

Committee Reports





EXHIBIT A
March 21, 2019

***N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
Joint Committee on Delineation of Fishing Waters***

Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2019
Craven Community College
Bosch and Siemens Advanced Manufacturing Center Room 104
College Court
New Bern, NC 28562

The first meeting of the Joint Committee on Delineation of Fishing Waters (JCDFW) was called to order on January 23, 2019 at 1:00 pm. Committee members and visitors introduced themselves.

ATTENDANCE

Joint Committee Members

Rob Bizzell – NCMFC

Pete Kornegay – NCMFC

Doug Cross – NCMFC

John Stone - NCWRC

Tommy Fonville - NCWRC

Monty Crump – NCWRC

Visitors

Gordon Myers – NCWRC

Kyle Briggs – NCWRC

Betsy Haywood – NCWRC

Ashton Godwin – NCWRC

Christian Waters – NCWRC

Tim Hergenrader

Glenn Skinner – NC Fisheries Assoc.

Jess Hawkins – NCFA

Terry Pratt – Commercial Fisherman

Ray Howell – CCA NC

Steve Murphey – NCDMF

Nancy Fish – NCDMF

Katy West – NCDMF

Mike Blanton - NCMFC

Carrie Ruhlman – NCWRC

W. Gardner Culpepper – NC Sound Economy

Jerry Schill – NCFA

Wes Potter – NCFA

Rocky Carter – Coastal Conservation Assn. NC

Chris Elkins – CCA NC

BACKGROUND AND STATUTORY CHARGE

NC Wildlife Resources Commission Executive Director Gordon Myers provided and reviewed a background document that described the underlying basis for the establishment of the JCDFW, including relevant statutes and rules. Director Myers outlined the statutory responsibility conferred by the General Assembly in 2013, which amended the Administrative Procedure Act for the Periodic Review and Expiration of Rules (Periodic Review). Pursuant to NCGS §113-129 (4), (9), and (10a), the NC Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) and NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) jointly determine the boundaries that define North Carolina's Inland, Coastal, and Joint Fishing Waters.

Pursuant to NCGS §113-132(e) the two commissions are authorized to jointly designate Joint Fishing Waters and adopt regulations governing responsibilities of each agency for those waters in which are found a significant number of freshwater fishes, as agreed upon by the MFC and WRC.

Director Myers stated that based on historical review of General Statutes, Session Law 1965-957 renamed "Commercial Fishing Waters" to "Coastal Fishing Waters" and established a definition for Coastal Fishing Waters, but it does not appear that the delineation between Coastal and Inland Fishing waters was adjusted to align with the statutory definition. He further stated that because there are waters currently designated as Coastal Fishing Waters in MFC 03Q .0202 that do not meet the definition in 113-129 (4) and (9), and WRC 10C .0108 references 03Q .0202, readoption of those rules requires modification.

Under the Periodic Review, MFC 15A NCAC 15A NCAC .03Q rules and WRC 15A NCAC 10C rules must be reviewed. Those that were determined to be Necessary with Substantive Public Interest or require modification must be readopted through permanent rulemaking no later than June 30, 2022.

Director Myers provided the JCDFW members a draft timeline for rules readoption, including key milestones. Based on that timeline, he recommended the JCDFW seek to reach agreement on boundaries no later than November 1, 2019. The draft timeline includes the following milestones:

February 27, 2019 – Briefing to Coastal Resources Commission

November 1, 2019 – Latest date to agree on delineation boundaries

November 1, 2020 – Latest date to submit Fiscal Note to OSBM

December 1, 2021 – Latest date for the WRC and MFC to approve Notice of Text

June 30, 2022 – Deadline for final rule adoptions

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The committee members discussed guiding principles and governance which led to the following outcomes:

- **Agendas** – Rob Bizzell, MFC and John Stone, WRC will plan meeting agendas
- **Public Records and Website** – WRC will set up a unique Joint Committee website on agency server infrastructure. The committee agreed the website would serve as a repository for all

committee-related documents and will provide links to relevant information located on agency websites.

