

Fisheries Roundtable
Finding a Way Forward

June 12, 2010
Hilton at Walt Disney World Resort
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Final Report

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FISHERIES ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION “FINDING A WAY FORWARD”

Final Report

Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc.
Lake Buena Vista, Florida
June 12, 2010

Rick E. Marks

Introduction

The Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. (GSAFFI) convened a one-day meeting in Florida on June 12, 2010 to provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss relevant fisheries management issues. This meeting was sponsored by the GSAFFI pursuant to Award #NA04NMF4520280 (#91-12). The GSAFFI staff invited 115 individuals of which 30 were invited to serve as panel members. In total, 26 individuals participated in two panel discussions and 65 individuals attended the meeting.

The primary objective of the meeting was to provide a constructive forum for a broad cross-section of marine resource stakeholders to openly discuss their views on various aspects of federal fisheries management and how to improve the current system. Stakeholders attending the meeting included but were not limited to representatives of regional commercial fishing organizations, individual commercial fishermen and seafood dealers, representatives of national environmental organizations, regional management council members and staff, natural resource consultants, and federal fishery managers and scientists.

Historical Context

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) was substantially reauthorized by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush in early January 2007 (*See* Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act, P.L. 109-479). The resulting changes in the law fundamentally altered the way domestic fishery resources are managed. The new provisions focused on ending overfishing, rebuilding stocks, reducing fishing capacity, and developing limited access programs -- all in the context of a more intensive reliance on fisheries science in the decision-making process.

A primary component of the new MSA was the development of Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs) as a fisheries management tool. These limited access programs are also known as Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs) or Individual Transferrable Quotas (ITQs). Since MSA reauthorization, these programs are more commonly known as “Catch Shares”. The terms IFQ, ITQ and catch share are used interchangeably in this report.

The catch share provisions contained in MSA Section 303 (16 U.S. C. 1853a) evolved into a key focal point of the current Administration's position on fisheries management. NOAA Undersecretary Dr. Jane Lubchenco announced the formation of a National Catch Shares Task Force initiative in June 2009. The Agency released a draft National Catch Share Policy in December 2009 and the final policy is expected in early 2011. Despite a substantial NOAA stakeholder process and assurances from Administration officials that catch shares constitute one management option of many, the national catch share debate continues to be wrought with intense controversy.

The potential for expanded catch share programs combined with implementation of the new restrictive MSA measures precipitated industry fervor across the country during 2007 to early 2010. The culmination of this angst came in the form of a peaceful protest titled 'Fix Magnuson Now/United We Fish' staged by 3000 to 4000 commercial, charter and sport fishermen in Washington, D.C. on February 24, 2010. The event attracted numerous members of Congress from several coastal states and provided a setting for stakeholders to voice opposition to catch share programs and demand more flexibility and improved science in the federal resource management process.

A flurry of congressional activity followed the rally in the form of newly introduced legislation and subcommittee/committee hearings. Despite efforts by some members of Congress to address existing problems, no improvements to the MSA were realized and the Administration's efforts to expand catch share programs continued unabated. In addition, numerous national environmental groups vociferously opposed all legislative attempts to address MSA issues and many fully supported expansion of catch share programs.

In early 2010 and despite increased interest in MSA implementation by some stakeholders, there was little discussion occurring between the different user groups. The lack of tangible progress in Washington, D.C. on MSA reform did not resonate well with industry stakeholders, especially those from the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions who were experiencing large area fishing closures, substantial quota reductions, and the implementation of new catch share programs involving red snapper and the snapper-grouper complex.

The national initiative to expand catch share programs, combined with MSA implementation and inadequate stock assessment data in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic has impacted stakeholders with widely disparate management philosophies. Furthermore, the emotional intensity of the situation contributed to the lack of open, honest dialog on key issues.

It became increasingly clear to GSAFFI leadership that some dialog between the various user groups might prove a useful first step. Sponsoring a cooperative non-political, non-partisan, industry-wide regional discussion focusing on key fisheries issues fit perfectly into the Foundation's purpose. The primary objective of the open discussion would be just that – an honest exchange of ideas focusing on how various groups might work together to improve the federal fisheries management system.

Roundtable Discussion Steering Committee Planning

The GSAFFI first engaged a subset of industry leaders to serve on an ad hoc Steering Committee to develop a regional roundtable meeting (*See Steering Committee Roster; Appendix 1*). The GSAFFI convened a one-day Steering Committee planning session in Tampa, Florida on April 19, 2010. The primary objectives of the meeting, chaired by Mr. Anthony L. Iarocci, were to develop the agenda, specify objectives, design meeting structure, and identify potential panel participants/invitees for the regional roundtable event (*See Steering Committee Roundtable Planning Meeting Agenda; Appendix 2*).

Roundtable Discussion Agenda & Objectives, Participants & Invitees

The Steering Committee developed the agenda for the Fisheries Roundtable Discussion: “Finding a Way Forward” scheduled for June 12, 2010 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. The one-day event was to be chaired by Steering Committee Chairman, Mr. Anthony Iarocci (*See Fisheries Roundtable Agenda; Appendix 3*). The GSAFFI staff issued a press release announcing the event in May 2010 (*See GSAFFI Press Release; Appendix 4*).

The Steering Committee identified four key topics in its agenda: (1) improving fisheries science; (2) MSA reform; (3) increasing cooperative research funding; and (4) role of catch share programs as a management tool. The primary objectives of the meeting were also set by the Steering Committee – to facilitate an open and safe exchange of ideas and identify possible collaboration opportunities within the four key areas.

Due to the intensity and diversity of opinions on the catch share issue, it was decided by the Steering Committee to split the roundtable discussion into two parts - a Fisheries Roundtable Discussion (Panel I) to focus on agenda topics 1, 2 and 3; and a second (Panel II) to discuss issues related to catch share programs.

The meeting structure required the Steering Committee to identify key individuals to participate on Panel I, II, or both. The GSAFFI proceeded to invite individuals to participate in panel discussions as well as a substantial number of general meeting invitees (*See Panel Participants; Appendix 5 and Fisheries Roundtable Invitees; Appendix 6*).

Mr. Bob Jones, Executive Director of the Southeastern Fisheries Association and current president of the GSAFFI provided opening remarks. He welcomed attendees and stated the primary objective of the meeting was to have a productive discussion between diverse stakeholders. In the words of Mr. Jones - “We can agree to disagree without being disagreeable.” He encouraged audience participation and closed by introducing the moderator for both panel discussions – Mr. Anthony Iarocci.

Mr. Iarocci thanked the GSAFFI and Steering Committee for their work and provided some historical context to the session, explaining how fisheries management had changed over time. He observed that diverse groups such as the federal government, fishermen, and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) must collaborate to solve the difficult management

problems facing everyone. He suggested that this first meeting, built on a foundation of open and honest communication, could serve as a first step toward a broader national discussion.

He proceeded to set the ground rules for the panel discussions including no arguing or direct rebuttal. He stressed being respectful of other's opinions and to use this meeting as an opportunity to share ideas and work together as resource stewards. After a brief update on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff, Panel I was introduced.

Panel I: Summary of Fisheries Roundtable Discussion

Panel I was comprised of three primary stakeholder groups. These included NMFS Southeast Region science and management staff, commercial/charter fishermen and seafood dealers, and representatives of national ENGOs. Individuals from each group freely exchanged ideas in true roundtable fashion on the three key agenda topics: (1) how to improve fisheries science in the Southeast Region; (2) increasing cooperative funding for fisheries science; and (3) Magnuson-Stevens Act reform.

