

Meeting Summary
MRIP Executive Steering Committee Meeting
December 17, 2019, 3:00 pm EST

In attendance:

Executive Steering Committee: David Detlor, Chair; Gordon Colvin, Executive Secretary; Bob Beal; David Donaldson; Randy Fisher; Clay Porch; Doug Mecum; Kellie Ralston; Jenni Wallace; Russell Dunn; Graciela Garcia-Molinier for Miguel Rolon; Marlowe Sabater for Kitty Simonds

Others: Alan Lowther; John Foster; Richard Cody; Lauren Dolinger Few; Dave Bard; Catherine Krikstan; Tom Sminkey; Adam Rettig; Chris Wright; Geoff White; Gregg Bray; Steve Williams; Chris Wheaton; Kurt Iverson; Josh DeMello

Mr. Detlor called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

I. MRIP Personnel Changes and Introductions: Executive Secretary Colvin introduced Mr. David Detlor, permanent Deputy Director of the Office of Science and Technology (ST) and current Acting Director of ST as Chair Pro Tem of the Executive Steering Committee ESC), replacing Ned Cyr, who retired in July. Mr. Detlor noted Mr. Cyr's retirement and that of Dave Van Voorhees, Division Chief for the Fisheries Statistics Division (ST1) in September. He then introduced Dr. Alan Lowther, who is the Acting ST1 Division Chief into January and Mr. John Foster, permanent Branch Chief for the ST1 Recreational Statistics Branch, who will take over as Acting ST1 Chief following Dr. Lowther.

Mr. Detlor noted that the hiring process for the ST Director, a Senior Executive Service position, is under way, and will take some additional time to conclude. We expect that others will be named as acting ST Directors in 2020 until the new Director is appointed. He also stated that we hope to initiate the hiring process for the ST1 Division Chief position, via a direct hiring procedure that will help streamline the process, in early 2020. He asked the ESC members to consider referring candidates to apply once the position is advertised.

II. FY 20 Implementation Plan: Mr. Colvin briefly described the status and content of the plan. The plan includes a summary of FY 19 accomplishments and FY 20 priority actions, based on the six goals of the MRIP Strategic Plan. The FY 20 priorities also include include some new activities (e.g., in support of the Modern Fish Act and the MAFAC Task Force, and new outreach and engagement strategies).

The ESC has completed its review and the plan is now final; the completion of the plan will be announced via web feature and Newscast. No questions or concerns were expressed by the ESC.

III. FY 20 Spend Plan: Mr. Foster introduced Mr. Rettig of the ST1 staff who is assisting in managing the MRIP Spend Plan development and execution. Mr. Foster reviewed the content of the preliminary Spend Plan handout (Attachment 1), noting that we do not yet have a final FY 20 Budget, and will not finalize the plan until then. He also noted that:

- a new feature of the Spend Plan spreadsheet is a quarter-by-quarter summary of when we plan to fund each line item;
- the bulk of our FY 20 funding will go to FINs, through cooperative agreements with our office or with Science Centers and Regional Offices. (Significant funds will also be directed to APAIS, FES, and ST6.) The fact that no full-year appropriations have been finalized for 2020 means we have not been able to distribute the bulk of FIN funding during Q1, as intended. However, we have been able to commit \$465K to date under the CR.

Mr. Donaldson expressed support for moving FIN distributions to Q1, and stated that the \$465 would be helpful.

Mr. Beal asked whether ASMFC/ACCSP needed to take any action regarding the indicated transfer of the Southeast Region Headboat Survey Oracle System to ACCSP. Dr. Lowther stated that this work is funded via the FY 20 catch shares FIS RFP. Mr. White will check with Mr. Ken Brennan to assure all necessary steps are taken to fund the project.

Mr. Beal also asked about the lead for the SEFHIER start up projects. ST1 staff will check with SERO and provide the necessary lead person contact information to Mr. Beal and Mr. Donaldson.