- **Minutes** – Nancy Fish, DMF and Betsy Haywood, WRC will collaborate on Minutes to share among committee and interested persons.

MEETING FREQUENCY

It was agreed that meeting monthly or bi-monthly would be necessary to meet deadlines. Upcoming data workshop will determine frequency of meetings. The next Joint Committee meeting will be March 21, 2019 at 1:00 pm at WRC Headquarters, 1751 Varsity Drive, in Raleigh. Nancy Fish and Betsy Haywood will look for locations between Raleigh and the coast and make recommendations to the Joint Committee for future meetings.

WRC staff described ongoing efforts to aggregate historical salinity data to derive estuarine salinity zones. DMF is concurrently looking at species composition, riparian vegetation, and habitats. DMF will provide maps of current fishing water boundaries.

DMF Director, Steve Murphey recommended DMF and WRC Staff work in parallel to provide data, biological and scientific criteria for consideration, and prioritized importance of the criteria, as well as impacts of changes to delineations of waters, separately for the Marine Fisheries and Wildlife Resources commissions.

Beginning at the March meeting, the JCDFW will meet regularly to discuss the collected data and staff recommendations; and evaluate potential stakeholder impacts that may result from the application of those recommendations to the delineation of Coastal, Joint, and Inland fishing waters.

After November 1, 2019, by which time the Joint Committee will agree on the delineation of Fishing Waters, fiscal analysis will begin.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Presentations from this meeting can be found at NCfishingwaters.org.

Rob Bizzell, NC Marine Fisheries Commission

Date

John Stone, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

Date



EXHIBIT A
May 1, 2019

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
Joint Committee on Delineation of Fishing Waters

Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2019
NCWRC Headquarters
Commission Room, 5th Floor
1751 Varsity Drive
Raleigh, NC 27606

The meeting of the Joint Committee on Delineation of Fishing Waters (JCDFW) was called to order on March 21, 2019 at 1 p.m. Committee members and visitors introduced themselves.

ATTENDANCE

Joint Committee Members

Rob Bizzell – NCMFC

Pete Kornegay – NCMFC

Doug Cross – NCMFC

John Stone - NCWRC

Tommy Fonville - NCWRC

Monty Crump – NCWRC

Visitors

Gordon Myers – NCWRC

Kyle Briggs – NCWRC

Margo Minkler – NCWRC

Ashton Godwin – NCWRC

Christian Waters – NCWRC

Chad Thomas - NCWRC

Fairley Mahlum - NCWRC

Kevin Dockendorf – NCWRC

Anna Stefanowicz – NCWRC

David Cobb – NCWRC

Janice Underwood – NCWRC

Mike Lopazanki – NCDCM

Jerry Schill – NC Fisheries Assn.

Hunter Stuart – fisherman

Watson Stuart – fisherman

Kent Ansell – fisherman

Wayne Twiford Sr. – fisherman

Wayne Twiford Jr. – fisherman

Wayne Twiford III – fisherman

Steve Murphey – NCDMF

Nancy Fish – NCDMF

Katy West – NCDMF

Anne Deaton - NCDMF

Kathy Rawls– NCDMF

Casey Knight - NCDMF

Col. Carter Whitten, NC Marine Patrol

Sgt. Brian Long, NC Marine Patrol

John Batherson, NCDEQ

Shawn Maier, NCDOJ

Jessica Helms - NCDOJ

Tim Ellis – APNEP

Manley Fuller – NC Wildlife Federation

Fred Harris – NCWF

Lisa Rutledge – NCWF

David Sneed – Coastal Conservation Assn. NC

Rocky Carter – CCA NC

Tom Berry – Wildlife Commissioner

Jason Dennis

REVIEW OF CHARGE

Chairman Stone asked NC Wildlife Resources Commission Executive Director Gordon Myers to review the committee purpose, charge and timeline.

