the one specific area
31 where we were very pleased to see, after a long period of identical
32 year funding, an increase to the council and commission line. We
33 have the top-level breakout here by councils and interstate fisheries
34 commissions, et cetera. As you can see, this total line, from \$35.8
35 to \$40.2, is about a 12 percent increase from FY18, a very
36 significant and much welcome \$4.2 million increase.

37
38 This is, among other things, a big focus here is on continuing our
39 work on deregulatory actions, a priority of the administration, and
40 trying to minimize the burden on commercial and recreational
41 fisheries while maintaining, obviously, our core functions, and the
42 direction that we received with this 12 percent increase over 2018
43 was to apply that equally across the councils and commissions,
44 which is what we have done, quite literally, a 2.15 increase to the
45 councils and 2.15 to the commissions.
46

1 As customary, year to year, that allocation of that increase is
2 formulaic. It's by basically our council distribution that we have
3 maintained for many years, and so that's generally good news, and
4 that is kind of the top-line distribution, along with all of these
5 component pieces of fisheries management program and services,
6 PPA, where we have historically had a range of different areas
7 where NEPA funding and ACL implementation and regulatory
8 streamlining and other kinds of things have contributed here,
9 similar to prior years, to the overall council-by-council allocation,
10 and so this gives you the bottom line of where we are.

11
12 I will draw your attention just to one thing. Last year, in 2018, we
13 had, down here, the deregulatory regulatory reform at \$1 million,
14 and were able to add for 2018, and, because of the increase from
15 Congress directed towards essentially those functions, and we were
16 clear that that was a one-year focus, and we were able to get a
17 larger increase this year, and so that goes to zero in subsequent
18 years, but we have the increases up here, and so that's one change
19 from last year that is important to note, and so that's the key table
20 that at this time of year is always what we make a point of trying to
21 make available to you, so that everybody can see where they stand
22 for the year. The usual rescissions and all factor into the bottom
23 line here, but, overall, it's a more positive situation than last year,
24 and that's good news there.

25
26 As far as moving the money out, we are well down the path of
27 getting everything done, and we're on schedule for having all of
28 the funds, and that's from all of those different categories and not
29 just the regional councils and commissions, but all those other
30 distributed and in your hands by the end of this month. That's the
31 core news there, and so all of those lines from the prior table will
32 be allocated and released to each council by May 31.

33
34 We are also getting into this period of a renewed five-year award.
35 Many of you that have been around for a while have been through
36 this. We've already had a webinar on May 8 for executive
37 directors and administrative officers to prepare for this, and so I
38 think folks should know where we're going, but, as always, we
39 have to kind of have a clean break from one year to the next, but
40 we're also trying to manage the transition as seamlessly as
41 possible, and so we are making available the capability for no-cost
42 extensions, and we are also preparing for implementing partial-
43 year funding in year-one of the award, so we don't have these gaps
44 in funding flow, which can be difficult, not just in this arena, but
45 with lots of our other sustained grants over time, where we have
46 five-year renewals, and we're trying to figure out a pretty smooth

1 alignment of clutch and gear, so that there's not a long pause there
2 and loss of acceleration without getting into our new five-year
3 round of funding, and so trying to make the transition as smooth as
4 possible.

5
6 That is 2019, and, overall, it's a good picture for us. In the
7 environment that we talked about a little bit yesterday, it's a very
8 welcome picture, to have an increase in our funding of that
9 magnitude and sustained over the last few years.

10
11 The FY20 budget was released on March 18. Again, a little bit of
12 a delay there, because of the shutdown, and all of that information
13 on the 2020 budget is available, and the blue book is the reference
14 place for you to see all of the components, and I will highlight here
15 the Presidential budget against the 2018 and 2019 enacted and
16 omnibus for 2019, and we're seeing the same pattern that we saw
17 in 2018 and 2019 again with the 2020 budget, where there is a very
18 substantial gap. The FY20 Presidential budget is an increase over
19 the FY19 Presidential budget of \$5.4 million, but there's a very
20 substantial gap between the Presidential budget and where we are
21 with our FY19 appropriation to date, on the order of \$190 million,
22 and there is a little bit of detail here on the components of that.

23
24 Keep in mind that the FY20 Presidential budget is building on the
25 decisions and recommendations that were embedded in previous
26 President's budgets, in 2019 and 2018, and so you see here fairly
27 substantial gaps in each of our areas.

28
29 Protected resources is \$13.5 million, and there's a very sizable gap
30 in fisheries science and management of \$60.5, and enforcement
31 and habitat and other accounts, totaling \$190 million, and so
32 there's a pretty big, the largest I've ever seen, difference between
33 what's being proposed by the administration and where Congress
34 is, and so, as you've all seen, year in and year out, the President's
35 budget reference point is prior years President's budget, and
36 Congress's reference point typically is last year's enacted, and so
37 we've got to kind of keep our head around two budget and policy
38 realities that are quite a bit different, and that's the order of
39 magnitude of the difference in each major account.

40
41 The priorities for FY20, where there were some increases, include
42 enforcement and related aspects of the Seafood Import Monitoring
43 Program, and there was \$1.6 million requested there, to largely put
44 people in ports of entry on a risk-based method for distributing that
45 effort and kind of strengthen and build the enforcement component
46 of the Seafood Inspection Monitoring Program that's about a year

1 in, and it's fairly new.
2

3 Also, ESA and MMPA permitting capacity, there's some increases
4 in aquaculture and a focus on deregulation, and these are
5 composition issues funded within base, but definitely areas of
6 focus, where we have been asked to kind of dedicate our efforts
7 and a lot of our planning work. We just spoke yesterday about
8 aquaculture, and that also is, while a major priority area, like a lot
9 of other aspects, we are exercising that priority within base
10 resources, largely, and we have seen some increases from
11 Congress, which has been very helpful, and they also have been
12 very directed.
13

14 There's a lot of focus on maintaining our science capacity in the
15 Northeast and Northwest, and we have labs in the Northwest in
16 Manchester and in the Northeast in Milford that have not seen
17 much increase in funding, and there's been a lot of congressional
18 attention and request that we maintain staffing levels there and
19 support for those research functions and also continue to support
20 some of our grantmaking functions in the aquaculture domain
21 around different parts of the country.
22

23 On the deregulation front, also noted here, we will continue to
24 prioritize support for the deregulatory changes that we talked
25 about, and, in my thinking, this goes into the broader category of
26 regulatory efficiency and some of the things that we talked about
27 yesterday, where we're trying to look at ways in which we can
28 approach regulatory efficiency with an eye towards improving
29 utilization rates and overall economic success of wild-capture
30 harvest, and so I think that's a means to an end, in our thinking,
31 and not an end in itself. It's to improve the economic viability of
32 our sustainably-produced wild-capture fisheries.
33

34 Back to our regional council and commission line, there is also a
35 gap in the 2020 budget between that and where we ended up, and
36 it's kind of going back in time a little bit there, and so there is,
37 within this total, a \$29 million request for the councils, which is
38 about a million over FY19 enacted, and so that is embedded within
39 this number, as noted here, an increase in the regional councils.
40 The total line though is decreasing from FY19 enacted. The \$3.7
41 million decrease for the interstate fishery management
42 commissions is what is driving that.
43

44 Pressing ahead, all eyes are on Congress. Congressional
45 deliberations are underway, and we have been answering tons of
46 questions, and we do have this continued space, and we are also

1 continuing to operate, as is noted here as the bottom line, in an era
2 of continued budget and policy uncertainty, and this has been a
3 theme that you've heard from me, from all of us, for some time
4 now, a number of years, and it's been the case really since FY12,
5 when our whole federal budget dynamic started changing, and we
6 are in a post-earmark era, and we're in a sort of a post-growth era,
7 and we're in an era of a great deal of deficit and debt pressure and
8 competing policy priorities, particularly on domestic, non-defense
9 discretionary spending.

10
11 That is resulting in different priorities on the administrative and
12 congressional side and a large and continued variance between the
13 proposed and enacted budgets, and we have substantial program
14 reductions in the President's budget that have huge effects in our
15 organization, if enacted, and those are communicated to our staff
16 and to our stakeholders, and ultimately to Congress, and decisions
17 will be reached, but it is difficult for an organization to keep its
18 head in two different games at the same time, and we also have this
19 issue that I noted earlier about the rising costs of doing business
20 over time continuing to create some pressure on us to figure out
21 how to deal with existing capabilities as well as change in the
22 composition of work that we're being expected to conduct.

23
24 From our vantage point, we are continuing -- This is really a top-
25 order issue for our leadership team as a whole, and we've been
26 approaching this challenge at a number of different levels. One of
27 them we talked about today, which is strategic alignment and
28 program prioritizations, making sure we are orchestrating the
29 capabilities that we have, our resources, our people, our science,
30 our technology, towards a common set of objectives that are the
31 highest priority objectives of the administration and of our core
32 mission functions.

33
34 That does involve optimizing the use of base resources over time,
35 and we have been talking to many people about various programs
36 and gains where we can see efficiency opportunities in data
37 collection and certain types of biological analyses. New tools offer
38 some promise for essentially reduced labor and greater
39 productivity.

40
41 We are also self-consciously, and this is part of the national and
42 regional aspect of our strategy, but also how we handle annual
43 priorities and dealing with fiscal issues and unanticipated things
44 that we've been running into frequently, like loss of sea days. We
45 are trying to take best advantage of the organizational diversity that
46 we have to figure out how best to do stuff, to adopt new practices

1 around the organization rapidly, to form alliances with other
2 organizations, where we can, and to be as responsive to change as
3 we can within our broad institutional regulatory and financial
4 constraints.

5
6 A big piece as well for us is looking at areas where we can explore
7 and use partnerships more strategically to get the work of the
8 organization done through that strategic alignment and aligning
9 aspects of our work with those of other organizations. Just, in
10 talking with a number of different people here, while at this event,
11 such as over lunch, with the regional IOOS program, and looking
12 at -- They are coming up on a renewal, and we're talking with
13 them about what our priorities are and what matters to the fisheries
14 world and where their capabilities could be relevant, and those
15 types of alliances, I think, are ones that we can always work harder
16 to better leverage, and, also, all of these depend on a very robust
17 mechanism for listening to and responding to and shaping the
18 hearing of the expectations and shaping of expectations on our
19 ability to respond from our stakeholder communities at large, at a
20 lot of different levels.

21
22 This is how we're trying to operate in this environment, and we're
23 putting a real premium on planning and on collective region-to-
24 headquarters alignment, both of our priorities, but also of our fiscal
25 plans, our resource choices, our strategic efforts on science and
26 technology, and a variety of other areas.

27
28 You will note, in our strategic plan, that some of the areas of
29 organizational excellence that are called out there dealing with the
30 challenges of facilities recap and other partnership-dependent
31 activity, the federal government generally is switching from build
32 and own to leased. We're looking at that reality for aspects of our
33 recap strategy over time.

34
35 We have a focus there on technology and on human resource
36 strategies for managing our people more effectively, and all of that
37 focus in the strategic plan is driven by this reality, and we're using
38 those capabilities as a way to respond. I will leave it at that and
39 turn the mic back to the Chair, and thank you for your attention,
40 and I welcome any questions that you may have.

41
42 *Jessica McCawley:* Great. Thanks, Paul. I think, first up, we're going to go to Phil
43 and then Gregg.

44
45 *Phil Anderson:* Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks, Paul, for the briefing on the
46 budget. As you know, we had an opportunity to meet amongst the

1 councils here yesterday morning for a bit, and one of the issues
2 that we brought forward was the issue associated with our annual
3 trawl surveys. We had recently learned from the Northwest
4 Science Center, at our April meeting, that the frequency of those
5 trawl surveys was going to be reduced from annual surveys and
6 backing off to doing every other year.

7
8 When I brought that issue forward at the table, I learned from some
9 other councils that other councils were having some similar kinds
10 of concerns, and not exactly the same, but in terms of data
11 collection that is critical for doing stock assessments and other
12 important work, and I appreciate the opportunity that I had this
13 morning in talking with both Chris and Sam and Cisco about this
14 issue, and, in particular, it appears that perhaps there's a way,
15 through this, that we can get back to a point where we can collect
16 the necessarily data to continue to doing our sound stewardship in
17 the groundfish resource on the west coast.

18
19 I was looking at your strategic plan and the resource management
20 piece and the fisheries science and management, and, really, as we
21 talked yesterday, this, in particular, is an example of kind of that
22 critical mission function that we believe is essential to the councils
23 being able to do our jobs and recommending regulations to you
24 that are based on sound science, and so we just wanted to call that
25 to your attention, that we hold this type of important collection of
26 biological data to help inform our stock assessments and to inform
27 our management decisions as a very high priority, and I wanted to
28 voice that.

29
30 *Paul Doremus:*

31 Thank you, Phil, and I'm sure you heard in your conversations this
32 morning, and we'll continue -- We certainly understand that's core
33 business, and I will make a general note. In light of some of the
34 discussion we've had around strategic planning and longer-term
35 thinking, and these sorts of long-term cost pressures on an
36 increasingly-expensive data collection machine, which we run,
37 largely, and thinking of our electronic monitoring discussion and
38 everything else, we have got to figure out ways to be able to meet
39 the same management objectives, the same and increasing level of
40 scientific confidence, in new and more cost-effective ways, if
41 we're going to continue to grow in a manner that we have in the
42 past and see that type of benefit play out in our resource
43 management choices.

44 It's certainly core business, and we fully appreciate your views,
45 and I do think that, longer term, our focus on scientific and
46 technical advancements in the observing domain, as well as in the

1 data management arena as well, are going to be really critical to be
2 able to maintain this capability.

3
4 *Chris Oliver:* Phil, I agree with you a hundred percent about -- When you talk
5 about mission-essential functions, and I have said it many times,
6 that I think perhaps the highest priority of all is maintaining our
7 stock assessment survey capacity. I don't have a satisfactory
8 answer for you today of how we're going to do that, but we are --
9 Our leadership council is meeting next week, and we'll be
10 continuing those discussions.

11
12 *Phil Anderson:* Thanks, Chris. We all appreciate the effort that you're putting into
13 that and the focus on it, and I appreciate that we're on the same
14 page, in terms of the importance and the critical nature of the
15 function of collecting that important data for managing our
16 resources. Thanks.

17
18 *Jessica McCawley:* Gregg.

19
20 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for the presentation, Paul. I
21 had a question about the deregulation regulatory reform monies
22 that we got before. On the CCC call, we were told that wasn't
23 going to be provided this year, due in part to the other increase,
24 and so we went back and looked at the minutes from last year's
25 CCC meeting, because it was my understanding that that was
26 going to be an ongoing contribution, that million, and that's --
27 When you read the minutes, on pages 12 and 14, in response to a
28 question, that was sort of the response, that if there were no
29 reductions, if you're level funded and there are no surprises on
30 rescissions or large reductions, we hope to be able to continue it.
31 Some of us were expecting, or hoping, that that money would be
32 continued, and there is certainly more deregulation and efficiency
33 work that we could do if we had that money in addition to the other
34 increase, and so I was just wondering if you had any further
35 thoughts on that.

36
37 *Chris Oliver:* Thanks, Gregg, and I don't have the transcripts in front of me, and
38 I recall the discussion. I know, shortly after I came into this
39 position, we sat down, Paul and Sam and Brian and others on the
40 leadership team, to try to figure out how we could get some
41 additional funding for the councils from our own -- From
42 manipulation of our own budget and rearranging some of our own
43 priorities to get the councils an extra million dollars.

44
45 It's not a lot, when you spread it across all eight councils, but,
46 relative to your overall budget, we felt that it was important to get

1 some money there. I don't recall the exact comment, but I
2 certainly recall the spirit and intent of that discussion, and it
3 certainly, from my perspective, was, all things being equal, we
4 would do everything we could, depending on budget outcomes, to
5 help ensure that that new increased level didn't go away. I would
6 like to think we had some effect on that \$2.2 million increase, and
7 certainly I've had a number of inquiries and requests from the
8 appropriations office since then about council funding needs, and
9 so hopefully some of that input was helpful to getting that increase.

10
11 In any event, given that \$2.2 million increase, we did not feel the
12 need to come up with that additional million, and I guess I would
13 take it a little bit further. Paul mentioned the 2020 President's
14 budget, and I can remember sitting around this table, when I was a
15 council executive director, and saying to Paul and to Sam and
16 others at the NOAA Fisheries leadership table that, yes, it's one
17 thing what Congress does, but why can't you even put us in your
18 budget, your proposed budget, for an increase, and I've come to
19 learn a lot more about how the budget process works, and we don't
20 necessarily get to say what we think we should get or the councils
21 should get.

22
23 The fact that the 2020 President's budget is -- I think it's \$190
24 million less than the 2019 enacted, yet it includes an additional
25 million above the 2019 enacted, and so, over a two-year period,
26 that is totaling a \$3 million increase for the councils, and I
27 personally put a lot of effort into internal discussions to make sure
28 that that happened and that the councils weren't harmed. In fact,
29 you got an additional million in the Presidential budget.

30
31 I guess, all in all, I think it reflects a much greater, in my mind,
32 understanding and appreciation for the work the councils do,
33 particularly given this administration's focus on the regulatory
34 environment and our obvious ties to that regulatory environment,
35 and I think a greater appreciation for the need for adequate council
36 funding, and I think you see that reflected in both the 2019
37 congressional budget and the President's 2020 budget, and so that
38 was a little bit long-winded answer, but thank you.

39
40 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty and then Bill.

41
42 *Kitty Simonds:* Maybe I misunderstood, but I thought the million dollars came
43 from a deregulation line item that you had, that that's where that
44 money came from, and for us to use it for our deregulation
45 activities, and that was my understanding. I mean, it just seems
46 kind of odd that -- Doremus is so smooth that I want to make sure

1 that I heard correctly that this other million dollars in 2020 sort of
2 makes up for that million dollars that we're not getting this year,
3 and so that's --

4
5 *Chris Oliver:* I will let the smooth guy answer. That's why he does a lot of the
6 talking.

7
8 *Kitty Simonds:* Chris, we do have to thank you, because this year is the first time
9 in ten years, because Doremus kind of skimmed over that part. He
10 said a few years, but it's been ten years since the councils have
11 received an increase, and this is the first year, and I think we have
12 to thank you for that, but I think you need to fix this deregulation
13 thing. Really. Am I understanding right? Didn't we understand
14 that that million dollars came for us to help with deregulation?

15
16 *Paul Doremus:* Yes, Kitty.

17
18 *Kitty Simonds:* Exactly, and so did you have a line item for that that was reduced?

19
20 *Paul Doremus:* There's not a line item, actually. We wanted to, because of the
21 very high focus of the administration on that activity and the fact
22 that we had not gotten resources or had the lead time to get it into
23 the President's budget, that was a one-year -- There is no line item
24 for deregulatory action.

25
26 That was a one-year effort for us to kind of scrape together, pull
27 together, do whatever we could, to put, as Chris said, a meaningful
28 amount, and not a massive amount, but a meaningful amount of
29 resource behind this priority, because it put a lot of burden on you,
30 and so there is nothing in the federal budget world that is better to
31 see than a base increase, and so we saw a base increase that we
32 contributed to the logic and congressional attention to that, as did
33 many of you, and thank you, and so we got that base increase of
34 more than double that amount to focus on this overarching need.

35
36 We do consider that to be a success, and we generally try to avoid
37 begging and borrowing in any given year, because it's hard to
38 replicate in a future year, because circumstances are always
39 different.

40
41 *Kitty Simonds:* I understand that.

42
43 *Paul Doremus:* Yes, and so that's the reality. We're winding that one-million into
44 the base increase, and, through the 2020 Presidential budget, we're
45 communicating to Congress the need to continue that.

46

1 *Kitty Simonds:* Right, and so, for us, we were able to hire one person with the
2 increase that we got this year, and so we're grateful for that, but
3 the other line item that I always find interesting is protected
4 resources. You know that our fisheries, all of our management
5 measures, are based on ESA and MMPA, and so I see you've got a
6 \$6 million increase for this year and then a decrease for 2020, and
7 what I'm leading up to is I'm requesting an increase in my turtle
8 grant. Should I tell you how much? By \$300,000. Thank you.

9
10 If it's true that you got \$6 million for that, you know what our
11 region runs on and what our fishery runs on, and it's on those two
12 acts, and it's not necessarily Magnuson, and so we have staff for
13 that, and we have projects, and let's see. When Senator Stevens
14 and Senator Inouye were around, we did receive millions of
15 dollars, which then went to your observer program, and so we're
16 down to a minimum amount right now in that turtle grant, and so I
17 am making this request. Thank you very much.

18
19 *Paul Doremus:* I could mention just generally, and thank you, Kitty. I appreciate
20 that in that domain there are enormous -- There's an enormously
21 wide array of program activities that are funded. All of these
22 increases have, behind them, basically a business case on where
23 the resources need to be most effectively used, and the bulk of that
24 increase is really around staff that we need to increase our ESA
25 consultation rate, to have less of a backlog and a faster response
26 time, and so that's a priority of the administration, and that's where
27 a good portion of the resources are, but I appreciate your point, and
28 we'll take that forward.

29
30 *Kitty Simonds:* Well, we do work with our region and our center on biological
31 evaluations, and we write many of the documents with them, and
32 so it's not just the region and the center staff. I mean, our staff
33 works on these as well.

34
35 *Jessica McCawley:* Bill, I believe you had your hand up?

36
37 *Bill Tweit:* Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks, Paul and Chris, for this
38 walk-through. I am not quite -- I guess this is really more of an
39 observation, in a lot of ways, than a question, but it strikes me at
40 least that there's a lot of mixed messages in the President's 2020
41 budget, and the slide that shows the snapshot of the overall NOAA
42 Fisheries budget illustrates that fairly well.

43
44 You know, we've heard pretty consistently from this
45 administration that IUU enforcement is a major priority, and that
46 certainly makes sense, that it should be, and so it's hard to

1 reconcile then the \$15 million drop in the enforcement category
2 that's being proposed for 2020.
3

4 Also, we've heard a lot at this meeting too about domestic seafood
5 production, which is another really great priority, and Phil brought
6 up the issue of, at least as we presently understand the 2020
7 budget, the kinds of survey reductions that are embedded in that
8 and will make it very difficult for the councils to deliver even
9 current levels of seafood production over time, and I think you all
10 understand that quite well, the mechanisms that are at work there.
11

12 Equally, we've heard that Sea Grant is essentially zeroed out, and
13 the implications of that for achieving some of the aquaculture goals
14 are, I think, obvious to everybody around the table too, and those
15 sort of mixed messages are troubling, because they make it hard
16 for us to really be certain about working towards some of the
17 objectives that I think we all share with the administration. As I
18 said, I can't figure out a way to turn that into a question, but I
19 would certainly welcome any comments on it.
20

21 *Paul Doremus:*

22 Thank you, and the point is well taken. It is a large and complex
23 budget, and I think there's some overarching imperatives that the
24 administration has been communicating very broadly about trying
25 to adequately support their priorities around defense and homeland
26 security and other areas, and so those are kind of upper-story
27 things that drive a lot of the -- They really set the context for
28 agency budgets that have an enormous amount of detail.

29 From a policy and budget point of view, shaking the agencies can
30 create these kind of kind of cross-currents that often show up in
31 really detailed aspects of the budget, and so the point is well taken
32 there, and I think, generally speaking, the administration is
33 expecting us to respond to our priorities and what are the
34 circumstances and do the best we can with our existing resources.
35

36 I will leave it at that for now. What I do tell our staff, in this
37 context, is that the President's budget, at all times, in any year and
38 in any administration, are proposed budgets. Congress disposes,
39 and so, right now, we have an enacted FY19 budget that's
40 favorable, and it's a strong budget, and we're focusing on
41 executing that.
42

43 *Jessica McCawley:* Tom.

44
45 *Bill Tweit:*

46 I'm sorry, but could I ask one follow-up just relative to the
enforcement, in particular?

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Paul Doremus: Sure.

Bill Tweit: I'm wondering if the -- I haven't had a chance to look ourselves, but, in the enforcement category, can you tell me what, if anything, is put into the joint enforcement agreements? I think you're aware of how important those are to the west coast councils and the west coast states, at least in terms of -- It's often the state enforcement agencies that provide a lot of the actual uniformed, on-the-water kind of presence, and so those are sort of critically important to us.

Paul Doremus: Yes, we do understand that, and this budget continues previous year budget proposals that did not include funding for the joint enforcement agreements, and we certainly recognize the points that you're making.

Jessica McCawley: Tom.

Thomas Nies: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks for the presentation, Paul. I am probably not going to be able to frame this well into a question either, and it's more an observation, and that refers to the slide that's on the screen now, which is the Fiscal Year 2020 President's budget and the apparent increase in the regional councils' PPA.

I would note that we have, for at least two or three years, have had the Senate provide some pretty, in some cases, ambiguous direction on how the council and commission increases should be split between the councils and commissions. Even this year, I see that the agency split the amount in half, rather than distributing the percentage increase equally, and we could probably argue for hours over whether the language was interpreted correctly or not, but what seems pretty clear to me is that this increase that's proposed in the President's budget is due, in part, to the agency's decision to reduce funding for the fisheries commissions, I think you said by three or three-and-a-half million dollars.

Given the history of the Senate report language over the last three or four years, where the Senate has seemed to take very good care of the commissions, to the point of one year saying that the entire increase was to go to the commissions, I'm just skeptical that we're actually going to see this happen, and so I guess my -- The only way I can frame this as a question is will you look for that million dollars somewhere else when the Senate tells you how to split up the council and commission PPA in a different way?

Paul Doremus: That's a choice that we will have to deal with if it gets presented to

1 us that way, and I think, looking at how both the Senate and the
2 House discussed this issue and decided to allocate an increase to
3 the council and commission line and distribute it equally, I think
4 that that's a good indication of the thinking in Congress, and I
5 would expect that to be their starting reference point for
6 entertaining this proposal.

7
8 The only other observation that I will make, and it's really just
9 echoing a point that Chris made, is there is a long path towards
10 what shows up on paper in the President's budget that includes a
11 lot of steps and a lot of agents and a lot of actors and a lot of
12 interests, and it is, again, a proposed budget. We will look to how
13 Congress responds and answer any questions that they have about
14 the implications of this approach, and then we'll see where things
15 land and take it on from there.

16
17 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. I see Dave and then Chuck.

18
19 *David Witherell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Paul, could you remind me of the
20 relationship between the amount enacted and how that translates
21 into the councils' PPA or spend plan? For example, in 2019, the
22 enacted amount is \$27,849, and the spend plan is \$26,612.

