

Recreational Initiative Communications Recommendations



December 2025: Outreach and Education Technical Committee
Gulf Council

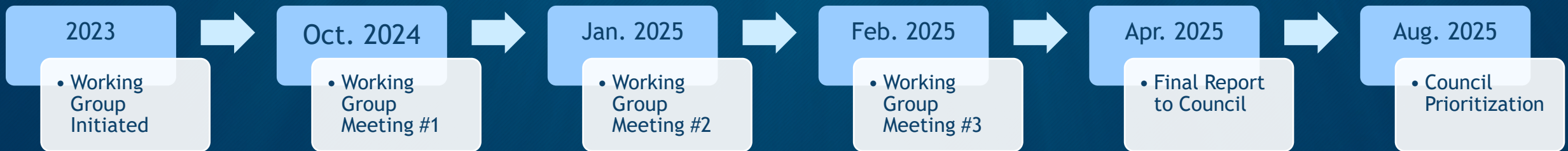
What is the Gulf Recreational Initiative?



An effort to engage the recreational community to:

1. Review and evaluate past and current management strategies
2. Explore potential innovative management strategies that could be applied in the future

12 Working Group Members from Gulf States

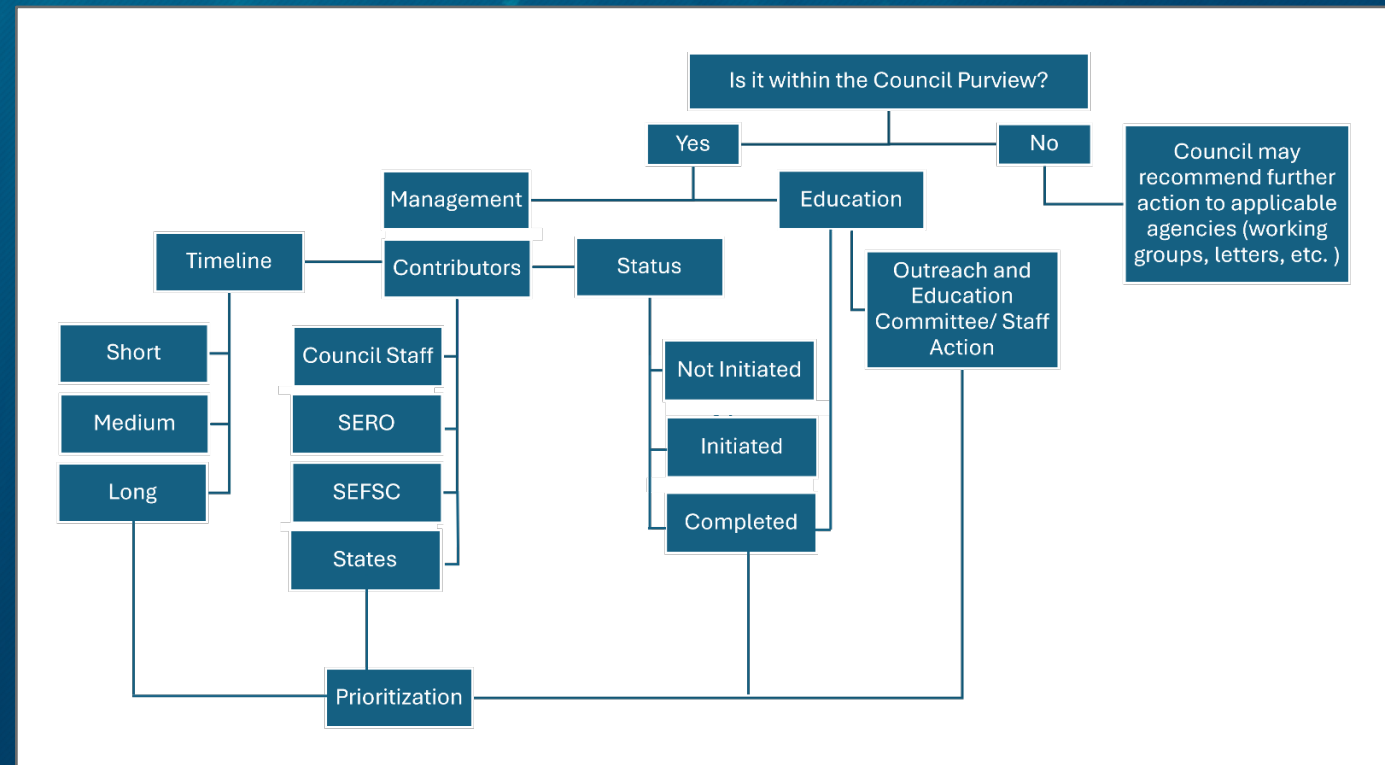


Working Group Recommendation Prioritization



19 Consensus Statements, 6 Goals

- Trusted Data
- Establish trust with the recreational community
- Develop predictable and reliable recreational access
- Allow for regional flexibility in management
- Increase recreational community engagement in the management process
- Maximize angler satisfaction and accommodate growth



8 Education Recommendations; 13 Management Recommendations

Consensus Recommendations



19 Consensus Recommendations



8 Education Recommendations; 13 Management Recommendations



August 2025 Council Prioritized



6 Priority Management Recommendations; 5 Priority Education Recommendations

Communication Recommendations



**Establish Trust with
the Recreational
Community**

**Increase Recreational
Community
Engagement in the
Management Process**

**Maximize Angler
Satisfaction and
Accommodate Growth**

Establish Trust with the Recreational Community



(2.2) The Council should better communicate the conservation implications of different fishing activities based on individual species' biology and life-history (e.g., depth/location and months of spawning, etc.), empowering anglers to make better decisions based on their conservation ethic.

Increase Recreational Community Engagement in the Management Process



(5.1) The Council should seek opportunities to partner with recreational fishing community leaders to educate and engage anglers to be more active participants in the Gulf Council’s management process—potentially through a leadership program sponsored by the Gulf Council, where participants are invited to attend Council meetings, review outreach materials, and provide public comment.

Increase Recreational Community Engagement in the Management Process