IV. MAFAC Task Force: Dr. Cody summarized the content of the Federal Register Notice that establishes a Task Force to develop a road map on the subject of generation, delivery, and use of electronically reported data from private recreational anglers to assist NMFS in fulfilling its mission activities. The Notice requests nominations of qualified Task Force members by January 21. Appointments will be for the Task Force's established period of two years duration.

V. National Academies In-Season Management Study: Mr. Foster reviewed the status of the new National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) study of the use of MRIP-derived data for in-season management of ACLs. This study was recommended by the 2017 NASEM review of MRIP and is also a required provision of the Modern Fish Act. NMFS has concluded a contract with NASEM's Ocean Studies Board to conduct the study, which is expected to take about 18 months to complete. A 10-member review panel will hold four public meetings: one in D.C., one on the East Coast, one on the Gulf Coast, and one on the West Coast. We expect the first meeting to take place between late Jan. and mid-March, and the study to wrap-up in late 2020 or early 2021. The NASEM staff advise that they are very close to finalizing the membership of the study committee, and will be working with ST1 to plan the initial meeting in the D.C. area between late January and mid-March.

Mr. Foster noted that electronic reporting, as a means to expedite preliminary estimates for in-season availability, is likely to be among the subjects the committee considers. Therefore, NMFS and the NASEM staff will work toward appropriate coordination of the work of the NASEM Committee and the MAFAC Task Force.

Mr. Fisher asked whether this study is seen as primarily related to federal offshore, rather than state inshore, in-season management. Mr. Foster stated that the scope is not limited to federally-managed fisheries. Mr. Colvin stated that the terms of reference for the study call for the committee to reach

out to all MRIP regional partners initially, including states, to identify partner needs for in-season management and supporting data.

Dr. Porch noted that there may be some overlap between the work of this study committee and that being done by MRIP with the Atlantic Science Centers and Council SSC's on rare event fisheries. Mr. Foster stated that we would be making the committee aware of the rare event fishery work so that they can coordinate their review as appropriate.

VI. Mr. Colvin provided an overview of the MRIP-related requirements of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2019 ("Modern Fish Act" or "MFA"). In addition to the required NASEM study discussed in agenda item V, there are three provisions of relevance:

- Report to Congress, in consultation with Councils and SSC's, on incorporating state and non-governmental organizations' data, assessments, and analyses. This draft report is in review and covers far more than MRIP data. Council and commission feedback on the draft report is due at the end of the month; we will prepare responses to all comments received and recommend revisions to the final product.
- The MFA requires NMFS to implement as many of the recommendations of the 2017 NASEM review of MRIP as feasible, and to report to Congress every two years beginning at the end of 2020 re: progress toward recommendations from previous NAS review. A tracking spreadsheet has been completed and will be updated and shared with the ESC in Q2/Q3 of 2020.
- The Act also requires NMFS to establish a state partnership program and report to Congress every two years beginning at the end of 2020 re: progress toward mandate to establish a partnership with a state, on the quality of state data and the priorities for improving state surveys. We plan to rely on our existing partnerships through FINs, and the regional implementation process rather than establish a new partnership program. We will be working with the MRIP Regional Implementation Council to develop the content for the required partnership program description, priorities and report.

Ms. Ralston asked about the process for responding to comments received on the state/NGO data report currently under review. Dr. Cody responded that responses are being prepared to all comments we receive and that should be available after the comment period closes.

VII. Upcoming Certification Schedules: Dr. Cody reviewed the handout table that summarizes pending and expected survey design certifications (Attachment 2 incorporated herein by reference).

Mr. Fisher asked whether surveys that are not yet certified would continue to receive MRIP funding support. Dr. Cody stated that the NMFS Policy Directive 04-114 provided that non-certified surveys that are currently receiving MRIP support could continue to do so if there is a plan and progress toward certification.