23
24 *Paul Doremus:* I think what you're pointing to here, paging back quickly, is we
25 have noted, on this chart, I think you're pointing to this number.

26
27 *David Witherell:* Yes.

28
29 *Paul Doremus:* Then compared to this number right here?

30
31 *David Witherell:* Yes, and I was just trying to figure out what that relationship was.

32
33 *Paul Doremus:* There is a reduction there that is our management and
34 administrative expenses reduction, and so that happens with all
35 budget allocation, the enacted levels, where we have an M&A
36 charge to be able to basically pay for the pieces of our organization
37 that are responsible for overseeing the administration of the effort,
38 and so that's an M&A charge that comes out of every PPA.

39
40 *David Witherell:* That's a percentage off the top? Is that applied as a percentage?

41
42 *Paul Doremus:* Yes.

43
44 *David Witherell:* Thank you.

45
46 *Jessica McCawley:* Chuck.

1
2 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you. Thank you for the presentation, Paul. This is more of
3 a comment, and it gets back a little bit to how the deregulation
4 money was characterized, and it's just a comment that I think
5 we've heard three different messages on that in the last couple of
6 months, and the first message was we're not getting the
7 management program and services item that we got last year, but
8 we are getting the base increase. Then, in your presentation, Paul,
9 you said that the base increase was a substitute and an increase
10 from the management program services million dollars, and then,
11 from Chris, we heard that he thinks that their interaction with
12 Congress had something to do with that increase, in regard to the
13 deregulation part, and so I think what I heard from Chris was that's
14 part of it, but not all of it.

15
16 I guess my comment is that we spent a fair amount of time sort of
17 wringing our hands over this particular issue, and we didn't really
18 get clarity until today about what it was, and we still got maybe
19 two different messages today, and so just, in the future, it would be
20 nice to know when shifts occur and what they represent. I think
21 that would be helpful.

22
23 We do track this pretty closely, and we want to know if we're
24 expected to do something with that money besides deregulation. I
25 know there was some other language in the congressional reports
26 about priorities for assessing priority species and the like, and so I
27 guess I would just request that, at the first briefing, if we could get
28 maybe a little more detail when categories shift or money shifts
29 around, and, if we could get that upfront, that would be
30 appreciated, and I think it would save us a lot of time trying to
31 figure out what it means and if we want to address it in some way
32 or other, but just having a clear picture from the get-go would be
33 helpful for us. Thank you.

34
35 *Paul Doremus:* Point well taken. Thank you.

36
37 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more questions? All right. Then we're going to move
38 on to the next topic, unless you guys have something else on this
39 one.

40
41 *Paul Doremus:* Thank you.

42
43 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thanks, you guys. Next up, we have the Shifting
44 Distributions and Changing Productivity, and it looks like Cisco
45 and Melissa.

1 **13. SHIFTING DISTRIBUTIONS & CHANGING PRODUCTIVITY**
2 **TECHNICAL MEMO**
3

4 *Cisco Werner:* Thank you very much. I will do a quick introduction, and then
5 Melissa will make the bulk of the presentation. Yesterday, of
6 course, Sam spoke on EBFM and related activities, and this is, in
7 part, obviously, something that stems from that. It is something
8 that also, in some ways, relates to the conversations today about
9 the importance of understanding and sampling and making sure
10 that we keep sampling the oceans and collecting the data that we
11 need to, in view of changing conditions that we're all familiar
12 with, whether it's on the west coast or the east coast or in the Gulf
13 of Mexico, but we are seeing changes that result in species shifts.

14
15 Today, Melissa will be speaking to that, to the species distributions
16 and changing productivity, and particularly also in reference to a
17 technical report, and the documents at least describe some of the
18 aspects associated with that, and so, with that, I will just turn it
19 over to Melissa. Thank you.
20

21 *Melissa Karp:* Thank you, Cisco, for the introduction. As Cisco said, I'm just
22 going to talk about the results of a working group that was
23 established in 2017 and, through that working group, we developed
24 a tech memo and a journal article, which you guys should all have
25 links to in the agenda, and so I will jump right in.

26
27 We're all aware that oceans are changing. We're seeing increases
28 in temperature and increasing intensity and severity and frequency
29 of extreme events, such as marine heat waves, and also challenges
30 with ocean acidification with decreasing ocean pH, and those
31 changing ocean conditions are having impacts on both our fish and
32 fisheries. We are already observing changes in species
33 distribution, species interactions, and changing productivity.
34

35 An example here, as shown in these two maps, which come from
36 OceanAdapt, which is an online data portal which helps visualize
37 shifting distributions, which is hosted at Rutgers and worked on by
38 Malin Pinsky, and this map here just shows black sea bass
39 distribution in 1972, and then you can see it expanding northward
40 in 2016.
41

42 These shifts in distributions and changing productivity can have
43 some significant impacts on fisheries management, through issues
44 and conflict with allocation decisions, and it can change the
45 effectiveness of spatial and temporal management, and it also can
46 impact the estimates of spawning biomass, maximum sustainable

1 yield, and biological reference points.
2

3 The question then is how do we position ourselves to really
4 address these growing challenges, and, as Cisco mentioned, there's
5 been a couple of kind of strategic documents that have come out in
6 the last five or so years, such as the NOAA Fisheries Climate
7 Science Strategy, the EBFM Roadmap and Policy, and the Next
8 Generation Stock Assessment Improvement Plan, which all really
9 call for and highlight the need for increasing the incorporation of
10 climate and environmental information in stock assessments and
11 fisheries management.
12

13 We started to kind of delve into this issue deeper and developed
14 this working group, and there was a specific charge of trying to
15 develop some more specific and actual recommendations that
16 would help us better incorporate environment and climate into the
17 fisheries management process, and we were really focusing on the
18 two main issues of shifting distributions and changing stock and
19 system productivity. The workgroup was comprised of
20 representatives from each of the six Science Centers, some
21 Regional Offices, staff in the Office of Science & Technology and
22 Office of Sustainable Fisheries.
23

24 We identified six key components or steps in kind of a climate-
25 ready management system that we felt some increased capacity
26 could really improve our ability to account for shifting
27 distributions and changing productivity, and these six steps or
28 components are shown in this diagram here, in the kind of bluish-
29 teal ring here, and these are the ability to detect changes,
30 understanding what is changing, understanding the mechanisms of
31 change, and so why is it changing, evaluating risks and priorities,
32 and so looking at what is most vulnerable to change, assessing and
33 forecasting, and so kind of looking at how will it change in the
34 future, communicating advice, and so how do you deliver and use
35 this key information to inform the management, and then that all
36 kind of sets up the system of climate-ready management and how
37 do you prepare and respond to changes.
38

39 For each of these components, we identified some key needs, some
40 challenges, and then we developed some possible approaches that
41 we felt could help kind of chart our way forward and improve both
42 the science and management under a changing ocean, and so, for
43 the rest of the presentation, I'm just going to walk through each of
44 these steps and highlight some of our key recommendations. I do
45 just want to note that where each region might focus could differ
46 among the regions, because of differing strengths and weaknesses,

1 and I would also like to just recognize that there are some initial
2 efforts that are already underway in some of the regions.
3

4 The capacity of U.S. fisheries management to effectively address
5 species distributions and changing productivity and develop an
6 appropriate response strategy really begins with the ability to
7 detect that a change has occurred, is occurring, or will occur in the
8 future, and the workgroup kind of noted that our capacity to
9 monitor and track changes at the spatial and temporal scale
10 necessary to do this can be challenging under our current
11 monitoring systems, which were largely developed assuming a
12 static system, and so we thought through a couple of
13 recommendations on how we thought we could improve this
14 capacity going forward.
15

16 The first one here is expanding the spatial and temporal coverage
17 of surveys, and so this can be done through just facilitating some
18 survey flexibility to track changes in species distributions. An
19 example here is Pacific sardine surveys, which is able to kind of
20 adjust its survey domain through using a kind of habitat suitability
21 and temperature model. Also, engaging and leveraging the
22 capacity of fishermen and other stakeholders, to kind of see if their
23 observations on the water could help supplement monitoring
24 capacity and inform also the survey adjustment decisions.
25

26 We also discussed building upon and improving the utilization of
27 current systems, such as the Integrated Ocean Observing Systems
28 and other advanced sampling technologies to collect
29 oceanographic information that might not be being sampled by our
30 traditional surveys. Additionally, coordinating and communicating
31 research and survey efforts and results across adjacent jurisdictions
32 will help kind of improve our ability to track changes, especially
33 changes that might be crossing jurisdictional boundaries, and then
34 just tracking and monitoring indicators of change that can serve for
35 early warning, and so these are things like changing composition in
36 catches and catch-at-age, or size-at-age, and pH that we are pretty
37 readily able to monitor on our surveys.
38

39 Not only is it important to understand know when something is
40 changing, but also an important component here is to understand
41 why it's changing and understand the mechanism of change, or
42 drivers of change, may improve our scientific advice and our
43 ability to develop forecasts, and so we have a few
44 recommendations for this component, the first one being collecting
45 oceanographic habitat and multispecies information on all of our
46 standard surveys. Therefore, you can relate changes in catches and

1 survey abundance indices with the underlying environmental
2 conditions.

3
4 Additionally, evaluating stock availability to surveys and fishing
5 gear and catchability changes with environmental conditions,
6 catchability being a very important parameter in stock assessments,
7 and it's used to estimate abundance in our surveys, and so
8 understanding how catchability changes with environmental
9 conditions can really help improve our estimates of abundance,
10 especially under these changing conditions. Lastly, just
11 conducting more process-oriented research that's looking at how
12 temperature and changing ocean acidification can affect important
13 vital rates, such as mortality and growth and fecundity.

14
15 We recognize that not all stocks are equally vulnerable to change
16 and not all changes may warrant the same level of response, in
17 terms of management, and so we felt that a very important
18 component here is kind of the need to evaluate the importance and
19 the magnitude of changes and then to prioritize species that are
20 most at risk or situations where the changes will have the most
21 impact on the stock and its management, and so, for instance, using
22 some spatial analysis techniques or sensitivity analysis to look at
23 the magnitude and the importance of distribution shifts, running
24 variability assessments or tiered risk assessments. Here, I am just
25 pulling an example from the Northeast vulnerability assessment
26 and using that to help prioritize the species at risk of changing
27 conditions.

28
29 The next component here is then conducting assessments and
30 forecasting into the future, and, to help formulize the consideration
31 of ecosystem dynamics in the stock assessments, we recommended
32 including ecosystem considerations in the terms of reference in
33 each regional stock assessment process, and this is something that
34 was also recommended in the Next Generation Stock Assessment
35 Improvement Plan, and that's something that we wanted to
36 reiterate in this tech memo.

37
38 Also, just capitalizing on the recent advancements in spatial,
39 temporal, and physical ecosystem economic models. A good
40 example of a project that's been doing that is the Alaska Climate
41 Integrated Modeling Project, and I'm just showing the schematic in
42 this slide. Also, looking at model predictive skills, and so looking
43 at how models which include environmental linkages and
44 comparative resistance models, which don't include those linkages,
45 and then including that information in the stock assessments and
46 communicating that to councils and SSCs.

1
2 Lastly here, we recommended exploring the use of multi-model
3 inferences techniques when there is not a clear kind of single-best
4 model or a clear hypothesis of what's happening in the system.
5 These techniques allow for a more full evaluation of alternatives
6 and a more complete characterization of the uncertainty in the
7 system.
8

9 We also felt that really, to facilitate kind of a climate-informed
10 decision-making that's able to respond to dynamic and changing
11 environments, that information needs to be communicated
12 effectively and efficiently. Looking across the regions, we noted
13 that there was kind of no standard way of this being communicated
14 from the science to management, and we felt that establishing
15 more routine reporting and standardized templates that have this
16 information on ecosystem dynamics and species distributions and
17 stock assessment information all in one place would help really be
18 able to compare and knowledge-share across species and regions.
19

20 An example here is APECS, which is Assessment Profile
21 Ecosystem Considerations and Socioeconomics, and it's just two-
22 page summaries of the key stock assessment, ecosystem, and
23 socioeconomic information in a concise, easy-to-digest format.
24 Also, utilizing and including decision support tools in stock
25 assessment reports, such as decision tables or decision trees, that
26 could help communicate risk and tradeoffs. Lastly here, just
27 facilitating regular engagement between the scientists and
28 managers and regions and across regions, through open dialogue
29 and workshops and various debriefing activities.
30

31 Then this brings me to that last question of how do you respond to
32 change, and kind of the hope, through identifying challenges and
33 needs in each of the previous steps and components, is that we
34 would be better positioned to provide councils and SSCs with
35 information needed to inform management decisions that are
36 increasingly going to be made under these changing conditions.
37

38 For instance, an important decision is planning for future
39 scenarios, and there are several different tools that we have
40 discussed which can help with planning for future scenarios, one of
41 them being structured scenario planning, which is a very useful
42 tool when the underlying mechanisms of change may not be well
43 understood, and so it allows you to play out future scenarios under
44 different hypotheses of what and how things are changing and then
45 identify potential management actions for each of those different
46 future scenarios, and this can be -- It's closely related to the

1 concept of management strategy evaluations, where you then can
2 evaluate how well those different management responses may or
3 may not meet your objectives and then pick one that seems robust
4 to all of these potential different scenarios. This can help in
5 planning for emerging fisheries, and we also wanted to highlight
6 here the kind of need to develop these plans in conjunction with
7 adjacent jurisdictions.
8

9 Also, for climate-ready management, we have recommended kind
10 of reevaluating spatial and temporal management approaches.
11 Many of the systems that use static spatial and time-area closures
12 may not be most effective when the conditions are changing, and
13 so we recommended using more responsive management, such as
14 dynamic ocean management, to help kind of evaluate and adjust
15 those spatial and temporal management measures using near real-
16 time biological, social, and economic data, an example here being
17 EcoCast, which takes global climate information and regional
18 ocean modeling and also occurrence data, and builds these species
19 distribution models, which then they created this EcoCast product,
20 which fishermen use to avoid areas where there is a high predicted
21 abundance of protected resources and to fish in areas where there
22 is a high predicted abundance of their target species, so they can
23 kind of dynamically avoid areas and lower bycatch incidences.
24

25 Lastly, to recommend developing more responsive harvest
26 strategies and control rules that are able to account for both
27 uncertainty and changes in stock status in response to the
28 environmental conditions, and these types of harvest control rules
29 may increase the successful management of fish stocks influenced
30 by environmental forcing.
31

32 These adaptive harvest control rules can take on several different
33 forms. The simplest would be just adjusting the council risk policy
34 to reduce kind of the desired risk of overfishing, if there is concern
35 that environmental conditions are affecting the stock, but you're
36 not quite sure how exactly that's happening, and just increasing the
37 uncertainty buffer there. You can also use empirical management
38 procedures, and so triggers and thresholds, to adjust the fishing
39 rates. Then the most kind of data-intensive one here would be
40 developing changing biological reference points that are able to
41 respond to recruitment forecasts and regime shift information.
42 Also, lastly here, just considering population resilience, age
43 structure, and genetic diversity. Populations that have a more
44 diverse age structure and an older age structure tend to be more
45 resilient to changing conditions.
46

1 Just to conclude, traditional methods and assumptions may need to
2 change to account for the changing distributions and productivity.
3 We have identified some additional focus efforts that may be
4 needed to help reduce risks. For instance, exploring future
5 scenarios and reevaluating spatial and temporal management
6 procedures and developing responsive harvest control rules. Also,
7 improving collaboration and communication between scientists
8 and managers and across regions to increase information use and
9 flow. Then improving capabilities to detect changes, understand
10 mechanisms, forecast future changes, and evaluating best
11 management strategies and respond to change.
12

13 Then, here, we just kind of provide some key needs and possible
14 next steps that came out of this working group. First in here is
15 kind of providing better information on current and future species
16 distributions. We're starting up a new project looking at kind of
17 the next iteration of tools and maps for helping modeling and
18 mapping distribution shifts, kind of building off of the work that's
19 been done at OceanAdapt. Improving our forecasts of future ocean
20 ecosystem conditions and improving understanding of the climate
21 impacts, and I would like to note that, for those two, NMFS and
22 OAR, the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, have
23 recently had discussions on how to better incorporate the climate
24 information that they provide and have into our stock assessments,
25 and hopefully that could improve forecasts and understanding as
26 well.
27

28 Increasing evaluation and best responses, using scenario planning
29 and management strategy evaluations, and then looking at how do
30 we improve those on-ramps for delivery and use of the information
31 on changing oceans, stocks, and fisheries in our assessments. With
32 that, I just want to kind of acknowledge and point out all of the
33 collaborators that have helped with this effort, and feel free to
34 reach out to any of them in your regions as well, and, with that, I
35 will take any questions.
36

37 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thank you so much for that presentation, and we'll take
38 any questions that folks have. Tony.
39

40 *Tony Blanchard:* That was a good presentation, but I would like to draw you a
41 scenario of how the fishermen would look at something like this.
42 all the spatial information we have -- In the Caribbean, we just had
43 two major hurricanes blow through the Virgin Islands as well as
44 Puerto Rico in 2017.
45

46 With the destruction that was done to the land, you have to

1 understand that there is also destruction to the bottom of the ocean,
2 and so my question is, and I know it's to the point that the structure
3 on the bottom is not necessarily going to be what it was the year
4 before, or prior to that. You see that change in structure on the
5 bottom and a change in the type of fish that you want to catch,
6 because fish associate themselves with a certain type of structure.
7 That will come into play with the movement of stocks, one stock
8 moving out of the area and another stock probably moving in.
9

10 That would also affect the ACLs, and the question comes up of
11 when the ACLs change in numbers in certain species, and not to
12 point a finger, but the scientists will say, well, we have a problem
13 here, and we need to understand what the problem might actually
14 be.
15

16 Now, yes, in the grand scheme of things, this scenario would work
17 if nothing was to change that drastically. Over time, we would
18 understand the movement, and a drastic change would not show up
19 in something like this. It would show up in numbers, in figures,
20 and a fisherman understands certain things, and, through my
21 experience with these two hurricanes that blew through there, the
22 structure has changed drastically, and so I expect you will probably
23 see a change in the type of fish, and the numbers will change,
24 because of the type of bottom.
25

26 The structure has been distorted or destroyed, however you would
27 like to put it, and I think we need to look at that, because I'm sure
28 that Florida is in the same position, and so it's not only going to be
29 the Caribbean, but any place that would be hampered with a
30 disaster like this, whether it be now or it be later, things would
31 have to change, because what would change on the top would most
32 likely change on the bottom, and that's the point that I am trying to
33 bring across the table, so that we all understand what we're looking
34 at.
35

36 *Melissa Karp:* Thank you. That's a good point.

37
38 *Jessica McCawley:* Mike and then Gregg.

39
40 *Mike Luisi:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I have about thirty-five questions that I
41 would like to ask you, but I'll try to keep it brief. I am really glad
42 to have been able to participate with the presentation, and I'm
43 looking forward to reading the full report. As you may know,
44 shifting stocks is right up our alley in the Mid-Atlantic, and we've
45 just spent about five years working through an amendment on
46 summer flounder commercial allocations that was pretty tough to

1 get through, and so I appreciate the advice. I just wish it would
2 have been about ten years ago that we got the advice. It could
3 have helped, but, in looking to the future, I often hear the words
4 “expansion” and “shifting” used interchangeably, and I am just --
5 My first question is, in your discussions, is it interchangeable, or
6 are they two different things that can be dealt with differently, due
7 to what I would perceive to be the definitions of each?
8

9 *Melissa Karp:*

I guess that’s a two-part answer. I guess it would have different
kind of management responses, because an expansion -- They can
both be climate driven. I think sometimes people aren’t sure if
expansion is climate driven or habitat, but I think they can both be
climate driven. Expansion though has its own sort of issues,
because you are increasing the number of states or areas that may
have access to the stock, versus, if it’s just shifting out, areas might
be losing access, and others might be gaining, and so how you
respond to that might be slightly different.

19 There is a pretty good paper, and I think by Jason Link in 2011,
20 that kind of really goes through the different type of responses you
21 would have, just expansion or contraction or shifting, but I think it
22 would have to kind of be approached slightly differently,
23 depending on exactly how it’s shifting and where it’s shifting and
24 expanding and contracting.

26 *Jessica McCawley:*

Go ahead. If you’ve got thirty-five, we just knocked off one, and
so go ahead.

29 *Mike Luisi:*

As a follow-up, thank you for that response, because I believe that
we are in a situation that we’re taking on the potential for a new
amendment, possibly, with the Mid-Atlantic Council in looking at
black sea bass allocations, and I would argue that, while the
science may say one thing, I would argue that black sea bass is
much more of an expansion than it is a shift, as we did with
summer flounder, and it’s just what I believe, and so we may
handle that work differently.

38 Where I think we can go forward in the future with a better
39 understanding, and it has to do with -- I’m sorry, and I did have to
40 step out of the room for a second, but the forecasting issue, the
41 predicative capabilities, I think that’s going to be a critical piece to
42 preparing for the change as it’s coming, and I’m wondering if, in
43 your predictive work, in your forecasting, are you forecasting just
44 the change in the ocean conditions, or are you looking at actual
45 potential for species moving due to those conditions changing?
46

1 The reason I ask is that we have been dealing a lot with stock
2 assessments. Stock assessments, I think managers are comfortable
3 with assessments, because they have proven to be true. I think,
4 with climate change and shifting and expanding stocks, I think it's
5 going to take some time for those predications to be realized, and,
6 as they become realized over time, there will be more faith in
7 starting the process earlier because I don't believe, and I know that
8 one of the recommendations, or one of your points, was that we
9 would like to get to the place where we are evaluating these
10 changes and making management decisions in near real-time.

11
12 I don't know that that's anything in our near future, to be able to
13 make real-time changes. One amendment took us five years to
14 complete, and, by the time you make the change, the conditions
15 have already changed, and you miss out -- You miss the
16 opportunity for access in an area, when, if you could have done
17 things more quickly and more real time, that access could have
18 been available, and so I think the predictive capability and the
19 forecasting is important, and I hope that you're looking into not
20 just the changing conditions, but where those species could
21 potentially be, and, once proven true, I think we're going to make
22 some solid progress on this issue. Thanks.

23
24 *Cisco Werner:*

A quick answer to the question is yes. I mean, we do want to look
25 both at the changing conditions, and there's always possible shifts
26 in the species that we're looking at, and, like you said, sometimes
27 it's hard to tell whether it's a shift or an expansion or a little bit of
28 both.

29
30 The project that we put up there, the OceanAdapt one that's out of
31 Rutgers, that's just one example of trying to look at that, and
32 sometimes the answer isn't just one, meaning some shifts go in one
33 direction and other species go in another direction, but there is an
34 envelope of certainty, or uncertainty, that's associated with this
35 thing, and that's certainly the approach that we want to take and
36 not just looking at sort of the abiotic, the temperature and salinity,
37 et cetera, but actually the impacts on the ecosystem and the fishery
38 as well, and so it's the integrated approach that we're looking at.

39
40 *Jessica McCawley:*

Marcos.

41
42 *Marcos Hanke:*

I will try to be brief. Cisco, in the Caribbean, we have -- Because
43 we're in the position we are, those shifts can much on a much
44 smaller scale, and, for example, on the deeper water on the edge of
45 the drop, we are seeing a presence on the assemblage of the species
46 that are there during the fishing and a big change, and I just wanted

1 to comment that, for example, a lot of red hind are mixed with the
2 silk snapper in that area, and this is just one comment of a change
3 of the fishery resource that was not there ten years ago with that
4 same percentage on the assemblage of let's say the red hind on that
5 fishery.
6

7 The other thing that I wanted to mention that I didn't hear is the
8 sargassum that for us is very, very important, and I can make a list
9 for you guys that for sure know about it, but it's a main driver for
10 our fishery, and I'm sure that a lot of places in the Caribbean,
11 where you can make available or not available the mahi and wahoo
12 and different other species in relation to that, and, from my point, I
13 see a big problem, once you are starting to have an influx of
14 sargassum for the last seven years or so, very constant and of
15 different magnitudes, that are arriving those fish that eat other fish
16 that, during the spawning season of our snappers and groupers that
17 before was not there.
18

19 That is a shift that is not necessarily directly on the catch, but on
20 the whole ecosystem that really worries me related to sargassum,
21 and, also, those are the -- I have a big list of it, but I just wanted to
22 bring the sargassum issue to the table, and I would like to hear
23 some comments about it.
24

25 *Cisco Werner:*

26 I agree that nothing -- It may not be as simple as just something
27 shifting and everything is the same. Like you said, the interaction
28 within the ecosystem could change. You could all of a sudden
29 have a presence of predators, and I think that's what you were
30 saying, that could all of a sudden deplete a population that was
31 there otherwise, and that's something that we do see.

32 I mean, I think that we've seen species going into areas where, all
33 of a sudden, they outcompete others, and so it's a combination of
34 the changing environmental conditions, but it's also that we have
35 to look very carefully at the interactions within the populations that
36 shift, and so it's new grounds, but I think the examples that we put
37 up there, for example the Alaska climate project, is one that looks
38 in an integrated way, not just at changes that might happen due to
39 global climate variability, but also looking at an envelope of
40 possible interactions that result from that within the species that are
41 likely to be there.
42

43 That's the thing. We need to develop -- Since there isn't
44 necessarily one certain answer, we need to develop a projection or
45 an envelope of possible answers that might come up, which then
46 we have to communicate to the decision-makers and to the

1 managers, so that they can consider this envelope of possibilities in
2 making that decision, but you're absolutely right, and that's why
3 that part about communicating things that are not straightforward
4 in a way that is straightforward enough that decisions can be made
5 is part of the challenge as well, and so you're spot-on on that.
6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* Gregg, go ahead. Sorry that I skipped you a second ago.

