

**MAFAC Recreational Fishing Working Group (RFGW) – Conference Call  
June 21, 2010, 3:00 p.m. EST**

Speakers: Mark Holliday, Ken Franke, and Russell Dunn  
Other NMFS staff on the call: Gordon Colvin, Forbes Darby, Heidi Lovett

RFGW Participants:

Lee Blankenship	Patrick Fitzmorris	Jason Schratwieser
Douglass Boyd	Bruce Freeman	Craig Severance
Dick Brame	Steven Fukuto	Rodney Smith
Bill Brown	Michael Kennedy	Rad Trascher
Tony DiLernia	Terry Lacoss	Ed Watamura
Polly Fischer	David Pecci	Bob Zales

The conference call began with opening remarks from Mark Holliday and Ken Franke and a brief review of the draft Recreational Saltwater Fishing Action Agenda by Russell Dunn. The following is a summary of comments provided by the RFGW participants on the call on the Action Agenda and other related issues:

**Bob Zales:** Number one priority is the need for baseline data related to Goal 3, *Improved Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries*. Such a need is being demonstrated by the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. There are some immediate impacts that are getting documented by the number of folks out of work, but no one really knows what the future impacts will be on the fisheries.

Mr. Zales is not sure why dispersants are being allowed to the extent that they have been, why NMFS is allowing this. There is such limited info on its impacts as well.

Second priority is catch shares; a third priority is changes to the appointment process. We need better recreational representation in the Gulf, particularly in Texas and Mississippi, which haven't had recreational fishing representatives for a number of years.

Fourth priority is recreational data and the MRIP Pilot Program. The timing is obviously bad for an electronic logbook pilot in the Gulf, with three-quarters of the for-hire fleet working for BP 8-12 hours a day. We may get good data from the Aransas Pass effort.

**Tony DiLernia:** Goal #5, Institutional Orientation, seems to capture it all. The Action Agenda can be summarized under it. Then Goal #1, Improved Communications is critical. "Boots on the deck" is where improvement is needed. The Regional Recreational Fishing staffers need to attend more fishing club meetings, be present at Council meetings, Fishing Forums, etc. Staff need to talk with folks one-on-one, build better rapport. Recreational fishermen should be encouraged to talk with the Regional staffers, and not seek to speak with the Regional Administrators who are too high up, and have so much on their plates.

Additionally, these Regional Recreational Fishing staff should be encouraged to maintain good contacts with the regional-based 'outdoors' writers and people in the press who cover these issues.

**Bill Brown:** He generally likes the document, but it seems very general, has no teeth to it. How are we going to do the things it suggests? Just communicating won't do it. Need Action. In the North Pacific, the Council has just one sportfish representative on it, and this hurts the for-hire industry. He is looking for more detail, more action in the document.

**Lee Blankenship:** Wants to see specific measures of success or indicators. Add some teeth and at least an evaluation of how to determine success.

**Bruce Freeman:** Asked about the final report of the summit, and was informed it was posted June 3, 2010. Secondly, how quickly does the Agency believe it can commit to accomplish everything in the Action Agenda? Third, with respect to the NMFS Regional Recreational Fishing Coordinators, some are full time, some are not. Agency should at least make sure all are full time. Fourth, already new issues are raising themselves in importance. For instance, there is new focus on new energy production. What are the advantages and disadvantages of wind energy generation in ocean waters? He wants to make sure the Agency is considering all the potential impacts, including on recreational fishing.

**Dick Brame:** Rather than just assessing what needs to be done, NMFS should actually do something. For instance, pledge to do one allocation, and see what comes out of the effort to help future allocation processes. Do first things first, don't just wait and figure out how to do them.

**Ed Watamura:** He and Craig Severence have been doing face-to-face meetings on the ground in Hawaii. Can the RFWG share email addresses to better help us work together? In the Action Agenda, he suggested adding more region to region examples rather than have it so generalized. It may help people understand what the goals are better. In the Western Pacific, he would like to see more recreational representation on the Council. Additionally, socio-economic data should be a high priority. In the State of Hawaii, they have an "out" and do not have to consider socio-economic issues.

**Polly Fischer:** The Gulf is not the only location of current disasters. They just had a large explosion at one petroleum facility and a second incident involving a fire at the Shell refinery in the Washington area. There is also concern about the aquaculture fish pens in South Puget Sound. A June 16 Seattle Post Globe article discusses the real impacts on Chinook and salmon from the non-native salmon raised in the pens. Regional reports are helpful -- can we have calls to discuss issues more often?

**Mark Holliday:** As a follow-on to that comment, Mark asked the RFWG to consider how they, as individuals, might be able to help further Actions on the Action Agenda.

**Bob Zales:** One way the Agency can help recreational fishermen is to encourage Councils to provide stipends for Advisory Panel (AP) members. They do for Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) members, but not all Councils pay stipends to the APs. It's nominal, they pay only about \$100/day, but it does help people attend meetings. If you attend, you either lose a day of work, or have to hire someone to take your trips.

Also, in addition to adding a representative to the RFWG from the Caribbean, don't forget the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes is part of the coastal zone, and there is a very large charter fishery constituency up there.

Finally, lots of folks don't have the capacity or ability to get email. You can't just communicate this way – you do not reach a large part of your stakeholders. We have over 4000 members, but less than 1500 emails. You need to publish newsletters, and use other forms to communicate.

**Michael Kennedy:** The Agenda does seem too broad and grand. There are obvious regional and nation issues that could be specified. He hopes it's considered a living document.

Regarding catch shares, NMFS needs to encourage Councils to take a long look. Better socio-economic data are needed. Additionally, deadlines on actions are needed, such as the Gulf for-hire catch share for red snapper.

**Russ Dunn:** Yes, this is definitely considered a living document. All the suggestions have been good and it will continue to evolve.

**Craig Severence:** He also considered the document a little too general, "mom and apple pie." He liked the suggestion of adding measurable goals and timelines. A key comment is that it may not reach everyone; in particular, those with limited English language skills. When asked about who is willing to work on what, Craig noted that he is willing to look at human dimension activities, research agendas, etc. He's a social anthropologist and could contribute to that.

**Ed Watamura:** Ed stepped up to help develop a regional report for Hawaii.

After all commenters were heard, staff thanked all the participants and the meeting wrapped up at approximate 4:30 p.m.