

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**  
**2022 Communications Improvement Plan**  
**January 2022**  
**Updated: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2022**

Planned improvements to Current Endeavors

**Gulf Currents Blog**

We will continue to produce frequent, timely articles and aim to produce no less than 12 stand-alone articles in 2022. We will also continue to create a pre-Council blog prior to each Council meeting. We will create a quarterly blog article digest and distribute it via listserv.

Platform: Blogger

Cross Promotion: Articles shared individually via website and social media. A quarterly blog article digest will be distributed via listserv.

Frequency: Monthly, at minimum.

Planned Improvements:

- Publish a blog article monthly
- Create a quarterly blog article digest

Staff Responsibility:

- EM and CRS will write articles.
- EM and CRS will cultivate a list of article ideas and create a loose article topic schedule for each quarter.
- EM and CJS will be responsible for posting on website
- EM, CRS, and CJS will be responsible for sharing on social media.
- CJS will complete the quarterly listserv digest.

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: So far, we have managed to publish 6 blog articles. We plan to complete at least 4 more before the end of the year, but that still won't get us to the planned 12. We've only published 1 blog article digest through the listserv because we have not managed to produce as many stand-alone articles as anticipated. We plan to publish 1 more digest before the end of the year.

**Listserv**

We would like to increase our subscribers and ensure that current subscribers are getting content targeted specifically to them.

Platform: Constant Contact

Cross Promotion: listserv members, website, social media

Frequency: As needed

Planned Improvements:

- Continue to develop species specific email contact lists from Fisherman Feedback Tool

- Now that we've begun to cultivate species specific email contact lists from the Fisherman Feedback tool, staff will target species specific press releases to appropriate lists.
- Regularly nudge people on social media to join our subscriber list.

Staff Responsibility:

- EM and CJS – select appropriate contact lists when distributing press releases
- EM - upload contact lists for each new Fisherman Feedback tool
- CRS – schedule social media posts nudging people to join our subscriber list

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We have created species specific “Fishermen Feedback” lists and send out species-based press releases when appropriate. We've also posted the opportunity to sign-up on social media and endeavored to sign-up new contact during in-person outreach events.

## **Social Media**

We would like to continue to increase the frequency and regularity of our posts. This can be achieved, in part, through redundancy because not everyone sees every post. We would also like to create more positive content by creating more recurring thematic posts and by posting more helpful resources. We would like to optimize our use of Facebook Business suite and transition away from Hootsuite. We will also start placeholder accounts on all relevant social media outlets to deter the creation of fraudulent accounts.

Platform: Facebook and Instagram

Cross Promotion: None.

Frequency:

Meeting Notices: Scheduled when FRN publishes for 1 week prior to meeting and for the morning of the meeting.

Regulations Updates: Shared when FRN publishes and a reminder 1-3 days before the change is implemented

Season openings and closings: 1 day in advance.

Blog/Press Releases/Public Comment Opportunities on as-needed basis.

Weekly reoccurring positive engagement posts

Planned Improvements:

- Transition away from Hootsuite and optimize use of Facebook Business Suite.
- Create a social media calendar
- Increase regularly scheduled, helpful social media posts directing anglers to helpful resources
- Recurring positive content
  - Deep Water Wednesday
  - Monthly Marine Map Monday or Managed Area Monday
  - Fish Identification Challenge (Species Comparisons & Zoom in)
- Start place holder accounts on all relevant social media platform

Staff Responsibility

- EM, CRS, CJS create content

- EM- regulations updates, public comment opportunities, blog articles, press releases
- CJS – meeting notices
- CRS- season openings/closings, reoccurring positive content
- EM, CRS, CJS curate the social media calendar as appropriate
- JM create place holder accounts on all relevant social media platforms

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We have successfully transitioned away from Hootsuite and use the Meta business suite calendar to schedule posts. We have also started placeholder accounts for all relevant social media accounts. We have greatly improved the frequency with which we post positive content and have begun repeating certain posts to reach a wider audience.

### **Fishermen Feedback**

We would like to rebrand the tool from ‘Something’s Fishy’ to ‘Fisherman Feedback’. We plan to create a one-page factsheet explaining the tool, its utility, and benefits to the fishermen. We would also like to create a Guideline document outlining our process for deploying, analyzing, and reporting each effort. We’ll also look into seeking approval for the tool through the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Platform: Google Docs (forms)

Cross Promotion: Listserv, Social Media, Website

Frequency: In advance of every stock assessment (not currently used for interim analysis).

Planned Improvements:

- Research blanket approval and expedited approval process for Paperwork Reduction Act
- Create a factsheet
- Draft Guideline document
- Rebrand
  - Blog Article
  - Fish Science Webpages
  - Constant Contact

Staff Responsibility:

- EM (CRS, JF, and LH) - Create SOPPs/Technical Guidance document
- EM/CJS research PRA approval options
- EM/CRS- Create a factsheet explaining the tool and highlighting why responding benefits fishermen
- CRS – Rebranding blog article
- CJS – Website and Constant Contact

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We have completely rebranded the Fisherman Feedback tool. We are currently in the process of gaining Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) approval by

adding our tool to a NOAA Citizen Science Program approval request. We have not created a fact sheet or drafted a guideline document.

## **Website**

We would like to continue to improve the fishery science pages by adding information on fisheries independent data collection and indices, the Council's comprehensive reference list. We would also like to dismantle the Fishing for our Future website, redirect it to Return 'Em Right and move the discard dashboard to the Fish Science Pages. We would like to create a website design guide to ensure that site has consistent formatting and style throughout. We would also like to add a link to the final action press release for each amendment to the Amendments Under Development and Implemented webpages. This will provide a simple summary of the action that was taken on each document. Finally, we will work with NOAA to create a one-stop-shop of angler resources.

