

Committee Reports





ROY COOPER
Governor

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Secretary

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Commercial Resource Fund Committee

FROM: Beth Govoni, Administrative Services Office Section Chief
Division of Marine Fisheries, NCDEQ

DATE: December 19, 2018

SUBJECT: MFC Commercial Resource Fund Committee Meeting Minutes

The MFC Commercial Resource Fund Committee met at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 19, 2018 at the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Washington Regional Office. The following attended:

MFC Commercial Resource Fund Committee: Doug Cross, Sam Romano, Mike Blanton

Absent: None

Commercial Fishing Resource Funding Committee Members: Steve Weeks

DMF Staff: Dee Lupton, Beth Govoni, William Brantley

Public: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chairman Doug Cross called the meeting to order, gave a reminder of the duty to avoid conflicts of interest, and inquired of any known conflicts of interest (N.C.G.S. 138A-15e).

Sam Romano made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Mike Blanton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes from the July 26, 2018 MFC Commercial Resource Fund (CRF) Committee meeting were reviewed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None offered

William Brantley read for the record public comment received by Mr. Chris McCaffity via email.

Marine Fisheries Commission's Commercial Fishing Resource Fund Committee Meeting Public Comment

Please use any extra revenue from our license fees to stock local seafood. Please apply for matching Saltonstal/Kennedy grants that are intended to enhance domestic seafood production. A 1% restocking fee on all seafood sales in NC would provide enough additional revenue to fund a world-class stocking program that could make our fisheries better than ever. This approach would benefit everyone and the resource by sustainably increasing seafood production and recreational opportunity.

I am always happy to answer any questions and/or go into greater detail.

*Thank you,
Chris McCaffity*

MFC COMMERCIAL FISHING RESOURCE FUND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Beth Govoni briefed the incoming CRF Committee on three supporting documents that guide the Commercial Fishing Resource Fund's administration. These included the Fund's Memorandum of Understanding between the MFC and the Funding Committee for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund, Strategic Plan for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund, and Administrative Procedures for Funding from the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund.

FUNDING OPTIONS FOR THE COMMERCIAL FISHING RESOURCE FUND

Chairman Cross opened discussion regarding five funding options from the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund.

Beth Govoni discussed prepared drafts that the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) had developed for the Commercial Fishing Resource Funding Committee. These proposals and RFP's had been approved by the Funding Committee at the October 18 meeting.

1. NC Commercial Resource Fund Proposal for Commercial Gear Development Projects

Chairman Cross asked Beth Govoni to summarize this project. The proposal would be for Year 1 funding, then reassessed for Year 2 funding at a date. William Brantley clarified the budget narrative and chart listed within the proposal.

2. NC Commercial Resource Fund Proposal for Disease and Pathology: Research and Monitoring

This project would set aside a \$25,000 retainer in preparation for funding pathology work for species within North Carolina's commercial fisheries. Chairman Cross asked if funds could be directed with a caveat to water quality issues. DMF Deputy Director Lupton stated that this was not within the existing scope of this project, however, it would be a topic to bring up at a future meeting of the committees. Mike Blanton asked

where the \$25,000 figure came from, and what would happen in the instance of multiple pathologic needs during a fiscal year. Deputy Director Lupton stated the fund amount was an estimate, and in the case of multiple pathology issues, additional funding could be secured at the approval of both the committees.

3. NC Commercial Resource Fund Proposal for Commercial Fishery Statistics

Govoni explained this funding would sustain and enhance the trip-ticket program for Year 1 of funding. Lupton explained the background of the trip-ticket program, and the need for sustained funding. Chairman Cross stated that the statistics to support North Carolina's commercial fishing industry were needed. Blanton asked if this funding supported federal and state quota monitoring, and if additional funds were being sought to support the trip-ticket program. Lupton stated the Quota Monitoring Biologist and Port Agent that this proposal supports would cover both federal and state monitoring, and no additional funding source was available.

