

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

Hilton Palacio del Rico Hotel

San Antonio, Texas

August 25, 2021

VOTING MEMBERS

Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
Susan Boggs.....Alabama
Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
Phil Dyskow.....Florida
Lisa Motoi.....USCG
Robin Riechers.....Texas
Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
Greg Stunz.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
Tom Frazer.....Florida
Bob Gill.....Florida
Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
Bob Shipp.....Alabama
Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
Troy Williamson.....Texas

STAFF

Assane Diagne.....Economist
Matt Freeman.....Economist
John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
Camilla Shireman.....Administrative & Communications Assistant
Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

1 Kerry Marhefka.....SAFMC
2 Clay Porch.....SEFSC
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1 The Law Enforcement Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened on Wednesday morning, August 25,
3 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Dale Diaz.

4
5 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
6 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
7 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
8

9 **CHAIRMAN DALE DIAZ:** I would like to call the Law Enforcement
10 Committee to order. The members of the committee are myself,
11 Mr. Dyskow as Vice Chair, Mr. Schieble, Mr. Anson, Ms. Boggs,
12 Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Riechers, Dr. Stunz, Ms. Motoi.

13
14 The first order of the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda. Is
15 there any opposition to adopting the agenda as written, or does
16 anybody have any other business that they want to add to the Law
17 Enforcement Committee? I would like to just make a small
18 modification, and I want to recognize General Spraggins for just
19 a minute, right after the Action Guide and Next Steps, for a
20 short discussion. Any opposition to approving the agenda as
21 amended? Then the agenda is approved.

22
23 Approval of the October 2020 Minutes, is there any additions or
24 edits to the October 2020 minutes? Seeing none, the minutes are
25 adopted. Actually, at this time, I would like to recognize
26 General Spraggins for just a minute for a statement. Thank you.
27 General Spraggins.

28
29 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not a
30 member of the committee, but I would like to bring up something.
31 I think most of you realize that, this past July, we lost one of
32 our marine patrol officers, Senior Master Sergeant Tommy
33 Jennings, and Tommy was forty-nine years old.

34
35 He was in the process of maybe retiring next year, and, as a
36 matter of a fact, we talked about putting his paperwork in, and
37 he would have his twenty-five years. Tommy had taken both of
38 the COVID shots in March, in that timeframe, and then found out,
39 during that timeframe, that he had come down with diabetes, or
40 had been diagnosed, and did not realize, at the time, that the
41 COVID shot sometimes does not build antibodies.

42
43 He went on a trip with his girlfriend that he had planned this
44 summer, because that's one of the major reasons that he had
45 taken the shots, and he came down with the virus the first of
46 July, and he passed away about ten days later. I would ask each
47 and every one of you just to remember his family in your

1 prayers. He was a great young man that served us very well, Mr.
2 Tommy Jennings.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Thank you for that, General Spraggins, and I
5 personally knew Tommy, and he was a great person and a great
6 marine law enforcement officer. Thank you for that. Next up on
7 the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps, and so, Dr.
8 Lasseter, if you would, just talk about those before we go
9 through each agenda item, and, if you're ready, Dr. Lasseter, go
10 ahead and go through the action guide and next steps for Agenda
11 Item Number IV, and let's move right into Agenda Item Number IV.
12 Thank you.

13
14 **LETC MEETING SUMMARY FROM MARCH 2021 MEETING**

15
16 **DR. AVA LASSETER:** Wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
17 Actually, I'm just going to review this real quick, the whole
18 rest of the agenda, because it's going to be really short, and
19 so we have the Law Enforcement Technical Committee, the LETC,
20 meeting summary from this past March.

21
22 There is only two items there that I would like to highlight for
23 you. The LETC did not make any motions this meeting, and the
24 rest of the work from their meeting are the remaining two agenda
25 items here, the strategic plan and the operations plan, and so
26 we'll briefly touch on those. Those two items, we would request
27 a motion from you to approve those, and so we'll go into them,
28 and let's start with the first one, which is Agenda Item IV,
29 which is their report.

30
31 That is at Tab L, Number 4, and the two items that -- Again,
32 this meeting was just a lot of information for the LETC, and
33 they did not make motions or recommendations to you, but there
34 were two items that I wanted to highlight.

35
36 The issue of illegal charters that the council has been
37 discussing at multiple meetings, the LETC did discuss this, and
38 the State of Florida, FWC, and NOAA OLE have been engaged in
39 dialogues with each other and with the charter captains in
40 regard to this issue, and they did hold a workshop meeting of
41 law enforcement officers and for-hire operators in St. Pete, and
42 the two agencies, FWC and NOAA OLE, have indicated they are
43 going to continue these dialogues and that they are going to
44 have internal biannual meetings as well.