(5.2) The Council should work with partners to develop scaled-down modules of the Marine Resources Education Program (MREP) to share with a wider audience—possibly including short videos on specific components of the fisheries science and management process.

Increase Recreational Community Engagement in the Management Process



(5.3) The Council should promote opportunities for anglers to report catch information and on-the-water observations of fish abundance and presence (e.g., through the Council's Fisherman Feedback Tool).

Maximize Angler Satisfaction and Accommodate Growth



(6.2) The Council should work with the recreational community, including the for-hire and private angler sectors, to develop seasons that maximize overlap in focal species to enable harvest of multiple species on a given trip and reduce discards. Maximizing overlap with the season for red snapper, the primary target for reef fish anglers Gulf-wide, should be a key priority. At the same time, the Council should recognize the for-hire and tackle industry's need to have a focal species available for harvest at all times.

Tactics and Prioritization



Navigate to the Virtual Whiteboard

Pages 1-5: Using the sticky notes, suggest tactics that the Council should use to accomplish each recommendation

Page 6: After we review results from pages 1-5 we will vote on the most important items to tackle using the thumbs-up sticker.

Appendix: Communications Recommendations not prioritized by the Council



- 1.2: To promote transparency in recreational data and improve catch and effort estimates, electronic self-reporting by anglers should continue to play a role in estimating recreational Gulf reef fish catch, including both mandatory programs (such as the Mississippi Tails and Scales/Alabama Snapper Check apps) and voluntary programs.

- 2.1: The Council should improve messaging regarding the potential on-the-water impact that management actions could have on the recreational fishery by projecting outcomes that can be interpreted by non-specialists (e.g., what increase in catch limits anglers could expect to result from a decrease in discard mortality and/or from rebuilding a stock).

- 2.3: The Council should improve awareness of the tremendous volume of outreach and educational material already available through the Council and its partners.