

Outreach and Education Committee Report

August 22, 2022

Dr. Greg Stunz, Chair

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab O, No.1**) and approved the minutes of the January 2022 meeting with the correction of a typo (**Tab O, No.2**).

Communications Plan to Promote Return of Shrimp Fleet Effort Data (Tab O, No.4)

Staff presented the communication plan developed by the Outreach and Education Technical Committee during its August 2022 meeting; to increase return rates for SD cards containing shrimp vessel position data, which are used to generate effort estimates for the shrimp industry. The plan suggests using a combination of several outreach methods: increasing targeted mailings, in-person interactions, and development and deployment of print and multi-media materials.

The Committee suggested that NOAA Fisheries focus on methods to improve the fleet's compliance before it institutes punitive measures. The Committee also suggested that, rather than focus on mail-out efforts, NOAA rely more on verbal communication with individual fishermen to enhance compliance. Southeast Fishery Science Center staff explained that the shrimping community is already accustomed to interacting with NOAA Fisheries via mail and has reservations that phone calls from the agency may not be as well received.

The Committee concurred that in-person interactions are most effective; however, since the shrimp fleet is at sea for long periods of time, it's hard to guarantee such interactions. The Committee further agreed that print and multi-media materials should point out that shrimp effort data has been, and will continue to be, used to preserve historical access to shrimping grounds when marine spatial issues such as wind-energy, aquaculture, and artificial reef areas are sited.

Staff will send a letter to NOAA Fisheries outlining the communications suggestions made by the Outreach and Education Technical Committee and the Council, as well as offer support and feedback during the development stage prior to the next mailing anticipated to occur in January 2023.

Draft Media Guidelines (Tab O, No.5)

Staff reviewed a draft of the Media Guidelines that will be added to the larger suite of Council Communications Guidelines. The Guidelines outline the roles of staff and Council members when responding to media inquiries on behalf of the Council. The Committee cautioned that, regardless of the intention of individual Council members, the media may take what Council members say and use it as it pleases. Members of the Council that also work for a state agency noted that their role is especially nuanced and that it's difficult to separate whether they are speaking as a Council member or on behalf of their state and their role at that state agency.

Finally, it was emphasized that Council members should freely discuss opinions and consider different angles to each issue while deliberating at the Council table.

***Remaining Items on the August 2022 Outreach and Education Technical Committee Report
(Tab O, No,6)***

The only remaining item from the Outreach and Education Technical Committee report was a presentation it received on the Return 'Em Right program, which is a project that aims to reduce release mortality due to barotrauma and encourage best fishing practices to keep released fish alive. To date, 155 federally permitted for-hire captains and 9,455 private recreational anglers have completed the learning module and received descending gear to reduce barotrauma mortality.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.