(1) How to improve fisheries science in the Southeast Region

NMFS Southeast Science Center staff initiated the discussion by reviewing the types of data incorporated into the region's stock assessment process -- the Southeast Data Analysis and Review Process (SEDAR). All these data types are critical to gaining a full understanding of the status of the stocks. These include fishery independent sampling, considered the cornerstone of the SEDAR. This information is collected according to an established research protocol and helps to describe the status of a stock in its natural state. Fishery dependent data, primarily composed of landings data, are often used as an index of abundance. However, NMFS staff noted these data often times must be corrected as they can be influenced by other factors (e.g. market pressures, fuel prices, weather conditions, etc.).

Other sources of data were also outlined by NMFS staff. These included fishery observer information which is utilized to assess discards at sea, and fish life history studies which provide insight into age distribution relative to fishing pressure, predator-prey dynamics, and how ecosystem processes influence fish life history. The final critical data component is fishery economic information. According to NMFS staff an understanding of the economics of the human component provides insight into decisions made by fishermen that impact fishing effort.

Regarding the specific question of how we might improve fisheries science in the region NMFS staff offered two recommendations: (1) increased investment in fishery independent sampling; and (2) modernize the way fishery dependent data are collected. According to NMFS staff the highest return on the dollar will come through funding for independent sampling. These data provide insight into trends and can be collected using fishing vessels as scientific platforms via cooperative research and partnerships; provided the industry participants are willing adhere to NMFS science protocols. Using electronic reporting to modernize dependent data collection will improve data quality for monitoring annual catch limits (ACLs) in all fishing sectors. NMFS

staff indicated there needed to be a concerted effort to increase these opportunities between stakeholders and state/federal agencies.

Following the NMFS scientific recommendations, industry representatives questioned staff about whether or not the Agency had the necessary funding and resources to meet the increased scientific demands of the MSA and if not, what could be done to address the problem. NMFS staff responded that: the recent changes to the MSA created more pressure on both science and management; ending overfishing added a whole new layer of requirements; tighter MSA deadlines have created premiums for resources and increased dependence on short-term monitoring of ACLs and quotas; and there is now more pressure to create stock assessments quickly and additional scientists and managers are needed to relieve that pressure. In sum, NMFS staff reaffirmed the new MSA demands are high, the Agency is struggling to meet those demands, and the near-term budget outlook is not promising.

There were also clarifying questions of NMFS from ENGO representatives about what economic data are incorporated into stock assessments. The Agency staff reported they collect economic information via surveys from commercial and recreational sectors to understand the impacts of regulations on coastal communities as well as on the broader community. The surveys are used to ask direct questions of stakeholders such as -- What are people willing to pay as opposed to utilizing other recreational opportunities? How do changes in fuel prices impact your activities? What are the impacts of imports and exports on U.S. seafood prices? NMFS staff explained that these economic data are often misunderstood because it is extremely difficult to predict human behavior from a set of survey questions. Nonetheless, Agency economists rank each management alternative based on the economic impact information generated from these survey questions. NMFS staff indicated there is room for improvement and a serious need for more and better information.

The ENGO stakeholders commented on the lack of funding and the need to generate adequate information. They expressed an interest in focusing on priority research needs and working cooperatively within the group to secure increased investment in fishery sampling programs. It was suggested the Gulf oil spill situation may provide an opportunity to leverage private and public sources to realize funding increases.

Finally, ENGO representatives concluded that even though there are differing opinions around the table the lack of funding for fisheries science is an issue everyone can agree upon. A recommendation was made by the representative of the Pew Environment Group to compose a group letter to Congress requesting increased funding for fisheries science in the Southeast Region, including funding opportunities resulting from the Gulf oil spill.

(2) Increasing cooperative funding for fisheries science

Industry panel participants initiated a lengthy discussion on the need to increase cooperative research opportunities in the Southeast Region. Many stakeholders expressed strong opinions that fishermen should be more fully integrated into the process both for fishery independent and dependent data collection efforts. Fishing industry representatives indicated that fishermen should be part of the scientific protocol development process and that using commercial fishing

vessels provides a better return on investment since the gear is designed for the target species/fishery and private vessels are far cheaper to run compared to federal research vessels.

Other industry participants expressed a perception that NMFS-generated science does not keep pace and is therefore out of touch with what fishermen see on the water. There was support expressed for including anecdotal information into the mix to augment Agency-generated science. Red snapper, one of the most prolific species in the Gulf of Mexico snapper-grouper complex, and sandbar shark were cited as examples of where the federal scientists have poor data and inaccurate assessments.

Other comments followed suggesting the National Standard Guidelines (NSGs), the Agency's interpretation of Congressional intent with respect to MSA implementation, was a major part of the problem. Industry stakeholders perceive the NSGs recommended use of the best available science irrespective of data quality, that decisions are often driven toward the most conservative approach, and that the Agency seems to always err on the side of conservation. It was stated that one possible way to resolve some of these issues would be to increase the positive cooperative interactions between industry and Agency scientists which could lead to improved data collection efforts.

The discussion moved to the South Atlantic fishery independent cooperative long line survey currently being planned for the red snapper assessment in SEDAR 24. NMFS staff indicated this was an excellent example of collaboration in the Southeast Region. It was also the direct result of industry disagreement with the existing stock assessment, specifically age distribution. Many in industry believe there is a significantly different age distribution at depth compared to the shallow water fish that are caught in the survey. NMFS agreed this was a testable hypothesis and is establishing a cross-shelf survey protocol using commercial vessels with a history of long line fishing. Though the results will not be ready for SEDAR 24 there is much anticipation the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council will have the results in sufficient time to consider the data.

Numerous Panel I participants echoed the need for more assessment-grade cooperative research opportunities in the Southeast Region. One panel participant suggested one possible way to make the cooperative research process more efficient would be to create a voluntary "pool" of pre-approved fishermen and vessels that could readily be tapped for research initiatives.

Another industry participant suggested the Agency and industry must collaborate on clear fishery dependent sampling protocols for core stocks. Since funding is tight it may not be useful to spend money on stocks that are already well-managed using less data. Rather, this funding could be diverted to increase sampling on data-poor stocks that are not managed well. In some instances fish catch is increasing but sampling is being reduced, a situation that must be addressed in the near future.

NMFS echoed these concerns, indicating in many cases sampling has indeed decreased. Funding has been tight and the Agency relies more heavily on individual states for sampling even though the states are experiencing their own fiscal woes. The overall cost to run federal research vessels has also increased. Demands for information intensified as a result of the MSA reauthorization

but capabilities have declined. Agency budgets are subject to earmark projects and funding increases for improving stock assessments do not always match the most critical need since the needs are many and varied. NMFS staff reaffirmed that a clearly articulated strategic plan designed to address priority problems is a critical need.

Further Panel I discussions on the idea of a strategic plan included a differentiation between a simple request for more regional science funding and a clear message that the Agency needs funding because it is struggling to meet the new mandates of the MSA. One industry panel member observed that if the Agency could justify moving any funding from the National Cooperative Research budget line item it will be difficult to justify additional funds in 2011 or 2012. The group will need a unified message but also support from the Agency internally and in their discussions in Washington, D.C.