4. NC Commercial Resource Fund Request for Proposals – Economic Impact Study

Beth Govoni gave a brief description of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process, as well as a summary of the economic impact study. Chairman Cross asked for specifics to what economic variables would be covered in the study. Funding Committee member Steve Weeks explained that this study would differ from previous studies and would be extrapolated out to include variables such as durable good expenditures and infrastructure. Mike Blanton questioned if the study would cover what the commercial industry was worth, or what it could be worth; with discretion to industry-wide regulatory issues currently in place. The RFP's methodology would depend on the applicant's proposal and could be reviewed during the process and at Vendor presentations. Blanton stated this in his opinion, there were more significant research priorities and fishery management issues, such as the statistical data-gap in Southern Flounder juveniles and adults, that should also be considered for funding.

Romano inquired as to whom would receive the RFP. This would go out in a DMF press release, as well as into the NC State contracting system.

5. NC Commercial Resource Fund Request for Proposals – Public Relations Campaign

Govini read an excerpt from the description of the Public Relations (PR) RFP. Blanton expressed concern on funding RFP's, with respect to management and research issues that needed to be addressed. Chairman Cross stated that funding to support NC's Commercial Fishing industry was vital to the future of the industry. Blanton asked about state appropriations that were already in place for similar projects. Blanton also asked who would validate the message that the PR campaign portrays? Chairman Cross stated that the committees would review the progress and results. Romano stated that the proposal was broad, and the product that comes out of the RFP would show the public what the industry entails. Blanton stated that the science behind NC's commercial fishing industry was vital for the industry's future, and there were gaps in science that needed review. Deputy Director Lupton stated if the Committees wanted to address

additional fishery management issues, the Committee Chairs could call a meeting at any point. Lupton stated she could talk with DMF staff on future project proposals.

Sam Romano asked how additional issues could be addressed through funding of the NC Commercial Fishing Resource Fund. Mike Blanton followed up by asking how often the CRF Committee would be meeting. Lupton stated the Committees could meet as often as they wanted, as long as they met the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding minimum requirements of two meeting per year.

Chairman Cross called for the committee to vote on the DMF projects for funding.

Mike Blanton made a motion to approve DMF projects for Year 1 funding.

- 1) NC Commercial Resource Fund Proposal for Commercial Gear Development Projects**
- 1) NC Commercial Resource Fund Proposal for Disease and Pathology: Research and Monitoring**
- 2) NC Commercial Resource Fund Proposal for Commercial Fishery Statistics**

Sam Romano seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Cross called for the Committee to vote on the RFP's.

Sam Romano made a motion to approve the following RFP's:

- 1) NC Commercial Resource Fund Request for Proposals – Economic Impact Study**
- 2) NC Commercial Resource Fund Request for Proposals – Public Relations Campaign**

Mike Blanton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Chairman Cross asked DMF to bring forward future projects for funding to support NC's commercial fishing industry at the next called meeting of the CRF Committee. Deputy Director Lupton suggested a joint meeting, and she would get with DMF Fishery Management staff to develop additional projects on sustainable fishery management, potentially during a Spring meeting.

Chairman Cross moved to make a motion to adjourn. Sam Romano seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

BG/wb



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DRAFT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marine Fisheries Commission
Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee

FROM: Michael Loeffler, Co-lead Southern Flounder Plan Development Team
Anne Markwith, Co-lead Southern Flounder Plan Development Team

DATE: November 29, 2018

SUBJECT: Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee Meeting

The Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, November 28, 2018 at 6 p.m. at the NCDEQ Washington Regional Office located at 943 Washington Square Mall in Washington, NC. The following attended:

Advisers: Fred Scharf (chairman), Michael Oppegaard, Tom Roller, Kurt Tressler, Mary Ellon Ballance, Keneth Johnson, Joe Romano, Bradley Styron.

Absent: Robert Cox, James Williams

Staff: Michael Loeffler, Anne Markwith, Charlton Godwin, Lee Paramore, Kathy Rawls, Trevor Scheffel, Lisa Hollensead, Laura Lee, Catherine Blum, Carter Witten

Public: David Sneed, Billy Byrd, Greg Judy, Joe Luczkovich, Brent Fulcher, Cathy Fulcher, Tylor Peacock

MFC: Mike Blanton

Fred Scharf informed the committee he would be late, so the agenda was shifted to go over agenda items, such as presentations, that did not require votes. Mike Loeffler called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. As there was a new committee member, Bradley Styron, the committee and lead staff made quick introductions before presentations started.

