

## **Red Tide Fishery Ecosystem Issue Communications Plan and Funding**

### **FEP and Red Tide FEI Communications Plan: January 2024 Council Meeting**

Since red tide is not an issue that can be effectively controlled by direct Council regulatory action, communications can be the most useful way to insight positive outcomes from the Fishery Ecosystem Issue effort. Not all fisheries issues can be solved with fishing regulations, and this provides a good opportunity for the Council to display its intentions to improve the sustainability of fisheries in light of factors outside of the Council's jurisdiction.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Host a Red Tide Symposium – Host a symposium that brings together a range of affected stakeholders, extra-jurisdictional agencies, media, and other groups that have a stake in red tide impacts to collaboratively address the issue in a holistic manner.
2. Produce a Federal Fisheries Red Tide Report – Since there are a range of existing groups that already address red tide, the Council should develop a report that summarizes the social, biological, and economic impacts that red tide has on federal fisheries and share them with existing groups on a regular basis.

### **Outreach and Education Committee: January 2024 Council Meeting**

The Committee cautioned that the symposium could easily become a huge undertaking and suggested that staff carefully define goals and manage expectations and attendance. Staff reminded the Committee that a summit is proposed in the Council's phase II of the funding request for the Inflation Reduction Act. It was also noted that the Federal Fisheries Red Tide Report would be a very useful product that could be used to justify continued work on Red Tide mitigation.

### **Inflation Reduction Act Phase II Proposal: June 2024**

Gulf Council proposed a generic Climate and Ecosystem Summit in its IRA Phase II proposal however, the summit was not funded because reviewers did not see how a summit would result in Council action toward improving climate ready fisheries and was therefore determined it was not appropriate for IRA funding.

### **Outreach and Education Technical Committee Meeting: November 2024**

The O&E was broadly supportive of a Red Tide Symposium and suggested that gathering disparate managers from extra jurisdictional agencies, researchers, and stakeholders to discuss the state of red tide science and management is essential for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to understanding and managing around the impacts of red tide. The O&E noted that at its core, the symposium would both inform and provide exposure and credibility for the Federal Fisheries Red Tide Report, the second product of the Red Tide FEI that was enthusiastically approved by the Council during its January 2024 meeting. The O&E discussed the value of a Red Tide Symposium for identifying gaps in research and the potential to extend red tide management focus beyond gag grouper and red grouper, which currently account for red tide mortality in stock assessment models. A committee member mentioned that there is a lot of red tide expertise concentrated in the region surrounding the Council office, which could greatly reduce the costs of a Red Tide Symposium hosted in the Tampa Bay area. Another committee member suggested that the 2025 Southwest Florida Climate Summit may be another opportunity to identify local expertise and interest in red tide and other climate and ecosystem issues.