The lack of Agency funding was also discussed in the context of law enforcement. There was concern expressed that law enforcement is stretched so thinly (in Florida) that they cannot patrol the back door sales of seafood that may not be recorded on the State's trip ticket reporting system. This was provided as another example of where adequate funding would be very beneficial to resource management.

Moderator Iarocci then went to the audience for comments. A summary of those statements is listed below.

- The industry wants to be part of the solution. We will write the letters lobbying for additional funding. We are very concerned about the data being used to determine the overfishing status. Industry needs to be part of the sampling design.
- We support the use of trained volunteer anglers to participate in sampling programs. We need to address the attitude of how scientists view these types of data. Research vessels are expensive so you must generate as much information from these cruises as you possibly can.
- We do not support moving funds from Cooperative Research to Catch Share Programs.
- The Gulf of Mexico Shareholder's Alliance is working cooperatively with NMFS to design fishery independent sampling protocols.
- The industry is prepared to help gather data wherever necessary. Please prioritize the red snapper long line survey for use in the upcoming SEDAR.
- The Monkfish Defense Fund staff provided a brief explanation of the successful cooperative research program (CRP) ongoing for the past 9 years with NMFS. They indicated this is one instance in which nearly all participants have a high degree of satisfaction and that it could serve as a template for other CRPs.

Turning back to the Panel I participants, Mr. Iarocci summarized the morning session and revisited the idea of generating a group letter to Congress requesting funding for fishery science (as suggested earlier by Ms. Holly Binns of the Pew Environment Group) as the primary output

from the Panel I discussion. Mr. Iarocci indicated that while not all stakeholders will agree on MSA reform everyone could agree on funding for improved science in the Southeast Region.

Mr. Iarocci noted that the primary objective in this process was working together as a group and an excellent byproduct of that collaboration could be such a group letter. Support for this idea was widespread among all participants with the exception of NMFS staff. NMFS staff stated that while they could participate in substantive discussions about data needs and process, they are Federal employees and therefore unable to lobby Congress and must adhere strictly to the requirements of Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). It was agreed by consensus that any letter-related activity would be generated absent Agency staff participation.

The ENGO Panel I members indicated they were fully supportive of working together on a letter but could not sign it without approval by their national organizations. It was further agreed by consensus that no signatures would be required until the letter was complete and all participants had the necessary clearance.

A discussion ensued regarding how the Panel might identify priority research needs for the region. Possible sources included the NOAA annual publication “Strategic Plan for Fisheries Research”, and also MSA Section 404 (*See* 16 U.S.C. 1881c) which requires that the Agency develop, in cooperation with the Regional Councils and States, a fisheries research plan detailing needs for the upcoming 5-year period. There was also a recommendation that a public workshop involving all stakeholders and the Agency might contribute to a comprehensive list of priorities.

The moderator nominated an ad hoc Working Group (WG) to compose the funding letter request for the Panel. The WG was comprised of the following Panel I participants –

Holly Binns - PEW Charitable Trust, Pew Environment Group
Bob Gill - Florida commercial fishing industry representative
Rick Marks - Hoffman, Silver, Gilman & Blasco
Doug Rader - Environmental Defense Fund

It was further agreed that Ms. Binns and Mr. Marks would jointly finalize a draft letter to be approved by the entire WG. The draft would then be forwarded to Panel I participants (with the exception of NMFS staff) for final approval before submission to Congress. A draft letter was partially completed but not yet finalized by the WG at the time of this report (*See Ad Hoc Working Group Draft Letter to Congress; Appendix 7*).

(3) Magnuson-Stevens Act reform

At the outset of this discussion it was clear there was a wide divergence of views on the MSA and the degree to which reform, if any, is needed. The NMFS staff indicated the most pressing conservation problems in the region are more a result of the ending overfishing requirements rather than a lack of management flexibility but that it is imperative we end overfishing. Generally, the industry stakeholders believed the MSA is in need of serious reform while the ENGO community is opposed to reopening the debate.

NMFS staff highlighted the controversial issues facing the Southeast Region. In the South Atlantic, the red snapper problem was partially attributed to the lack of an assessment and a sound understanding of the extent of the fishing mortality problem. In the Gulf red snapper situation there were conflicting theories on who was responsible - the shrimp fishery or the directed red snapper fishery. In the Gulf grouper fishery problems are attributed to red tide. NMFS concluded that some of these problems were due to the science while some were the result of the councils taking too long to phase out overfishing. The Gulf council implemented their red snapper plan prior to the MSA reauthorization and NMFS staff indicated that it has worked.

NMFS staff also indicated that the 10-year rebuilding flexibility is not really a pressing issue for the region since most of the fisheries being managed already have equivalent or longer rebuilding timelines. The most critical problem is the MSA requirement to end overfishing immediately. In areas like the Caribbean where data collection is non-existent, tracking ACLs will be a daunting problem. Overall, NMFS believes that ending overfishing is good for the fisheries in the long term.

Industry stakeholders offered their perceptions of the MSA implementation. It was made very clear the MSA is not working for the majority of industry stakeholders and is harming the Nation's access to these marine resources. Mr. Jimmy Hull of the Southeastern Fisheries Association's East Coast Fishing Section offered the rhetorical question -- "The Act is eliminating the fishing industry. What are fisheries without fishermen?"

There is a strong belief among the industry that NMFS does not have the necessary tools to implement the Act properly and overly restrictive deadlines prevent time for sound science to catch up to the decision-making process. The Monkfish Defense Fund's cooperative trawl survey was cited as an example – under the current MSA regulations there would not be sufficient time to conduct the trawl survey and save the fishery from total closure as was done back in 2000. To many industry participants on Panel I the MSA contains unrealistic goals and timelines.

There are reportedly widely held beliefs throughout the fishing industry that the ENGOS helped orchestrate many of the problematic changes to the MSA (catch shares were mentioned by one Panel member in this regard) and that they are comfortable with the current framework. Much of this perception is based on the fact that the majority of national ENGOS staunchly opposed all MSA reform legislation introduced around the February 24, 2010 protest rally in Washington, D.C. and they continue to oppose reopening the debate. At least one industry participant indicated they have tried to work with the ENGO community with little to show for their efforts. Many industry participants also believe there is an impasse with respect to the ENGOS interest in making any improvements in the MSA.

The industry stakeholders recognized they were less effective (due primarily to disorganization and lack of funding) during the reauthorization compared to the ENGO community but continued to articulate a lengthy list of MSA reform topics where open and honest discussions with the ENGO community would still prove useful. These included but were not limited to the following items:

- Mixed stock flexibility
- Management flexibility to help communities survive restrictive quota periods
- Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) oversight
- Assessment of current peer review provisions
- Guidance regarding how the Science & Statistical Committees/Councils deal with uncertainty and the practical effects on Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) control rules
- Phase-in period for ending overfishing
- Forcing mechanism to ensure the Agency generates the best scientific information possible rather than simply defaulting to the precautionary approach in the face of a data-poor situation
- When restricting fisheries for periods of time the Agency should work equally hard to assist those coastal communities and fishermen to survive those difficult times (i.e. putting “Service” back in the National Marine Fisheries Service)
- Improved data collection, honest science, and system transparency

The ENGO representatives responded on several points. First, they were very clear that the entire ENGO community is unanimously opposed to altering the MSA and all of the “flexibility” legislation. The conservation groups believe there are opportunities to work within the existing framework and adhere to the biological and legal mandates while minimizing negative impacts to the industry. The ENGO’s preferred approach would be to resolve industry concerns in that manner rather than reopen the MSA debate.