REVIEW DRAFT FMP SECTIONS

Division staff gave a presentation on the draft biological species profile section of the FMP. The committee asked questions about the age and growth of southern flounder, including differences between the states. The committee also had discussion on the lack of information on the ocean portion of the stock. It was mentioned that money from the Commercial Fishing Resource Fund could potentially be used for buying additional satellite tags to help with the ongoing work to identify the ocean portion of the stock and potential spawning areas.

The commercial presentation was postponed until the recreational section is completed. The committee felt that seeing the two sections together would give them a better understanding of the total fishery. Both the commercial and recreational fisheries sections will be presented at the January meeting.

Chairman Scharf arrived during the biological profile section presentation. At the completion of the presentation, after questions were addressed from advisers, the committee went back to the postponed action items and then the meeting continued as written on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Mike Oppegaard to approve agenda, seconded by Mary Ellon Ballance – motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Mike Oppegaard to approve meeting minutes from July 18, 2018, seconded by Joe Romano with the request to check spelling of names of Kurt Tressler and Mary Ellon Ballance – motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Scharf let the committee know that there was one written comment submitted prior to the meeting and pointed the committee members to the copy of the full email in their briefing materials. Only one member of the public, Mr. Brent Fulcher, wished to make public comment. Mr. Fulcher inquired if the division had looked at NEAMAP data when doing the assessment, as he thought it might be helpful for information on portions of the stock. He also requested, from an industry standpoint, that the division keep in mind the latitudinal changes relative to seasons. He felt that TACs, ACLs, or any other type of quotas may be detrimental to the southern flounder fishery because it will cause people to fish on bigger fish to make up the economic loss; while the industry has been able to compensate for economic reductions in the summer flounder fishery due to an increasing price per pound, this will not be possible with the southern flounder fishery as the price per pound is already high. In closing, he offered help to the division from the commercial fishing industry with survey or tagging work.

UPDATE TO THE JANUARY 2018 SOUTHERN FLOUNDER STOCK ASSESSMENT

Division staff presented the results of the updated southern flounder stock assessment with data through 2017. Most of the discussion by the committee was on the model and the data. The committee asked questions about correlations between adverse weather, general weather patterns, and the landings. Division staff mentioned that the model indirectly takes this type of information into account, however regardless of weather conditions, recruitment is still not going up. There was also discussion on what causes the SSB target and threshold lines to go up and down. An explanation was given about how the line moves, and that decisions on the percentage at which it is set are made prior to getting the biomass results. From a model standpoint, to come up with the targets and thresholds, it is the biological factors that are driving that line. As mortality increases, SSB will decrease. A question was raised as to how we define the shrimp trawl estimates. This is done through observer coverage. The shrimp trawl is an incidental catch, they are not intended to catch flounder.

The committee also discussed the coastwide premise of the stock assessment. It was mentioned that what North Carolina does impacts other states and what other states do impacts North Carolina. From state to state, North Carolina makes the biggest commercial contribution, but Florida is the biggest in recreational landings. There was a question about the robustness of data from other states compared to data from North Carolina. The other states data are top notch; it is just too early to know how cooperative management is going to work.

REVIEW THE DRAFT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE FMP

Division staff reviewed the draft goal and objectives for the fishery management plan with the committee. The goal and objectives have been revised to provide general guidelines that are more consistent across the state's FMPs with specifics for individual plans as needed (i.e., the coastwide nature of the southern flounder stock and other states' management). There was discussion on how hatcheries and stocking might play into the management plan. The division would not recommend this route at this time for several reasons: flounder take a lot of room to grow out, there is too little information on flounder hatcheries, and more research needs to be done, including studies on success rates of stocking. Additionally, the southern flounder stock is not at the point that it could not recover on its own and stocking could interrupt the natural reproduction of the fish. It was discussed that the focus of management should be regulation changes and habitat improvements, and hatchery work should be added as a research recommendation to help address some of the unknowns associated with it.