8
9 *Gregg Waugh:* That's all right. Thank you. The three east coast councils and the
10 ASMFC met at our March meeting to talk about this issue, and
11 there was agreement to move forward with two sort of major
12 activities, one dealing with science and data and the other with
13 governance.
14

15 The idea was that the Northeast and Southeast Centers would lead
16 the data and science, and we know that there is a workshop being
17 planned. Again, the councils want to be involved in that workshop
18 and those discussions, in part to ensure that the ongoing fishery-
19 independent and dependent programs are maintained and
20 expanded, where needed, to pick these species up as they move.
21

22 Then, on the governance side, the councils and the ASMFC are
23 going to designate some staff to work on various alternatives for
24 managing those species as they do shift. The question is, is there
25 any more progress on that workshop between the Northeast and the
26 Southeast, and what sort of role do you all envision the councils
27 having in that process?
28

29 *Cisco Werner:* My understanding is that that workshop is being considered for this
30 summer, if I understand right, and that's specifically, I think,
31 between the Northeast Center and the Southeast Center, and
32 probably then also not just on the science side, but also on the
33 Regional Office side, but that's the best guess I have, or my last
34 understanding of it is that they're talking about sometime this
35 summer. It might slip into early fall, but it's this fiscal year, in any
36 case.
37

38 *Jessica McCawley:* Roy.

39
40 *Roy Crabtree:* Gregg, Clay is going to be in later today or this evening, and so he
41 would be the one to check with.
42

43 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more questions? Chris.

44
45 *Chris Moore:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks, Melissa, for the presentation.
46 As Mike said, we're right in the middle of it, from a number of

1 perspectives, and we obviously have a very direct interest in this
2 particular topic. I'm curious how these steps have been received
3 by the various regions, and I'm specifically talking about how,
4 after this report was done, you're going to push this
5 recommendation out, the six-step process.
6

7 As I go through these steps, some of these things are being done
8 and have been done, or are in the process of being done, by the
9 Northeast Fisheries Science Center and us. If you look at, for
10 example, risks and priorities, you have very specific management
11 actions related to climate vulnerability and risk assessments. We
12 recently had a state of the ecosystem report in the Northeast
13 Fisheries Science Center that captured some of the things that
14 you're recommending in here, and so I guess my direct question is
15 now what?
16

17 You've gone through this process, and you've developed this
18 technical memo, and is there a push now from Headquarters to
19 start actually going through these steps in each one of the regions,
20 or is this sort of left up to the regions now to figure it out for
21 themselves?
22

23 *Melissa Karp:*

24 Thank you for that question. I think we kind of looked at these as
25 key components to a system, and so I kind of, at the beginning,
26 highlighted where you would focus. In each region, where you
27 would start, and the type of focus would kind of be regional
28 dependent on kind of strengths and weaknesses, because some
29 regions already -- You mentioned that you guys are already doing
30 a risk assessment, and so that -- You might not need to focus there,
31 and you may be focusing on detecting changes, and so, right now, I
32 kind of left it at that, but I would definitely be interested -- I am
33 kind of hoping that is like a first step, and hopefully there will be
34 next steps going forward and potentially helping both the science
35 and management side in each of the regions work through this
36 process.

37 *Cisco Werner:*

38 If I could just add to that, I think the structure that's been set up is
39 like the regional implementation plans and the regional action
40 plans, the RIPs and the RAPs. Again, continued representation
41 from broad sectors, from very broad sectors, to try to see how it's
42 perhaps best that either this information is developed and passed
43 along particular to the questions of a region, but, also, I think it's
44 important to look at lessons learned from other regions, and so I
45 think it isn't externally specified completely, but we have, I think,
46 the mechanisms to develop it internally within the regions. Different regions will be at different stages of development in the

1 various areas, and so it's not a one-size-fits-all yet.

2

3 *Jessica McCawley:* Chris, did you have more?

4

5 *Chris Moore:* Yes, just a quick follow-up, and so there are regional
6 implementation plans or there is plans for regional implementation
7 plans?

8

9 *Cisco Werner:* There are teams already set up.

10

11 *Chris Moore:* I lose track of all these teams and all.

12

13 *Cisco Werner:* Agreed. Like I said, there's a regional implementation plan, and,
14 associated with those, there is the teams that are putting those
15 together, and that -- As I said, it has representation from the
16 Science Centers, the Regional Offices, the councils, and I'm
17 looking at -- If you're not on these teams, let me know, but the
18 plan was that this would be an integrated effort resulting from
19 things like the EBFM and the climate science strategy and the
20 other things.

21

22 *Chris Moore:* Just to follow-up on that, that's good to know that, that that's
23 happening, but what I am concerned about is that we have so many
24 things going on. I mean, if I just go down the list of the things that
25 our council is involved with, it's EAFM, and GMRI is putting
26 something together, and we have an association with Malin Pinsky
27 on changing distribution, and there's some ongoing work there,
28 and who is keeping track of all that stuff?

29

30 There is an NOS tool that just came out that might have application
31 to climate change, and you guys -- You have your hands full, and
32 what I worry about is that we have these multiple efforts going on,
33 and maybe we could use more coordination to make sure that
34 we're putting it together in a six-step process that you guys have
35 identified to get to the point where we can come up with better
36 management strategies for things like black sea bass. I mean,
37 that's my point. Again, there is just so much, and it's good to
38 know that these regional implementation teams are formed, and
39 they're focused, and hopefully they will give us what we need.

40

41 *Jessica McCawley:* Bill.

42

43 *Bill Tweit:* Thanks, Madam Chair. Thank you, Melissa, for a really good
44 overview of the work. My question is about sort of consistency
45 between some of your findings and some of your
46 recommendations. One of your very first findings, very first

1 bullets, under detect changes is to expand the spatial and temporal
2 coverage of surveys, with some thoughts about how that can be
3 done for species where you actually understand the mechanism of
4 change, or think we do, like Pacific sardine, and take advantage of
5 that in how you design your surveys, which is great for those few
6 species we do understand the mechanism, and engaging and
7 leveraging the capacity of others.
8

9 Certainly, at the North Pacific Council, we're starting to have a lot
10 of discussions between industry and the Science Center about how
11 to do that. Those are great, but, as I think we reflected to you in a
12 letter, there is still no substitute for the basic, covering the
13 foundational, which is still the basic survey structure, at least until
14 we understand better how to actually integrate those other things,
15 like until we understand some of the mechanisms of change and
16 until we understand exactly how to work in some of the platform
17 of opportunity. We absolutely need continued survey work
18 expanded in this case, and we talked about that in our letter.
19

20 The question is, if that's really one of your very first bullets, and,
21 to me, that makes sense that it would be one of your first bullets,
22 when you get to the key needs and recommendations page, survey
23 just simply drops off, and I don't understand why that is not listed
24 as really your very first key need. It's still that basic survey
25 presence, with some capacity to expand, both spatially and
26 temporally.
27

28 *Melissa Karp:* By all means, maintaining baseline surveys is key, and it's not
29 intended to push those aside for the expanded surveys, and, also,
30 here, for collecting oceanographic habitat and multispecies
31 information in all standard surveys, and so I think that -- Wanting
32 to maintain our standard surveys and collecting this additional
33 information would then particularly help figure out how to expand
34 them in the future, and so I think -- I don't know if that answers the
35 question, but it's not throwing away standard surveys completely
36 and only having expanded or flexible surveys.
37

38 *Bill Tweit:* But when it gets covered at the beginning of a presentation and
39 then not brought back up in the summary at the end, it feels like it
40 is being sort of dropped in favor of other things.
41

42 *Cisco Werner:* If I could add to that, please, it certainly is a thought that we've
43 entertained quite seriously, in terms of how do we -- We know that
44 species are shifting or expanding, or both. In the North Pacific, for
45 example, we know that there's a big question as to whether the
46 Pacific cod has shifted in a direction or the pollock, and, yet, we

1 want to keep the surveys where they are. Like you said, we can't
2 shift them without really knowing exactly why, and, at the same
3 time, not giving up the anchor that we've developed over the past
4 years of the existing surveys.
5

6 I will just throw out a thought that we've been entertaining, and
7 that's to use the unmanned vehicles, the sail drones or any other
8 unmanned vehicle like that, and you can imagine that they could
9 go to places where the surveys are not there yet, because the
10 surveys are conducting the surveys in areas where they've been for
11 the past decade or so.
12

13 Then you could imagine detecting signals and then -- Again, this is
14 a thought, but you could work perhaps with industry and ask
15 industry perhaps to take a sample of where the acoustics detected a
16 particular signal, and so you could imagine perhaps a different
17 collaborative approach, where you could begin to consider these
18 expansions with the capabilities that we have and for the --
19 Remaining anchored where we are, but, at the same time, taking a
20 look, with other collaborations or other ways of thinking about at
21 least detecting it or at least saying, yes, it is possible that
22 expansions have happened, and so that's one way of expanding the
23 surveys without actually shifting where our core surveys are, and
24 it's just a thought.
25

26 *Bill Tweit:*

27 Thanks. I think industry is interested in working with things like
28 that, but, right now, at least under the President's budget for 2020,
29 we're looking at a reduction of standard surveys, and sail drones
30 cost money too, and there is nothing in there for sail drones, and
31 so, again, I guess, going back to the mixed messages theme, we're
32 not clear how we're going to get there if indeed we have to work
33 with reduced survey effort and nothing additional to help spark the
34 industry collaboration and some of the other ideas.

35 *Cisco Werner:*

36 We have a bit of a challenge in that regard, but it's something that
37 is not lost on us, on how do we do that, because we do need to do
38 that, and so there's an acknowledgement that we have to
39 understand where the shifts might happen or where the new
40 sampling might need to happen and yet balance with the
41 capabilities that we have right now, and so good point.

42 *Jessica McCawley:*

43 Mike and then John.

44 *Mike Luisi:*

45 Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one last really quick thing. I need
46 to put my state director's hat on just for a quick second to just
advise, if you haven't already, to consider maybe presenting this to

1 the Atlantic States Commission. As one of the folks who sits on
2 the commission, they're having in-depth discussions right now
3 about how we're going to deal with allocations as a result of
4 shifting stocks and expanding stocks, and something that is kind of
5 scaring me a little bit is some of the thoughts that are coming out
6 of those discussions, where we basically take all of the decision-
7 making out of the process and make a change in allocations a
8 formula, a formula based on the science, without there being any
9 consideration of any other components of the fishery.

10
11 I would just hope that you guys could take this and maybe work
12 with the commission and get on the Executive Committee's
13 calendar at some point at a future meeting, and I think they would
14 benefit from hearing some of the advice from your report. Thanks.

15
16 *Cisco Werner:* I will be glad to. Thank you.

17
18 *Jessica McCawley:* John.

19
20 *John Quinn:* Not to pile on in this section, but, on the east coast, we're having
21 some indication that the surveys, the spatial, actually will shrink,
22 because of the presence of offshore wind, and I think we had a
23 long presentation at our last meeting that there's going to be a lot
24 of areas that potentially cannot be surveyed, and so that's just a
25 little -- I am not too confident that the east coast surveys are going
26 to expand.

27
28 *Cisco Werner:* That's yet another factor to bring into it. Thanks for bringing that
29 up.

30
31 *Jessica McCawley:* Gregg.

32
33 *Gregg Waugh:* On your Slide Number 7, where you talk about detecting changes,
34 one of the bullets is coordinate research and survey efforts across
35 adjacent jurisdictions, and does that include data collection also for
36 making sure that the landings systems are modified to pick up
37 species? I know that the Northeast has added a number of species,
38 but I imagine this will continue, and so are data included in that, or
39 are you not thinking about landings data?

40
41 *Melissa Karp:* I don't think that was explicitly discussed, in that sense of
42 particularly landings data. We were thinking more of
43 communicating and coordinating in terms of making sure there
44 was maybe some standardized -- There is some gear differences
45 across regions, in terms of surveys, and that can complicate
46 understanding of if an abundance shift is occurring or not, if

1 there's these different surveys, and so we kind of threw that out
2 there as a potential idea of how you just kind of coordinate
3 research and results across regions to help track, and so I think
4 that's something that we could discuss going forward, in terms of
5 data collection.
6

7 *Cisco Werner:* By that, Gregg, with the landings, as long as we knew where
8 perhaps they were -- Where the harvest took place. I think those
9 together should be something that's done. If it wasn't explicitly
10 stated, we probably should make it more explicit.
11

12 *Gregg Waugh:* Right. That's certainly one way to pick up changes, is if new
13 species are showing up in an area, if there's a way for them to get
14 coded so they're recorded, and then that's another way to detect
15 movement.
16

17 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any other questions? Thank you so much, Cisco and
18 Melissa, for the presentation and answering questions. Next up,
19 we have Adam, who is going to talk to us about voting recusal and
20 financial disclosure.

1 **14. VOTING RECUSAL AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE**
2 **PROPOSED RULE**

3
4 *Adam Issenberg:* Thank you. As I think folks are aware, we had put out a proposed
5 rule for notice and comment, and the comment period closed about
6 two months ago, and we received four comments, three of which
7 came from several of the councils that are represented here today,
8 and the fourth was from a private citizen. Those comments raised
9 a number of concerns, and we have reconvened the working group
10 of NOAA GC attorneys and NMFS staff who had worked to
11 develop the proposed rule.

12
13 We are working to address those comments and revise the rule, as
14 appropriate, and get a final rule out. We don't have a specific
15 timeframe, but I will say it is my personal interest that, by the time
16 we meet again next November, I would be able to report to you
17 that -- Well, hopefully I won't be reporting, because you will have
18 seen in the Federal Register a final rule. It is my goal not to have
19 to talk about this again come November, and so we're working on
20 that.

21
22 That essentially is my report. I am happy to take any questions. I
23 do want to note though that the public comment period is closed.
24 We have received your written public comments, and, at this point,
25 we really can't take any new substantive comments. We
26 understand the comments that we've received, and I think it's just
27 a question of trying to get everybody together and kind of figure
28 out how to resolve them and what to do about them. I don't feel
29 like there is a lack of clarity about the concerns. Some of those
30 concerns are things we've discussed at prior CCC meetings, and
31 so, again, I'm happy to take comments or questions, just with that
32 caveat that, at this point, we really can't have a substantive
33 discussion about the rule itself.

34
35 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Are there questions? John.

36
37 *John Gourley:* Thank you. The Western Pacific Council has been talking about
38 this issue for a while now. How are you going to resolve the issue
39 that we have where you don't allow our council members that are
40 simply an employee of a large cannery operation to vote, but yet an
41 owner, a minority owner, could come in and could vote? It seems
42 to be that it's dysfunctional, and so how can you resolve the issue
43 that the Western Pacific has that was outlined in the letter that we
44 submitted for comments within the comment period?

45
46 *Adam Issenberg:* As you indicate, that issue was raised in the Western Pacific

Council's comment letter, and we are looking closely at that comment, and I really can't address, at the moment, how we will resolve that issue, but, again, we are very aware of that issue, and we are giving it close consideration.

Jessica McCawley: John, go ahead.

John Gourley: That didn't help me much. Is there a way that you could exempt certain industries, such as like a cannery industry, that has hundreds of employees and an employee that happens to become a council member would be allowed to vote on issues, whereas let's say a smaller fishery, with limited people, they would have a larger influence over the fishery, and is that something that you could explore?

Adam Issenberg: Again, I can't address the specifics of the rule at this point, given where we are in the rulemaking. That specific suggestion, I don't recall whether that was in your comments, and we would have to give that some thought, as to whether that's something that we could consider, but I understand your interest in resolving this issue. We are well aware of this issue, and we've discussed it at CCC meetings, and it's raised in the comments. I understand your frustration, in that I'm not providing you an answer on that question, but I really can't answer that question here today.

Jessica McCawley: Dave.

David Witherell: Thank you, Madam Chair. Adam, since we really can't get any answers to questions, I guess I will just make a statement that we eagerly await the determinations relative to having a controlling interest for more than 50 percent of direct ownership, as we don't necessarily see that as the case in many fishing operations in Alaska that are family owned or where a minority owner may actually hold the quota that controls how that fishing company operates, and so I just wanted to make that statement.

The second point that I would make, as a statement, is that there sure seems to be some inconsistency between applying a full attribution to an employee of a company and no attribution where there is a clear direct financial interest in the outcome of a council vote for somebody sitting there, a council member that may represent a certain fishing sector that is designed specifically to testify to the council and whose salary may be entirely dependent on council actions on that issue.

I make that as a statement, that there seems to be some real

1 inconsistency there, and it sure wasn't -- Those indirect employee
2 issues were not addressed in the rule, and so I will be curious to
3 read your response to comments in the final rule. Thank you.

4
5 *Adam Issenberg:* Thanks, and those issues are addressed in the comment letters, and
6 we will consider those carefully, and we'll address them in
7 response to comments, as appropriate.

8
9 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any more questions or comments on this topic? We're a
10 little ahead of schedule. We're going to go ahead and take our
11 break, but, before people disperse, if you could head down to the
12 lobby, we're going to take a picture real quick, and then we'll take
13 a break after the picture, and so we'll see everybody in the lobby.

14
15 *(Recess)*

15. SOPPs - TIMING OF REVIEW

1
2
3 *Jessica McCawley:* Next up is the SOPPs Timing of Review, and this is Alan who is
4 going to talk to us about this.
5

6 *Alan Risenhoover:* Thank you, and so I know everybody has been waiting for this, and
7 this is another exciting topic, and I'm going to ask Brian to help on
8 this, but I would just open it with kind of what the problem is, and
9 then Brian is going to give you the solutions.
10

11 As you know, the MSA requires you all to produce and publish
12 your SOPPs, and the purpose of these is really to inform the public,
13 as well as the council, how the council operates, and so it is an
14 important thing that we need to take seriously and get done, and so
15 we do have regulations that outline the scope of the SOPPs and
16 what should be in them and that it should be published in the
17 Federal Register as a notice of availability, and it includes an
18 internet address at which the folks can see the SOPPs.
19

20 We have had a policy directive and a procedure for doing this for a
21 number of years, I think going on the order of ten years now, but
22 we're aware that the clearance process of this hasn't worked, or
23 doesn't work, and so what we thought would be good, and I think
24 some of you around the table have the same concern, is we need a
25 process or a procedure that fits with getting these things approved
26 and up so that the public can see them. If you do have changes in
27 the future, that that process would be such that, if it's a major
28 change, yes, there may need to be additional review, but, if there's
29 not, let's just have those move forward.
30

31 We have had some discussions with Chris, I think prior to the
32 shutdown even, on this, where he voiced some ex-council
33 executive director concerns on how SOPPs changes hadn't been
34 approved and that there was basically a logjam, and so that's a
35 little bit of the issue and a little bit of the history, and we've talked
36 with Brian, and I know he's talked with some of you, and so let me
37 turn it over to him and listen to some of the ideas we've come up
38 with.
39

40 *Brian Fredieu:* Thanks, Alan. Thanks, Chair. Each council has their own
41 procedure for how they update their SOPPs. Each council, I think,
42 uses their SOPPs in a little bit of a different way, and, as Alan
43 noted, the regulations provide some basics for what is included in
44 the SOPPs. DOC Financial Assistance Law Division and
45 Sustainable Fisheries also produced a model SOPPs that I think
46 most of the SOPPs now that the councils have in place follow, and

1 I think that was around 2011, which most councils last approved
2 SOPPs date from.

3
4 There is a policy and procedure directive for the clearance of
5 SOPPs, and the policy directive is pretty clear. It echoes what is
6 already in the regulations, as far as what needs to be included, and
7 the procedural directive is kind of where the problem lies at the
8 moment, as far as the timing of clearance, and it expresses the need
9 to have a national consistency to how we clear SOPPs, and it talks
10 about how its aim is to be efficient. We, of course, know that that
11 is not the case, because we're here, almost eight years later, and
12 councils who have submitted their SOPPs for clearance -- They
13 have been sitting on the burner for a while.

14
15 I sent an email out to the regions and to the council directors just to
16 outline a rough game plan that we thought at the time was going to
17 work, which was essentially find out what the status of all the
18 councils SOPPs were and consult with the appropriate entity,
19 whether it be General Counsel, Department of Commerce General
20 Counsel, or the NMFS Region, or even NMFS Headquarters,
21 whoever had it on their desk at the time, to see what the holdup
22 was and whether we could move it along.

23
24 The more proactive approach is to consult with General Counsel,
25 the Fisheries and Protected Resources Section, and the Department
26 of Commerce General Counsel on what we can do to streamline
27 and completely revamp the procedures for how to clear SOPPs,
28 and Alan kind of alluded to our initial thinking of how to do it.

29
30 I don't want to put the cart before the horse, because I know there
31 is several councils out there that are currently in the midst of
32 approving their SOPPs, or their committees are meeting about it, or
33 they've already sent a letter recently to the region with their
34 updates, and so I don't want to try to work to clear something and
35 then have the process change underneath you, and so I think, with
36 that, I will just stop talking, and I will turn it over to the Chair to
37 see if we have any questions. I think I have some of my own
38 questions that could perhaps drive the conversation, but maybe it
39 would be better to turn to the group.

40
41 *Jessica McCawley:* Okay. I am going to go to Chris first.

42
43 *Chris Oliver:* I don't want to speak for the councils, but I want to channel my
44 former self for a minute, because, when we had that discussion that
45 Alan alluded to, my concerns, and here's where I will channel my
46 former self, but I don't think it was a big, huge problem that

1 SOPPs hadn't been formally approved, with the understanding that
2 the councils would continue to operate under their latest council-
3 approved version that is posted on their website and that they
4 would be able to make minor administrative technical changes to
5 those SOPPs and still be valid, if you will.
6

7 Under those conditions, I personally, when I was an ED, didn't
8 find it to be a huge problem that they hadn't been approved, but
9 it's always just been hanging out there in sort of limbo, and so
10 that's kind of why we circled back, and it was like, hey, whatever
11 happened to the SOPPs approval.
12

13 *Jessica McCawley:* Miguel.

14
15 *Miguel Rolon:* Some of us were discussing this before, and there is a couple of
16 ideas that we wanted to discuss today and see how they pan out,
17 but one idea is to have a simple SOPPs, sort of a template for
18 everybody, at the national level, and so all the councils would have
19 the same template.
20

21 Then we will have an operational handbook that will be suitable
22 for each council situation. That way, the operational handbook has
23 to be within the constraints, the legal frame, of the SOPPs. That
24 way, you could have those SOPPs approved for all the councils,
25 and you don't need to revisit those often, unless some law changes,
26 and, that way, you will give each council the flexibility to have the
27 operations plan for the daily basis and the business work.
28

29 Of course, most operations plans are documents that are reviewed
30 at the council level, and they are open, and they have to be
31 reviewed by NOAA legal counsel and that, just to make sure that
32 we comply with the applicable regulations under the SOPPs, and
33 that is more or less what everybody has done, but, in some cases,
34 and this is one situation, there are things in the SOPPs that should
35 not be there, because they are too restrictive, and they were
36 looking at one particular issue. For example, although we
37 submitted the date that we select the chairman and the vice chair,
38 August 15 or whatever, we are not following that, because the
39 Regional Administrator cannot be at the council, and so that's
40 something we should remove out of the SOPPs, and we are not
41 using it.
42

43 In concrete, the idea is to have the simple SOPPs that comply with
44 all the laws and regulations and then allow the flexibility of each
45 council to have their operations plan or handbook or whatever they
46 want to call it that will be specific for that council, and we wanted

1 to hear your reaction to that idea.

2

3 *Brian Fredieu:* Are there other council reactions to that idea, first?

4

5 *Jessica McCawley:* I would say that that was kind of the consensus of what we talked
6 about the other day, that maybe there's a simple SOPPs that
7 everyone can add to, but then there's also a handbook that could be
8 used that would be more specific to each council, and it could be
9 modified more frequently, especially if it's going to take eight
10 years to approve the SOPPs. The handbook could be a lot more
11 flexible per council. Chris.

12

13 *Chris Oliver:* Do you envision that council-specific handbook to actually have to
14 go through some formal approval process as well or only the
15 overarching SOPPs?

16

17 *Jessica McCawley:* Only the SOPPs. Good question. Only the SOPPs.

18

19 *Chris Oliver:* It's a reasonable idea to me.

20

21 *Jessica McCawley:* Chris.

22

23 *Chris Moore:* Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks, Brian, for the presentation,
24 but I'm in total agreement with Chris. From my perspective, there
25 is no issue, and there's no problem here. We have had SOPPs that
26 have been submitted to GARFO five times, four or five times,
27 since 2012, and we went through a very detailed process back in
28 2011, where we revised the SOPPs based on a policy directive, and
29 we're good. We don't have a handbook, and our SOPPs contain
30 everything that we need to deal with from a council perspective,
31 and we update them with minor stuff, and we send that copy to
32 GARFO, and we post it to our website. Again, from our
33 perspective, there's no issue.

34

35 *Jessica McCawley:* Others? Brian, I don't know if you want to respond.

36

37 *Brian Fredieu:* There exists already a model SOPPs that I alluded to, and most
38 councils, for the most part, meet that format. Some councils have
39 additional material in their SOPPs, and, if this is the direction that
40 the councils want to go in, and if Sustainable Fisheries and NOAA
41 General Counsel is okay, I think we can just stick to our guns and
42 have a quick review to make sure that the model SOPPs is up to
43 date, because it is eight years old, and I know there is some talk
44 from DOC Financial Assistance Law Division to add some content
45 dealing with hostile work environments and EEO and things like
46 that into the SOPPs that were not included in the model, but that's

1 certainly a much easier way to proceed. I think the procedure for
2 approving any changes is still bad, but it won't be an urgent thing
3 to fix.
4

5 *Jessica McCawley:* Do others want to comment on this or have additional questions?
6 Dave.

7
8 *David Witherell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the concern from the councils
9 was that, if NMFS was interested in applying the procedural
10 directive and going through a formal review process eight years
11 after we've already completed our SOPPs, and it's been online,
12 and it's been part and parcel to our NOAA grants, and we've gone
13 through at least one of those five-year grants since the SOPPs was
14 approved by the council, and we've been audited, of course,
15 several times, under our grant, under that SOPPs.

16
17 From our standpoint, the SOPPs, as they exist, are approved, and
18 they are available online for anyone to see. If, however, the
19 council makes changes to that SOPPs, and I don't know who
20 makes the determination as to whether or not they are simple
21 changes or substantial changes, the concern might be that, well,
22 does that initiate implementation of that procedural directive from
23 its start, and, if so, then I think the approach that Miguel described,
24 which would be a simple SOPPs based on just the regulations,
25 where the details of how you actually operate in a council
26 handbook that would also be posted online would be kind of our
27 backstop approach. From what we're concerned with, our SOPPs,
28 as they stand, are approved. We can make those changes, minor
29 changes, and just keep posting it online.
30

31 *Jessica McCawley:* Brian, I don't know if you wanted to respond.

32
33 *Brian Fredieu:* No, I think David's concerns would be something that we would
34 need to look into, as far as if we went the route that it seems that
35 the consensus of the group is.
36

37 *Jessica McCawley:* Alan.