The ENGO representatives cited examples as proof the existing authority provides for adequate management flexibility. The first example was the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council’s regulatory framework on the greater amberjack season closure allowing industry to preserve quota for later in the season. The second example was from the Northeast Region where ENGOs supported NMFS efforts to provide for as much yield as possible for so called “choke” species in multi-stock fisheries that have large amounts of uncertainty where allowable yield was being unduly constrained by poor data. A third example involved Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) and cooperative efforts with fishermen in the royal red shrimp and golden crab fisheries.

Secondly, the ENGOs stated that the NSGs were developed through a public process so all stakeholders had an equal opportunity to affect change. Since the 1996 MSA reauthorization did not contain enforceable deadlines the ENGO approach in 2006 was to make certain that hard deadlines were part of the reauthorization and implementation to compel councils to act based on recommendations from the SSCs and finally bring an end to overfishing.

However, the ENGOs stated they support robust commercial and charter fishing industries and were willing to discuss the MSA implementation, hear more about industry concerns, and if the MSA debate were to be reopened they would be part of the process to discuss how to proceed. The Pew Environment Group representative recommended H.R. 4914 (NJ Congressman Frank Pallone's (D-6th) "The Coastal Jobs Creation Act of 2010") as one approach that might help communities make the transition to sustainable fisheries. (*Editor's note* – as of this writing H.R. 4914 has yet to be voted on by the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate.)

There was additional discussion regarding what the ENGOs consider a critical failed paradigm in fisheries management – maximum sustainable yield (MSY). Their belief is that other goals are more applicable and less likely to get fisheries into an overfished condition. The representative from the Environmental Defense Fund offered to work together to create a shared vision for what we want our fisheries to do in this country.

In the end, regarding the idea of MSA reform, the ENGO message was very clear – they were willing to help identify solutions so long as those solutions did not require fundamental changes to the MSA.

Panel II: Summary of Catch Shares Roundtable Discussion

Moderator Iarocci encouraged the audience to participate in the upcoming discussion and then provided an opportunity for the Panel II members to introduce themselves. The following individuals participated in the Catch Shares Roundtable Discussion.

Donnie Waters – commercial red snapper fishermen from Pensacola, FL
Paul Reiss – commercial wreckfish fishermen, Chairman of the wreckfish advisory panel
Buddy Guindon – commercial red snapper fishermen and fish house owner
Bobby Spaeth – Madeira Beach Seafood Company
Phil Steele – Assistant Regional Administrator for NMFS SERO
Jim Busse – Seafood Atlantic Company
David Krebs – Ariel Seafood Company, Gulf Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance - Pres.
Doug Rader – Environmental Defense Fund

Mr. Spaeth offered his perceptions of the ITQ in the Gulf. He has been involved in the development of the red snapper and grouper catch share programs since their inception and served on the IFQ committee. He is not opposed to IFQs but does not believe they work for all fisheries. He is frustrated that while everyone helped rebuild these stocks only a relative few individuals have access. He believes that non-fishing interests are promoting catch shares and this may not be in the best interests of the industry. He is also concerned that since reef fish species live in close proximity there are unintended bycatch consequences and high grading problems that are not being addressed.

He provided two examples to support his points. First, the bycatch in the red snapper fishery is too high resulting in the discarding of tons of marketable fish. Mr. Spaeth feels there are not enough shares to match the size of the stock and it is causing problems. There are other complications too, some similar, occurring in the Gulf gag grouper fishery. The area closures

designed to protect gag limit the ability of fishermen to harvest their shares of other species. Also, the species are mixed so fishermen do not keep a .80 cent small golden tilefish if they can toss that back to keep a \$2.50 fish. The high grading problem should be mitigated by keeping what is caught. There is simply no balance in the program.

His key recommendation was that we not move forward with IFQs until we fix the problems we already have. He recommends that all stakeholders come together to solve the existing bycatch problems.

Mr. Waters stated the ITQ restored the red snapper fishery. He reminded the Panel participants that they offered to bring all reef fish into the ITQ system in the very beginning. The ITQ has stopped derby fishing and constant market presence increased the value from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per pound. The ITQ allows U.S. product to compete with imports.

Mr. Phil Steele reminded the Panel that the red snapper ITQ has been in existence since 2007 and the grouper/tilefish program just started in 2010. He indicated that prior to 2007 there was a huge discard problem in the fishery on the order of tens of thousands if not millions of juvenile red snapper were being discarded each year. Under the present IFQ system there is still bycatch and it is a concern but the ratio of fish caught to fish discarded was reduced substantially since the start of the program.

He agreed there are problems with the current system but expressed a belief that these will be worked out. He indicated the Council is required to review the IFQ plan in 2012 and can make changes to address some of these issues. Mr. Steele also indicated that increased trading of shares between fishermen might help reduce bycatch and high grading. There is hope that improvements in hook technology might also reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality. Finally, he thought it may be possible to identify bycatch “hot spots” and share that information with fishermen to keep them away from those areas.

Mr. Jim Busse agreed that fixing the problems with the existing ITQ programs made sense before moving to create new programs. He stated that fishing communities and fishermen are important to him and he is very concerned about what he is hearing from industry colleagues in the Gulf and New England regions. He believes everyone has a right to be on the ocean.

Mr. Busse is concerned enough about this issue that he reported working with a larger group to actively oppose catch share programs. He is worried that NMFS will attempt to create an ITQ in the South Atlantic kingfish fishery so the group is developing its own plan to reduce participation and control the fishery rather than consider a catch share alternative.

Mr. David Krebs agreed that catch share programs do not work for everyone. He believes it should be a system designed by fishermen, not dealers, and that fishermen should have a referendum vote to adopt any such plan. He originally opposed catch shares in the 1990s but the derby fishing and poor market conditions changed his mind. He was uncomfortable with the perception that NMFS was forcing catch share programs on the industry indicating that it was merely another tool in the box that should at least be considered.

Moderator Iarocci commented that there are a number of different tools in addition to catch shares that can be useful. He cited the example of permit banking in Massachusetts where small boat fishermen can organize a distribution of fishing shares so fishermen can continue to fish but the shares always remain within the fishery.

Dr. Doug Rader clarified that EDF does advocate for catch share programs that can work in many cases. He stated that the status quo in the Gulf and South Atlantic is failing – multiple closures along with negative environmental and social impacts – and that catch shares are part of the adaptable management tools that can be used to solve exactly these kinds of problems.

He also indicated that catch share programs have a very good track record, particularly in the case of annual catch limits and accountability measure requirements. These programs lead to more and better information about the fishery. By increasing observer coverage in these programs, possibly even with video monitoring, the high grading problem can be addressed.

According to the EDF representative most of the problems with catch share programs are centered on the initial allocation. The rest of the issues are design problems such as cross-sector issues, massive recreational mortality, and uncertainty on commercial discard mortality and can be addressed. The catch share programs in the Gulf are performing well and stakeholders must come together to address the multiple species issues.

Mr. Buddy Guindon referred to the Council's upcoming 2012 review of the red snapper ITQ and indicated the Gulf Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance is working to identify potential improvements to the program. He supported a zero discard fishery and increasing the red snapper quota.

Moderator Iarocci asked the Panel members to clarify exactly what the Gulf Shareholder's Alliance (GSA) was. Mr. Krebs indicated the concept was the result of experiences from a trip to New Zealand he took with Mr. Donnie Waters. There they observed the industry had taken control of their fishery and were providing science and marketing the fish. The most intriguing part was that industry could design a plan that worked specifically for them. The GSA is funded through grants from EDF, World Wildlife Fund, Ocean Conservancy and individual memberships. Ms. T.J. Tate is the executive director and handles outreach initiatives.