Platform: Website (WordPress)

Cross Promotion: Listserv and social media for launch

Frequency: Updated and improved on an as-needed basis

Planned Improvements:

- Add fishery independent indices to fish science pages
- Add a comprehensive reference list to the fish science pages
- Dismantle FFF and move the discard dashboard to the fish science pages
- Create a website style-guide
- Add a link to the final action press release for each amendment to the Amendments Under Development and Implemented webpages
- Work with NOAA to create one-stop-shop of angler resources (quota monitoring, stock assessment reports, MRIP query tool)

Staff Responsibility:

- CRS, CJS – On fish science page, change recreational data collection tab to Harvest Data tab and include info on commercial harvest
- EM, CJS – On fish science page, create fisheries independent tab and build out page
- CJS - Dismantle FFF and move the discard dashboard to the fish science pages
- EM – Work with NOAA to create a one-stop-shop of angler resources
- CJS – Create website style guide
- EM - Add a link to the final action press release for each amendment to the Amendments Under Development and Implemented webpages

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We successfully dismantled the Fishing For Our Future webpage and created a website style-guide. We added Final Rule FRN links to each of the items on the implemented pages in lieu of adding press release links. We have not added fishery independent indices to the Fish Science webpages nor have we added a comprehensive reference list to the fish science pages. We have not worked with NOAA to create a one-stop show of angler resources.

## Public Comment

Learn new comment database administration. Transition to using optimize database management system. Ensure that all staff are trained, and all aspects of the new system are running smoothly.

Platform: Google Docs

Cross Promotion: Shared on homepage and implemented page on website, social media, pre-council blog posts

Frequency:

- New comment form created for each new amendment. Relevant 'general' comments from the previous year are added.
- General comments received since the last Council meeting sorted by topic and added to each Council meeting materials page
- Comments are reported out for each item during scoping and before final action

Planned Improvements:

Staff Responsibility:

- EM, BR, JM, CJS learn new comment database administration
- JM – re-link all historical comment forms on website
- JM – Replace all individual comment forms with pre-filled links to new form

**3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update:** We have successfully transitioned to the new comment database. This included completion of projects to re-link all historical comment forms and replace all individual comment forms with pre-filled links.

## New Communications Endeavors

### Videos

We would like to take better advantage of our studio and the cornucopia of knowledgeable people who participate in the Council process to create video content to share across communications platforms. We would like to start conducting interviews with SSC, AP, and Council members. We'll create a list of topics and explore the idea of creating a vlog or series of themed shorts.

Platform: YouTube

Cross Promotion: Shared on social media and over listserv via quarterly blog digest

- Create 4 videos

Frequency: Once per quarter

Planned Improvements:

- Create a list of video topics and potential contributors
- Shoot, edit, and distribute 4-videos

Staff Responsibility:

- EM - Create a list of video topics and potential contributors
- EM - Shoot, edit, and distribute 4-videos

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We created and distributed two helpful videos and have cultivated a list of video topics for future efforts.

## **Communications Guidelines**

We would like to formalize our communications procedures. As our team expands and our responsibilities grow, it's imperative that we create a communications handbook to ensure that our products and methods are standardized. The document will outline our communications methods, staff roles, and explain the rationale when necessary. The following list of items should be included in the SOPPs:

### Planned Improvements

- Regulations Guidelines
  - a. Website tables and species pages
  - b. Fish Rules
  - c. ACL Infographic
  - d. Recreational calendar
- Fisherman Feedback Guidelines
- Analytics Guidelines
- Media Guidelines

### Staff Responsibility

- EM/CJS - draft Regulations Guidelines
- EM (CRS, JF, and LH) – draft Fishermen Feedback Guidelines
- JM – draft Analytics Guidelines

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We completed Media, Analytics, and Regulations guidelines. We also created guidelines for the Use of Council Products. We have not yet completed Fishermen Feedback Guidelines.

## **Species Timeline Project**

We plan to develop a sortable web-based timeline tool that hosts management histories for each managed species.

### Planned Improvements:

- Find appropriate hosting tool
- Pilot single species (AJ)

### Staff Responsibility:

- CRS/CJS - Find appropriate tool
- CRS/CJS- Pilot single species (AJ)

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We have begun to sort and detail regulations for the greater amberjack pilot but we have not progressed beyond that.

## **MRIP Storyboard**

We plan to use the draft MRIP Infographic developed in 2021 to create a storyboard that explains the changes to the MRIP program over time and answers frequently asked questions regarding the integration of new estimates into management.

Planned Improvements:

- Find appropriate tool to create the storyboard
- Build the storyboard
- Have MRIP Communications Team review the storyboard
- Publish MRIP FAQ's on the Fisheries Science Webpage in the interim

Staff Responsibility:

- CJS - Find appropriate tool to create the storyboard
- CJS/EM - Build the storyboard
- CRS - Have MRIP Communications Team review the storyboard
- CJS/EM - Publish MRIP FAQ's on the Fisheries Science Webpage in the interim

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Update: We have put the MRIP Infographic on the Fisheries Science webpages. We have completed a draft of the MRIP Storyboard but we have not asked the MRIP Communications Team to review it.

Extra Communications Endeavors:

**Fish Rules API** – We've contracted a company to integrate the Fish Rules API into the regulations pages of our website. This will mostly enhance back-end functionality by allowing us to make regulations changes across web and mobile platforms through a single interface (fish management). This will also allow us to schedule changes on the website in advance.

**In-Person Outreach Events** – We completed three special outreach events this year: The Mississippi Deep Sea Rodeo in Biloxi, MS; Grouper Grapple in Ft. Myers, FL; and Florida Guides Association meeting. Across the events we engaged directly with 419 people and gained 31 subscribers to our listserv.