Director Myers, in reviewing the charge of the JCDFW, outlined relevant statutes including §113-129, which defines Coastal, Inland, and Joint Fishing Waters and §113-132 that establishes jurisdictions of the fisheries agencies. He further explained that both statutes specify the NCWRC and the NCMFC must jointly agree on the dividing line between Inland and Coastal Fishing Waters.

Explaining why a new delineation is now required, Director Myers referenced an amendment to the 2013 Administrative Procedure Act which includes a “Periodic Review and Expiration of Existing Rules,” requiring state agencies to review all of their active rules every 10 years. Rules designated as “Necessary with Substantive Public Interest” must be readopted using the permanent rulemaking process. NCWRC has determined that rules that delineate Coastal, Inland, and Joint Fishing Waters are “Necessary with Substantive Public Interest” and must be readopted through permanent rulemaking no later than June 30, 2022. The JCDFW was formed to help integrate the work of the two commissions to jointly determine the boundaries that define Coastal, Inland, and Joint Fishing Waters, specifically looking for a science-based approach to determine the transition between Coastal and Inland Fishing Waters. Statutory and biological factors will be key considerations in the work of the committee.

Director Myers also reviewed the timeline for rules readoption, including key milestones. Based on that timeline, he recommended the JCDFW seek to reach agreement on boundaries no later than November 1, 2019. The draft timeline includes the following milestones:

November 1, 2019 – Latest date to agree on delineation boundaries

November 1, 2020 – Latest date to submit Fiscal Note to OSBM

December 1, 2021 – Latest date for the WRC and MFC to approve Notice of Text

June 30, 2022 – Deadline for final rule adoptions

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Monty Crump to approve the minutes of the initial meeting of the JCDFW, held on Jan. 21, 2019. Second by Rob Bizzell.

Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSS/DETERMINE CRITERIA FOR REVISED DELINEATIONS

NC Division of Marine Fisheries habitat specialist Anne Deaton gave a presentation offering a potential science-based approach for reclassifying jurisdictional waters.

The history of the distinction between Commercial Fishing Waters and Inland Fishing Waters was briefly outlined. As early as 1915, and for the purposes of clarifying fishing regulations, specific Commercial Fishing Waters were named; water bodies not named were considered Inland Fishing Waters. In 1965, the NC General Assembly renamed Commercial Fishing Waters to Coastal Fishing Waters and established Joint Fishing Waters. Since then, there have been minor boundary changes agreed upon by both the NCWRC and the NCMFC.

Deaton reviewed maps of current jurisdictional boundaries by region, followed by characterizations of commercial and recreational fisheries in waterbodies within the Albemarle Sound Management Area to provide information on fish assemblages.

In trying to determine the best approach to define estuarine waters, Deaton reviewed various options that could be used to assess jurisdictional boundaries, including:

- NC Environmental Review Commission's Surface Water Classification of Salt Water
- Existing NOAA dataset for salinity
- NC Division of Water Resources salt water classifications
- NCDMF's salinity data from biological programs
- Multi-variate analysis to assess fish assemblages in relation to environmental factors
- Some combination of the above

When questioned, Deaton advised that salinity would be the better tool to use as an indicator of estuarine conditions, with fish assemblages used as a confirm those findings.

Next, NCWRC Anadromous Research Coordinator Jeremy McCargo gave a presentation outlining another science-based approach for determining the transition between Coastal and Inland Fishing Waters.

The statutory definitions for water body classifications were briefly reviewed. Then McCargo presented the committee with another approach that could be considered, which included:

- Aggregate salinity data to map long-term averages of low and high salinity
- Utilize available peer-reviewed published science in the form of multivariate analyses to objectively derive estuarine salinity zones, that are consistent with Section 2.1.5 Fish assemblages by system of the state's Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP) source document
- Include wetland habitat type defined and mapped in the CHPP

McCargo reported that interpolation of data points was used to create shapefiles categorizing results into 0-4ppt and >4ppt groups, creating a statewide salinity layer, which was presented to the committee for consideration.