Mr. Paul Reiss explained the history of the Wreckfish ITQ program. He stated the catch share model is a perfect fit for that fishery due to the small number of participants, lack of bycatch, high degree of fishing difficulty, and overall ease of management. He believes IFQs are a better way to go compared to the status quo. The fishery originally had 70 vessels with documented landings which became 50 after the initial allocation. The fishery was further consolidated to 20-25 boats and is presently prosecuted by 3 vessels.

Mr. Spaeth moved the discussion forward on some of the lesser known requirements that accompany an ITQ program. First, there are vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements along with monthly costs and repairs. Fishermen are not even permitted to give anyone a fish to eat unless it first gets logged in the system. Third, participants must pay the government fee equivalent of \$.10 cents per pound on every fish. A vessel captain must also provide the Agency

with a 3-hour pre-landing notification. Fifth, there is a lot of required paperwork, enough to require some companies to use one staff member just to process ITQ-related documents. Also, new entrants are severely limited since the cost to purchase the initial quota to get into the fishery is extremely high – in the case of red snapper approximately \$25 per pound. Finally, the ITQ referendum allows only the highest producing fishermen to vote so it is really not a program built by all participants.

Several members of the GSA (D. Waters, B. Guindon, and D. Krebs) responded to Mr. Spaeth's points. First, it was stated the paperwork is not much more than an inconvenience since all of it is computerized. Second, the call in time does not have to be spent at the dock and can be submitted to NMFS 3 hours prior to landing. Finally, it was stated the Council did not accept all the provisions submitted by the Advisory Panel when designing the program so many of the flaws are not the industry's fault. This point was made to serve as a reminder that any ITQ should be designed by the fishing industry, voted on by the industry, and then passed by the council with minimal change.

Dr. Doug Rader also responded to the comments made by Mr. Spaeth. He reiterated that these are all design issues and should be left to the fishermen to change as they see fit. The bottom line is that we must manage total mortality including discards for all species regardless of catch shares. VMS requirements are coming in the near term for commercial and for-hire sectors regardless of whether a catch share program is in place. He is of the opinion there should not be significant incremental cost changes due to increased monitoring requirements.

Moderator Iarocci then opened a Q & A session for the audience. A summary of those comments/questions is listed below.

Q1: Is there flexibility within the 5-year timeframe to make changes to the ITQ program? (Frank Helies)

A1: Yes. The council chose the current 5-year review period but in reality they can review the program in any interval of time with the exception that MSA sets a maximum period for review at 7 years. (Phil Steele)

Q2: Are there specific research needs related to catch shares that cooperative research could address? (Frank Helies)

A2: Yes, a number of them. These include but are not limited to research on discards at sea, temporal and spatial characteristics of juvenile fish concentrations, marketing, enforcement improvements, better VMS technology, and improved accurate CPUE data. (Phil Steele)

Q3: Will the funding being set aside for catch shares be used for research or just design and implementation? (Frank Helies)

A3: Money was not shifted from cooperative research to catch share implementation. Some of the funding dedicated to New England for catch shares includes research money and it will all be

allocated to help reduce mortality uncertainty surrounding choke stocks such as yellowtail flounder. (Doug Rader)

Q4: In past years our fish house would help fishermen buy their own boat. I have tentatively supported ITQs but based on my observations I just don't see how a little guy can get into the fishery anymore. We cannot sell our shares to help them. (Karen Bell)

A4-1: This is exactly what we are talking about. Fishermen today cannot afford a \$300,000 investment to enter the grouper fishery and expect a reasonable return on the investment. IFQs make it very difficult for young people to enter the fishery. (Bobby Spaeth)

A4-2: There are provisions in the MSA allowing Councils to set aside up to 25% of cost recovery funds to help new entrants. The Gulf Council chose not to use this approach in the first 5 years of the program. Yes, it is true that it is expensive to get into any business but at least now the fishery is more stable, lasting for an entire year as compared to the 40 days it used to last. (Phil Steele)

A4-3: Quota is a very difficult issue for everyone. We hope the fishery rebuilds enough so that quota can be increased to make room for new fishermen. Quota must not be bought and put on the shelf, we need to bring these fish to the public. (Donnie Waters)

A4-4: One of the ideas we are working on is the establishment of a central lien registry where fishermen can go to borrow against the value of their shares. We can make these shares bankable property and help new fishermen get started in the future. We have supported additional quota set asides for new entrants via a lottery or some other way of allocating. (David Krebs)

A5-5: I use myself as a financing tool for the fishermen that are at my fish house. (Buddy Guindon)

Q5 (statement only, no question): I participated in all aspects of the red snapper fishery. Prior to 1993 there were 30 vessels that landed more than 30,000 pounds. After the 5,000 pound qualifier was implemented we added 130 vessels to the fishery and there were over 60 that had landed at least 40,000 pounds. The fishery became a derby and led to wasteful fishing. The IFQ has given me more freedom to pick and choose when I fish. I would rather pay 3% on a \$4.50 fish than get \$2.00 per pound. High grading will have to be addressed, it is a big problem and hopefully we can do more trading of shares to get at this problem. Right now we see 70% compliance in the grouper fishery. (Wayne Werner)

Q6: The red snapper fishery in the Gulf is much different compared to the South Atlantic. It is mostly a recreational and for-hire fishery in the SA and regulatory discarding is a big problem due to the 20-inch size limit. The king mackerel stock was rebuilt with regular management measures. King mackerel fishermen in the SA are strongly against any privatization of the fishery and they worry about the weighted vote. They are looking to control the fishery on their own with a 2 for 1 permit reduction. The hope is to use other common sense solutions before we get into an ITQ situation. One question to the GSA representatives – How do you prevent your

shares or investment from becoming a negotiable commodity and where should royalties be invested? (Rusty Hudson)

A6: This issue is on the agenda for the 5-year review. The GSA believes it should stay with the fishermen so they can fish. The GSA position is that everything should stay status quo for an additional 5 years to allow for the fishery to stabilize. This will prevent outside investors from putting quota on the shelf by purchasing quota to be sold at a later date. (David Krebs)

Q7: One clarification - The MSA does not mandate a referendum by fishermen on new ITQ programs in the South Atlantic. One question – NOAA has indicated in recent presentations to the regional councils that 32 catch share programs will be under construction by 2012. Which fisheries in the Gulf and South Atlantic regions are under consideration? (Rick Marks)

A7: To your clarification – you are correct the only councils required to conduct referendum votes are in New England and the Gulf. However, I think that if a council were looking at designing a catch share system they would want to put the program to a vote. To your question about new catch share programs - nothing is set in stone by 2012 but it is possible in the Gulf to see the rest of the reef fish and king mackerel considered for catch shares. In the SA, wreckfish, golden crab, black sea bass, vermilion and golden tile could be candidates. The SA Council is having only preliminary discussions about the king mackerel fishery. (Phil Steele)

Q8: There has not been any guidance issued from the Agency regarding MSA Section 303 and the role of coastal communities and regional fishing associations in relation to limited access privilege programs. When do you think we will see this advice from the Agency as to how the councils can act to protect communities and industry infrastructure? (Rick Marks)