There was discussion by the committee on when they would get guidance on what reductions are needed and how this relates to the coastwide nature of the assessment and these objectives. Similar to ASMFC managed species, North Carolina will take its proportion of the reductions needed. The division will provide information to the committee as it is available to help with the discussions on reductions and potential management actions. It is the division director's intention to meet with the directors of the other states at the beginning of 2019 to discuss what management actions they may take. There was also discussion by the committee on when the draft amendment would go to the Marine Fisheries Commission for action. At the February 2019 commission meeting, the division will present the goal and objectives for approval.

Motion by Mike Oppegaard to approve the draft goal and objectives for the FMP, seconded by Tom Roller – motion approved unanimously.

DISCUSS AND SET THE 2019 JANUARY-JUNE MEETING SCHEDULE

Division staff reviewed the proposed 2019 meeting schedule. The AC members will review the dates and let staff know if they anticipate schedule conflicts. The January meeting date was acceptable to everyone in attendance.

ADJOURN

Motion by Mary Ellon Ballance to adjourn, seconded by Mike Oppegaard – motion approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

cc:	John Batherson	Laura Lee	Patricia Smith
	Chris Batsavage	Dee Lupton	Jason Walker
	Catherine Blum	Shawn Maier	Biological Supervisors
	Ellie Davis	Stephen Murphey	Committee Staff Members
	Anne Deaton	Hardy Plyler	District Managers
	Nancy Fish	Steve Poland	Marine Fisheries Commission
	Jess Hawkins	Jerry Schill	Marine Patrol Captains
	David Hilton	Isaiah Smith	Section Chiefs



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DRAFT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marine Fisheries Commission
Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee

FROM: Michael Loeffler, Co-lead Southern Flounder Plan Development Team
Anne Markwith, Co-lead Southern Flounder Plan Development Team

DATE: January 15, 2019

SUBJECT: Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee Meeting

The Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, January 9, 2019 at 6 p.m. at the NCDEQ Washington Regional Office located at 943 Washington Square Mall in Washington, NC. The following attended:

Advisers: Fred Scharf (chairman), Michael Oppegaard, Tom Roller, Kurt Tressler, Mary Ellon Ballance, Joe Romano, Bradley Styron, James Williams

Absent: Keneth Johnson, Robert Cox

Staff: Michael Loeffler, Anne Markwith, Lee Paramore, Kathy Rawls, Lisa Hollensead, Laura Lee, Catherine Blum, Carter Witten, Jesse Bissette, Brandi Salmon, Debbie Manley, Katy West, Daniel Ipock, William Boyd, Steve Anthony

Public: Glenn Skinner, Greg Judy, David Sneed, Bert Hill, David Jones, Francis J. Welch, Jeremy Swanner, Steve Midgett

MFC: Pete Kornegay

The start of the meeting was delayed slightly due to staff from Temporary Solutions working with the advisors to complete necessary paperwork. Fred Scharf called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Tom Roller to approve agenda, seconded by Mike Oppegaard – motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Joe Romano to approve meeting minutes from November 28, 2018, seconded by Mary Ellon Ballance – motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Fred reviewed one email that was received prior to the meeting; all advisors were provided a hard copy at the meeting. There was only one person who wished to provide public comment at the meeting. Steve Midgett stated that the commercial guys are always getting blamed and overfishing is always their fault. He felt that water quality, including sedimentation, is an issue with many of the species, but no one is bringing it up as a cause for decline in populations.