Motion by Tommy Fonville that the JCDFW:

- Accepts the use of salinity as an objective, scientifically valid, and biologically defensible methodology to determine delineation of inland, joint, and coastal waters, which is consistent with the North Carolina Coastal Habitat Protection Plan's source document; and
- Requests staff of NCWRC and NCDMF work collaboratively to refine salinity maps as necessary

He further moved that the JCDFW:

- Consider all waters outside of the coastal sounds with salinities less than 4 parts per thousand year-round as Inland Fishing Waters; and
- Consider all waters with salinities greater than 4 parts per thousand year-round as Coastal Fishing Waters; and
- Due to seasonal fluctuations of salinities, the JCDFW requests staff of NCWRC and NCDMF work collaboratively to provide recommendations for determining the inland-coastal delineations in those areas where salinities are greater than 4 parts per thousand during high salinity periods and less than 4 parts per thousand in low salinity periods.

Second by Monty Crump.

Rob Bizzell advised that the NCMFC members of the committee felt it was premature to select a number for the parts per thousand and a more robust discussion of that issue was needed.

Motion by Rob Bizzell to table the motion and take it up at the next meeting. John Stone announced that if the motion to table passes, the Joint Committee should be prepared to vote on the original motion made by Tommy Fonville at the next meeting, as time is of the essence.

Motion carried with no opposition.

NCDMF Director Steve Murphey suggested that staff leads from the two agencies be designated to better facilitate moving the process forward. Christian Waters was designated as lead for NCWRC and Anne Deaton was named lead for the NCDMF.

WEBSITE PREVIEW

Fairley Mahlum, NCWRC’s Chief of Communications and Outreach, previewed the JCDFW’s website, which will provide general information about the committee, serve as a repository for all committee-related documents and provide links to relevant information. The JCDFW agreed the website should “go live” in the near future.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the JCDFW will be on May 1, 2019 at the NC Cooperative Extension Craven County Center, located at 300 Industrial Drive, New Bern, NC 28562.

Motion by Monty Crump to adjourn. Seconded by Tommy Fonville.
Motion carried with no objection.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Rob Bizzell, NC Marine Fisheries Commission

Date

John Stone, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

Date



ROY COOPER
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN
Secretary

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

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: February 15, 2019

SUBJECT: Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee Meeting

The Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee (AC) met on Wednesday, February 13, 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, Keneth Johnson

Absent: Robert Cox

Staff: Michael Loeffler, Anne Markwith, Steve Murphey, Kathy Rawls, Laura Lee, Catherine Blum, Carter Witten, Jesse Bisette, Brandi Salmon, Debbie Manley, Katy West, Daniel Ipock, William Boyd, Alan Bianchi, Chris Wilson, Drew Cathey, Charlton Godwin, Dan Zapf, Candace Rose, Trevor Scheffel

Public: Approximately 65 members of the public were in attendance, 14 who spoke

MFC: Mike Blanton, Sam Romano

Fred Scharf called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. At Dr. Scharf's request, the members of the AC introduced themselves for the benefit of the members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Fred Scharf to modify the agenda to include opening remarks from Director Steve Murphey to the committee, seconded by Mike Oppegaard - motion was approved unanimously.

Motion by Mary Ellon Ballance to move the public comment portion of the agenda to occur after the presentation and discussion of Amendment 2, seconded by Joe Romano – motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Michael Oppegaard to approve meeting minutes from January 9, 2019, seconded by Mary Ellon Ballance – motion was approved unanimously.

STEVE MURPHEY, DIRECTOR OF NCDMF, OPENING REMARKS

Director Steve Murphey addressed the AC to thank them for their commitment and dedication and to advise them at what point we are in the timeline for development and implementation of Amendment 2. The southern flounder stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. The division was originally going to take management options to the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission (NCMFC) at its February business meeting. However, this species is a unique four-state species. Secretary Regan has expressed concern at the economic impact to North Carolina in the context of the four-state management of southern flounder and he has instructed Director Murphey to reach out to the other states concerning the progress of implementing regional management. Currently, the division is setting up a meeting in South Carolina with the other states' representatives to occur this spring. This pause in the process provides the opportunity for the four states to collaborate more fully for regional management. In the meantime, the division is moving ahead with Amendment 2 in order to address overfishing of this species. Director Murphey thanked the AC for their time and patience as the process continues.