A8: I don't know for sure. There is quite a bit of interest and we should see something at some point. (Phil Steele)

Q9: Catch share programs should pay for themselves. (Bobby Cardin)

A9: In the Gulf they do not. The 3% cost recovery does not cover even a quarter of the law enforcement costs which are being covered by federal dollars. (Phil Steele)

Q10: Are taxes being collected for bookkeeping, monitoring and enforcing? (Bobby Cardin)

A10: There have been some discussions about this. During the MSA debate Senator Stevens (R-AK) wanted to increase the cost recovery fee to 15% or 17%. As I indicated, the cost recovery fee is not covering the two programs in the Gulf. (Phil Steele)

Q11: What are the Panel's thoughts on Total Allowable Catch (TAC) rollovers? (Bobby Cardin)

A11-1: We would prefer a TAC increase but they (NMFS/Council) will not allow a rollover. If it is not harvested it will not be added to next year's TAC. (David Krebs)

A11-2: This choice was made by the AP and Council. There is a 10% overage allowed on the final trip now. If everyone saved 10% and added it to next year's catch it would pose management problems and result in negative impacts on the fish populations. The grouper plan in the Gulf is modeled after the red snapper program. (Phil Steele)

Q12: What does the GSA want to do with the shares, keep them in the industry or use them as an investment? (Bobby Cardin)

A12-1: The current requirement is you must have a permit, boat, and a VMS and you can purchase shares. After the 5-year period they discussed opening it up to the public but the industry doesn't want to see that happen. We met with an economist and he indicated we were crazy to keep it within industry but we want to keep it for the fishermen, not the investors. (David Krebs)

A12-2: We are going to work very hard to keep this fish available to the public and the shares within the industry. (Donnie Waters)

Q13: What was the defining moment when the industry decided they needed an IFQ? (Ben Hartig)

A13: In 2006 the 10-day derby fishery was wiping everyone out. We realized we had accountability for who participated in the fishery, the landings records were there. We used a 10-year time frame to identify the true participants. (David Krebs)

Q14 (statement only, no question): We stopped the first ITQ program because the government was not ready for fishermen to be part of the process. There are a lot of problems with the grouper IFQ but they can be worked out with patience. I support the fishermen and we need to be involved and work together because the government is coming to reduce the fleet. Remember that IFQ means fleet reduction. We needed EDF to make this happen. If you want to be a fisherman you also have to be a businessman. (Russell Underwood)

Q15 (statement only, no question): I am a red snapper fisherman from Alabama. During 2004 to 2006 the value of 25,000 pounds of fish was worth \$168,000. During 2007 to 2009 that same amount of fish was worth \$370,000. (David Walker)

Moderator Iarocci closed the Panel II Q& A session and offered an opportunity for each Panel member to make closing remarks. Those comments are summarized below.

- Mr. Donnie Waters commented that we don't want to impose ITQs on anyone. The fishermen should make the decision and everyone should have the option to say no.
- Mr. Buddy Guinidon recommended the east coast fishermen learn about catch shares and if they opt for something else he hoped it worked.

- Mr. Bobby Spaeth recommended we fix the problems with the existing Gulf IFQs before moving on.
- Mr. Phil Steele commented that we have some challenges in the areas of bycatch and new entrants and they will be part of the 5-year plan review. He indicated the Agency will do its best to fix the current problems in the Gulf programs.
- Mr. Jim Busse indicated that all decisions made relating to catch shares were made by the kingfish industry, not him personally. He was concerned there is not enough SA industry representation on the ad hoc kingfish panel.
- Mr. David Krebs indicated the GSA members are available to answer any questions and urged stakeholders to keep the dialog open.
- Mr. Anthony Iarocci (moderator) thanked everyone for coming and working together. He felt this was the start of something quite different.
- Ms. Judy Jamison, GSAFFI Executive Director closed the meeting by thanking everyone for the professional manner in which the meeting was conducted.

Summary – Which Way is Forward?

The primary objective of the Fisheries Roundtable Discussion was to provide a constructive forum for a broad cross-section of marine stakeholders to openly discuss their views on various aspects of federal fisheries management and how to improve the current system. In this regard the meeting can be judged a success. Rarely today do we see representatives from such a wide array of interests engage in productive, frank discussion about such complex natural resource issues.

The Panel I participants found substantial commonality toward improving fisheries science and increasing cooperative research opportunities and funding. There was enough synergy generated around this issue to support a group effort to draft a letter for Congress urging increased funding for priority science needs in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions. However, there was no such agreement for making changes to the MSA. In fact, the interests of the ENGO and industry representatives on this issue were nearly diametric. Despite this polarity, there was still interest expressed by some Panel I participants to continue the dialog on MSA concerns.

The Panel II catch share discussion was never geared to achieve agreement among participants. The GSAFFI simply intended to provide a constructive forum in which opinions could be shared and questions asked. It was very clear, even at the regional level, that the catch share debate continues to be wrought with controversy. Here again, despite extreme differences the dialog was opened for future opportunity.

Regarding the question of “Which Way is Forward” we would be well-served to reexamine the intent of Mr. Iarocci, the moderator and chair of the Steering Committee (SC), when he

convened the meeting. He made it very clear that a collaboration of diverse groups would be necessary to solve the difficult management problems facing all stakeholders. He correctly conveyed the thoughts of the SC that a first meeting, built on a foundation of open and honest communication, could lead to something larger. Based on the interest expressed by participants on both panels to continue the dialog started on June 12, 2010 in Lake Buena Vista , Florida it may be appropriate to now consider applying this approach in the context of a broader national discussion.

Appendices

- 1: Steering Committee Members
- 2: Steering Committee Roundtable Discussion Planning Meeting Agenda
- 3: Roundtable Discussion Agenda
- 4: GSAFFI Press Release Announcing Roundtable Discussion Meeting
- 5: Panel Discussion Participants (Panels I & II)
- 6: Roundtable Discussion Invitees
- 7: Ad Hoc Working Group *Draft* Letter to Congress (Incomplete)

APPENDIX 1

Steering Committee

Iarocci, Tony	Florida Keys Commercial Fisherman's Association – Chairman Global Marine Consultants, Inc. 236 Guava Ave. Marathon FL, 33050-5713 Fax 305-743-2697 nicafish@bellsouth.net
Hartig, Ben	South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council 9277 Sharon Street Hobe Sound, FL 33455 bhartig@bellsouth.net
Jones, Bob	Southeastern Fisheries Association Executive Director bobfish@aol.com
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Marks, Rick	Fisheries Consultant DC Principal Arlington Courthouse Plaza II 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 1010 Arlington, VA 22201 rem@hsgblaw-dc.com
Sansom, Jerry	Organized Fishermen of Florida P.O. Box 700 Cocoa, Fl 32932 fishawk@aol.com
Spaeth, Bob	Southern Offshore Fishermen's Association 13417 Gulf Lane Madeira Beach, Fl 33708 rspaeth8@aol.com

APPENDIX 2

ROUNDTABLE PLANNING MEETING Crowne Plaza Tampa Westshore 5303 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, Florida, 33609 April 19, 2010

