

**Outreach and Education Committee Report  
January 26, 2026  
Dr. Anthony Overton, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab O, No.1**) and approved the minutes (**Tab O, No. 2**) from the January 2025 meeting as written.

*Management Area Mapping (Tab O, No. 4)*

The Committee heard an update on the project to develop a dynamic mapping tool to replace the static images used to communicate management areas. Based on feedback received from the Outreach and Education (O&E) Technical Committee, staff continues to work on the tool and perform beta testing with Advisory Panel members before it's published later in 2026.

The Committee received an update on progress for getting management areas and boundaries added to commercially available mapping tools indicating that the process was complex, may require a national effort, and should be spearheaded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Capt. Dylan Hubbard, (O&E Chair) emphasized that a national effort would be more enticing for the industry than a regional one and shared the O&E Technical Committee motion suggesting the Council draft a letter to NOAA encouraging the effort. A Committee member suggested staff package and share Gulf areas so that users can install them on their machines themselves. The Committee decided to develop a motion for Full Council that would consider requesting that NOAA develop a system for providing appropriate marine regulatory areas and boundaries to companies producing marine charts and mapping units while proposed legislation Modernizing Access to Our Public Oceans (MAPOceans) Act is finalized.

*Recreational Initiative Communications Recommendations (Tab O, No. 5)*

Staff presented an overview of the five Recreational Initiative communications recommendations first prioritized by the Council during its August 2025 and subsequently prioritized by the O&E Technical Committee. The Committee directed staff to focus on the top two communications recommendations prioritized by the O&E Technical Committee. Specifically, to fulfill recommendation 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,” the Committee recommended staff develop a video series emulating the curriculum from MREP

explaining the science and management processes. The Committee also asked staff to improve messaging across various platforms around how species life histories are impacted by fishing behavior to fulfill recommendation 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), empowering anglers to make better decisions based on their conservation ethic.” The Committee noted that the Council may want to partner with Sea Grant to accomplish recommendation 5.1 which aims to develop a leadership program with the recreational community. The Committee also indicated that the Council accomplishes recommendation 6.2 when it gathers public input on preferred seasons ahead of making management changes.

*Anonymous Voice Mail Box (Tab O, No. 6)*

The Committee heard a presentation on a pilot effort to test an anonymous voicemail public comment service. Staff noted that the comments received to date were substantive and relevant to Council business and shared that it plans to provide an anonymous voicemail comment summary in the meeting materials for each Council meeting. The Committee supported continuation of the anonymous voicemail public comment service and encouraged staff to increase visibility and knowledge of the service.

*2025 Communications Analytics (Tab O, No. 7)*

Staff presented an overview of Council communications analytics for 2025. Analytics are down across all platforms, with the exception of its email listserv and Facebook. This drop is, in part, attributed to an intentional and voluntary reduction in visibility occurring in response to communications limitations put on federal agencies. A Committee member indicated that staff could improve numbers across social platforms by producing video content featuring fishing and research.

*2026 Communications Improvement Plan (Tab O, No.8)*

Staff presented a draft 2026 Communications Plan which was shaped using past analytics, staff and O&E Technical Committee recommendations. The Committee noted that the plan was ambitious and supported staff in moving forward to accomplish its goals.

*Other Items from the O&E Technical Committee Summary (Tab O, No. 9)*

The O&E Technical Committee Chair, Capt. Dylan Hubbard presented remaining items from the December 2025 O&E Technical Committee meeting summary. He highlighted a SeaGrant Reef Fish Extension update, discussed the Ecosystem Based Management Outreach discussion, and explained why trying to add a Council learning opportunity to Council meetings was difficult.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.