38
39 *Alan Risenhoover:* I think part of this is not so much to look at what the council
40 SOPPs are, but it's to look at the procedure we have for dealing
41 with those and see if there's a better way and not force you to go
42 through that, but instead look at that procedural directive and see if
43 we can have something that's a little more straightforward, instead
44 of having a very complex procedure we're not following, because
45 we don't need to.
46

1 *Jessica McCawley:* Dave and then Chuck.

2

3 *David Witherell:* Just an observation that, of course, when the councils approve their
4 SOPPs, they get approval that includes the Regional Director and
5 with the advice of NOAA GC in the rule, and so it's not like the
6 council is marching off in a direction that is not congruent with the
7 approach approved by NMFS anyway. Thank you.

8

9 *Jessica McCawley:* Chuck.

10

11 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you. We recently started to revise our SOPPs to add some
12 possible workplace environment whistleblower policies and those
13 sorts of things, and so are those minor changes, or are those more
14 substantial ones that are going to take a more lengthy approval
15 process? At some point, we're going to have to know where to
16 draw the line.

17

18 *Jessica McCawley:* Alan.

19

20 *Alan Risenhoover:* We might be able to help you with some standard language or stuff
21 to be included along those lines. We can check on that too, Chuck.

22

23 *Jessica McCawley:* Chris, did you have your hand up?

24

25 *Chuck Tracy:* If I could just follow-up. We have developed our language, and
26 we submitted it to our regional GC folks, and so I don't think we
27 need help with the language. We just need help to know what the
28 approval process is going to be from this point on. Is that the sort
29 of thing that's going to take -- Is that all right if the council
30 approves it, and that's good enough, or is that going to be
31 something more substantive?

32

33 *Brian Fredieu:* I can only speculate that it's likely that your general counsel would
34 submit it to DOC to get their approval for the language, especially
35 since the prior representative for DOC FALD, Jeff Robertson, who
36 is no longer there, but he already spoke to this issue internally, to
37 say that we need to work on some language for that, and you
38 started the process by yourself, without their impetus, but I don't
39 know.

40

41 *Jessica McCawley:* Go ahead, Chuck.

42

43 *Chuck Tracy:* Just one other note. This started as a result of our audit. They
44 noted that we didn't have a whistleblower policy in, and so that
45 sort of precipitated it, and so that just does speak to the fact that we
46 do get reviewed annually, and our compliance is checked through

1 that process.

2

3 *Jessica McCawley:* I had Chris and then Miguel.

4

5 *Chris Moore:* Thank you. I like Alan's idea. I think, if we're going to do
6 anything, just take a hard look at that policy procedural directive
7 that we used in 2011, and we spent a lot of time with it. I
8 remember having conversations with these DOC lawyers and
9 FALD, whatever that stands for, and it was good. It was good for
10 us, from the council perspective. We scrubbed our SOPPs, and we
11 came up with a better format, and I think we're in a good spot, and
12 so I think taking a hard look at what you have now and seeing what
13 needs to be updated and what we need to modify, in terms of the
14 submission process and all that, would be a good first step.

15

16 *Jessica McCawley:* I have Miguel and then Tom.

17

18 *Miguel Rolon:* Several years ago, one of our lawyers at the Regional Office told
19 me that the problem was what happened between the Regional
20 Office and Washington, and he was suggesting that perhaps we
21 could look at the procedure and allow general counsel at the
22 regional level to have the authority to approve those SOPPs and
23 the amendments to the SOPPs, because sometimes the SOPPs are a
24 little bit complicated to amend, and he suggested that, and so I
25 bring that to your attention, just in case, when we discuss the
26 procedural directive and all to improve it, but that was one
27 suggestion that he made several years ago.

28

29 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. I have Tom.

30

31 *Thomas Nies:* Again, sort of on the same page as Chris Moore, it would be nice if
32 we had a more streamlined process for review and approval. One
33 of the first things that happened after I took over as ED was our
34 SOPPs got approved in 2014. When I actually looked at the
35 process, it had actually been about a twenty-year process since
36 we've had approved SOPPs, but, much like Chuck, our auditors
37 actually compare our SOPPs to our operations handbook, and
38 when they find some what I would consider minor differences,
39 they want to know when we're going to fix our SOPPs, and it's
40 like, oh my gosh, and you guys will be out of business before we
41 get a response.

42

43 *Jessica McCawley:* Chris.

44

45 *Chris Oliver:* I was just waiting to see if there are other hands, but it sounds like
46 maybe a first step is for us to go back and look at how we might be

1 able to revise and greatly streamline that policy or procedural
2 directive, and therein may lay an elegant solution.

3

4 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Anything else on this topic? Gregg.

5

6 *Gregg Waugh:* Just an add-on to what Chris said. The agency will be looking at
7 the procedural directive and looking at the process for review, but
8 the councils are okay with where we are now with how each
9 council has their SOPPs/handbook structured, and the agency is
10 okay with that?

11

12 *Alan Risenhoover:* Yes.

13

14 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you.

15

16 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Anything else? Thank you, Alan, Brian, and Chris, on
17 that topic. Next up, we have the best scientific information
18 available guidance, and Cisco and Stephanie are up.

1

16. BSIA GUIDANCE

1
2
3 *Cisco Werner:* Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the council on the BSIA.
4 It's a topic that we've considered for a long time in discussion, and
5 we've received a lot of input, and it's been a very deliberative
6 process to get to this point, and so I think that today Stephanie will
7 be making a presentation. A couple of days ago, we also sent out
8 the version of the policy, and so you've all had a chance to look at
9 it, at least at this point, and then the steps that will follow will be
10 described by Stephanie in the presentation, and so, with that,
11 Stephanie, if you could, please.

12
13 *Stephanie Hunt:* Sure. I am Stephanie Hunt from the Office of Sustainable
14 Fisheries. I am going to go through the final NOAA Fisheries best
15 scientific information framework, which we have talked to you all
16 about on numerous occasions. We embarked on this effort many
17 years ago, in part because of some concerns that you raised and
18 some concerns and questions that internal staff raised about how
19 we make and document best scientific information available, or
20 BSIA, decisions.

21
22 The purpose of this procedural directive is to increase clarity and
23 transparency in how those decisions are made and documented in
24 the context of catch specifications and stock status decisions, and
25 so it's a limited scope. The document clarifies that the SSCs have
26 a really important role in developing catch recommendations, and
27 they assert that those decisions and recommendations are best
28 scientific information available and consistent with NS 2.

29
30 The document outlines that the agency has the responsibility of
31 making stock status decisions and approving catch specifications,
32 and, through that approval, it's where we finally determine that the
33 decision is based on BSIA, and that's our official and final
34 certification.

35
36 We recognize that there's a lot of differences in how each region,
37 center, and council group work together, and so we tried to address
38 those, but we really came up with kind of a national framework for
39 the BSIA process, and we anticipate -- We see this as really kind of
40 a status quo process, outlining what is generally happening
41 already. There is a few minor tweaks in the process, but we
42 anticipate, if the process is followed, the decisions will be certified
43 as BSIA and everybody is happy, and there should be no surprises.
44 In fact, the document should, hopefully, improve communication
45 and transparency, so that there are less surprises through these
46 decisions.

1
2 This shows you how long we've been working on this document.
3 We have been working on it for a number of years, and it's been
4 really challenging to address the regional differences and different
5 viewpoints. Some groups wanted to see more specificity, and
6 some groups wanted more flexibility, and we also were challenged
7 to find the right balance between this document and the National
8 Standard 2 Guidelines, which are in existence and describe BSIA,
9 and so they're two different things, and we found ourselves
10 repeating NS 2 on multiple occasions.
11

12 We've presented this document to you all on a number of
13 occasions, and we've come to many of your council meetings and
14 your council sub-committee meetings, and we got a lot of great
15 feedback through that process, and we also got feedback from our
16 Regional Offices and Science Centers, and we've tried really hard
17 to address those comments, and we think we've come up with a
18 strong document that will hopefully increase transparency in these
19 decisions.
20

21 The next few slides, basically I will go through the document and
22 what the document says. This is a general outline. The document,
23 the content has not changed a whole lot since you've last seen it,
24 but it is now a procedural directive, and so that is a change in the
25 format. The introduction lays out the purpose of the document. As
26 I said, the purpose is to provide clarity and increased transparency
27 in how BSIA determinations are made and documented in the
28 context of stock status and catch specifications. The introduction
29 talks about how this procedural directive complements National
30 Standard 2 Guidelines, and it does not replace them.
31

32 The objective talks about the various roles of the SSCs and the
33 councils and NOAA Fisheries in this process. It describes some of
34 the challenges that we face, which have to do with timing
35 constraints and the inherent scientific uncertainty in our stock
36 assessments. Fisheries science is challenging.
37

38 Then the document goes on to make a recommendation. As I
39 mentioned before, this is a national framework. We could address
40 all regions' specific circumstances, and so we recommend that
41 each region, center, and council group work together to develop a
42 regional BSIA framework, which can add more specificity to how
43 your process works, and it can be under the umbrella of this broad
44 national framework, and hopefully that will improve
45 communication and transparency even more, those regional
46 documents.

1
2 The next section is sort of a six-step process, and I will go into that
3 in more detail, but, just to finish off on this slide, there is
4 appendices, of course, that cite the Magnuson Act and National
5 Standard 2 Guidelines and the Next Generation Stock Assessment
6 Improvement Plan. It defines acronyms and all that good stuff.
7

8 The NOAA Fisheries BSIA framework, this six-step process, is
9 sort of the heart of the document. The big content is here, and so I
10 will take some time to go through this. These are described as
11 steps in the process, and they are steps by NOAA Fisheries, the
12 SSCs, and the councils, and so the first step is a stock assessment,
13 and we describe, in the context of this document, a stock
14 assessment could be everything from a data-limited approach to a
15 comprehensive stock assessment. That was some of the feedback
16 we got from the councils, is what does this cover, and it covers all
17 of those things.
18

19 The second step of the process is a peer review of the stock
20 assessment, and that would be part of an NS 2 compliant peer
21 review process. I think an important recommendation in the paper
22 is under Number 2, that the stock assessment and peer review
23 separately and explicitly consider the technical merits of these four
24 issues. In the past, that has been part of the confusion with our
25 BSIA determinations, is that sometimes overfishing and overfished
26 are kind of lumped together, and so we feel like, if the stock
27 assessment and the peer review explicitly and separately consider
28 these, it's going to make things more clear.
29

30 There are four different topics that we list here that should be
31 considered, but not all stock assessments consider all four, and it
32 would depend on your terms of reference, and we cite those terms
33 of reference as being a really important part of this process, and we
34 try to clarify the last two. There was some confusion about what is
35 science and what is management, and we recognize that, for
36 example, a stock assessment is not going to be revising the SDCs
37 or harvest control rules unless the terms of reference ask it to look
38 at that. It's clearly the council's responsibility to develop those
39 things, and so we tried to clarify the language there, to make it
40 clear where science and management differ.
41

42 Then the third step that you will see in the slide is the assessment
43 revision after the peer review happens, and sometimes there are
44 recommendations from the peer review panel, and we talk about
45 NOAA Fisheries would address those and document them, and
46 those changes, those revisions, don't necessarily have to go back to

1 the peer review panel, but that NOAA Fisheries and the SSCs
2 should coordinate, to make sure that the recommendations are
3 addressed. We also said here, again, that the terms of reference for
4 the stock assessment would limit the scope of those revisions.
5 Revisions shouldn't be beyond the scope of the original terms of
6 reference.

7
8 Moving on to Step 4, which also is a multi-part step, and so bear
9 with me as I go through these. After the assessment is peer
10 reviewed and any revisions are made, it's delivered to the SSC,
11 and the SSC makes catch recommendations to the council, after
12 determining that the information in the assessment meets the
13 National Standard 2 Guidelines for BSIA, and so this requirement
14 comes from the Magnuson Act and the National Standard 2
15 Guidelines themselves. This, again, is not the final BSIA
16 certification, but it is an assertion from the SSC that, in their view,
17 the information is BSIA.

18
19 We note that, if the SSC is the body that's conducting the peer
20 review, that they should conclude their work on the peer review
21 before they move into their catch recommendation process, and
22 that also comes from the NS 2 Guidelines. The document also
23 outlines the process for when the SSC disagrees with the peer
24 review findings. They should document that, and that is already
25 outlined in NS 2.

26
27 Section 4, or Step 4, also recommends that NOAA Fisheries
28 establish a point of contact for each SSC to help navigate any
29 science and management uncertainties and challenges that come
30 up. This person would play an important role in facilitating
31 communication, especially in the case where there is significant
32 scientific ambiguity in the stock assessment results or the peer
33 review.

34
35 We received a lot of comments on this as well. Some folks wanted
36 us to really clarify what this person is doing and who it is, and
37 other folks thought that this is a pretty significant role, and they're
38 not sure how we're going to accomplish it, and we left the
39 recommendation in there, because we thought it would help
40 communication and transparency, which is the purpose of the
41 document, but we left the details to be worked out in your regional
42 BSIA frameworks. It will depend on -- Each region will do it
43 differently.

44
45 The next step in the process, still under Number 4, is that, after the
46 SSC deliberates, NOAA will enter the stock assessment results into

1 our species information system database, and, when we lock the
2 record in that database, we are then asserting that the information
3 in the assessment is consistent with the BSIA process.
4

5 Some centers, at this point, create a BSIA memo, and not all
6 centers do, but some do, and, if they do, the councils are welcome
7 to see that. We got some questions on that through the council
8 meetings. Again, this isn't the final BSIA certification, but it's
9 another step in the process that everything is going well and we're
10 certifying and we're locking that record, and we're getting ready to
11 make a status determination. Things are still on the rails, and
12 everything is going well.
13

14 From here, once the record is locked in SIS, NOAA Fisheries
15 makes a stock status determination, and we do that through a
16 decision memo, and so, as the process is outlined in the paper, the
17 agency wouldn't make that status determination until after the SSC
18 deliberates, and that is so that we can get the benefit of SSC input
19 on those decisions, but we do make the final decision, and we do
20 recognize, and got feedback, that there is a lot of urgency in
21 making these stock status determinations, and so we will endeavor
22 to make those as quickly as possible after the SSC deliberates, but,
23 in most cases, we prefer to wait until after the SSC has had a
24 chance to weigh in.
25

26 Another thing that came up is we do decision memos for stock
27 status determinations, and the councils would be welcome to see
28 those, if you would like, and you can request them, and you can
29 share them. There are no legal concerns with that.
30

31 That is what we do in Step 4, and then we move on to Step 5,
32 where it starts getting easier, hopefully, and not for you guys, but
33 for us, for the BSIA document, and so, at this point, the SSC has
34 provided a catch recommendation, and the council is developing
35 catch specifications based on the ABC advice from the SSC, and
36 we say in the document that, if there are BSIA concerns through
37 the catch specification process, we will strive to inform the council
38 of those concerns prior to a final decision, so that you can amend
39 those recommendations, if possible, and we see the NOAA rep to
40 the SSC also playing an important role in kind of facilitating and
41 helping communication. If those issues arise, we also recognize
42 there are major timing constraints here, and this may not be
43 possible, but we will strive to do that.
44

45 Then the final step is that NOAA Fisheries receives the catch
46 specifications from the councils and, if we approve them, then we

1 are certifying that the decision is based on BSIA, and that's the
2 final step in the process.

3
4 We noted, in the document, that this was based on some concerns
5 raised by the councils that, if you follow this process, we should
6 approve these as BSIA. There should be no surprises, and, in fact,
7 as I said before, if you're getting these BSIA assertions throughout
8 the process, you should be in very good shape, and we wouldn't
9 expect there to be any major surprises.

10
11 That's what the document says, and there are a few more details
12 that you can read, and I'm happy to answer questions on, but the
13 next step is -- Again, this is a broad framework, and we do think
14 that these regional BSIA framework documents will be an
15 important next step, and we suggest those are done within the next
16 three years. We have really appreciated the feedback that we've
17 gotten from everyone through this very long process, and I'm
18 happy to answer any questions you have.

19
20 One more thing is we're happy to come to your councils and
21 present the paper. Here are your points of contact. Rick Methot
22 and I are probably the best folks in the next few months, because
23 Patrick and Deb are busy doing a few other things, but you can
24 reach any of us and try to schedule those, if you would like them.

25
26 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thank you for that presentation. Are there questions?
27 Gregg.

28
29 *Gregg Waugh:* Some of our concerns are still there. One of the items that our SSC
30 has raised repeatedly, and we have provided comments on this, is
31 that BSIA and status should be determined by the agency and
32 reported to the SSC before the SSC is expected to develop fishing-
33 level recommendations, because, if we go through that whole
34 process, and it's time consuming and expensive, and, if you get to
35 the end of it and we've got a different determination, then we have
36 to start over. Is that something that can be adjusted in the regional
37 BSIA plan, or how do we resolve that?

38
39 *Stephanie Hunt:* I think that was one of the hardest issues that we were working
40 through, because people had very different views on that, and there
41 is clearly a lot of benefit to us having some input from the SSC
42 before we make a determination, but there are timing constraints,
43 and we heard from both sides of it, and so we ended up where we
44 did, where we said we, generally, in almost all circumstances,
45 would want to wait until after the SSC deliberates. I think that you
46 can, if you have a justification for a difference in a different

1 process, you can lay that out in your regional plan and explain why
2 that's important to you.

3
4 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you, and I should have said thanks for the presentation.
5 Right now, the way it's written, the agency is only required to
6 report status if it's overfished or overfishing or there is concern
7 with BSIA. It would be nice if the agency would report the status
8 regardless, and so, if it's not overfished and not overfishing, that
9 determination would be helpful as well.

10
11 *Stephanie Hunt:* Are you suggesting that, and I remember getting this comment, and
12 I forget if it was from you guys, but that we notify the council, or
13 that we actually make a status determination if it's good status or
14 in bad status? Right now, per the Magnuson Act, we are only
15 required to make a determination if essentially it's in bad status,
16 overfishing or overfished or approaching an overfished condition,
17 and so that's when we do decision memos, and that is also when
18 we, technically, per the Magnuson Act, have to notify the councils,
19 but, of course, we're briefing the councils on stock assessment
20 results, and so you should be notified of a good status too, but
21 what's your specific question?

22
23 *Gregg Waugh:* I don't think it has to be that formal, but some written notification
24 that there's agreement that the stock is not overfished and not
25 overfishing.

26
27 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Are there more questions on this topic? Carrie.

28
29 *Carrie Simmons:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Stephanie, for the
30 presentation. I think this is going to be a useful directive for us.
31 We struggle, again, in the Southeast with data-poor issues, and I
32 think this will help us follow a more consistent process when we're
33 reviewing assessments, especially assessments that are maybe
34 interim or updates that don't have a rigorous peer review process,
35 and so I think it will be very good for us.

36
37 I had a couple of questions about the regional plan. Do you
38 envision that the councils will take the lead on that or that the
39 Regional Office would take the lead on that? I mean, the councils
40 seem in a good position, because we're working closely with the
41 SSCs, and we're planning the meetings and that type of thing, but I
42 wasn't sure how you were envisioning that. I think someone
43 should take the lead on this, and that would be my suggestion.

44
45 I think, in the actual policy, you suggest in there that maybe this
46 document, once it's finalized, could be part of the regional

1 operating agreement, and I would suggest that we don't do that,
2 because I think the regional operating agreement gets into the
3 management side of things, if I recall, and the responsibilities more
4 of the SERO and council staff, and so I would prefer it to be a
5 stand-alone document, because I think each of the councils, and
6 like we're supposed to do a plan together, have their own regional
7 operating agreements, and so that wouldn't necessarily work with
8 us anyway in the Southeast, and so that would be my question and
9 suggestion.

10
11 *Stephanie Hunt:* Thank you for that. We didn't talk about who should take the lead,
12 and I would definitely leave that up to you to work out with the
13 Regional Office and Science Center. On the question of the
14 regional operating agreement, we made that as an example, and
15 you could do that, but it's not even a recommendation. We do
16 recommend that the plans, or the regional frameworks, are publicly
17 available, and it is also, I think, up to you.

18
19 We had a question of are these regional frameworks like region,
20 center, and then all of the councils, or per council, and we also
21 leave that up to you. We recognize there are differences in how
22 the Mid and the New England Council work, and, if it's easier to
23 do two regional plans, that's fine. The document doesn't speak to
24 that, and we tried not to get into the details, because we think it's a
25 decision that you should make with the region and the center.

26
27 *Jessica McCawley:* Are there more questions? Kitty.

28
29 *Kitty Simonds:* Our bigeye quota is -- Overfishing and overfished is determined in
30 the international commission, and so the SCE of the International
31 Commission of the WCPO, they met in August, and they
32 determined that bigeye was not overfished, and no overfishing is
33 going on, and then the commission meeting happened in
34 December.

35
36 Then we didn't hear about it until April. We did get a letter from
37 the center saying that bigeye -- The BSIA, that it followed that and
38 whatever, and so our question had been that we couldn't say that it
39 wasn't overfished or overfishing in 2017, which is what we wanted
40 to say, because the NMFS determination came in April of 2018,
41 and so, in terms of getting notified, they should write letters to the
42 councils about the determination. I can't remember if the center
43 went through -- Would they have to go through all of these steps or
44 just accept it from the international commission? What happens?

45
46 *Stephanie Hunt:* Your center does the BSIA memos.

- 1
2 *Kitty Simonds:* Yes.
3
- 4 *Stephanie Hunt:* Not all centers do that, and so I think the document reflects what
5 happened. The stock assessment happened at the international
6 level, and the center took some time to determine whether they
7 considered that international assessment BSIA, and they wrote the
8 BSIA memo, and then we did a stock status decision memo, and so
9 you're right. I think that, especially with the international
10 assessments and the BSIA memo, that took longer than some of
11 these decisions to.
12
- 13 *Kitty Simonds:* Then I just have a quick question about -- Let's see. You say that,
14 in the usual case of significant ambiguity in peer-reviewed
15 assessment findings or disagreement by the SSC with the findings,
16 NOAA Fisheries will consult with and consider any additional
17 input provided by the SSC prior to finalizing the assessment
18 results.
19
- 20 Then would this mean that, until the SSC conducted the review of
21 both the WPSAR results and the revised stock assessment post-
22 WPSAR, that a determination wouldn't be made until after that
23 happened?
24
- 25 *Stephanie Hunt:* I think that's generally how it's recommended.
26
- 27 *Kitty Simonds:* Okay, and so we just need to be clear about that, because we have
28 situations in our part of the world.
29
- 30 *Stephanie Hunt:* I heard about them.
31
- 32 *Kitty Simonds:* Right.
33
- 34 *Jessica McCawley:* Phil.
35
- 36 *Phil Anderson:* Thanks, Madam Chair. Thanks, Stephanie. I am almost hesitant to
37 ask this question, and it has to do with salmon. We have had an
38 opportunity, of course, to talk with Rick Methot about this issue,
39 Chuck and I, and we have probably fifty to sixty salmon forecasts
40 that are done either by the states or by treaty tribes that are brought
41 into the council process in late February, and then we have a two-
42 meeting process that extends over about a seven-week timeframe,
43 where we develop the regulations for the coming season.
44
- 45 The issue associated with BSIA on our run forecast is a concern,
46 and I'm hoping that the answer is to develop how you're going to

1 address that particular situation within the regional BSIA plans,
2 and I'm not sure we can fit into all the boxes that have been
3 created here for our salmon stocks. Just do you have any thoughts
4 about that?

5
6 *Stephanie Hunt:* We did add some footnotes to make it very clear that salmon is one
7 of those odd issues and that we think that the framework generally
8 fits with what you're doing, but, if you have a slightly different
9 process that you want to outline in your regional framework, you
10 could do it there.

11
12 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any other questions? Stephanie and Cisco, we really
13 appreciate that presentation. Thank you very much. Next up on
14 our list is the consultation with the fishery management councils
15 on developing U.S. positions, and this is the UN Convention on the
16 Law of the Sea. Kitty, you're up.

1 **17. CONSULTATION WITH FMCs ON DEVELOPING U.S.**
2 **POSITIONS: UN CONVENTION ON LAW OF THE SEA**

3
4 *Kitty Simonds:* Thank you. As usual, we have situations that many other councils
5 don't have similar situations, but could. You don't know what
6 happens. We learned about shifting stocks, and so here we go. In
7 2015, the UN General Assembly agreed to develop an international
8 legally-binding instrument under the Law of the Sea, and it's
9 called the Convention on Conservation and Sustainable Use of
10 Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

11
12 Now, the E-NGOs and many Pacific island nations, who some of
13 them are former trust territories of the United States, began
14 working on this like ten years ago. For the Pacific islands, this is
15 what they would like to see in the future, so that all fishing takes
16 place in their 200-mile zones, because, currently, they charge our
17 U.S. purse seiners anywhere between \$12,000 and \$15,000 a day
18 to fish, and so this is major for them, and it's all about money,
19 although the themes talk about genetic resources and marine
20 protected areas and all of that sort of thing.

21
22 This is the U.S. zone in our region, and, of course, the orange
23 hatches, and you've seen them before, are the closures because of
24 monuments. Moving along, what we did was we had staff call up
25 some of the other councils to find out if they had taken any
26 positions, if they had looked into it, what was their interest, and so
27 we talked to the Pacific Council, the Mid-Atlantic, the South
28 Atlantic, and the North Pacific Council, and so you can see what
29 their responses are.

30
31 This is the map that, about three weeks ago, Greenpeace and
32 Oxford University and others -- This is the first proposal for
33 closing the high seas, and one of the interesting things that they
34 said was they tried to avoid heavy fishing areas, and I started
35 laughing, and I said, well, what are you trying to do here, and I
36 thought you said it was conserving resources, and so you notice
37 that, around Hawaii, of course, the bottom of the archipelago, they
38 are proposing closures there and along the northern part of the U.S.
39 EEZ's west coast and, of course, the east coast, and so these are
40 closures outside of 200 miles, and so, obviously, those of you who
41 have fisheries, or could have fisheries, like swordfish and things
42 like that, they could be affected.