REVIEW FMP SECTION: DESCRIPTION OF THE FISHERIES

Division staff presented the draft Description of the Fisheries section of the FMP, which included information on both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Commercial Fishery

There was discussion about the different commercial gears and landings by areas. The one data point that caused confusion was the Albemarle Sound landings from 2011, which were abnormally low as a hurricane had moved the fish out of the sound. Advisors brought up several reasons that they thought might have caused the increase in the southern flounder fishery, particularly the gill nets. The large peak in landings in the 1990s was most likely due to summer flounder regulations. There was also an uptick in the gill net fishery starting in 1988. Several advisors commented that as more fisheries became regulated, more people seem to switch to the unregulated fisheries (i.e., offshore permit costs caused some to switch to inshore fisheries; gigging increased with the introduction of the ITP). Cost prohibition, and ease, may have caused some fishermen to switch from pound nets to gill nets. Gill nets are important in certain areas and not in others, as are pound nets.

- **A request was made for information on how the gig fishery grew as the gill net fishery declined as well as landings by area.**
- **A request was made for detailed data to show the geographical differences in gear.**

Recreational Fishery

There was discussion as to why flounder are separated out by species for the recreational fishery but not commercial. The importance of species identification education was brought up during this discussion. Most of the discussion, however, focused on the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), and questions concerning how sampling is conducted. During the

discussion the committee, and public, were pointed to various presentations and sources for supplemental information; staff will follow up with an email detailing this information. It is important to note that the recreational estimates are based on the best available scientific information, however better species identification will improve these estimates.

- **A request for how many MRIP surveys are sent out each year and to who, as well as how many CRFL licenses there are each year.**
- **Request that the FES and DMF presentations be sent to the southern flounder advisory committee.**
- **A request for the night gig creel survey data was made.**

REVIEW PROJECTIONS

Division staff presented projection scenarios from the updated stock assessment. These scenarios were used to determine the fishing mortality (F) needed to end the overfished status. Three of the five projections shown (i.e., fishing at current F , two moratorium scenarios) were for information purposes only to help the committee understand what the projections were doing. The two scenarios for informing management indicated that a 52% reduction in total catch was needed to reach the spawning stock biomass (SSB) threshold by 2028, and a 72% reduction would be needed to reach the SSB target by 2028. The committee will need to help the division figure out how to reduce total catch relative to 2017 (the terminal year of the assessment) by at least 52%.

There was discussion on any uncertainty around the projections. All scenarios, as required by statute, have a 50% probability of success. Other questions about the projections were also raised, including why the shrimp trawl bycatch fleet had been excluded and southern flounder recruitment estimates in relation to abiotic factors. The difficulty with the shrimp trawl bycatch fleet is that the values used are coast wide, not state specific, and it's impossible to parse out North Carolina's contribution to be used in the projections. However, the catch from this fleet is relatively small, accounting for only two percent of the coast-wide catch. The recruitment estimates are calculated assuming average environmental conditions. There was a short discussion on why previous management measures from the last 20 years had not worked and how the public could be assured (with such a large reduction in catch) that anything coming from this Amendment would work better. It was acknowledged that environmental conditions, outside of NCDMF control, can play a role in stock rebuilding. It is also possible that the previously enacted regulation changes, like season closures due to protected species, aren't as quantifiable as other measures (i.e., quota), and as a result more fishing is occurring than was assumed would happen when the regulations were enacted. Finally, there is not the variation in recruitment like in other species. The committee is going to have to come up with recommendations for management that haven't been tried before.

DISCUSS SUSTAINABLE HARVEST

The discussion on sustainable harvest started with staff explaining that the division would be taking an amendment (Amendment 2) to the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission at its February meeting. Amendment 2 will focus on season and area closures as a way to end overfishing and

start rebuilding the stock. The committee will receive a presentation on Amendment 2 at their February meeting, and will be able to provide recommendations to the division at this time concerning the amendment. This amendment does not negate the purpose of the committee, as discussions will be held concerning other management strategies (i.e., quotas, seasons, gear restrictions) that allow for sustainable harvest. These management strategies will be addressed in Amendment 3 to the FMP. It was decided to wait on further discussion of potential management options until the committee had seen the presentation on Amendment 2 in February.