Ms. Ralston asked about the relationship between certification of a survey and the decision to use its estimates for stock assessments and management. Dr. Cody stated that the Policy Directive calls for completion and execution of a Transition Plan to enable use of data from newly certified surveys. Mr. Colvin will send the link to the Policy Directive to the ESC. The ESC can submit any additional questions on the policy and associated procedures to him or Dr. Cody.

Dr. Porch stated that the term “certification” has been interpreted to imply finality. He suggested changing the term to clarify its applicability. Mr. Foster suggested we could consistently refer to survey design certification to emphasize the limits of what certification covers. The Program Management and Transition Teams will give further consideration to this suggestion.

VIII. Strategic Communications Plan: Mr. Bard and Ms. Krikstan presented the Communications and Education Team report and presented an overview of the FY 20 Strategic Communications Plan, summarized as follows:

- The goals, strategies, and tactics in this plan were developed by the MRIP Communications and Education Team (CET) with partner and stakeholder input. The plan was also informed by recommendations from the 2017 National Academies of Sciences review of MRIP and the MRIP five-year strategic plan (2017-2022). Both seek to expand two-way communications with key constituencies to improve their knowledge of the properties and use limitations of catch statistics, and to build confidence in the data. This plan is a living document, and the CET will execute and update it as needed.
- Target Audiences:
 - Recreational fishing community
 - Congress
 - NOAA Fisheries staff
 - MRIP partners
 - MRIP customers
 - MRIP stakeholders
- Goals:
 - Build the recreational fishing community’s confidence in our data collection methods and catch and effort estimates.
 - Enhance collaboration with and among partners.
 - Strengthen our relationship with customers.
 - Increase congressional understanding of recreational fishing data collection programs.
- Tactics that will support audience research: Mr. Bard and Ms. Krikstan presented the report of the Communications and Education Team.
 - Customer Satisfaction Assessment, to inform the development of a formal onboarding process for stock assessors, fishery management staff, and other recreational fisheries data users.
 - Needs Assessment, to inform the development of a Communications and Outreach Toolkit for Regional Offices, Science Centers, FINs, and other agencies and organizations we work with.
 - Social Network Analysis, to support the identification of influential stakeholders and critical “information distribution” channels.
 - Road Shows and Listening Sessions, to gauge the recreational fishing community’s response to our messaging and materials.
 - Ongoing work with the CET, regional communications working groups, and Recreational Fishing Coordinators to ensure our messaging and materials are appropriate for their target audiences. (For example: We’ve worked closely with Andrew Torres, Recreational Fishing Coordinator with PIRO, to host “talk

stories” with the recreational and non-commercial fishing communities in Hawaii, and are pulling together a video proposal to help us reach this audience with region-specific messaging about recreational fisheries data collection.)

The ESC will review the plan and provide any comments or questions to Mr. Bard and Ms. Krikstan.

IX. Pacific RecFIN Regional Implementation Plan: Mr. Colvin noted that the ESC had received the plan for review and no comments had been received. Mr. Detlor asked whether there any concerns or objections to approval of the plan. None being indicated, Mr. Detlor stated that the plan is approved. He thanked Mr. Williams for his efforts to complete the plan and for all his support of MRIP and his work as a member of MRIP teams in light of his upcoming retirement.

Mr. Detlor adjourned the meeting at 4:20 EST.