AGENDA

Monday, April 19, 2010

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions – **Judy Jamison**, Executive Director (GSAFF)
- 9:15 a.m. Opening Comments – **Tony Iarocci**, Moderator
- 9:30 a.m. Overview of the “Fix Magnuson Now/United We Fish” rally in Washington, DC - **Bob Jones**, President, Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc.
- 10:00 p.m. Group Discussion – Possible Topics (**Attachment**)
- Current issues facing the commercial fishing Industry
 - o Impacts of current and future management
 - Red snapper moratorium / SA bottom fishing closure (**Handout**)
 - Bottom longline and sea turtle interactions (**Handout**)
 - Shrimp trawl and small coastal shark interactions (sawfish/blacknose) (**Handout**)
 - Use of catch share programs for managing fisheries (**Handout**)
 - Industry’s opinion of current IFQ programs in GOM/SA
 - o Overfished stocks / sustainable fisheries (**Handout**)
 - o Sector conflicts / improve Industry unity
 - o Stock assessment data / SEDAR process (**Handout**)
 - Strategies for assisting Industry moving forward
 - o Industry interaction with NOAA, Councils and Congress
 - o Industry engagement with general public and restaurant trade
 - Possible role of the Foundation in implementing these strategies (**Handout**)
 - o Cooperative research
- 12:00 noon **LUNCH**
- 1:30 p.m. Group Discussion (con’t) – Possible Topics
- Goal of the Regional Roundtable
 - Topics to be placed on Agenda / Issues to Discuss (above)
 - Individuals that should be invited to participate
 - How to move forward from a regional to national discussion
 - Other items
- 5:00 p.m. **ADJOURN**

APPENDIX 3

**Fisheries Roundtable Discussion
Finding a Way Forward**

Saturday, June 12, 2010

AGENDA

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions – **Bob Jones**, President (GSAFFI)
- 9:15 a.m. Opening Comments – **Tony Iarocci**, Moderator
- 9:30 a.m. Roundtable Discussion
- Topics: 1) How to improve fisheries science in the Southeast region
2) Magnuson-Stevens Act reform
3) Increasing cooperative funding for fisheries science
4) Role of catch shares as a management tool
- 12:00 noon **LUNCH** on your own
- 1:30 p.m. Roundtable Discussion (continued)
- Moving forward from a regional to national discussion
 - Follow-up to the roundtable meeting
 - Other items
- 3:00 p.m. Catch Shares Panel
- ** Public comment will be taken after each topic (as time allows)**
- 5:30 p.m. **ADJOURN**

APPENDIX 4

FISHERIES LEADERS MEET TO DISCUSS FISHERIES SCIENCE

The Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation (GASAFF) announces a meeting between commercial, recreational and environmental groups to address the urgent need for updated science to manage living marine resources. The gathering of marine affiliated stakeholders will be held on Saturday, June 12, 2010 at the Hilton Hotel at Disney World in Orlando, FL. The meeting is scheduled from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

“The goal of this meeting is for the fishing industry to take the lead in working together with all user groups, to find solutions to common problems and discuss options for funding marine research in the Southeastern United States,” said Tony Iarocci, former member of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council who will chair the event. The Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act instituted strict guidelines for managing federal fisheries through a scientific approach. Unfortunately, regional Councils are forced to make critical decisions based on inadequate data, because fisheries scientists, both federal and state, have faced budget cuts in key areas of data collection. At the same time, the portion of the NOAA budget allotted to Cooperative Research has been cut.

Areas closed to bottom fishing and other stringent regulations are negatively impacting the recreational and commercial fishing sectors and their ability to make a living. The small coastal communities that professional fishermen call home are feeling the brunt of new management measures that are keeping boats tied to the dock. Commercial and recreational fishing interests have joined forces to demand improvements in the quantity and quality of the scientific research that drives stock assessments in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Federal and state officials, as well as members of the environmental community, have been invited to participate in the Roundtable to elicit discussion aimed at gaining consensus among competing user groups. Topics to be discussed include 1) how to improve fisheries science in the Southeast, 2) the role of catch shares as a management tool for fisheries in the Southeast, 3) Magnuson-Stevens Act reform, and 4) increasing cooperative funding for fisheries science, through direct federal funding, Congressional earmarks or non-profit support. Bob Jones, President of the Foundation, notes “This will be a starting point in keeping southeastern fisheries viable, while continuing to promote good stewardship of the resource.”

There will be a catch shares panel discussion beginning at 3:00 PM, following the main program.

The Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. is a private, regional nonprofit research organization with a general membership and Board of Trustees representing a wide spectrum of the commercial fishing industry throughout the southeast U.S. Through the Foundation, the commercial seafood and fishing industry can collectively identify industry needs, and address those needs through appropriate research and other activities, with cooperation from business, academia and both state and federal government. Representing the nine-state region from Virginia to Texas, the Foundation has sponsored more than 600 fisheries related research projects. For more information please contact Foundation Program Director Frank Helies at 813-286-8390. (<http://www.gulfsouthfoundation.org/>)

APPENDIX 5

Fisheries Roundtable Panel

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Catch Shares Panel

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APPENDIX 6

Panel Invitees

Iarocci, Tony	Florida Keys Commercial Fisherman's Association
Baker, Pam	Environmental Defense Fund
Binns, Holly	Pew Trusts
Burns, Scott	Walton Trust
Causey, Dr. Billy	NOS/ONMS
Crabtree, Dr. Roy	NMFS/ NOAA Fisheries
Crockett, Lee	Pew Trusts
Donofrio, Jim	Recreational Fishing Alliance
Eichbaum, Bill	World Wildlife Fund
Fetherston, Elizabeth	Ocean Conservancy
Gill, Bob	Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council
Hartig, Ben	South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
Hull, Jimmy	East Coast Fisheries Section
Kelly, Bill	Florida Keys Commercial Fisherman's Association
Marks, Rick	Fisheries Consultant DC
Merritt, Rita	South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
Mc Coy, Sheri	Southeastern Fisheries Association
Pinero, Eugenio	Caribbean Fisheries Management Council
Ponwith, Dr. Bonnie	NMFS/Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Pruitt, Dean	Gulf Fishermen's Association
Rader, Dr. Doug	Environmental Defense Fund
Robbins, Chris	Ocean Conservancy
Sansom, Jerry	Organized Fishermen of Florida
Spaeth, Bob	Southern Offshore Fishermen's Association
Zales, Bob	National Association of Charterboat Operators

Catch Shares Panel

Iarocci, Tony	Florida Keys Commercial Fisherman's Association
Abrams, Greg	Greg Abrams Seafood, Inc.
Busse, Jim	Seafood Atlantic
Crabtree, Dr. Roy	NMFS/ NOAA Fisheries
Guindon, Buddy	Katies Seafood
Houghton, Bill	Madeira Beach Seafood Co.
Krebs, David	Ariel Seafood
Rader, Dr. Doug	Environmental Defense Fund
Reiss, Paul	Wreckfish Subpanel
Spaeth, Bob	Southern Offshore Fishermen's Association
Steele, Dr. Phil	NMFS / NOAA
Waters, Donald	Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholder's Alliance