ADJOURN

Motion by Mary Ellon Ballance to adjourn, seconded by Mike Oppegaard – motion approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

cc:	John Batherson	Laura Lee	Patricia Smith
	Chris Batsavage	Dee Lupton	Jason Walker
	Catherine Blum	Shawn Maier	Biological Supervisors
	Ellie Davis	Stephen Murphey	Committee Staff Members
	Anne Deaton	Hardy Plyler	District Managers
	Nancy Fish	Steve Poland	Marine Fisheries Commission
	Jess Hawkins	Jerry Schill	Marine Patrol Captains
	David Hilton	Isaiah Smith	Section Chiefs



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DRAFT

December 13, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marine Fisheries Commission

FROM: Jason Rock, Co-lead Blue Crab Plan Development Team
Corrin Flora, Co-lead Blue Crab Plan Development Team

SUBJECT: Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

The Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee met on December 6, 2018 at 6 p.m., at the NCDEQ Washington Regional Office located at 943 Washington Square Mall in Washington, NC. The following attended:

Advisers: **Joseph Romano, Mike Marshall, Kenneth Seigler, Robert Bruggeworth, Thomas Roller**

Staff: Jason Rock, Corrin Flora, Robert Corbett, Kathy Rawls, Debbie Manly, Daniel Ipock, Katy West

Public: Glenn Skinner, Wayne Dunbar

Chairman Romano called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of the 8pm agenda item. Seigler moved to approve the agenda with edits and Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the draft minutes from the August 8 meeting. Roller moved to approve the minutes as presented and Bruggeworth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. No members of the public provided comment during the formal public comment period.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN PRESENTATION: ECOSYSTEM IMPACT ON THE FISHERY

Division staff (Flora) gave a presentation to the committee on the fishery management plan section entitled “Ecosystem Impact on the Fishery.” Discussion covered water quality and

degradation, habitat quality and degradation, significant weather events, disease and parasites, bycatch in other fisheries, and invasive species. There was additional discussion about toxins, including mosquito and agricultural pesticides and their persistence in the environment. The committee asked about mortality estimates, including environmental parameters and bycatch gear studies, livestock farm impacts, and water quality monitoring stations. Staff recognized that there is a data need in blue crab bycatch mortality. The staff also explained livestock farms and water quality will be addressed in an issue paper, however, the division does not regulate or study these aspects directly.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUE PAPER: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE HARVEST IN THE NORTH CAROLINA BLUE CRAB FISHERY

Division staff (Rock) gave a presentation to the committee on the fishery management plan issue paper to achieve sustainable harvest in the blue crab fishery. The presentation included several options and combinations of options. Options included maximum harvest size of mature female crabs, limited harvest on immature females, late season closure, and cull tolerance. Additionally, the presentation included adaptive management framework for the blue crab fishery. Staff explained that these options are those able to be quantified and additional options which cannot be quantified will be presented at the next meeting. Discussion covered the difference between a minimum rather than a maximum size limit on mature female crabs, environmental aspects, market value, and peak season closures as opposed to late season. The committee requested additional analysis be included on a minimum size limit of mature female crabs. The committee discussed the positives and negatives of adaptive management. They voiced concerns about consistency in the fishery across long term affects.

Kenneth Seigler made a motion to look to placing a minimum size limit on all mature female crabs, maintain the 5% cull tolerance, maintain the prohibition on immature female harvest. Robert Bruggeworth seconded the motion. Discussion of the motion included the addition of adaptive management. The committee wanted more time to research the topic. Motion passed 4 to 1.

DISCUSS AND SET THE 2019 MEETING SCHEDULE

Staff presented proposed dates to the committee and no objections or concerns were made. Dates will be set and any additional meetings will be scheduled as needed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

cc:	John Batherson	Laura Lee	Jason Walker
	Chris Batsavage	Dee Lupton	Biological Supervisors
	Catherine Blum	Shawn Maier	Committee Staff Members
	Ellie Davis	Stephen Murphey	District Managers
	Anne Deaton	Steve Poland	Marine Fisheries Commission
	Nancy Fish	Jerry Schill	Marine Patrol Captains
	Jess Hawkins	Patricia Smith	Section Chiefs



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MICHAEL S. REGAN
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STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

February 1, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marine Fisheries Commission

FROM: Jason Rock, Co-lead Blue Crab Plan Development Team
Corrin Flora, Co-lead Blue Crab Plan Development Team