(Attachments follow)

Attachment 1

FY20 MRIP Spend Plan

Activity	Funding Mech.	FY20 - Planned	
		MRIP	FIS or ET Funds
APAIS - Atlantic Base + Add-On + FHS/LPS+HMRFS+CatchCard	Coop. Agreement	\$4,200,000	
APAIS - Gulf APAIS Add-On	Coop. Agreement	\$855,000	
APAIS - Gulf Base	Coop. Agreement	\$3,980,800	
APAIS - Puerto Rico	Coop. Agreement	\$500,000	
APAIS Scanning	Contract	\$25,000	
FES - Atlantic and Gulf and HI	Contract	\$2,220,285	
FES - Atlantic and Gulf Sample Size Increase	Contract	\$515,666	
FES - InfoLink	Contract	\$24,000	
FES Area Fished Pilot	Contract	\$250,000	
FES Nonresponse Follow-Up Survey	Contract	\$260,000	
FINs - MRIP participation	BOP Transfer	\$75,000	
IT Support - Pre-funding of Next Year	Contract	\$650,000	
IT Support for Current Year	Contract	\$300,000	
LPIS	Contract	\$708,366	
LPS Re-Design Pilot Study	Contract	\$300,000	
Pacific RecFIN Base***	BOP Transfer	\$2,200,000	
SAS Maintenance	Contract	\$74,984	
Staffing - Communications Consultant	Contract	\$80,000	
Staffing - Contractors	Contract	\$800,000	
Staffing - ST1 FTEs	Labor/Benefits	\$2,539,392	
Staffing - ST6 FTE	Labor/Benefits	\$175,000	
Staffing - Statistical Consultants	Contract	\$450,000	
Training/Prof. Development	Pcard	\$20,000	
Travel - FTEs	Pcard	\$50,000	
APAIS - Gulf: Electronic Data Capture in the Field for Recreational Fishing Access Point Intercept Surveys on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of Florida, and the Gulf Region	Loop. Agreement		\$79,300.00
TOTALS		\$21,253,493	\$79,300.00
Activity	Funding Mech.	FY20 - Planned	
		MRIP	FIS or ET Funds
SRHS - Migration of Southeast Region Headboat Survey ER Oracle System to ACCSP.	Direct Cite?		\$39,550.00
SEFHIER Start-Up: Expansion of SRHS ER Compliance Tracking System to Include All Federally Permitted For-hire Vessels in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.	Direct Cite?		\$367,250.00
SEFHIER Start-Up: Implementation of Electronic Reporting Program for For-Hire Vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic	Direct Cite? Direct Cite?		\$711,900.00
		\$150,000	

* Base Funds: Funds acquired prior to FY 2008.

** New Funds: Funds obtained for MRIP since FY 2007

*** \$1M for Pacific RecFIN comes from base funding provided by NWFSC

Attachment 2

Sponsor	Survey component	Status	Comments	Completion*
CA - CDFW	California Recreational Fisheries Surveys (CRFS)			
	(1) Primary Private/Rental Boat survey	Consultant/NMFS review complete	Waiting on CDFW response	2020
	(2) Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Survey (CPFV)	Consultant/NMFS review complete	Waiting on CDFW response	2020
	(3) Secondary P/R Boat Survey	Consultant/NMFS review complete	Waiting on CDFW response	2020
	(4) Man-made Shore Survey	In Review		
	(5) Beach Bank Survey	In Review		
	(6) Angler License Directory Telephone Survey (ALDTS)	In Review		
WA-DFW	(1) Ocean Sampling Program (OSP)	In Review	Consultant support focused on better alignment of survey methods and estimation	2020
	(2) Puget Sound Sampling Program (PSSP)	In Review	Consultant support focused on better alignment of survey methods and estimation	2020
OR-DFW	(1) Oregon Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS)	In Review	Consultant support focused on better alignment of survey methods and estimation	2020
HI-HDAR	HI Survey components	Compiling documentation	Expect submission of documentation mid 2020	2020-2021
NOAA	(1) For Hire Telephone Survey	Compiling documentation	Documentation Complete (awaiting completion of other certifications)	2021
	(2) FHTS Validation	Compiling documentation		2021
	SEFHIER	Not Started	Validation methods have not been developed -phased approach to implementation	TBD
ACCSP/SC	SC Logbook	Not Started	Anticipate request in 2020-2021	2021-2022

*Dates subject to change depending on partner and MRIP consultant availability