43
44 We look at the impacts, and they're really significant to us, and so
45 our SSC formed a working group, with Ray Hilborn as the chair,

1 and they are developing a process for determining spatial areas,
2 and so we are going to be completing that at our June meeting, and
3 hopefully to share it with the other councils and the NMFS.
4

5 You see that purple area, and that is our monument, and so, at this
6 time, because of not just monument expansion, but we also have
7 our council longline prohibited area, which is the gray area, and
8 then you see the yellow hatches. Now, that is a closure triggered
9 by two false killer whale mortalities. Any serious injury is
10 considered a mortality, and so they're closed now, and so what you
11 see is our longline fishery can only fish in 17 percent of the entire
12 Hawaii EEZ, and so having closures on the high seas is ridiculous.
13

14 The next map you see, all of these dots there are -- This is fishing
15 effort by foreign vessels around our EEZ, and they are obviously
16 Japan, China, Korea, Chinese Taipei, and this comes from Global
17 Fishing Watch, and their information comes from AIS. I don't
18 believe that they have permission from other countries to use VMS
19 to locate vessels.
20

21 The next slide is the other part of the U.S. EEZ, and so what we're
22 showing you here is that foreign fishing takes place right up to our
23 200-mile zone, and, obviously, if they turn off their AIS or
24 whatever, we don't know where they are, and this last map shows
25 you similar around Howland and Baker and American Samoa, and
26 our EEZs out there run actually -- There are no high-seas pockets.
27 They run into like Japan's EEZ, and they run into the Cook
28 Islands, and so we're surrounded by foreign countries, except for
29 Hawaii in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.
30

31 These negotiations, of course, are happening now, and what we are
32 asking for is for the CCC to request that the State Department and
33 NMFS International provide a briefing at our November meeting
34 on this initiative and the U.S. position and convention timing and
35 that sort of thing. Did you want to add something, Dean?
36

37 *Jessica McCawley:* Sam, did you want to add something now? Okay. After.

38
39 *Kitty Simonds:* Okay. I'm done.
40

41 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Sam.
42

43 *Sam Rauch:* Thank you. As you will recall from the last CCC in Alaska, we did
44 talk about the BBNJ, and I had provided an update on where they
45 were now, and I think it's probably appropriate to build on what
46 Kitty has said with a little bit more detail about that process.

1
2 This is a process that the UN General Assembly started, and it's
3 been going on since 2006. In 2017, the UN General Assembly
4 approved four sessions for BBNJ negotiations, and this is called
5 the Intergovernmental Conference on BBNJ, and the UN General
6 Assembly would like the collective countries to try to develop a
7 treaty as soon as possible.

8
9 Currently, there has been two sessions, and the third session is in
10 August of 2019, and the fourth session will be in 2020. There are
11 four issues that are being discussed, marine genetic resources,
12 including sharing benefits of those, area-based management tools,
13 including marine protected areas, which was the focus of much of
14 what Kitty was talking about, but there's also high-seas
15 environmental impact assessments and capacity building and
16 transfers of marine technology, and so the State Department is
17 leading all of the United States' negotiations and participation in
18 those discussions.

19
20 They do consult with us frequently on the positions that we've
21 taken, and, in a minute, I will go through some of the positions that
22 we've taken, but they also have frequent public meetings ahead of
23 these negotiations sessions, and they will have one before the
24 August meeting, and we don't know when that is, and we will
25 make sure that we let you all know when that is, if you wanted to
26 participate in that one.

27
28 The main position that the United States has taken that's relevant
29 to most of your interests is that we want to make sure that the
30 BBNJ agreement doesn't undermine the mandates of processes
31 from the various RFMOs that we are party to, such as ICCAT,
32 WCPFC, IATTC, and other ones. We have invested, collectively,
33 a lot of time and energy and effort to make sure that the
34 international fisheries that the United States is a part of are
35 conducted in a sustainable manner, and that includes closed areas
36 or other area-based management, and what we do not want to see
37 is a different management organization that comes over the top of
38 those RFMOs and creates a competing or different forum for
39 deciding on fishery restrictions and regulations.

40
41 That is the position that the United States has been supporting
42 throughout. We do not support the creation of a new global body
43 that has either oversight of the RFMOs or some ability to create an
44 area closed to fishing exclusive of the views of the RFMOs.
45 Rather, to the extent that there is an international organization that
46 is formed, we would envision a process where, after a scientific

1 review, that organization might recommend areas for high-seas
2 action that would then go back to the RFMOs for action if the
3 RFMOs thought that was appropriate.
4

5 While this has been the United States' position, and the position of
6 a number of other countries, it is not the only position. There are
7 quite a few countries involved that do want to see an overarching
8 international organization that could directly create closed areas on
9 the high seas and that those closed areas would affect fishing
10 interests on the high seas, and so that is something that we are
11 working through with the other countries. It is an international
12 negotiation, and it's not clear where those would end, where those
13 will go, but I thought it important to let you know the position that
14 the State Department has been taking on all of our behalf and that
15 NOAA has been supporting that position.
16

17 I think, if you are interested in other issues that have been going
18 on, I'm happy to discuss that, but I do want to reiterate that there is
19 a third session coming up in August, and the State Department
20 does intend to host a stakeholder meeting, which I don't have the
21 details on yet, but it will happen between now and August. We
22 will get you the information when that happens, including whether
23 or not you can attend in person or whether there is any remote
24 access possibilities, and so that's the update on where that process
25 is, and I wanted to provide that to you. That's, I think, consistent
26 with everything that I told you last year, with the exception that
27 there was a meeting in between the two. We had the second
28 session in between the two of them.
29

30 *Kitty Simonds:* Thank you, Sam. We are on those phone calls, and so we work
31 with them about it, but I thought we needed to explain our
32 council's position on this. Thanks.
33

34 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Sam. Chris.
35

36 *Chris Oliver:* Just to add a thought to what Sam pointed out and what Kitty
37 pointed out, and I have to channel my former self a little bit again,
38 because I know, when I was with the North Pacific Council, we
39 had some interaction and discussions about MPA establishment in
40 the international high seas, whether it's under the BBNJ vehicle or
41 otherwise, and one of the concerns, and I've pointed this out to the
42 State Department too, is that not just what the impact might be
43 directly to fisheries in the Western Pacific that rely on access to
44 those areas, but simply creating a precedent and expectation that
45 whatever the U.S. government agrees to in those international
46 waters would suddenly become some precedent or expectation for

1 what we do in our backyard, in our own domestic waters. From
2 that perspective, I think it's something that maybe deserves to be
3 on everybody's radar screen, to some extent.
4
5 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Chris. Dean.
6
7 *Dean Sensui:* I just wanted to make a comment that it seems, after you look at
8 the map of the Northwest and Hawaiian Islands and the main
9 island chain, that it seems like the U.S. is one of the few countries
10 that closes off its own EEZ to its fishermen, and that doesn't seem
11 to make a whole lot of sense when that resource is well managed
12 by this council here.
13
14 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more comments or questions? Bill.
15
16 *Bill Tweit:* Thank you, Madam Chair. The map that you showed of the global
17 oceans, is that something that can also be posted along with just
18 the narration, so that we can all get copies of that map?
19
20 *Jessica McCawley:* Great. Any more questions or comments? We're at the end of the
21 day, and we're a little early. Tom, did you have something else?
22
23 *Thomas Nies:* I did. Can we go back to Kitty's presentation?
24
25 *Jessica McCawley:* Sure.
26
27 *Thomas Nies:* I think there was a slide in there where you were asking the CCC
28 to do something.
29
30 *Kitty Simonds:* (Ms. Simonds' comment is not audible on the recording.)
31
32 *Thomas Nies:* Did we adopt those recommendations after Sam explained what
33 was happening? Are we doing that now?
34
35 *Kitty Simonds:* Thank you.
36
37 *Jessica McCawley:* Was that a motion, Tom?
38
39 *Thomas Nies:* That's what I'm trying to figure out, is whether we need a motion
40 here, Madam Chair.
41
42 *Kelly Klasnick:* You all provided three things here, and do you want to address
43 each one individually or just one at a time? Do you want to make
44 a motion on each one of these? Okay.
45
46 *Jessica McCawley:* Kelly is going to paste them over into the motion document. I am

1 not sure if someone wants to make this motion as one motion, and
2 it's there on the board. Dean, do you want to read it?
3

4 *Dean Sensui:* **Okay. The CCC should make recommendations regarding**
5 **BBNJ and develop proactive positions pertaining to similar**
6 **conventions, should they be introduced in the future. The next**
7 **item is the CCC should recommend the U.S. State Department**
8 **to consult with FMCs on a regular basis during the negotiation**
9 **of the new BBNJ convention. Finally, the CCC should request**
10 **the State Department and NMFS to provide a briefing at the**
11 **November 2019 CCC meeting on the reason for this initiative,**
12 **the U.S. position, convention timing, et cetera.**
13

14 *Jessica McCawley:* I assume that that's a motion, Dean.

15
16 *Dean Sensui:* **I make that motion.**

17
18 *Jessica McCawley:* It's seconded by Tom. It's under discussion. Sam.

19
20 *Sam Rauch:* Thank you. I just wanted to point out a few things. First of all, the
21 State Department does technically come, or is invited, to the
22 council meetings, and periodically does attend, and so, to the
23 extent that the individual councils would like to discuss with their
24 State Department reps a more specific briefing, I'm sure that that
25 could be arranged, and the Fisheries Service would be happy to
26 help with that, if there is a need to do that.
27

28 I also think that the Fisheries Service would be happy to help
29 arrange -- I can't guarantee that the State Department will show up
30 in November, but we'll be happy to try that, to provide a similar
31 kind of briefing. I would suggest that the State Department did not
32 start this initiative either, and so, the reasons for the initiative, I'm
33 not sure they could give you any better answer than I can give you
34 today about that.
35

36 That being said, it's not clear to me that the State Department has
37 the capacity to engage each council, or each FMC, or the CCC in
38 general, before each one of these meetings, but it is -- As I said, it
39 has offered these public access points, and it would accept any
40 concerns or views the councils may have, and that's all I had to
41 add.
42

43 *Jessica McCawley:* Good points, Sam. Any more discussion on this motion? Folks
44 seem to be thinking. Phil, you seem like you want to say
45 something down there.
46

1 *Phil Anderson:* Maybe I have a question for the maker of the motion. The second
2 -- Well, first of all, there is three pieces to this. The second and
3 third piece, I don't have any problem with. The first part, the CCC
4 should make recommendations regarding biodiversity of areas
5 beyond national jurisdiction and develop proactive positions, I am
6 just struggling with how we're going to go about doing that. I
7 think, after those next two steps are taken, we could make -- We
8 could entertain that part of the motion, after we have a better
9 understanding of where the State Department and the United States
10 is coming from after the November meeting.

11
12 The second bullet, to me, I don't -- I mean, I don't have -- If you
13 want to have that in there, that's fine, and we're -- As Sam points
14 out, we have State Department representatives, and we're free to
15 ask them to come to our meetings and address particular topics of
16 concern, and so whether we pass that part of the motion or not to
17 me doesn't matter, but I am concerned with the first part at this
18 point in our process, and I'm happy to have this body look at this
19 question and get more informed about it and then make an
20 informed decision about what we want to do as a group.

21
22 *Jessica McCawley:* That's a good point, Phil. Are you -- I don't want to put words in
23 your mouth, but are you suggesting that, of the three points, that
24 maybe Point Number 1 is premature at this time and you're
25 suggesting, to the maker of the motion, that we strike that point?
26 Is that what you're suggesting?

27
28 *Phil Anderson:* I think, Jessica -- Gosh, you just read my mind. I think, if that part
29 of the motion was removed and we consider the other two
30 components, with the understanding that we would come back and
31 discuss further the first component after we receive our briefing in
32 November, I would be much more comfortable with the motion.

33
34 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Dean, maker of the motion.

35
36 *Dean Sensui:* **We agree. The Western Council agrees that we hold off on this**
37 **first part until after the November meeting.**

38
39 *Jessica McCawley:* All right, and so it sounds like we're striking that, and, even
40 though we don't need to, I am looking over to the seconder. I
41 assume that that's a thumbs-up on striking the first point? Okay.
42 Is there more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to**
43 **this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

44
45 I am assuming that there isn't any more discussion on this
46 particular topic, and so, with that, I'm going to turn it over to

1 Gregg to do our wrap-up from today.
2

3 *Gregg Waugh:* This will be very brief. We had a lot going on today, and the EDs
4 have been funneling information to me, and we will have a
5 document to distribute first thing in the morning that will recap the
6 first two days' worth of activities, and the only motion that was
7 passed today was the one that we just did, and so you will have a
8 document tomorrow morning to look at. When we get to the last
9 action item, which is Actions and Wrap-Up and Next Meeting, we
10 will go through that document quickly. I will be glad to answer
11 any questions.
12

13 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Well, unless there is any other burning questions or
14 comments, then we're adjourned for the day, and we'll see you
15 back here at 8:30 in the morning. Thanks, everybody.
16

17 *(Recess)*

1 **18. CONTINUED COUNCIL MEMBER/STAFF/NMFS STAFF**
2 **DEVELOPMENT**

3
4 *Jessica McCawley:* We will get started this morning, and so first up on the agenda this
5 morning is Continued Council Member/Staff/NMFS Staff
6 Development, and I'm going to turn it over to Tom.

7
8 *Thomas Nies:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to live on the edge here this
9 morning, and I'm not going to actually have a presentation. In the
10 briefing book, there is a document that you might want to open up
11 and have in front of you, and it is on the board, but it's a little
12 difficult to read on the board, and I'm going to kind of walk
13 through this document and to discuss this issue.

14
15 One of the things that I think we can all recognize is that fisheries
16 management is not getting any easier. We're faced with increasing
17 challenges, between climate change, shifting distributions of
18 stocks, and the science involved, if anything, is getting more
19 complex, when you start talking about state-based assessment
20 models and management strategy evaluation or ecosystem-based
21 modeling approaches.

22
23 We have to recognize, I think, that our council members come
24 from a wide range of backgrounds. They typically serve for
25 anywhere from three to nine years on the councils, and, over that
26 time span, the challenges and the issues facing the council can
27 change dramatically. The only real orientation, or training, that
28 council members get is the training that NMFS provides them
29 when they are newly appointed, for the appointed council
30 members, and that tends to focus on the mechanics of
31 management, issues like financial disclosure requirements, the
32 Magnuson Act, and that type of thing.

33
34 Unless a council has their own sessions and workshops, which
35 typically may happen at a council meeting and be relatively brief,
36 there is really no further formal training for council members on
37 how to deal with the issues they have. The Council Coordination
38 Committee does meet a couple of times a year, but we're a pretty
39 small group, when you look at the rest of the council members.
40 It's just usually, at most, the council leadership, and occasionally
41 the host council may have a few people sitting in the room. Some
42 regions may have some ability to talk to each other, but, again, it
43 doesn't usually include the entire council.

44
45 We were very fortunate, I think, for about ten years to have a
46 group called the Fisheries Leadership and Sustainability Forum,

1 which I will just refer to as the forum, which about twice a year
2 provided opportunities for professional development for council
3 members, staff, and NMFS staff. They sponsored sixteen meetings
4 that addressed a wide range of different topics of interest to the
5 council, and many of those issues were of interest to the agency,
6 such things as how to deal with uncertainty and risk, how to
7 approach allocations, and they also had some special projects,
8 some under contract with the agency, such as the National
9 Essential Fish Habitat Summit, and they held a meeting on
10 operational guidelines and best practices.

11
12 Unfortunately, the forum has dissolved, and so they're no longer
13 going to offer that opportunity, and so I think the question that
14 some of us wanted to bring to the CCC was whether we thought
15 there was value in trying to continue the example of the forum on
16 our own. I don't know how many people at the table have been to
17 a forum, and many of us have, but I know that not everyone has,
18 and so maybe a brief overview of what went on might be helpful.

19
20 The forum meetings were typically two days long, and they would
21 invite council members. Initially, they did not invite council
22 member staff, but, eventually, they did include council member
23 staff in the forums. NMFS usually sent a number of people, both
24 as presenters and participants. The meetings usually had a theme
25 or themes that they focused on, and they arranged for
26 presentations, and the meetings were facilitated by professional
27 facilitators. You all probably are familiar with Katie Latanich and
28 Kim Gordon. Katie was here earlier, and I can't see if she's in the
29 back of the room here today or not. There she is.

30
31 There were also breakout groups, which allowed people to discuss
32 the issues amongst each other, and there was also some social
33 events in the evenings, which allowed council members and staff
34 from different regions to exchange their experiences, and, to be
35 honest, many people felt that was one of the most important things
36 of the forum, the chance for council members from different
37 regions to sit down and talk about the problems they face.

38
39 I've got a short list of benefits, and I'm just going to read through
40 the bullets a little bit here, just so you know it. As I pointed out,
41 the idea of cross-regional exchanges was very valued, and the
42 conversations were held in a neutral environment. Council
43 members weren't expected to make any decisions, and they were
44 not -- I guess you might say the meetings were semi-public. I'm
45 not sure that I ever saw a member of the public in the room, but
46 I'm not sure that they were prevented from coming. The

1 conversations tended to be wide-open. A council member wasn't
2 worried that someone was going to then take their comment and
3 throw it at them in a meeting. There was an opportunity for
4 exploring the issues, I think in some detail, and there were a lot of
5 networking connections that were built as well.
6

7 The forum did do evaluations, and, from 2014 to 2017, 100 percent
8 of the participants said they would consider attending another
9 forum or regional workshop, and they said they would also
10 recommend them to their colleagues. All of this is just in order to
11 let you know that the people who attended these felt they were
12 very valuable and very productive, and the idea that we're losing
13 this ability I think should be a concern to us, because it is
14 something that I think improved the operation of the councils as a
15 whole.
16

17 What we thought, and there is basically three discussion questions
18 and one action item, perhaps, for the group to discuss, and, Madam
19 Chair, you may want to lead the discussion on the questions
20 individually. The first one is do the members of the CCC think
21 that there's a need for a program like this to bring in council
22 members and council staff and NMFS staff and provide an
23 opportunity for them to share their experiences and learn from
24 other councils in a forum similar to that provided by the Fisheries
25 Forum?
26

27 The second bullet, of course, is probably an important one, and that
28 is are the councils willing to organize and participate in such a
29 program, including helping to fund it? The third bullet is one for
30 the agency, which we may not get an answer on today, but I think
31 it's one we need to ask, and that is, is the agency willing to provide
32 financial support for this effort?
33

34 If you have the document in front of you, just to give you a little
35 bit of an idea of what we were talking about, a couple of us put
36 together a strawman, which is really just that. It was just some
37 initial thoughts to help people understand what a forum might
38 involve. We don't think we're going to be able to pull this off
39 every year. Our idea is perhaps we want to do one of these every
40 other year, and one approach might be to alternate it with the SCS
41 meetings, so they're not held on the same year.
42

43 We figure it would probably be, much like the other forums, a two-
44 day meeting. The location would be to be determined, but our
45 feeling is we ought to try and have the location -- I'm going to say
46 central, recognizing that central doesn't necessarily mean Kansas,

1 given where Hawaii is, but that central may mean something like
2 the west coast or Colorado, so that the travel costs are split a little
3 more evenly among all the councils.
4

5 The topics, of course, we would have to come up with, and I think
6 they would have to be developed by some type of CCC sub-
7 committee and approved by the CCC about a year before the
8 meeting. We had some idea on attendance, and a rough idea is
9 roughly thirty-two seats to the councils and allow the agency to
10 send about ten people. We would have some extra seats available
11 if we were inviting in presenters who might be from the agency or
12 the councils or someplace else.
13

14 Ideally, we would think that the example of the forum of having
15 professional facilitators help organize and run the meeting is one
16 that we should follow, both to take some of the planning workload
17 off of the councils and also because I think that gives a little bit
18 more neutrality to who is running the meeting and how it gets
19 organized.
20

21 We did a ballpark estimate, that probably needs to be refined, that
22 the cost of this would be about \$200,000. A big chunk of it is the
23 travel and stipends for council members that each council would
24 wind up paying, but I think, realistically, that, if you're going to
25 hire a facilitator, that's going to cost each council somewhere
26 between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to contribute to a facilitator or
27 facilitators who are going to work for this.
28

29 That's sort of the idea that we're talking about here, and I think
30 now would be a good time to start answering the bullet questions,
31 the first one being do people think there is any value in trying to do
32 something like this? Is there a need for ongoing council training
33 and staff development?
34

35 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Tom. Yes, let's start with that first bullet and that first
36 question. Don't everybody jump at once this morning. Tony and
37 then Roy.
38

39 *Tony Blanchard:* I ain't shy. I am going to give you from my experience and my
40 perspective, and Roy probably understands this, because he comes
41 to the Caribbean on a steady basis. I think this training is valuable,
42 or some kind of training. I don't think a one-shot deal that you get
43 one time is going to cut it. For me, I came into the whole process
44 because I was the chair of the Trap Reduction Committee, and I
45 was dragged in, and I was just like the rest of the guys, and I've
46 had enough of government, to be honest with you, and I think

1 some of us would agree, but we probably wouldn't want to say
2 that, but I am going to say it.

3
4 I stepped up because none of the other guys wanted to do it,
5 although there were bigger fishers than me, and so, from there, the
6 travel and the other experience -- I went to one of the forums that
7 was in Puerto Rico, I believe it was, and, for most of us, we are
8 low profile, and Miguel would probably be able to answer this, too.
9 Because I was sent an email earlier, and I needed to print it, and I
10 don't have no way of printing it, and I don't have a printer, and I
11 don't have a computer, and, for most of us, that's just the way of
12 life. It's not that we can't, but most of us just don't choose to live
13 that way.

14
15 I think the experience out of the box would probably be a good
16 thing for some of us. For me, because of my personality, and I
17 ain't really a sit-back guy, I stepped up, and I am not afraid to talk
18 or give my point of view, and all of us may not agree, but it's just
19 my point of view.

20
21 Somebody coming behind me, there's not really much guys that
22 are involved in the process that will want to take it any further, or
23 could take it any further. It's kind of like -- Let's say it's an
24 intimidating atmosphere to be in. When you see yourself as a
25 fisherman, and then you've got guys with doctorate degrees and
26 top-dogs in the government, and you're sitting back and you're
27 running a small business, because the reality of it is that all
28 businesses, compared to Alaska, is -- They don't even show up on
29 the map.

30
31 I am going to speak for the Caribbean, to a certain degree. I think,
32 for us, we need something like that, just to keep us involved with
33 the changes and the policies and everything else that comes down
34 the line, so that we ain't behind, to the back of the line, trying to
35 catch up, because it seems to be a catch-up game, and so I think we
36 do need to have a program. I can't tell you exactly what should be
37 in the program, but I think we do need to have a program.

38
39 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Tony. Roy.

40
41 *Roy Crabtree:* I am very supportive of these types of programs, and I think there
42 is a real need for them. What we have tried to do in the Southeast
43 is expand the Marine Resource Education Program that we run,
44 working with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and we do that
45 every year, and it's two series of meetings, one in the spring that is
46 based on the science and one in the fall that's based on

1 management, and it goes through all the aspects of the science and
2 how a stock assessment is put together, and then, in the
3 management one, we go through the Magnuson Act and NEPA and
4 how the councils work and all of those kinds of things, and it has a
5 very high level of participation out of the staff of the Regional
6 Office and the Science Center and a lot of staff agencies
7 participating.

8
9 We usually have thirty-five or so people sign up for that each year,
10 but we have set aside seats for council members to participate in
11 that, and we have had a number of council members. Some of the
12 ones who are here at this meeting have participated on it, and,
13 normally, we'll get -- More often, we get new council members
14 than anyone else, and so that's been really valuable, and it's a very
15 popular program.

16
17 We run a Caribbean-specific version of that down in Puerto Rico
18 and the USVI, and we've had trouble coming up with the funding
19 to keep the program going, and so I think it's very valuable, and
20 we've kind of gone our own path to try and meet that need, and,
21 for us, it's not just a program for council members, but it's also to
22 bring in constituents and fishermen and a diverse group of people
23 each year.

24
25 *Jessica McCawley:* I have Dean and then Mike and then Terry.

26
27 *Dean Sensui:* Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Becoming a council
28 member, when you get appointed to this position, you're kind of
29 half expected to be hitting the ground running, and there's a lot to
30 take in. Just trying to understand the fundamentals of MSA is one
31 thing, and that's not that hard to grasp, but what gets kind of a little
32 perplexing sometimes is all the subtleties of the science, and just
33 having a simple glossary to explain terms and some of the thought
34 processes behind it might help, things like P* and terms of
35 reference and all that kind of stuff. It's not familiar to people who
36 aren't in the science arena, like myself, and I've kind of had to
37 piece all that stuff together and get a better grip on what's going
38 on.

39
40 Another thing that I think might be really, really difficult to try and
41 convey to council members, if they're not already exposed to it, is
42 the subtleties of the politics. Everything up until that point makes
43 a whole lot of sense, and everything is very rational, and a lot of it
44 is quantified, and some of it's qualitative, but then it's backed with
45 some quantitative evidence, and you take that whole package of
46 information and get it to the people who are running the show, and

1 it just hits a brick wall sometimes, and we have experienced that
2 where we are, and I think just getting a new council member to
3 appreciate how that can happen might help alleviate some of the
4 frustration that builds up along the way, but, yes, I fully support
5 having any opportunity to learn more about this process.
6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Dean. I have Mike and then Terry.

8
9 *Mike Luisi:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be brief. The answer is yes to the
10 question. I participated myself, and I found a lot of value, and the
11 feedback I have received from other council members from the
12 Mid-Atlantic has all been positive, and so I would certainly
13 support, or we would certainly support, continuing with the
14 program. Thank you.
15

16 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks. I have Terry and then Mel and then Dale.

17
18 *Terry Stockwell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I have had the good fortune of
19 attending a number of these forums over the years, and I want to
20 underscore the many benefits that Tom articulated, particularly
21 highlighting the friendships that I have developed with folks from
22 around the regions over the years because of the forums and the
23 fact that I've learned something new every time I have gone to one
24 of these. It's been a very rewarding program, and so, when you're
25 ready, I've got a motion.
26

27 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. We'll come back to you, Terry. Mel and then Dale.

28
29 *Mel Bell:* I will just echo what Dean and Terry said. I mean, I have
30 participated in a couple of forums on the east coast and a training
31 event on the west coast, and I personally got a lot out of it, and,
32 connected to what Dean was talking about, the area where
33 fisheries, or me as a biologist, where sort of biology and
34 government collide can be a very confusing area, and there is
35 really -- There is a need for some form of training, to kind of help
36 people with that.
37

38 Whether you're a fisherman or a biologist, it's not that easy to kind
39 of figure this stuff out, and so what the forum format provided, I
40 thought, was just a nice kind of neutral area where you could
41 discuss all sorts of topics and kind of think above the -- You get
42 kind of caught down in the weeds sometimes in the council
43 meetings, and this kind of gets you up at a higher level, where you
44 can kind of sit back and think and meet people and talk and share
45 ideas, and so some form of training like that would be extremely
46 valuable.