SUBJECT: Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

The Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee met on January 24, 2019 at 6 p.m., at the NCDEQ Washington Regional Office located at 943 Washington Square Mall in Washington, NC. The following attended:

Advisers: Joseph Romano, Mike Marshall, Kenneth Seigler, Robert Bruggeworth, Perry Beasley, Sammy Corbett

Staff: Jason Rock, Debbie Manly, Katy West, Anne Deaton, Jeff Dobbs, Odell Williams

Public: Wesley Potter, Vic White, Alton Parker, Wayne Dunbar, Dallas Ormond, Joe Geer, John Midget, Larry Paul, Jan Corbett, David Quip

MFC: Mike Blanton

Chairman Romano called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Marshall moved to approve the agenda and Seigler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the draft minutes from the December 6 meeting. Marshall moved to approve the minutes as presented and Seigler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



Members of the public provided comment during the formal public comment period. Wesley Potter shared concern with habitat and water quality. John Midgett and Joe Geer both commented on opening crab dredging to continue supporting their small community and the importance of the fishery. Dallas Ormond spoke on the importance of protecting the nursery and end overfishing of blue crabs. Mr. Ormond supports 2 cull rings in pots larger than the current minimum size.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUE PAPER: MANAGEMENT OPTIONS BEYOND QUANTIFIABLE HARVEST REDUCTIONS

Division staff (Rock) gave a presentation to the committee on the fishery management plan issue paper management options beyond quantifiable harvest reductions. The presentation included several options and combinations of options. Options included gear modifications including size, number, and placement of cull rings; removing cull ring exemptions; degradable panels; crab trawl tailbag mesh size; sponge crab and early season closures; peeler size limits; and effort control. There was additional discussion from the committee about water quality, expanding crab sanctuaries, and day of the week closures. Staff explained crab sanctuaries and water quality will be addressed in future issue papers. The committee requested more information from division staff on regional early season closures, peeler size limits, returning cull ring exemptions to proclamation only, and an increased cull ring size with defined placement.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUE PAPER: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE HARVEST IN THE NORTH CAROLINA BLUE CRAB FISHERY

Division staff (Deaton and Dobbs) gave a presentation to the committee on the fishery management plan issue paper bottom disturbing gear in the blue crab fishery. The presentation included several options in regard to crab dredge and crab trawl. Options included elimination of the crab dredge fishery, no blue crab bycatch in the oyster dredge fishery, increasing crab trawl tailbag mesh size, and moving the crab trawl line. Discussion covered areas in which crab dredge and crab trawl are allowed, small number of participants in the fisheries, impact on the bottom, and financial impacts.

Kenneth Seigler made a motion to not adopt any of the recommended management options on crab dredge. Perry Beasley seconded the motion.

Motion passed 4 to 1 with 1 abstention.

Kenneth Seigler made a motion to leave crab trawl lines as is. Sammy Corbett seconded the motion.

Motion passed 4 to 1 with 1 abstention.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

cc:	John Batherson	Laura Lee	Jason Walker
	Chris Batsavage	Dee Lupton	Biological Supervisors
	Catherine Blum	Shawn Maier	Committee Staff Members
	Ellie Davis	Stephen Murphey	District Managers

Anne Deaton
Nancy Fish
Jess Hawkins

Steve Poland
Jerry Schill
Patricia Smith

Marine Fisheries Commission
Marine Patrol Captains
Section Chiefs



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Marine Fisheries Commission Coastal Recreational Fishing License Advisory Committee

FROM: William Brantley, Coastal Recreational Fishing License Project Coordinator
Division of Marine Fisheries, NCDEQ

DATE: December 18, 2018

SUBJECT: Coastal Recreational Fishing License Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

The Coastal Recreational Fishing License Advisory Committee met at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 18, 2018 at the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Headquarters Office. The following attended:

Funding Committee: Cameron Boltes, Pete Kornegay, Chuck Laughridge

Absent: Rob Bizzell

DMF Staff: Beth Govoni, William Brantley

Public: Matt Kenworthy

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chairman Cameron Boltes called the meeting to order, gave a reminder of the duty to avoid conflicts of interest, and inquired of any known conflicts of interest (N.C.G.S. 138A-15e).