45
46 This sentence was cut off, but the revised report has been sent
47 out, and it should say that they will have biannual meetings to

1 share information regarding ongoing law enforcement efforts to
2 address illegal charters, and the feedback I have received is
3 that the for-hire operators seem to be very receptive to this
4 new attention. Then the other item that I just wanted to
5 highlight for you was that the LETC members --

6
7 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ava, can I interrupt you for just a second?

8
9 **DR. LASSETER:** Of course. Please.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** I just want to point out, on the record, that
12 this is an example of our entire process working, and so,
13 through public comments, we've had people come, on several
14 occasions, and talk about the issue with illegal charters.

15
16 Our LETC are communicating together, and they've got an action
17 plan that they're working on, and they have actually made some
18 cases, and I think this is just a really good example of how all
19 of the coordination that we're working on here at the council
20 level and at the LETC level is all coming together to make some
21 differences out in the fishery, and public participation and
22 public comments are the things that got the ball rolling on the
23 strides that we're making in this area, and so thank you, Dr.
24 Lasseter, and you may proceed.

25
26 **DR. LASSETER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a really good
27 point, and that is actually a really good connection to the
28 other item that I wanted to highlight for you, which is just a
29 little bit more about the Fish Rules app.

30
31 This is another example where the public had commented to law
32 enforcement that, hey, it would be great if we had state-
33 specific contact information for reporting violations in the
34 Fish Rules app, and the LETC requested that council staff figure
35 out if this could be added, and I brought this back to Emily
36 Muehlstein, and she coordinated with the Fish Rules app
37 developers, and we have had all of the contact information for
38 reporting violations for all five states and NOAA OLE and the
39 Coast Guard added to the app. Again, great communication and
40 coordination between the public and law enforcement agencies.

41
42 Those are the only two items in here, apart from the strategic
43 plan and the operations plan, and we're going to go through
44 those separately, for this report. The LETC will be reviewing
45 and approving this report at its October meeting, which we
46 anticipate to be virtual. We can go ahead and switch over to
47 the strategic plan, which I believe is Tab L, Number 5.

1
2 **APPROVAL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**
3

4 The strategic plan, when the LETC reviewed it, they did not make
5 changes. They did just review it and rubber-stamp it, and we
6 updated the years and changed some photos, and Steve VanderKooy
7 did some little editing work there, and so you're welcome to
8 review this. Again, changes have not been made, but we do
9 request a motion that you review and approve it, as the Gulf
10 States Commission has done at its spring meeting, and I will
11 pause there.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ms. Boggs.

14
15 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** I will make a motion to approve the Gulf of
16 Mexico Cooperative Law Enforcement Strategic Plan for 2021 to
17 2024.

18
19 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Second.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** All right, and so we're going to wait while that
22 gets up on the board. We do have a motion by Ms. Boggs, and it
23 was seconded by Mr. Donaldson. **The motion is to approve the**
24 **2021-2024 Cooperative Law Enforcement Strategic Plan.** Is there
25 any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
26 **opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Dr.
27 Lasseter.

28
29 **APPROVAL OF COOPERATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS PLAN 2021-**
30 **2022**
31

32 **DR. LASSETER:** Wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay.
33 Moving right along, our last item will be the operations plan,
34 which is at Tab L, Number 6, and the version we have provided to
35 you in the briefing book is a red-lined version, so that you can
36 skim through it and see the changes that have been made.

37
38 We do have Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Les Casterline,
39 who I believe was there in person, although I believe it was
40 Jerod Barker was actually attending the meeting, but we do have
41 Les here, who could probably answer any questions, but, really,
42 they just updated their work, what they have been doing, their
43 activities, and updated some language, and, again, the Gulf
44 States Commission has reviewed and approved this with all the
45 red-lined changes accepted, and we request that you review it
46 and approve as well.

1 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ms. Boggs.

2
3 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, sir. I will make a motion to approve the
4 **2021-2022 Gulf of Mexico Cooperative Law Enforcement Operations**
5 **Plan.**

6
7 **MR. DONALDSON:** Second.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Okay. We have a motion by Ms. Boggs, and it's
10 seconded by Mr. Donaldson, to approve the 2021-2022 Cooperative
11 Law Enforcement Operations Plan. Is there any discussion on the
12 motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion?**
13 **Seeing none, the motion carries.** Dr. Lasseter.

14
15 **DR. LASSETER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. That is all
16 of the items that we had for the Law Enforcement Committee
17 today. The LETC will be meeting before your October meeting,
18 and, just to let the committee know, the 2021 biennial report on
19 IUU has come out, and we will forward that to you for the
20 October meeting, for your review as well, and we'll be
21 discussing that with the LETC as well, and so that's just a
22 little information there, and that is all I have. Thank you
23 very much.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Thank you, Dr. Lasseter. Is there any other
26 business to come before the Law Enforcement Committee? Seeing
27 none, this concludes the Law Enforcement Committee.

28
29 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 25, 2021.)
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