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Jessica McCawley: Thank you. Dale.

Dale Diaz: I had never attended one of the forums, and I don't think we had good participation in that from the Gulf Council. There may have been a few of them, but I just don't remember a lot of talk about the forums with our council. I like the idea, and what I really like is, when I used to be on the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, for a while, at the commission business meeting, we were asking all of the commissioners to bring maybe new and innovative ideas of how they were approaching problems.

Sometimes people would bring up something, and somebody is doing something to approach a problem that you have with a different way that you can steal from them or use or whatever you want to say, and I use the South Atlantic's presentation at this meeting. I mean, look at the innovative stuff that the South Atlantic is doing, and so it might be good to have an agenda item, if we get these meetings up, where every council might bring something that they're doing that's kind of a new or innovative way to approach a problem, and it doesn't have to be a fisheries problem. It might be some type of way you're getting data out to the council members or something you're doing with your meeting to make it more efficient or more effective or something like that, anything to help improve the process, but I do support it, and thank you, Madam Chair.

Jessica McCawley: Thanks, Dale. Terry, are you ready for your motion?

Terry Stockwell: Yes, ma'am. **I move that the CCC establishes a temporary working group to develop a proposal for a regional fishery management forum. The CCC will review and consider approving the proposal at its November 2019 meeting.**

Jessica McCawley: All right. We have the motion on the board. Is there a second to this motion?

Tony Blanchard: Second.

Jessica McCawley: It's seconded by Tony. It's under discussion. Go ahead, Chris.

Chris Oliver: I have a technical question. Tom, with regard to the cost draft you outlined, roughly a total cost of \$200,000, which is \$25,000 per council, I remember previous discussions about whether each of the eight councils were willing to pony up, if you will, but then you asked the question of whether NMFS is willing to pony up,

1 and so how much of this do you see the councils supporting versus
2 what NMFS might support?

3
4 *Thomas Nies:* Well, I always learned that it never hurt to ask, and so we would
5 like you to pay for all of it, but the reality is I think what we were
6 actually looking at is that the councils would pay the travel for
7 their individual council members and attendees, the travel and per
8 diem, and the agency would pay the travel and per diem for any
9 attendees that you send, including any invited participants that may
10 be presenting.

11
12 That leaves really the cost of the facilitators that would be hired,
13 and I think that -- I mean, ideally, we would say the agency would
14 pick up all of that. The reality is I think the councils should be
15 willing to share in the cost of that. We've got a ballpark estimate
16 in there that was -- It's really just a ballpark estimate, and I don't
17 have it right in front of me, but it's probably somewhere around
18 \$70,000 or \$80,000.

19
20 We would have to refine that a little bit, and I think what we
21 should expect is that the councils would be willing to pick up half
22 of the cost of the facilitation and hope that the agency would pick
23 up the other half, and the idea here is that something on the order
24 of what you contribute to the semi-annual SCS meetings, for
25 example, which I believe is somewhere around -- Chuck would
26 know. He hosted the most recent one. I think that was what,
27 roughly \$60,000 or something?

28
29 *Jessica McCawley:* Chuck.

30
31 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you. We requested \$125,000 from the agency, and we
32 received that, and we spent it all.

33
34 *Thomas Nies:* So that would probably be the -- Depending on the facilitation
35 costs, that would probably be the high end, I think.

36
37 *Jessica McCawley:* I had Bill.

38
39 *Bill Tweit:* Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to Tom and Terry for
40 putting the motion on the table. I'm wondering what your thoughts
41 are about composition of the working group and if you had any
42 thoughts about who might be tabbed to pull the working group
43 together.

44
45 *Jessica McCawley:* Tom.

46

1 *Thomas Nies:* A couple of us have talked about it a little bit. I think we would
2 need someone as a chair to lead the working group, and I think we
3 would ask the councils to contribute members to it, either from the
4 staff or -- I would be willing to participate in the working group,
5 and I have an admin officer who is excellent at contracting issues,
6 and I would be willing to contribute her time to help us sort out
7 contracting and help come up with cost estimates that might be a
8 little better than these initial ones, and I'm not -- I can't speak for
9 any other councils, but I think it would be helpful if perhaps one of
10 the council members chaired the working group, to give it a little
11 more credibility.

12
13 *Jessica McCawley:* Bill.

14
15 *Bill Tweit:* Thanks. I actually have a strong interest in this, and I would be
16 willing to chair this, if this were to pass. I'm also interested in
17 thoughts about whether the agency would -- What kind of a
18 participatory role the agency might have in this working group.

19
20 *Jessica McCawley:* Chris.

21
22 *Chris Oliver:* Let us discuss that and get back to you, and we'll see if we can
23 volunteer somebody. I don't know if Sam has another thought.

24
25 *Sam Rauch:* I think we can participate in the workgroup. Depending on how
26 it's formulated, we may or may not become official or -- We'll
27 have to figure out our legal and authority questions and all that, but
28 we can participate at least in the initial planning stages of that.

29
30 *Jessica McCawley:* Bill.

31
32 *Bill Tweit:* Also, maybe just a little clarity about the purpose of the working
33 group. At least when this was discussed among the councils
34 Tuesday morning, we pretty quickly sort of blended in a bit of a
35 discussion about new member training, and I would just propose
36 that that be an entirely separate issue and that this not try to take on
37 anything broader than just the opportunity for older council
38 members, and older not chronologically, but older in terms of
39 service, and not the elderly, although they wouldn't be -- Long-
40 serving, or longer-serving, but to educate themselves in some of
41 the efforts that we all grapple with, as Dean said, and begin to get a
42 sense for that balance between politics and management that we
43 talk about and the ability to develop cross-council network
44 relationships, and so a very different function from what new
45 member training is, and also a different function from what a
46 program like MREP does, which is really to educate stakeholders,

1 and certainly council members as well, but this is really more, I
2 think, oriented towards really developing our tools and our
3 strengths as council members and the ability to have the
4 perspective of other councils in mind as we're confronting the
5 problems that face individual councils.
6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Bill. Thanks for that clarification. Terry.

8
9 *Terry Stockwell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. To that point, Bill, this motion is
10 specific to that, and nothing is intended for new member training
11 or MREP or anything other than the sole purpose of moving along
12 with what the old forum used to do.
13

14 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Terry. Gregg.

15
16 *Gregg Waugh:* I think it would be very helpful to have the NMFS participation on
17 this group, because a part of the idea is to continue ongoing
18 training for NMFS staff as well and not just the councils, and I
19 think that's a good forum to have some of the NMFS staff be
20 exposed to different ideas in different regions as well, and so I
21 think, in some of our discussions, that's some of what we were
22 looking for from the agency as well, because it would be a benefit
23 to you all as well.
24

25 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more discussion? Tom.

26
27 *Thomas Nies:* Just to put some ideas on what this working group might want to
28 bring back in November, depending on what they think, but my
29 thought is they might want to come up with a more detailed
30 proposal for how this thing is going to work and how they would
31 be planned in the future, and they also might want to bring in some
32 ideas for what we would want to discuss at the first one of these
33 sessions.
34

35 If we decide to adopt the idea proposed in the strawman that these
36 essentially alternate with the SCS meetings, we would probably be
37 holding this first forum, I think, in 2021, because I believe the SCS
38 meets next June, and so, if we start ironing out what the topics
39 might be in November of 2019, I think that gives us plenty of time
40 to try and put together an excellent forum that we would hold in
41 2021.
42

43 *Jessica McCawley:* Also, good clarifying points. Is there more discussion on this
44 motion? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that**
45 **motion stands approved.** I am going to look back to Tom. I feel
46 like this motion and the discussion covered all three of those bullet

1 points and questions, but, if you don't, can you let me know?

2

3 *Thomas Nies:* Well, I'm a little confused. Did Mr. Oliver hand you a check yet?

4

5 *Jessica McCawley:* Not yet. No cash in my pocket yet, but it sounds like they're
6 willing to participate in the group that's going to discuss this, and I
7 hope that part of that discussion will be is NMFS willing to
8 provide some type of financial support, and how much, for this
9 effort. Anything else on this topic of continued council
10 member/staff/NMFS staff development before we move to the next
11 topic? All right.

1 **19. CCC COMMITTEES/WORKGROUPS**

2
3 *Gregg Waugh:* I beg your indulgence here for a moment. Speaking from the
4 South Atlantic Council's perspective, we have placed a lot of
5 demands on Chris. It's nice having a friend in that type of
6 position, and he's been extremely helpful to us, as well as to all the
7 other councils. He had been particularly supportive of our efforts
8 to look at private recreational reporting, and he was very
9 instrumental in us getting the funding for our second phase of
10 MyFishCount, and so we wanted to recognize those efforts with
11 something from the South Atlantic Council, and I've also got
12 something sort of on behalf of all of us here as well that we'll do
13 after that one.

14
15 *Jessica McCawley:* I am going to read our inscription on here. First, I will say that we
16 just want to thank you for everything that you've done for the
17 councils so far and what we hope you will do, and I'm not just
18 giving you this gift because I want you to fix MRIP, and I'm just
19 saying, or because we want some money, but I'm just saying.

20
21 The inscription is: To Chris Oliver for his support of the
22 Council/NMFS partnership process and private recreational
23 electronic reporting, May 2019.

24
25 *Chris Oliver:* (Mr. Oliver's comment is not audible on the recording.)

26
27 *Gregg Waugh:* Sort of from the rest of us, Chris, we recognize that you're in a
28 tough position. For those days when things are getting really
29 frustrating, and you've got Congress on you, and Sam is being
30 Sam, and, as Kitty says, smooth Paul isn't putting the money
31 where you would like it to be, and you've got friends around the
32 table who are asking and asking and asking, we just want you to
33 know that we do appreciate what you do for us. We're thankful for
34 the additional funding that you have provided, and we just want
35 you to know that, even though sometimes we keep asking, we do
36 appreciate all your efforts on behalf of us.

37
38 For those times when things get particularly rough, and you need
39 to blow off a little steam, it's just something for you to remember
40 Charleston by, and we just got you this little token of our
41 appreciation.

42
43 I don't know if all of you saw Chris at the hearing, but Joe
44 Cunningham, our new representative from this area, made good
45 use of a horn during his questioning, and I felt your pain, Chris,
46 sitting there, but, in all seriousness, and there's also a small cup in

1 there, if you need to be entertained, and it changes color as you put
2 water in it.

3
4 *Chris Oliver:* Thank you, Gregg. Seriously, thank you. This is beautiful. Thank
5 you very much. It was an honor and privilege sitting at this table
6 in my previous capacity, and I'm happy to be able to continue
7 working with all of you in my new capacity, and so I look forward
8 to continuing to do that. Thanks.

9
10 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Next up, we're going to move to the CCC Committees
11 and Workgroups, and I am going to call up John Carmichael to talk
12 about the Scientific Coordination Sub-Committee.

13
14 *John Carmichael:* Thank you very much. It's my pleasure to report on the Scientific
15 Coordination Sub-Committee on behalf of all of our members from
16 all of the councils, and so what I will do is give a quick update on
17 our last meeting and then fill you in on the plans for the next
18 meeting.

19
20 The last meeting was hosted by the Pacific Fishery Management
21 Council, and it addressed the use of management strategy
22 evaluations, or MSEs, to inform management decisions made by
23 the regional fishery management councils. It was January of last
24 year in San Diego, and I think everyone had a great time at that
25 meeting, and certainly learned a lot, and Chuck is going to give us
26 a brief overview of what discussed in the meeting there.

27
28 *Chuck Tracy:* Thanks, John. Mostly, I just wanted to kind of give a shout-out to
29 the people that helped organize that meeting and put it together. I
30 thought it was a very successful meeting. It was a little different
31 format than the SCS meetings have been in the past, with a lot of
32 open discussion, and people seemed to like that format, and it
33 worked quite well.

34
35 As John mentioned, the theme was the use of management strategy
36 evaluations to inform management decisions made by the regional
37 councils, and we had some invited speakers. The three main topics
38 were the use of MSEs in evaluating and modifying harvest control
39 rules, estimating and accommodating uncertainty, and adjusting
40 harvest control rules in changing environments or a non-static
41 maximum sustainable yield.

42
43 The minutes from that, or the report from that, will be out very
44 shortly, and we had a little bit of a delay in getting that done, with
45 some staff turnover in our office, and so my apologies for that. I
46 was hoping that that would be ready for you all here today, but not

1 quite, but we should be getting the proceedings fairly soon.
2

3 There is an executive summary of the report available for you to
4 take a look at in its stead, and so, if you want to get a little advance
5 look at what's coming in the proceedings, you're welcome to
6 peruse that. Again, I did want to thank our SSC Chair, Dr. Will
7 Satterthwaite, and our council staff, Mr. John DeVore, for their
8 efforts in putting this together. Again, it was a very good effort
9 and a very successful meeting.

10
11 Just in context of the last agenda item, I mentioned that we did
12 request and get \$125,000 for that, and we did spend that all, but I
13 would also point out that we did pay for travel and per diem for the
14 participants, for the non-federal participants, and that was a pretty
15 big chunk of what we spent our money on. I think, for the hotel
16 and that end of the business, it was on the order of \$40,000 or
17 \$45,000, between the meeting space and what we'll spend on the
18 proceedings and those sorts of things, and so that might be a little
19 more context. With that, thanks, John.
20

21 *John Carmichael:*

22 Thanks, Chuck, and I will hit just a few of the topics, to give you a
23 review of what was discussed at the meeting and some of the
24 recommendations. It focused on MSEs, and the three main topics
25 were the use of MSEs in evaluating and modifying control rules,
26 and we talked about the uncertainty within MSEs, and then how
27 MSEs can be used in evaluating control rules with regard to
28 changing environments and changes in MSY, and so it was a very
29 technical meeting, and it became apparent to those of us, certainly
30 in the Southeast, that we're kind of behind the curve a little bit
31 when it comes to MSEs, because we haven't had as much
32 experience in working with those models, but I think everyone got
33 something out of it that they could take home and see where they
34 needed to go, perhaps, with MSEs and how they could be useful.

35 A big part of the discussion was just what is an MSE, and this was
36 a pretty, I think, straightforward example or explanation for a
37 complex topic, but it's an iterative process, and that's really what it
38 is. It iterates lots of different things that are going on in
39 management, in the environment, and the population, and the idea
40 is that you're evaluating the tradeoffs, which, as managers, that's
41 what you're doing all the time when you make decisions.
42

43 The idea is that it's a tool that can help the managers look at the
44 tradeoffs in their different strategies and their different actions and
45 to see what will happen and how will uncertainty affect your
46 consequences and your management choices and, ultimately, lead

1 to your management goals, and so it is kind of the next step, in
2 terms of bringing in uncertainty in stock assessments and
3 evaluating management alternatives and actions.
4

5 The recommendations that came out, just a quick summary, was,
6 one, first and foremost, really is engaging stakeholders and
7 managers, because, when you're understanding consequences, a lot
8 of it is how are stakeholders going to respond to the management
9 actions that you put into place, and that's not really a biological
10 question, a lot of times. It's a behavioral question, and so you have
11 to get the stakeholders engaged, and you also have to have the
12 managers engaged, because they also have insight into what
13 they're going to do and what they might do, and they also know
14 how things have changed.
15

16 Facilitators are recognized as being necessary to make this happen
17 and to lead the process. Everyone acknowledged that biologists
18 typically are not very good facilitators, and so you need to have
19 someone with that skill to get all of these diverse groups together
20 and talking the same.
21

22 Avoiding complex analyses is recommended, which might seem a
23 little bit contrary to where you're going with MSEs, but the idea is
24 keep the analyses kind of simple, so that you can explore a lot
25 more of the different outcomes and the possible uncertainties in
26 what may happen. Then communication is critical, and that
27 communication extended to the managers, the stakeholders, the
28 biologists, lots of back-and-forth communication, so that everyone
29 can understand what's going on, and that simplicity is better.
30 Simpler communication, and not journal articles, but simpler
31 things that the stakeholders and the managers can really get their
32 heads around and use. All of this can be kind of tough for
33 scientists too, which is where the stakeholders come in.
34

35 It was noted that ecosystem MSEs are really tough, because you're
36 expanding the scope of what you're looking at, and there's a lot
37 more uncertainty. Things are suddenly getting exponentially more
38 complex, and that means you need more participation, and so the
39 ecosystem is bigger, and maybe you need stakeholders from a
40 broader range geographically and across fisheries.
41

42 Then, importantly though, when doing that, you've got to consider
43 the information that managers need. In other words, if you're not
44 looking at the questions that are important to managers, then
45 you're not really doing an MSE that's going to help the whole
46 purpose you're doing MSEs, which is to help managers make

1 decisions.

2
3 Then, of course, why pursue an MSE? I thought this pretty well
4 captured the reason and the justifications. A well-done MSE
5 results in a better understanding of the science, the uncertainty
6 associated with the analyses, and the risk involved in making
7 complicated management decisions. That is kind of the carrot of
8 doing it and why to put this investment into that, and so there was
9 a lot of discussions of the complex things and experiences that
10 people had, but, even though like us in the Southeast that haven't
11 done as many of these, I think these lessons about going down this
12 path were very useful and relevant to all of us, and so, all in all, it
13 was a really good meeting, as they have all been, and I think, from
14 the folks that I talked to there, they really appreciated the
15 opportunity, again.

16
17 They were appreciative of NMFS providing the funding for us to
18 continue this, and the discussion on the technical issues is good,
19 but building the relationships across all of the SSCs is also really
20 valuable, and so that brings us up to the next meeting.

21
22 This one will be hosted by the North Pacific Fishery Management
23 Council. The proposal, you've been given a written proposal that
24 largely addresses the theme topics, and so I know we may have a
25 few questions on some of those.

26
27 The overarching theme is ecosystem management issues, and the
28 dates are summer of 2020, and the location is hopefully Alaska.
29 The funding is contingent, of course, on even being able to hold
30 this, and the proposed topics that we have are based on the
31 discussions of the steering committee, which is representatives of
32 each SSC and each council staff, and this group has just worked,
33 since the very beginning, really, with some revolving membership,
34 to organize these meetings and deal with the follow-up from one
35 meeting and the kicking-off of the next meeting.

36
37 After a few discussions, we settled on these topics, and they were
38 very graciously fleshed out by Diana at the North Pacific Council,
39 who took a lot of discussions and a lot of widely-varying ideas and
40 put them down into what is I think a pretty good proposal on the
41 topics, and probably more fleshed-out type of topics than we've
42 had in the past, a lot of times, and so they did a great job on that.

43
44 The three main areas are, as noted here, incorporating ecosystem
45 indicators into the stock assessment process, managing interacting
46 species in EBFM, and then how do you assess and manage species

1 exhibiting distributional changes, and so, with that, I will pause
2 here for any discussion on the next meeting or the topics in
3 particular.
4

5 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any questions for John? Tom.
6

7 *Thomas Nies:* John, thank you. I've got a couple of questions on the proposed
8 topics, and I guess I'm a little concerned at the use of the word
9 "management" in these TORs and exactly what is meant. This is a
10 scientific group that's meeting, and I recognize that there will be
11 some council staff there who are, obviously, familiar with
12 management, but I'm a little nervous about the lines in here about
13 how to assess and manage species and how to do management in
14 an ecosystem-based fisheries management context, when this is
15 really a group of scientists that are meeting. It seems like it's a
16 little bit outside what we might want them to talk about, but maybe
17 you could elaborate on what the thinking was behind this.
18

19 *John Carmichael:* I would say I think it was along the lines of -- In most cases, it was
20 really thinking of management in terms of what information the
21 scientists can provide for management and less so much to
22 specifically doing management, but I completely agree with you
23 that I don't think that really comes out clear, and particularly not in
24 the topical areas and seeing "management" show up so often, but,
25 yes, I think the focus was to try and get into the idea of supporting
26 management and the information that you guys might want to use
27 from this, in terms of making management decisions, and so I
28 think that could be fixed by some edits to these and still capture the
29 general gist. I think, particularly in the second bullet, it mentions
30 management right from the beginning, but a lot of the text is more
31 about the information that supports management and how you
32 provide the evaluation, and so I think that's a reasonable edit to
33 make to these.
34

35 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more questions for John? All right. Thank you, John. Next
36 up, we have the Habitat Workgroup, and we're going to bring
37 Roger up.
38

39 *Roger Pugliese:* Good morning, all, and thank you, on behalf of the CCC Habitat
40 Workgroup, and I would like to thank all the members that helped
41 move the activities along to this point. Today, I'm going to be
42 reporting out on a follow-up from the decision that was made at the
43 last conference call to approve advancing a workshop relative to
44 EFH consultation.
45

46 The group is involved in initiating and moving things forward on

1 the council and NOAA Fisheries EFH consultation and regional
2 innovations workshop, and this workshop is going to provide the
3 forum not only to look within your individual areas and working
4 with your regions, but also across the other regions and seeing how
5 some of the different activities are being accomplished and benefit
6 that capability or look at other opportunities to advance this.

7
8 The focus is to create a cross-regional forum for all of the members
9 and individuals involved in looking at permit review, EFH
10 consultation, how the councils and NOAA Fisheries and the
11 centers can work even more efficiently to address things that I
12 think have been really highlighted in this meeting with other non-
13 fishing activities and the impacts they may have on fisheries in our
14 areas, and so what I really was going to go directly to is that we've
15 engaged the group, and the group is going to be refining the
16 individual components of the workshop. The package of the
17 workshop was included as one of the attachments for this meeting.

18
19 The focus we had here was to reach back to our membership, our
20 partners, council partners, to look at what some of the benefits that
21 individuals saw, so we can craft exactly how the different sessions
22 are going to be conducted and get members identified to develop
23 those and then really advance refinement and coordination, so that
24 this can actually be an extremely productive meeting.

25
26 Just to touch on some things, what we did was, in reaching out, I
27 think what we ended up doing is seeing a pretty clear pattern on
28 how some of the other areas -- The most significant, one being that
29 very direct coordination between your individual region, center,
30 the fisheries Science Centers, on how they support information
31 relative to EFH consultations, not only in the active process, but in
32 those processes where the council may want to weigh-in at a
33 specific time and get the information across all those different
34 partners, to make sure that it's a substantive and valuable effort, to
35 different things that go all the way down to how those types of
36 information are becoming available.

37
38 We look to our other partners and see how they're providing EFH
39 information and what tools, and I think you've been seeing some
40 of the different tools that have been developed in our region to be
41 able to get information out or to actually provide those capabilities
42 to individuals that are involved.

43
44 We have another second activity in not only crafting and refining
45 what the sessions are, but also compiling some specific questions
46 for partners in the region. One of the things that we have been

1 doing is working directly with the organization of BOEM and with
2 the Navy, et cetera, and, really, this is a reach-out, to see what
3 types of other refined information may be useful that they could
4 access, and so that's another aspect, I think, that's going to be
5 really critical and provide even a more effective effort in this
6 workshop, in advancing the workshop.

7
8 As you can see, some of the other areas highlighted discussing the
9 roles of everything from renewable energy to how other activities,
10 in terms of supporting designations, such as the development of
11 say an EFH user guide, which we have done in the Southeast, and
12 it's something that I think could really be of benefit, and I think the
13 region can discuss it, and the councils can discuss it, and so the
14 bottom line is this is one of the first real opportunities we've had
15 across all of the councils to be able to look and coordinate on this
16 type of an effort.

17
18 I think it's going to very significantly benefit each one of the
19 councils, and I think making sure that we're addressing what you
20 see as helping the councils, each council individually as well as the
21 cross-walk between the councils and the bigger picture for the
22 Southeast on fully addressing EFH needs and information, and I
23 think it's -- As I said, I think it's right in line with discussions we
24 had on enhanced coordination early this morning, and it really goes
25 even further, with some of the bigger activities we saw presented
26 that are coming down the line that the councils are going to have to
27 be able to address and be ahead of the curve on.

28
29 I wanted to touch, again, on the logistics. The timing is August 20
30 through the 22 in Portland, and it's pretty much a -- We've had
31 some questions earlier on, and this is going to be a focused council
32 staff and NOAA Fisheries staff, to really get in the weeds both in
33 your region and across the regions on how we can enhance the
34 activities and better address some of these types of consultations
35 for non-fishing activities.

36
37 Again, I would like to thank all the participants that have advanced
38 this and then our partners in NOAA that have helped secure the
39 locations, refining the timing, and we're moving forward, and I
40 think it's going to be a very productive and effective workshop as
41 we advance it, and hopefully we'll be able to report out at the
42 winter/fall meeting, both on this and -- Also, like I said, this was
43 very focused on the workshop, and then we can have, I think, a
44 little bit more report on other activities of the councils on habitat.
45 With that, I would pass it back to Madam Chair.

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1 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Roger. Are there questions for or about the Habitat
 2 Workgroup and what they covered last time or the upcoming
 3 discussions? All right. Thank you, Roger. Next up, we're going
 4 to go back to the Legislative Workgroup, and I'm going to turn it
 5 back to Dave. Maybe we have one remaining position left on
 6 aquaculture?

7
 8 *David Witherell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe Gregg has that language, and
 9 I will let him post that, but this is the revised proposal for the
 10 consensus.

11
 12 *Jessica McCawley:* Stand by.

13
 14 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you. We are pulling up the aquaculture language. We
 15 circulated this quite a bit, and we got Adam's input as well, and so
 16 the way it reads now is the CCC believes that regional fishery
 17 management councils have existing authority under the Magnuson-
 18 Stevens Act to develop fishery management plans for
 19 aquaculture/mariculture, which is consistent with NMFS' long-
 20 standing interpretation. This authority allows the councils to
 21 address, in a public and transparent manner, major topics like the
 22 permitting processes and duration, approval of systems and siting,
 23 species that may be cultured, and recordkeeping and reporting.
 24 However, conflicting court decisions have caused confusion, and
 25 specific mention of aquaculture/mariculture in the MSA would
 26 affirm the councils' authority to manage such activities that impact
 27 existing fishery management plans.

28
 29 We have circulated this amongst the EDs, and some of the chairs
 30 and vice chairs have weighed-in on this also, and this would
 31 replace and become the new consensus statement in the CCC
 32 working paper for aquaculture, and we've got the existing wording
 33 that's in there as well as some initial proposed revisions, if
 34 anybody has any questions or wants to look at that. If this
 35 acceptable, then we've got a draft motion to approve this, but we
 36 would deal with any questions first.