Chuck Laughridge made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Pete Kornegay seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None offered

ADVICE ON THE CRFL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Chairman Boltes opened discussion regarding the 2018 CRFL Request for Proposals.

A brief summary on the draft RFP that the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) had developed for the MFC Coastal Recreational Fishing License Advisory Committee (Committee) was given

by William Brantley. Brantley noted that the RFP presented during this meeting was a draft, and advice forthcoming by the Committee would be compiled and briefed to DMF management for consideration prior to release.

The DMF Artificial Reef Program was discussed, specifically how the RFP would affect reef projects. Brantley mentioned that future reef construction and maintenance would be handled by DMF, through partnership opportunities with regional organizations, on a rotational basis spanning the North Carolina coast. Beth Govoni stated that these projects were organized within a 5 year-plan. Kornegay stated that he had heard concern over the frequency of reefs in the northern district. Govoni stated that some CRFL funded artificial reef development was previously a competitive process within the RFP.

Chairman Boltes directed the meeting to Goal 1 of the RFP draft: *Marine Resources and Habitat Management*. It would be beneficial to know what strategy in the RFP current funds were being directed to, which would possibly identify gaps or overlap for future funding opportunities. DMF would provide a summary of the current projects and what goals/strategies they currently aligned with.

Boltes asked how DMF decided if the projects were recreationally significant and was there a requirement that they be recreationally significant for funding through the Marine Resources Fund. Govoni stated that for CRFL projects, the focus was N.C.G.S 113-175.1. Govoni stated the statute does not specify recreational specific projects, however, the focus had traditionally been on recreational fishery projects that could not be achieved through appropriated funds.

Discussion on the return-on-investment for CRFL projects was initiated by Laughridge. Metrics, trends and data needed to not be simply collected, but the potential use of results from projects needs to be taken into account with consideration to how they will affect various management methods. Part of this could include a public relations effort, which includes social media, to display return on investment to license holders and allows the public to see benefits of the CRFL grant program. Laughridge also mentioned that it can be difficult to see tangible results from CRFL funding of DMF's Marine Patrol, however, he thought additional enforcement officers would provide a considerable return-on-investment to recreational license holders.

Order of precedence in expending CRFL funds was a topic, with Laughridge leading the discussion. Laughridge mentioned that CRFL funds should first be used to obtain DMF's mission before funding outside RFP projects. Laughridge stated he admired the format of the RFP; and followed up by stating that though the MFC no longer controls the Marine Resources Fund, DMF will likely see the MFC object/support projects for record.

Project Suggestions by the MFC CRFL AC

- A project proposal to study data amassed by DMF. Fisheries data should be able to be implemented as quickly as possible.

- A project proposal to study catch and release mortality using single barbless hooks. This would be an example of research that held practicable applicability. Results could impact angler catch-and-release practices.
- A project proposal to study siting of artificial reefs, as there was research from East Carolina University depicting less-than-preferred locations of reefs north of Hatteras. This would provide useable data to the Dare County region in their reef planning.
- Continued focus on Submerged Aquatic Vegetation areas, with collaboration of the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan.
- Require applicants to state how each RFP proposal would benefit the recreational angler.

Considerations for the CRFL Program Going-Forward

Future grant completions, Chairman Boltes stated, should involve “action” plans or results, such as credible recommendations or implementation of research. At the request of Chairman Boltes, DMF will provide an on-going effort to advise the Committee of completed CRFL projects with a short, one-page summary of the final results and impacts.

William Brantley discussed the budget report, and explained that after all FY19 obligations were considered, there was \$1,315,795 available for RFP funding.

To summarize, Chairman Boltes stated that the focus of CRFL funding should be to take care of the needs of the Division.

A future meeting request with senior DMF management was mentioned by Laughridge, focusing on the potential utilization of CRFL funds and Marine Patrol’s staffing.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

None

Chairman Boltes adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

