



NOAA Announces 17 Appointments to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee's Recreational Fisheries Working Group

On May 14, NOAA Fisheries appointed 17 new members to 2-year terms on its Recreational Fisheries Working Group. Representing marine recreational fishing interests across the nation, including the U.S. territories, these appointees will help both the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) and NOAA Fisheries. Over the next year, the working group will help develop a National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy, a priority announced by Eileen Sobeck, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, at the 2014 National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit. In addition, the Working Group will provide advice and guidance on other recreational fisheries issues and activities identified by MAFAC and the agency.

The appointees include (* signifies a re-appointment):

- Rick Bellevance, RI
- Dave Pecci, ME*
- Rip Cunningham, MA
- Gary Smith, MS
- Marcos Hanke, PR
- Lange Sykes, FL
- Bob Zales, FL*
- Sonny Schindler, MS
- Skip Feller, VA
- Michael Kennedy, FL*
- Greg Stunz, TX
- David Bacon, CA
- Lee Blankenship, WA*
- Marc Gorelnik, CA
- Andy Mezirow, AK
- Craig Severance, HI*
- Ed Watamura, HI*

MAFAC was established in 1971 to advise the Secretary of Commerce on living marine resource matters. Through this advice and at the request of the Secretary, the Committee helps ensure the Nation's living marine resource policies meet the needs of commercial and recreational fishermen, and environmental, tribal, academic, consumer, and other national interests. In 2010, MAFAC established a Recreational Fisheries Working Group to support its work on issues of importance to the recreational fisheries community.