37
 38 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Gregg. Are there questions or discussion on this new
 39 language? As Gregg mentioned, a number of you have looked at
 40 this throughout the week, but, if folks have additional questions or
 41 discussion on this, now is the time. All right. With that, I would
 42 entertain a motion.

43
 44 *Gregg Waugh:* **I will make that motion to revise Topic 19, Aquaculture**
 45 **Consensus Statement, to read as I just read.**
 46

1 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Gregg. Is there a second? It's seconded by Carrie. It's
2 under discussion. Chuck.

3
4 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you. I guess I just would make it clear that we don't have
5 the authority to adopt these changes for our entire council, and they
6 haven't seen these, and so we do have a meeting in June, and we
7 will be bringing this up with them, but, pending their approval, and
8 we would make that stipulation in this motion.

9
10 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Chuck. Any other discussion of this motion? Mel.

11
12 *Mel Bell:* Just a point, and so I will put my state fisheries hat on. We're
13 dealing with development of -- A lot of the aquaculture, or the
14 aquaculture we will see, at least in our state, our region, will be in
15 state waters, but realizing that -- I know that the Army Corps of
16 Engineers has permitting authority in state waters, and permits are
17 required for activities in state waters, but, I mean, there's still -- I
18 guess just to make sure we're all clear that the states will be
19 heavily involved in whatever takes place related to aquaculture, at
20 least for sure in our area, but that's perhaps more geared towards
21 federal waters, or federal jurisdiction, and I realize it's a
22 partnership thing, because we need state and federal both involved
23 in state. I'm fine with that.

24
25 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks for that clarification. Any more discussion? **Any**
26 **objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands**
27 **approved.** Dave, do you have anything else relative to the
28 committee that we need to discuss?

29
30 *David Witherell:* That concludes our work. We will report back at the next meeting
31 on any teleconference we might have or any further suggested
32 changes.

33
34 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Excellent. Thank you. The Council Communications
35 Group, and Kim, you're up next.

36
37 *Kim Iverson:* Good morning, everyone, and thank you for the opportunity to
38 speak on behalf of the Council Communication Group. My name
39 is Kim Iverson, and I think I've met most everyone here, but I
40 work as the Public Information Officer for the South Atlantic
41 Council, and I hope that you've enjoyed your visit to Charleston
42 and had an opportunity to do a little sightseeing and maybe this
43 afternoon take advantage of this beautiful weather. It's like this
44 every day here.

45

1 I thought it may be helpful to go back and reiterate some of the key
2 points that were covered at the Communication Group meeting in
3 Sitka, Alaska, and forgive me. I'm a Mac person, and so, when I
4 get in front of a PC, it makes me a little nervous.

5
6 A copy of the final report, we worked together recently to finalize
7 that report and come to a consensus from the workgroup, and it's
8 in your briefing book materials, and I included a spreadsheet that I
9 think you may find helpful. There is details from each individual
10 council on how you're using communication tools at this time, and
11 we'll continue to update that, so you can compare what your
12 council is doing with other councils, as far as communication tools
13 are concerned.

14
15 We talked, at the meeting last year, about communication and
16 technology and how we're moving forward and using things like
17 webinars for not only communications or broadcasting our
18 meetings, our council meetings and advisory panel meetings and
19 SSC meetings, et cetera, but also having webinars and using
20 webinars for public hearings and for scoping. We just had an
21 advisory panel, and our Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meeting
22 was held via webinar, and the fishermen were -- The members of
23 the AP were receptive to it. It was a brief, half-day meeting, and it
24 really held down the cost by having that meeting via webinar, and
25 so we're moving forward in that direction.

26
27 We talked briefly about promoting a regional council system and
28 the use of having things that are consistent, as simple as letterhead,
29 so that we are identified as a regional council system, and our
30 website, our fisheriescouncils.org, and I want to go to that website
31 briefly in a minute, and we'll just look at it and maybe have some
32 ideas on how we can better utilize that tool.

33
34 Emily Muehlstein from the Gulf Council and Cameron Rhodes,
35 who you met earlier this week from our council staff, gave a very
36 good overview of the use of social media tools, and we talked
37 about the use of things like Facebook and YouTube and Twitter,
38 and we vary in how we utilize those tools, but how to utilize them
39 more effectively.

40
41 Janice Plante from the New England Council gave a very good
42 overview from her personal experience as a reporter in working
43 with news and media, and she talked about the importance of
44 having individual communications with reporters and developing
45 strong working relationships with news media contacts.

1 We talked about regional and national communication between
2 councils and NOAA. Laurel Bryant from NOAA Communications
3 attended the meeting, and she talked about their perspective on
4 fisheries communication, and we have always had a very good
5 working relationship with Laurel.
6

7 We talked about the councils and advisory panel meetings and how
8 we vary. We have eleven advisory panels here in the South
9 Atlantic region, and some councils have one ginormous one, and
10 how we work with our advisory panels, as far as training is
11 concerned and the need to have additional training. We've heard a
12 lot about training here, everything from the need to inform council
13 members to the Marine Resource Education Program.
14

15 We did talk about that program. As Roy pointed out earlier, it's a
16 workshop-based program, where we have a science workshop in
17 the spring and a management workshop in the fall, and we do
18 include council members. We have one council representative
19 from each of the councils at those workshops, and those are,
20 generally speaking, new council members, and they go back and
21 share that information, and it's been very helpful. I will remind
22 you that the Marine Resource Education Program, MREP, not to
23 be confused with MRIP, and that's been something that we've
24 struggled with a little bit, in trying to come up with a different
25 name, but we've stuck with the program name, but it is
26 administered through the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and the
27 participants apply.
28

29 We have had people say, well, we think that all of your advisory
30 panel members should have to go through MREP. Well, it doesn't
31 work that way. It's not run by the councils. It is run by a steering
32 committee that selects the applicants based on the number of
33 applications that are received, and we always have more applicants
34 than people that we can accommodate.
35

36 We found out this year that -- We had thirty-six participants at our
37 science workshop, and it was kind of like having a wedding where
38 you invite 150 people, but you don't expect everyone to show.
39 Everyone showed, and so we always usually have five or six
40 people that cancel, and what we learned this year is the need to
41 keep that to a small group that's workable, and, once you reach a
42 max capacity, it's not necessarily a good thing.
43

44 We also talked about publications and outreach and what the
45 individual councils are doing. Sylvia from the Western Pacific

1 gave a good overview of how they utilize publications for their
2 outreach.

3
4 One thing is I wanted to just briefly look at the fisheriescouncil.org
5 website. For some of you, you may not utilize this website, but it
6 is our all-council website. We have information at the bottom of
7 the page, and it's a little static, but, if you want general information
8 on the individual councils, it's available, and each of the PIOs, the
9 public information folks, have the ability to go in and monitor or
10 change the information for the individual councils.

11
12 We do have meeting information, and the CCC meeting
13 information is always posted here, and the National SSC Meeting
14 briefing book materials and things are posted, and so, if you're not
15 familiar, you can go and access the webinar and also the agenda
16 and briefing book materials, and so the final reports and any
17 additional information from this meeting will be posted on this all-
18 council website.

19
20 We also have some documents and reports that are available. One
21 of these is a helpful fact sheet, and this has been updated, this fact
22 sheet here, and it's a single page, and you can print this out. It's in
23 high resolution enough that you can copy and print it, and so we
24 just updated that with the latest data from NOAA Fisheries, and I
25 would encourage you to utilize that single-page handout. It's
26 helpful for people that are not familiar with the council process.

27
28 If you have ideas, from the Communication Group standpoint, we
29 would welcome that, on how to better utilize this website. We use
30 it when people have general questions, and I recognize that it has
31 its limitations, but, for having a united voice, as far as the regional
32 fishery management councils, I think it's a very helpful tool and
33 one that the Communication Group wants to utilize better.

34
35 Speaking of websites, I was asked that we also provide an update
36 on NOAA Fisheries' website upgrade. As everyone is aware,
37 NOAA Fisheries is in that transitional process. They are updating
38 their website for all the regions, and there is a copy of the
39 schedule. It is ongoing, and I think you will get more details at the
40 November meeting, but I wanted to let you know that we were
41 provided with this schedule, and I think it's on target. I don't
42 know who would speak to that, or I can't answer questions
43 individually on the website for the NOAA Fisheries transition, but
44 perhaps there may be some discussion.
45

1 We also, at this meeting, have talked about the need to have
2 effective communication tools, and Dave Whaley had pointed out
3 the fact sheets that he would find use for, for the legislative needs,
4 and I was thinking that was something that the Communications
5 Group could assist with, in developing fact sheets for I think it was
6 shifting fisheries and timing on how amendments are created.

7
8 One of the things that I will point out is, at our next council
9 meeting in June, we'll be down in Stuart, Florida, and we have a
10 session scheduled on the first morning, where our staff will meet
11 jointly with NOAA Fisheries staff from the Regional Office and
12 discuss some items of concern, and one of these that we plan to
13 discuss is timing on amendments and how to just explain the
14 difference between a regulatory amendment, a framework
15 amendment, a standard amendment, what's involved, and to have a
16 better understanding of that between ourselves, so we can explain
17 that better to our constituents, and so I think that will be extremely
18 helpful, and I hope that we can work with Dave in developing
19 these other fact sheets and to provide that unified voice on what
20 we're doing. With that, if anyone has any questions -- We did
21 discuss, recently, the need to get back together and have a meeting.

22
23 We don't have one scheduled, and we would like to work with you
24 guys in the future to -- We will come up together as a group on
25 some agenda items and things that we feel that we need to discuss
26 and address, and so please reach out to us, as your
27 Communications Workgroup, and let us know if there are
28 additional things that you would like to see addressed.

29
30 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Kim. Any questions or comments here on this report?
31 Dean.

32
33 *Dean Sensui:* Thank you, Kim, for that report. That was kind of nice. As
34 bewildering as this whole process can be to a new council member,
35 it's even worse for the general public, who oftentimes don't even
36 know that we exist, and, if we do, then we're looked at more like
37 cheerleaders for the industry, when that's absolutely not true, and
38 so the role that you guys play is a pretty critical one, when it comes
39 to interfacing with the public and getting into understanding and
40 appreciating what's being done and to get the general public to
41 realize that they can also have an input into this whole process,
42 which is really what it's all about.

43
44 I spent twenty-four years in the news industry, doing writing and
45 editing and photography, and I produce a television show about
46 fishing now, and it's one of those outreach things that are really

1 important, and, along the way, I got to realize that a lot of the news
2 industry, like any other industries, can be personality driven, and
3 there are some good reporters out there and some that aren't so
4 good. Some will come in with a preconceived notion of what it is
5 that they want to write, and they will look for just that, and so it's
6 kind of important that everybody develop some kind of
7 relationship with somebody in the news media.

8
9 I have got my own relationships, just because I was in it for so
10 long, and so I kind of know who would be good to approach for
11 certain types of stories and to help clarify things, and, along with
12 the outreach, and this is, again, in your realm of things, and it's
13 education, and educating the public is something that our region
14 tries to do as much as possible. It's a steep, uphill climb, but it's
15 worth the effort, and so thanks, again, for all that you guys do. I
16 appreciate it.

17
18 *Kim Iverson:*

19 Thank you very much. I appreciate those comments, and one thing
20 that I found in my career is, as news reporters and working with
21 media, the news industry is cutting back more and more on those
22 kind of boots-on-the-ground reporters that I've had a working
23 relationship with over the years, and people want it now, and they
24 want it very quickly, and they want it in bullet points, and they
25 want to be entertained with the information that they receive.

26 In a communications world, where people are being bombarded,
27 and I used that graphic earlier, where just we get tweets, and we
28 get Facebook, and we get video, and people want to be entertained,
29 and we have to have it quick. As Dave pointed out, legislators are
30 overwhelmed with information, and so we have a very limited time
31 with people, and we need to be able to communicate effectively
32 and reach that target audience, and I think that our councils all do a
33 good job, but we always welcome input and how to do things
34 better.

35
36 I was really happy that our staff was able to show some of the tools
37 that we're using now to do pilot projects and to do outreach, and
38 those are -- That's the wave of the future, but it's also still
39 important to have those individual relationships with our media
40 folks, and so thank you. I appreciate those comments.

41
42 *Jessica McCawley:*

43 Go ahead, Dean.

44 *Dean Sensui:*

45 One more thing is that I noticed kind of an alarming trend at the
46 University of Hawaii at Manoa, where I got my degree from,
journalism degree, and one of the courses looked like it was more

1 like advocacy journalism, and that is not journalism. That is PR,
2 and it even borderlines on being propaganda, and so that's
3 something else to be aware of.
4

5 We had an incident recently, or not recently, but a couple of years
6 ago, where the Associated Press, of all things, came out with a
7 scathing article about our longline industry and how it supported
8 human trafficking and forced labor, and it's still being harped
9 upon. That same bunch of misinformation was dredged up and
10 thrown out there again by Georgetown University, and it was not
11 well researched.
12

13 They really didn't interview enough of the people involved in the
14 industry, and there was a lot of -- It was started on false premises
15 and a lack of understanding of how the fishing industry works, like
16 for example the number of hours you would be spending on a boat
17 deploying thirty miles of lines, 3,000 hooks, and then having to
18 take a million dollars' worth of hardware, and an unknown number
19 of very high-value fish, and how much work that all takes and how
20 hard it is for some of these fishing captains to actually try and get
21 anybody to do this kind of work.
22

23 All of that was just thrown into the paper and passed along as
24 research, even though it was not peer reviewed, and so that's the
25 kind of things that Sylvia would be up against, as far as trying to
26 get things straightened out, and I'm sure that you have seen your
27 share, too.
28

29 *Kim Iverson:*

30 Thank you for that. I think we could probably have another three-
31 day workshop in working with media and media versus -- The use
32 of good journalism. We had a similar story that occurred with our
33 golden crab fishery, and we were doing some work on the Oculina
34 Bank coral down off of Florida, and we wanted to emphasize the
35 fishermen had been directly involved in regulatory actions to
36 protect those corals and setting their gear.
37

38 NBC News came down, the Associated Press, and we took media
39 out on a ship, and they saw how the research was done, and
40 everything was wonderful, and we were so excited to see it on the
41 NBC News, on the nightly news, and, at the end -- They did this
42 wonderful thing about how the corals were being utilized for
43 scientific research and cancer research, and, at the end, they had
44 this schematic of this trawler dragging these traps through this
45 coral that was totally inaccurate, and they wanted to sensationalize
46 that piece of the story.

1 Once it's out there, it's very difficult to get it back, and so we've
2 all had those experiences, and we learn from them, and we try to
3 be proactive instead of reactive in our communication, but it's still
4 important that we recognize the need for good journalism and
5 seeing all those viewpoints, and so you're not alone.
6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* Bill.

8
9 *Bill Tweit:* Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks, Kim, for your work with the
10 committee. You mentioned that you thought the committee could
11 play a role in helping produce the one-pagers that Dave Whaley
12 had suggested might be really useful. In our discussion with Dave
13 before the full CCC meeting, in the pre-council only meeting, and
14 so I guess I would just like to maybe try to put a point on that and
15 actually see that that happens then.
16

17 If I recall correctly, Dave was suggesting there was probably three
18 topics, and I remember two of them distinctly, and I'm not sure if I
19 remember the third, but --
20

21 *Kim Iverson:* I believe he mentioned shifting fisheries, forage fish and what the
22 councils are doing to help protect forage fish, and the timing for
23 amendments. I believe those were the three topics.
24

25 *Bill Tweit:* Anyway, I would suggest to this table that we actually authorize
26 the Communication Group to go ahead and begin work on drafting
27 those, in consultation with Dave, to make sure that they're
28 addressing the point that he's hearing a need for, and then bring
29 that back to us.
30

31 *Jessica McCawley:* That sounds great, Bill.

32
33 *Kim Iverson:* Thank you very much. I think we can start working on that
34 together.
35

36 *Jessica McCawley:* Any more comments? Tom.

37
38 *Thomas Nies:* I'm a little confused. I thought Dave's suggestion was that each
39 council prepare their own.
40

41 *Kim Iverson:* Yes, and I was thinking from an individual standpoint and for our
42 communications folks to work together. I mean, to work
43 individually to develop these sheets, but to have them have a
44 consistent look or information that is consistent. They will be
45 individualized, but looking similar. Does that make sense? I am

1 not saying this correctly, and I'm sorry, for someone that is a
2 communications person, but to have a --
3
4 *Jessica McCawley:* Similar look and feel?
5
6 *Kim Iverson:* Similar look and feel. Thank you, Jessica, and that may not be
7 what you have in mind.
8
9 *Bill Tweit:* Avoid the duplication that would be inherent if each council were
10 to simply produce their own, but have the ability to be reflecting
11 each council's perspective, but with a similar look and feel and
12 compact, and have it be -- If we're up to our own devices, it would
13 be a fairly -- Each one would be a fairly word tome.
14
15 *Thomas Nies:* I guess the only caution I have is I got the impression that Dave
16 thought that we might want to develop those rather quickly, and
17 my recollection of when we tried to do the one-pager a few years
18 ago on the Magnuson Act, which is now on our webpage, which
19 we thought was going to happen very quickly, it actually dragged
20 on for about seven or eight months, and I guess I'm just a little
21 nervous that we not let that happen again.
22
23 *Kim Iverson:* Would it be helpful, Tom, if we had a template, that maybe we just
24 worked together to have a template, and then each council will fill
25 in that information? I think we could come up with something
26 fairly quickly, and, if not, that is fine too, but I just made note of it
27 as Dave was mentioning it.
28
29 *Thomas Nies:* Okay.
30
31 *Jessica McCawley:* I agree. I like the idea of the template, and I agree that we
32 probably need it sooner than November, is my guess, based on
33 what Dave told us. I saw another hand over here. Chris.
34
35 *Chris Moore:* Thank you, Madam Chair, and this may be a question for Dave as
36 well, but I'm trying to think what is an effective way to deliver a
37 message to the folks that we would be interested in having look at
38 this document. A typical one-pager has a lot of words, and there's
39 things on there that may not be as effective as something like an
40 infographic, but I'm not sure that an infographic would capture this
41 particular topic well, but I like the idea of a template, but I don't
42 like the idea of material that's not going to be used or isn't
43 effective, and so has the Communications Group considered
44 something besides just text, and, Dave, what do you think about
45 something else?
46

1 *Jessica McCawley:* Go ahead.

2

3 *Dave Whaley:* Maybe we're looking at two separate things that are
4 complementary. What I'm looking for is, for instance, if a member
5 of Congress says that I want a mandate in the Magnuson Act that
6 councils now take climate change into account in every decision
7 they make, I want to have a one-pager that says here's what we're
8 already doing, and here are the -- I want to be proactive, so that we
9 can tell them that you don't need this and this is what we're
10 already doing.

11

12 Now, the down-side is we can't communicate that without
13 lobbying until we're asked, but I want to have that ready, so that, if
14 somebody comes up with a crazy idea, we can say here's what
15 we're already doing, here are all the good things we're doing, and
16 toot our own horn. Down the road, it might be helpful to have
17 something that's a little more polished and more of a document
18 that could be up on the website, if that makes sense. I will put
19 some thoughts together and send out an email to all the EDs to
20 clarify this a little bit more, but I just want to be proactive, so that
21 people are thinking about this before it becomes an issue.

22

23 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks for that clarification, Dave. Are there more comments or
24 questions on this topic? Anything else for the Council
25 Communications Group? Thank you, Kim. Thank you, Dave.

26

27 *Jessica McCawley:* Before we leave this committee workgroup topic, we just
28 established another sub-committee workgroup this morning, and
29 we heard Bill volunteer to lead that group, but we didn't have a
30 formal motion to have Bill lead that group, and maybe we could
31 have a motion, and I would entertain a motion to make Bill the
32 chair of that new committee, so that we can get something back
33 before the November meeting, or at the November meeting. Terry.

34

35 *Terry Stockwell:* **So moved, Madam Chair.**

36

37 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Let's let Kelly get it on the board. Continue Council
38 Member Development Workgroup? Regional Fishery
39 Management Forum Workgroup? Okay. That sounds good
40 enough for now. The first task for Bill is to develop a new name
41 and a catch acronym for this group. **The motion is to make Bill**
42 **the chair of this group.** Terry, does that -- Okay. I got a thumbs-
43 up on that. Can I have a second for this motion? It's seconded by
44 Marcos. It's under discussion. Carrie.

45

1 *Carrie Simmons:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a quick question. So, there will be
 2 one staff member, including a NMFS staff member, on the
 3 working group for this, and is that correct?
 4

5 *Jessica McCawley:* Yes, that's my understanding. Do we need to specify those folks?
 6

7 *Carrie Simmons:* No, I don't think so. Thanks.
 8

9 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any other questions? Any other discussion? **Any**
 10 **objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Chris
 11 and then Chuck.
 12

13 *Chris Oliver:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I have to get on a teleconference
 14 shortly, and I'm probably going to not get off of it until you're
 15 done, and so I just wanted to say thank you for hosting a really
 16 great meeting. It's amazing how well we stayed on schedule on
 17 the agenda, but, well knowing what it takes to put these on, I just
 18 want to express my appreciation and kudos to the council staff and
 19 to Anna and Brian over there for all that they did to put this
 20 together. It's a lot of work, and so it was great to see everybody.
 21

22 I guess one last thing. Due to the nature of the council member
 23 nomination process, we have one CCC member who is not going
 24 to be at the next meeting, and I just wanted to recognize and
 25 express appreciation to Dean at the West Pacific for his
 26 participation in both the Western Pacific Council and in this forum,
 27 and so thanks, Dean. We will miss you. *(Applause)*
 28

29 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Chris. Thanks, Dean. Chuck, I think you had your hand
 30 up, before we go to break.
 31

32 *Chuck Tracy:* Thanks. I probably should have mentioned this earlier, but I just
 33 wanted to make sure that the CCC's guidance to the SCS
 34 Committee to use those topics for their next forum, that the CCC
 35 was in agreement with that. There was some discussion about
 36 characterization of those titles, and our terms of reference does
 37 mention that approval for meetings and workshops will occur at
 38 the CCC meeting, and so I just wanted to kind of check that box, I
 39 guess, and I'm not sure if you need a motion for that or just some
 40 acknowledgment that that's the intent of the CCC.
 41

42 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thanks, Chuck. Anything else before we go to break?
 43 Thanks, everybody. Let's take a ten-minute break.
 44

45 *(Recess)*
 46

1 *Jessica McCawley:* We will begin again. I believe we have one leftover workgroup
2 item. Chuck, are you ready?
3

4 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I did want to mention that there was a
5 request that the CCC consider re-establishing its Electronic
6 Monitoring Workgroup and also to consider giving it some
7 responsibility to pursue some of the data modernization issues that
8 were brought up, and so, if there's interest in that, I would be
9 prepared to have a motion for that.
10

11 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. I will certainly entertain a motion, and so would you like
12 to help with the motion that Kelly is typing?
13

14 *Chuck Tracy:* **I move the CCC re-establish its Electronic Monitoring**
15 **Workgroup to continue to examine electronic monitoring**
16 **issues as well as data modernization issues.**
17

18 *Jessica McCawley:* The motion is for the CCC to re-establish its Electronic Monitoring
19 Workgroup to continue to examine electronic monitoring issues as
20 well as data modernization issues. We have a motion by Chuck.
21 Do we have a second? It's seconded by Marcos. It's under
22 discussion. Is there discussion or concerns? All right. Go ahead,
23 Dave.
24

25 *David Witherell:* Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just interested to hear from Chuck
26 what the objective is of establishing this new workgroup. Is it to
27 share information, or is to explore things like how to fund this? Is
28 it looking at technology? I guess I'm trying to figure out what the
29 purpose of the workgroup is and what products they might produce
30 for the CCC, and that's all.
31

32 *Chuck Tracy:* Thanks. I think you're right it is to share information, and I think
33 there is a funding aspect, for electronic monitoring in particular,
34 that's of potential interest, and we've had requests from the Net
35 Gains Alliance to coordinate more closely with councils and to
36 have contacts with each council and to attend council meetings and
37 to look at ways to coordinate some of these issues.
38

39 A lot of these issues are cross-regional, and so I think this would
40 give us an opportunity to coordinate on some of those issues. In
41 terms of electronic monitoring, I think in particular, we've got
42 some regulations coming along, and I think there might be an
43 opportunity to learn from the other councils' experiences in the
44 regulatory processes and establishing regulations. Then, again, the
45 funding issue, I think is important to the Pacific Council.
46

1 *Jessica McCawley:* Go ahead, Dave.

2

3 *David Witherell:* Just a follow-up question. Can you describe maybe the
4 composition of the workgroup that you would envision, Chuck?

5

6 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you. Well, since it's my idea, I suppose that I could
7 volunteer to chair it. I think one member from each regional
8 council, and I think we could have somebody from National
9 Marine Fisheries Service, and that might be helpful as well.

10

11 *Jessica McCawley:* Terry, and then I want to come back to the fact that Chuck just
12 volunteered to chair another group.

13

14 *Terry Stockwell:* Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Chuck. I'm a little
15 concerned about this motion. First, it's a timing issue. We're in a
16 little bit faster track in the Northeast, and I don't want to get
17 hamstrung into something that we may or may not be able to move
18 ahead with, and I certainly don't object to participating, but we
19 may come up with our plan to fit our needs, which might not work
20 for the rest of the regions.

21

22 *Jessica McCawley:* Chuck.

23

24 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you. No, I don't think there is any intent here to delay any
25 action on the part of any council in pursuing what they are doing,
26 and at least our council is also very deep into the electronic
27 monitoring regulatory process, and we certainly don't want to
28 hinder that process either, but I think it's just an opportunity that,
29 once we go through our processes, for the other councils that are
30 have further to go to learn from the experiences of those that have
31 gone before them.

32

33 *Jessica McCawley:* Terry.

34

35 *Terry Stockwell:* Just as a follow-up, some of our detractors want to study it to
36 death, and I don't want to fall into that trap.

37

38 *Jessica McCawley:* More discussion on this? Chris.