Interested Parties

Paul Balthrop	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Joanne McNeely	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Rusty Hudson	Directed Sustainable Fisheries, Inc.
Dr. Benny Galloway	LGL Ecological Research Assoc. Inc.
Dr. Bill Hogarth	College of Marine Science, Univ. of S. Florida
William (Corky) Perret	Mississippi Department of Marine Resource
David Chauvin	Mariah Jade Shrimp Co.
Kathryn Novak	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Paul Parker	Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fisheries Association
Greg DiDomenico	
Dr. Wilson Laney	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Jack Amason	Sea Garden Seafoods, Inc.
Wilma Anderson	Texas Shrimp Association
Joey Daniels	Wanchese Fish Company
Byron Despaux	Despaux Enterprises, Inc.
Craig Dopson	Dopson Seafood
Philip Horn	Clark Seafood Company, Inc.
Rutledge Leland	Carolina Seafood, Inc.
Mike Voisin	Motavatit Seafoods, Inc.
Chris Nelson	Bon Secour Fisheries, Inc.
James Ruhle	
Kay Williams	Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council
Capt. John Woods	Seaside Seafood
Karen Bell	A.P Bell Fish Company
Steve Cox	Cox's Wholesale Seafood
Tracey Gore	Gore Seafood, Inc.
Dennis Henderson	Gulf Shrimp Company
Ron Lukens	Omega Protein
David O'Neill	Garware Wall Ropes, Ltd.
Patrick Riley	Western Seafood Co., Inc
Bobby Samanie	Lafitte Frozen Foods
Ewell Smith	Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board
Billy Tillett	Moon Tillett Fish Company
Sal Versaggi	Versaggi Shrimp Corporation
Dr. Steve Bortone	Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Bob Mahood	South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Dan Furlong	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Larry Simpson	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Vince O'Shea	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Cynthia Sarnou	Gulf Restoration Network
Ellis Pickett	Gulf Restoration Network
Dennis O'Hern	Fishing Rights Alliance
Howard Johnson	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Mark Robson	Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Eric Schwaab	NMFS/NOAA
Shepherd Grimes	NOAA
Hoyt Childers	National Fishermen
Glen Brooks	Gulf Fishermen's Association
John Williams	Southern Shrimp Alliance
Richard Vendetti	Southern Shrimp Alliance
Janie Thomas	Shrimp Producers Association
David Allison	Oceana
Gary Graham	Texas Sea Grant
Capt. Lindsey Parker	University of Georgia
Daniel Parshley	GSAFFI
Dan Basta	Nat. Marine Sanctuary Program
TJ Tate	Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance
Nils Stolpe	
Sean McKeon	North Carolina Fisheries Association
Beulah Dalmida-Smith	Caribbean Fishery Management Council
Wayne Werner	

APPENDIX 7

FISHERIES ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
PANEL I SCIENCE FUNDING LETTER
DRAFT #2

Submitted by R. Marks to H. Binns

June XX, 2010

Dear {INSERT NAME}:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, represent a diverse cross-section of stakeholders actively engaged in fisheries management in the Southeast U.S – commercial fishermen, commercial seafood dealers, the charter and for-hire industry and ocean conservation organizations. Collectively, we are concerned that currently available appropriations are insufficient to meet the new requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Act). In order to protect both the fisheries resources and fishing-dependent communities in this region, we urgently request additional appropriations be made available to the National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Region to fund expanded stock assessments, fishery independent data collection and cooperative research programs.

PLACEHOLDER ON COMPARISON BETWEEN FUNDING FOR SE SCIENCE CENTER VS. OTHER REGIONAL SCIENCE CENTERS. In testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council chairman, Duane Harris, said,

The Southeast Region of the U.S., including the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean, has not been funded at the level needed to provide data and stock assessments on as timely a basis as is needed for the three Councils in this region to effectively and efficiently do their job. Also, the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the Regional Office are not adequately funded to provide timely stock assessments that drive the Council based management recommendations. We respectfully request that adequate funding be provided so that NMFS and the Councils can do the job Congress has outlined.¹

Clearly, a significant increase in funding for the Southeast region is needed if the Councils are to do an adequate job of fulfilling the requirements of the Act. We strongly recommend that Congress and the Administration consider immediate funding opportunities available in the following areas:

Fisheries-related data and scientific funding needs in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill

The ongoing Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has resulted in tragic loss of life, damaged the livelihoods of many, and is creating an unknown but likely devastating environmental

¹ Letter to Secretary Locke from Duane Harris, Chairman, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, dated 4/6/10.

disaster. Though the full impact of the spill on the Gulf's coastal communities and its marine resources is still unknown, experience from past spills indicates that the damage will last for years. Funding made available immediately in response to this disaster will enable the agency and the regional fishery management councils to address priority data needs. We also urge Congress and the Administration to pursue a mechanism to ensure that those responsible for the spill will fund the intermediate and long-term research and monitoring needs, as well as the likely long-term economic impacts to the commercial, charter and recreational fishing industries in the region.

FY 2011 & 2012 Line Item Budget Request Opportunities

Opportunities exist now to expand the line-item appropriations in both FY 2011 and FY 2012 for:

- **Natural Resource Damage Assessments**
Assessing the nature and extent of the damage caused by the spill will be critical in guiding short-term clean-up and longer-term restoration. We support increased funding for natural resource damage assessments so that NOAA can fully understand the impact of the spill on fish, marine mammals, turtles, birds and other coastal/marine wildlife and their habitats, including wetlands, beaches and other areas. Additionally, natural resource damage assessments will help NOAA understand the socioeconomic impact of the spill on Gulf communities. These assessments will enable NOAA to develop targeted and effective response strategies, as well as monitor the impact of these activities over time on Gulf resources and communities.
- **National Cooperative Fisheries Research**
Cooperative fisheries research involving scientists and fishermen can provide urgently needed data on fish resources and habitats, and has the added benefit of keeping fishermen employed and on the water. Increased funding will provide much needed data and increase fishing industry confidence in the science being used to make management decisions.
- **Expanded Stock Assessments**
Increased funding will reduce the scientific and management uncertainty that limits the ability of the Councils to set appropriate catch levels and accountability measures that maximize catch while maintaining healthy fish stocks and rebuilding those that have been determined to be overfished.
- **Fisheries Statistics**
The 2006 amendments to the Magnuson Stevens Act required the Agency, within two years, to improve the quality and accuracy of MRIP, with a goal of achieving acceptable accuracy and utility for each fishery. That goal has not been met, and significant funding is needed to ensure timely data collection and analysis that will result in real time management decisions that both the Councils and the fishing industry need.
- **Fisheries observers**
Like cooperative research, additional funding will provide improved data and increase industry confidence in the science being used to make management decisions.
- **Survey and Monitoring Projects**

Additional funding will provide opportunities to better estimate stock size and quantify fishing impacts, both critical aspects of managing fisheries to ensure healthy populations and maximize catch while rebuilding fisheries that have been determined to be overfished.

Regarding a proactive, long term strategy (FY2013 and beyond) we recommend funding decisions be made in conjunction with the 5-year council research plans required to be submitted to the Secretary pursuant to the Act (Section 302(h)(7)). Linking federal funding to recommended multi-year research needs will ensure that adequate data are available to address the requirements of the Act.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests and recommendations. Rarely does such a diverse group of Southeast U.S. stakeholders agree on fishery-related issues. In this particular case there is little disagreement – current federal appropriations are insufficient to meet the new requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. In order to protect both the fisheries resources and fishing-dependent communities in this region, we urgently request additional appropriations (and longer term funding plans) be made available to the National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Region to fund critical data collection programs.

Respectfully submitted,

Potential CC List:

President

OMB

Sec. Locke, Dr. Lubchenco & Eric Schwaab

House and Senate Appropriations Committee members

Chairs and Ranking Members of Committee's of jurisdiction (House Natural Resources / Senate Commerce) & subcommittee chairs / ranking members

cc to all Council members and Council Executive Directors

cc to Roy Crabtree & Bonnie Ponwith

cc to Council Coordinating Committee

cc to each state's Congressional delegations & Governors