39

40 *Chris Moore:* Sitting here reflecting on this motion, the electronic monitoring
41 part of it makes sense to me, in terms of our discussions this week.
42 The data modernization stuff, that's a big thing. It's a big thing for
43 us, and it's a big thing for the east coast, and it's a big thing for
44 GARFO. They have an ongoing initiative that they started a
45 couple of years ago. I'm just concerned that this is going to get
46 confused with some of the things that we're already doing, and

1 perhaps, as Terry indicated, maybe slow some things down that we
 2 don't want to slow down. I think we can support the EM part of it,
 3 but, the other part of it, I don't think we need to have that in the
 4 motion.
 5
 6 *Jessica McCawley:* That's a good point, and so there's a suggestion here, Chuck, to
 7 maybe strike the "as well as data modernization issues" portion of
 8 this. Is that something that you would be willing to do, to strike
 9 that part of the motion?
 10
 11 *Chuck Tracy:* Thank you. **Well, I would be willing to consider that.** We're the
 12 CCC here, and, obviously, we're trying to operate on consensus. I
 13 suppose that, if the need arises, there is some other -- Something
 14 that is identified down the road, that a CCC could consider adding
 15 that responsibility to the committee, if it seems appropriate.
 16
 17 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Thanks, Chuck. It sounds like we have a suggestion and
 18 a willingness to strike that from the motion. The seconder is
 19 Marcos. Are you okay with striking that? Yes. Okay. Tom.
 20
 21 *Thomas Nies:* If I might, Madam Chair, ask the maker of the motion what is the
 22 deliverable that's coming out of this group?
 23
 24 *Chuck Tracy:* Well, ideally, I think one product might be some consideration of a
 25 plan or a process to fund some of the costs associated with
 26 electronic monitoring, such as third-party review and those sorts of
 27 things. Likewise, this is an agenda item that comes up frequently
 28 on the CCC agenda, and so there would be an opportunity to have
 29 a little more structure to what is presented to the CCC from the
 30 council perspective and what's going on and coordinate -- Maybe a
 31 little more advanced coordination on our responses to some of the
 32 proposals that are coming out from National Marine Fisheries
 33 Service.
 34
 35 *Jessica McCawley:* Tom.
 36
 37 *Thomas Nies:* Is this envisioned as being a temporary group, or is this now
 38 envisioned as being a permanent sub-committee of the CCC?
 39
 40 *Jessica McCawley:* Good question. Chuck.
 41
 42 *Chuck Tracy:* Well, I don't know that any of them are necessarily -- That any of
 43 our committees are -- The longevity, I think, is up to the CCC for
 44 any of these. To be established as a temporary group I think is
 45 fine, if that makes this more palatable.
 46

1 *Jessica McCawley:* Other discussion here? We have removed a portion of this motion,
2 and so we're now focused on electronic monitoring for this
3 workgroup, and it sounds like there is some discussion of it being
4 fairly temporary. I'm assuming that this group will come back
5 with something in November, and is that what you were thinking
6 here, Chuck?

7
8 *Chuck Tracy:* Yes, Madam Chair.

9
10 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any more discussion of this motion? Once again, let me
11 read the motion, since it has changed. **The motion is for the CCC**
12 **to re-establish the Electronic Monitoring Workgroup to**
13 **continue to examine electronic monitoring issues. Is there any**
14 **objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands**
15 **approved.**

16
17 Do we need to now appoint a chair to this re-established group? I
18 know that Chuck has volunteered to be the chair of the group, and
19 would someone like to make a motion for chairmanship? Phil.

20
21 *Phil Anderson:* **I would move that we appoint Chuck Tracy as the Chair of the**
22 **Electronic Monitoring Workgroup.**

23
24 *Jessica McCawley:* We have a motion and a second. The motion is appoint Chuck
25 Tracy the Chair of the Electronic Monitoring Workgroup. Is there
26 a second to this motion? It's seconded by Chris. It's under
27 discussion. Any more discussion of this particular motion? **Any**
28 **objection to this motion? Seeing none, this motion stands**
29 **approved.** Now are we ready to leave the topic of CCC
30 Committees and Workgroups? All right. I'm going to move into
31 the next topic, which is the Report on COFI 33. Go ahead, Bill.

1 **20. REPORT ON COFI 33**

2
3 *Bill Tweit:*

4 Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you again to the CCC for
5 according me the privilege of representing the regional councils as
6 part of the U.S. delegation to the 33rd Session of the Committee on
7 Fisheries, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's
8 Committee on Fisheries.

9 The meeting was held in Rome last July at the FAO Headquarters.
10 114 countries formally participated in the meeting, and so there
11 were over 750 delegates and a fair number of observers, observers
12 coming from fishing organizations, but also environmental groups
13 and others, and so I was a formal member of the U.S. delegation,
14 on behalf of the regional fishery management councils, and the
15 delegation was led by the Department of State, and Deidre Warner-
16 Kramer was our lead. Normally, that would have been Bill
17 Gibbons-Fly, but he was actually chairing the entire session. It
18 was the U.S.'s turn to preside over the committee.

19
20 Other members of the U.S. delegation included Commerce, and
21 John Henderschedt was representing National Marine Fisheries
22 Service International Division, and the Coast Guard was Todd
23 Dubois, who is functioning I think as the liaison between
24 Commerce and the Coast Guard, and he was there to represent the
25 Coast Guard, and then Gerry Leape from Pew was the NGO
26 representative to the U.S. delegation, and I gather that's the typical
27 makeup of the U.S. delegation.

28
29 I was impressed at the leadership role the U.S. plays in this forum,
30 and not just because we were chairing the session, but clearly we
31 are an influential delegation, and it was a lot of hallway
32 discussions and aisle discussions about motions that were coming
33 up on agenda items that were coming up, and the U.S.'s voice was
34 clearly pretty instrumental, and so that was interesting to see, that
35 it wasn't, in part, just because of our clearly acknowledged role as
36 global leaders in managing sustainable fisheries, but, also, it
37 looked like just the depth and strength of our delegation situated us
38 for that.

39
40 These are just my notes about what the major issues were. I did
41 send to the councils, to the EDs of the councils, and hopefully they
42 distributed them, a several-page report that goes into some more
43 depth, and it included the links to the actual formal proceedings,
44 including the formal minutes of Committee on Fisheries 33, and
45 that's all there on the FAO, and so what follows in the next couple
46 of slides is just some of my observations, and I think I hit many of

1 the high points, but I easily could have missed some things as well.

2
3 The issues that seemed to me to come up sort of repeatedly
4 throughout the agenda were these five issues, and one is just a
5 focus on progress towards achieving the sustainable development
6 goal that the FAO had adopted of conservation and sustainable use
7 of the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

8
9 Another one that came up throughout was the global efforts to
10 combat IUU fishing, and this meeting was highlighted by the
11 initiation of what's called the Global Record, which is the
12 international registry of fishing vessels larger than -- If my
13 memory serves me correctly, it's thirty-two meters, and the U.S. is
14 participating in that global record, and it seemed like most
15 countries were organizing themselves, as well as the E.U., to also
16 participate in the Global Record.

17
18 An issue that seemed to be really gaining traction at this meeting
19 was the issue of managing abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing
20 gear. I think this will have its own acronym soon, which will make
21 it truly a global issue, and that's being looked at from several
22 perspectives. One is just the issue of plastics and plastic pollution
23 in the world's oceans, and another is the issue of entanglement and
24 the unintended mortalities to marine mammals, turtles, fish, and
25 other marine life, damaged other marine life.

26
27 Aquaculture was a subject that was really front and center, and it
28 was really on the same scale as wild-capture fisheries, and the
29 point was made several times that the world is probably largely
30 capped out on wild-capture fisheries, and most of the remaining
31 growth, in terms of providing seafood and sufficient supply to
32 really be a major supplement to the world diet, will have to come
33 from aquaculture.

34
35 Then, also, an emerging focus on the importance of small-scale
36 fisheries, not as much from a seafood production perspective, but
37 more from preservation of coastal communities, preservation of
38 coastal cultures, of fishing cultures and the important role that
39 fishing plays in maintaining the fabric of those societies,
40 everything from nutritional and the importance in diets to just the
41 cultural and spiritual values that get transmitted through fishing
42 families and fishing-dependent villages.

43
44 Some of the issues that the U.S. is really focused on, and, again,
45 these are not comprehensive. If it's not on the list, it doesn't mean
46 the U.S. wasn't interested in it. Again, these are my notes and sort

1 of what I caught. One is just ensuring that the role of the FAO
2 doesn't become overly broad or overly regulatory. The U.S. and
3 many other nations, but not all, agreed that the role of the FAO is
4 to provide information and keep the FAO out of the compliance
5 business, so it doesn't become an actual sustainability certifier, and
6 that was an issue that cropped up a couple of times, and the U.S.,
7 working in consortium with other countries, made sure that the role
8 of the FAO remained properly limited and defined.

9
10 Also, along those lines, they thought that an appropriate role for
11 the FAO in aquaculture was helping develop a code of best
12 practices. It was broadly recognized that getting aquaculture on
13 the global scale off on the right foot and on a sustainable foot, that
14 a key element of doing that would be to develop a code of best
15 practices.

16
17 I almost debated about whether to include the next bullet, but the
18 U.S. position at the meeting of COFI last year was concern about
19 increasing barriers to trade, and we'll leave it at that.

20
21 IUU, the U.S. is a very strong leader on IUU, both in terms of a
22 continued push to adopt port state management measures, but
23 equally in terms of the importance of global utilization of the new
24 global record, and the U.S. was also vocal about support for
25 continued work by the Fisheries and Agriculture Organization on
26 climate change.

27
28 Coincident with the meeting, the FAO produced a very
29 comprehensive report on climate change, with a lot of emphasis on
30 impacts to fisheries and impacts to oceans and other marine
31 resources of climate change, and that was a very well-received
32 report, and it's worth trying to pick up off the web. It's big, and
33 it's comprehensive, but there's some really good chapters in that,
34 including a fair amount of material produced through the United
35 States and produced through a lot of the scientists working in the
36 regional fisheries Science Center network, and so some of our best
37 work was really highlighted in that.

38
39 Then, again, as I mentioned earlier, this issue of lost fishing gear,
40 and the U.S. was in support of voluntary guidelines for gear
41 marking, and that's something that I would expect would begin to
42 start coming up on the council radar, if it hasn't already, is this
43 issue of gear marking, to ensure accountability for lost gear. Then,
44 finally, the final one that I flagged is marine mammal mortality
45 recommendations, and the U.S.'s position was continuing efforts to
46 support reductions in marine mammal mortalities.

1
2 Again, this is from my perspective, and this is not a U.S.-endorsed
3 set of issues to monitor, but these are the issues that, from my seat
4 as a representative of the regional councils, and as a member of a
5 regional council, some issues that I think the councils should keep
6 their eye on, both as they develop between COFI sessions, but also
7 in the next COFI session.
8

9 The first one was a rather mysterious agenda item, and it was
10 entitled “trawl guidelines”, and we never really even saw what
11 those would look like, and, when I asked members of the U.S.
12 delegation, including the delegation lead, where did this come
13 from and what’s this about, there was pretty much just a head-
14 scratching of we’re not really sure, and so, at this meeting, we
15 essentially -- The U.S. worked to keep it off the agenda, but I think
16 it’s an issue that we’ll continue to -- Wherever it’s coming from, I
17 think it will -- I won’t be surprised to see it re-introduced, with
18 maybe more advance notice, for the next session.
19

20 On the more positive side, and that one pretty much fell into, at
21 least initially, damage control, I think, from my perspective, and I
22 think the U.S.’s current trawl guidelines are probably not in need
23 for a large amount of international examination, and, on the
24 positive side, there was a lot of focus on small-scale and artisanal
25 fisheries. 2022 is the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and
26 Aquaculture, and the reason those two are combined is, at the FAO
27 level, an understanding that it’s those two activities, artisanal
28 fishing and aquaculture, that the FAO views as being really
29 essential to the maintenance of the small coastal, particularly in the
30 underdeveloped world, the small coastal fishing communities, and
31 so I think there will be a big push over the next couple of years, on
32 the international scale, to recognize the importance of both of
33 those, in terms of preserving the health of fishing communities.
34

35 Again, some emphasis at the council level on what are the councils
36 doing to recognize the importance of artisanal fisheries and
37 managing artisanal fisheries, and the same with marine debris. As
38 I already mentioned, the gear marking, but just overall ensuring
39 that our regulations are designed to minimize gear loss and
40 minimize entanglement as well, and I think a lot of councils are
41 grappling with the entanglement issues already, but I won’t be
42 surprised to see some questions being asked about have you looked
43 at your regulations and do your regulations actively discourage the
44 kinds of fishing practices that result in gear loss.
45

46 There was an agreement to establish a new sub-committee on

1 fisheries management, and this was initially being proposed by
2 Norway, and it was picked up fairly quickly by the E.U., and the
3 U.S. was cautiously supportive of this, in part just worried about
4 workload and the impact on a lot of countries that don't have the
5 ability to staff a lot of FAO sub-committees, and so just a general
6 concern of let's make sure it's a meaningful addition to the current
7 FAO activities, but it ultimately ended up passing.
8

9 The primary purpose, at least as described, is to address small-
10 scale fisheries and fishery management of small-scale fisheries,
11 and that certainly, I think, will be welcome, again, to some of the
12 councils, in particular who already grapple with the difficulty of
13 trying to manage numerous small-scale fisheries, the small vessel,
14 multiple port, over far-flung areas sort of issues, and so it could
15 prove valuable even to the U.S. experience that way, and I think
16 there will be a lot of development of the kinds of technologies that
17 will enable data collection at a low cost under many of these
18 conditions.
19

20 Labor conditions came up at odd times, and the E.U. was pushing
21 hard on labor conditions in several different agenda items, and
22 certainly some NGOs were, both within the meeting room, but
23 equally in poster sessions outside of the meeting room, and labor
24 conditions got a lot of play.
25

26 Some of the kinds of regulations that were under consideration,
27 and nothing really passed, but some of the things that were being
28 considered would make it extremely difficult for what we think of
29 as the typical fishing family model, particularly in many of our
30 smaller-scale fisheries, where the kids are working onboard during
31 the summer or under other conditions, but are a working part of the
32 fishing family. At least some of the labor conditions that are being
33 described, in a well-intentioned effort to avoid child labor and
34 child trafficking and slave labor and some of the documented
35 problems globally, would also impact the U.S. tradition of fishing
36 families working together, and so, again, something I think for the
37 councils to keep an eye on.
38

39 Then, in closing then, some of my thoughts about ensuring
40 ongoing and effective regional management council engagement in
41 the CCC is, first off, I think it's extremely important that the
42 councils have a formal role in the U.S. delegation, and so I
43 appreciate that State and Commerce make that possible now, and I
44 think we should strongly encourage them to continue to do that.
45 It's an important forum, because we are global leaders, and the
46 councils play a key role in the U.S.'s global leadership and

1 sustainable fisheries, and so we have a lot to contribute, a lot of
2 expertise to contribute, but, equally, for the councils to be able to
3 monitor, along with the agencies, world trends in sustainable
4 fishery management and aquaculture, to make sure that, like some
5 of the issues that I mentioned on the previous slide, to make sure
6 that, as those solutions are developed, they are consistent with
7 what we need to effectively manage our fisheries and don't
8 become solutions that actually have us moving backwards.
9

10 I would strongly suggest that the CCC have an agenda item prior to
11 COFI 34, which will be in the summer of 2020, and so actually,
12 probably this fall's meeting, to designate a representative on behalf
13 of the regional fishery management councils and begin to provide
14 some guidance to them. That will give them time to work with
15 both State and Commerce in advance of COFI, to help with
16 development of the U.S. positions, and there is a lot of work that
17 goes into developing the U.S. positions on each agenda item.
18 Then, as well, have the CCC schedule time following COFI 34 to
19 review the results. With that, I would be happy to answer any
20 questions.
21

22 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Bill. Any questions? Kitty.

23
24 *Kitty Simonds:* The lost gear and discards, did they talk about who is responsible?
25 Because what happened with us last year is there was a vessel that
26 I guess people just left the vessel, because whatever happened, but,
27 anyway, this vessel was in the American Samoa EEZ, and so the
28 Coast Guard was called to say that you need to do something about
29 this and determine what country it came from, but the Coast Guard
30 said that they weren't responsible.
31

32 I said, well, but this vessel is going to be floating, and it may end
33 up on American Samoa's reefs, and then you're going to have to
34 go up and clean up the corals and all of that, but they said they're
35 not responsible and it's the responsibility of that country, and so
36 that's why I was curious if you all had discussions about who is
37 responsible, and it's one thing to mark the gear and do everything,
38 but, when something happens, especially in our zone, who is
39 responsible?
40

41 *Bill Tweit:* The discussions on this, at least the ones that I was privy to or
42 participated in, did not get to that level of detail. The impression I
43 got was that the importance of gear marking though was that that
44 was sort of the first step in assigning responsibility.
45

46 *Kitty Simonds:* Right, and that's been in the commissions, and all of our gears are

1 marked, at least in that commission.

2

3 *Bill Tweit:* But I did not hear any discussion within the U.S. delegation of who
4 would be the lead agency to respond in that kind of a situation, and
5 so I think that's a great question to begin to raise.

6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* Other questions or comments? Dave.

8

9 *David Witherell:* I just had one question for Bill. One of your recommendations, the
10 middle one, was to have an agenda item prior to the next COFI to
11 provide some guidance to the council representative that is going
12 to go to that meeting if the agenda published well in advance, so
13 we know the topics that the COFI is going to discuss. Or do we
14 just make some assumption of what topics are going to be
15 discussed at that meeting, so that the CCC can provide the
16 representative with guidance?

17

18 *Bill Tweit:* The agenda is not published that far in advance, but both State and
19 NMFS International Group are tracking development of a lot of
20 these issues between sessions, and I think they have a very
21 reasonable sense of what many of the major items are likely to be,
22 and so, if it's an appropriately set up agenda item -- In other words,
23 maybe some consultation in advance with both State and NMFS
24 International folks, and I think a reasonable outline of likely issues
25 could be put together.

26

27 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

28

29 *Kitty Simonds:* Since we're inviting them to the November meeting to give us a
30 report on BBNJ, they can do the same thing there.

31

32 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Any more questions or comments? Thank you, Bill, for
33 that presentation. We're going to move into Other Business, and
34 I'm going to turn it over to Gregg to talk about a new schedule
35 format.

1 **21. OTHER BUSINESS**

2
3 *Gregg Waugh:* The EDs met back in November, and we've talked about how the
4 fall meeting moved into the winter, due to budget issues, and the
5 result is the February and May dates are too close together, and
6 then you've got a big gap, and so the EDs talked about moving it
7 back to where it was originally, where there was a meeting in the
8 fall and then one in the spring, and so that's the proposal that we're
9 bringing forward, is to change the meeting dates. The proposal is
10 to change the meeting dates to the fall and spring.

11
12 The additional part to that motion would be, for 2020, to have the
13 spring meeting on the dates of May 26 through 29, hosted by the
14 Western Pacific, with May 26 as a travel day, and then the fall
15 meeting would be September 22 through 25, hosted by NMFS in
16 D.C.

17
18 **I would make that in the form of a motion, to set the CCC**
19 **meeting schedule as meeting in the fall and spring. For 2020,**
20 **the dates are as follows: May 26 through 29 of 2020, with the**
21 **West Pacific hosting. May 26 is a travel day. September 22**
22 **through 25, NMFS hosting in Washington, D.C. September 22**
23 **is a travel day.**

24
25 *Jessica McCawley:* Do we have a second to this motion?

26
27 *Tony Blanchard:* Second.

28
29 *Jessica McCawley:* It's seconded by Tony. It's under discussion. This motion is doing
30 two things. It's not only setting the specific 2020 dates, but it's
31 basically setting up that the meeting would occur in the fall and the
32 spring of each year. Any discussion of this motion? **Any**
33 **objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands**
34 **approved.** Is there any other business to come before this
35 committee before we go into the actions wrap-up? Tom.

36
37 *Thomas Nies:* Just very quickly, Madam Chair, I wanted to follow-up on
38 something that we first started looking into last year, and, Kitty, I
39 hope you're paying attention. We started the research project, and
40 we've sort of narrowed it down a little bit, and we now have a null
41 hypothesis that CCC meetings cause good weather, and I would
42 like to point out that St. Thomas, of course, it was beautiful, and
43 we went to Gloucester, and, much to our relief, the weather in
44 early May turned out to be gorgeous in Gloucester. Sitka, which
45 Dave told us to prepare for rainy and cold weather, it might have
46 been a little cool, but we had very little rain, and Charleston --

1 Everybody said it's going to be hot and sweaty, and I'm like this is
2 gorgeous and what are they talking about. I realize that, so far, I
3 don't think we can reject a null hypothesis, and so, Kitty, it's up to
4 you next year.

5
6 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Tom. Any more other business before we go into the
7 actions and the wrap-up? I'm going to turn it over to Gregg.

1 **22. ACTIONS, WRAP-UP, and NEXT MEETING**

2
3 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you, Madam Chair. We will do this just out of order a little
4 bit, and I've got to move one more file, but if we can pull up the
5 November 5 through 7 topics. This is the meeting that was moved
6 from February of this year, and it's going to be November 5th
7 through the 7th, and the 3rd and 4th are going to be travel days, and
8 the meeting is at the Omni Shoreham in Washington, D.C., and
9 that's a rough draft of the agenda items. I will give you all a
10 second to look that over and see if there are any additional
11 suggestions.

12
13 *Jessica McCawley:* Kitty.

14
15 *Kitty Simonds:* You need to add BBNJ to this, because you have COFI, and it goes
16 along with COFI, and just make sure we don't have the recusal on
17 this agenda, so Adam will go crazy.

18
19 *Gregg Waugh:* I think just add BBNJ.

20
21 *Jessica McCawley:* Mike.

22
23 *Mike Luisi:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Can you go back up to the dates again?
24 I want to make sure. That's all. I just wanted to clarify. Thanks.

25
26 *Jessica McCawley:* All right. Are there more comments on the topics for this
27 November meeting in D.C.? Chuck.

28
29 *Chuck Tracy:* We did discuss the possibility of having a report from the
30 Electronic Monitoring Workgroup on there, and so I don't know if
31 that would just come under other workgroups.

32
33 *Gregg Waugh:* Right. All the workgroups will be added under that topic there.

34
35 *Jessica McCawley:* Number 7. Bill.

36
37 *Bill Tweit:* I think the point that Chuck was probably going to make relative to
38 that, and the point that I was also thinking of making relative to the
39 temporary workgroup on the sort of replacing the functions that the
40 forum used to provide, and those will take probably more time than
41 a typical just workgroup report. I mean, there is substantial chunks
42 of time in that workgroup report session that we ought to be
43 planning for, and so it might be good to be more explicit about it.

44
45 *Jessica McCawley:* Okay, and I misspoke. It's actually Item Number 12 and not Item
46 Number 7. You are suggesting we need to make sure there's

1 adequate time to cover all of these groups, the new groups, et
2 cetera, there. Okay. What else? Carrie.

3
4 *Carrie Simmons:* Thank you, Madam Chair. Are we getting an update on the SOPPs
5 guidance policy? Is that in Number 6, or is that something else?
6

7 *Jessica McCawley:* I don't know the answer to that. That's a question for Gregg.
8

9 *Gregg Waugh:* We will add update of the SOPPs.

10
11 *Jessica McCawley:* What else? Anything else for this topic list? If not, we're going to
12 move into the summary of the actions. I am going to turn it back
13 to Gregg to go to the summary of the actions.
14

15 *Gregg Waugh:* Thank you. What we tried to do this year, at this meeting, was to
16 tag an ED for different topics, and this has been a little running on
17 the fly here, but we are going to have some additional discussions,
18 and I will circulate this amongst the EDs, but we'll produce
19 something that will be almost a meeting report. We do verbatim
20 minutes, but that's a lot to slug through, if you're ever tried to read
21 through it, and so this will be something that will evolve over time,
22 but it will be more of a report.

23
24 The intent was to capture any action items, and we've got some of
25 them giving some direction under each topic, but the main thing is
26 to capture any motions, so that we're clear on what was done at the
27 meeting, and so we approved sending a letter to Congressman
28 Young, and that will go out either Friday or Monday, with the cap,
29 to him. That's all set to go.
30

31 We set two-year terms of the Legislative Workgroup, and the vice
32 chair will move up to chair, and we elect a new vice chair, and
33 Tom Nies was elected as the vice chair this time. We have added
34 new text to the CCC working paper for Topic 1, which is Stock
35 Rebuilding, and we added new text to Topic 14, which is Stock
36 Assessment and Survey Data.
37

38 We recommended having the State Department consult with the
39 councils during the negotiations for BBNJ, and we're requesting a
40 presentation, and that's been added to the agenda. We set a
41 temporary workgroup to develop a proposal for the Fisheries
42 Management Forum, and we approved new wording for the topic
43 for Aquaculture.
44

45 Then, this morning, we had several motions, and the last one,
46 which hasn't been added to this yet, but Bill is chairing the

1 Regional Fishery Management Forum Workgroup, and we set up
2 an Electronic Monitoring Workgroup to examine electronic
3 monitoring issues, and Chuck will lead that.
4

5 This will just be a document that will be sent out, and I'll work
6 with the EDs, and then it will be distributed to everybody, so that
7 you have a record of what was done at this meeting, and the only
8 other remarks I have is that I would like to thank everybody for
9 attending and our staff for a super job in putting this on and the
10 presentations, and we've got our support staff back at the office
11 that you don't get to see. Cindy in particular, handled a lot of the
12 hotel arrangements, and Brian and Hannah for all of their help as
13 well, and you all know Kelly now, from getting him files, and
14 Kelly has done a yeoman's job with this, and Cierra has been a
15 great help as well, and so thanks to everybody. Madam Chair, I
16 will turn it back to you.
17

18 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, Gregg. I want to echo all the thanks to the South Atlantic
19 Council staff, and I want to thank everybody for your attendance
20 and participation at this meeting. I think we've had a great
21 meeting, and thanks for your patience with me, especially when I
22 called you the wrong name or couldn't see your hand up in this
23 skinny little table setup, and so thank you for that. Mel.
24

25 *Mel Bell:* I hope you enjoyed your visit here in Charleston, and I thank you,
26 on behalf of the citizens of Charleston, for allowing us to be part of
27 your weather experiment, and, to Tom, the PI of that study, we
28 appreciate being a data point in that, and you have probably made
29 some brides happy, because Charleston is the number one wedding
30 destination in the country now, and so I'm sure somebody had
31 probably a very nice wedding, thanks to you, and so we appreciate
32 you coming, and come back again, and I will look forward to
33 seeing you all in November.
34

35 *Jessica McCawley:* Thanks, and one final reminder to put your name tags in the name
36 tag recycle box on your way out, and thanks, everybody.
37

38 *(Adjourn)*