AMENDMENT 2: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE HARVEST

Division staff presented draft Amendment 2 to the AC. The committee members were reminded that this was a draft, and that the division is seeking the AC's input on this document to prepare it to go to the commission; the AC recommendation will be included in the draft for the NCMFC.

There was discussion on several of the slides throughout the presentation. When the overfishing status was presented, the AC discussed if fishing mortality (F) was showing a downward trend in 2017 because of management that had occurred through Supplement A to Amendment 1. Staff explained changes in F are variable and do not always correspond directly to management (i.e., an increase in F occurred in 2016 directly after management to reduce harvest was put into place.) There was discussion on the difference in commercial landings between gill nets and pound nets. It is not the same magnitude by area or over the last ten years. In the last three years, both gears have had similar landings, but pound nets have increased in landings over the last 10 years. Next, there was discussion on how discards play a very important role in the recreational fishery. The additional discards that would be created by having a recreational season are built into the calculation of allowable harvest, since incidental discards will continue to occur unless all the gear is taken out of the water. Reducing the bag limit for the recreational fishery could affect the total pounds harvested, but additional analysis would need to be completed to account for additional discards created. There were questions asked about how the fishery would be managed since the recreational fishery is managed as a flounder aggregate that includes not only southern flounder, but summer and Gulf flounder. This will be fully examined in the Southern Flounder FMP draft Amendment 3.

After the presentation, the AC continued its discussion. There were questions about the timeline to have recommendations to the NCMFC; the AC needs to have recommendations on draft Amendment 2 before the May 2019 NCMFC meeting. There was extensive discussion on why management measures in the past have not worked, and why such large reductions are needed at this time. The AC expressed concern that the proposed reductions are heavy handed, would put

many in the commercial fishery out of business, would have many other significant economic impacts, and that the management measures should not treat all users the same (i.e., some gears may have a greater effect on the resource than others.) However, harvest has never been capped for either sector, commercial or recreational. In the southern flounder fishery, regulations have been increased, but harvest has not successfully been reduced. Increasing size limits have resulted in more discards and created the potential for fishermen to target fish that are critical to increasing the spawning stock biomass. Concerns were raised about regulations that would result in taking gear out of the water, which would lead to the loss of fishery dependent data. The AC discussed the breakdown of commercial and recreational harvest from the other three participating states and the importance of regional management of the stock.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Scharf reviewed the guidelines for public comment. Due to the number of members of the public who wished to speak, public comment was limited to three minutes per person. Prior to public comment, one of the committee members asked that staff review how spawning stock biomass was calculated, to help further inform the public before they spoke; staff gave a quick verbal explanation.

Paul Lane, a commercial fisherman from Albemarle Sound, said a 13-inch minimum size limit would help the stock. Fishing on mostly female fish does not work; currently fishermen are harvesting too many females. If the size limit is left as is or raised, it will be the end of the stock.

Jamie Winslow, a commercial fisherman, stated she has fished everywhere except management unit E (southern part of the state.) She presented a handout she prepared by going through proclamations and reading the most recent southern flounder stock assessment to make graphs of the reductions that have taken place since 2001. She said there has been great loss in the commercial fishery already in all management units due to the reductions in fishing days and yardage fished. She also expressed concern about the large number of mature females being caught now and the large number of recreational discards.

Billy Ray Lucas, a recreational fisherman and president of Carolina Fishers of Men Inshore Trail, does not agree with the data that was presented; they catch plenty of flounder. He questioned the poundage of discards for the recreational fishery being higher than the commercial, and why the division has not looked at the breeding grounds in the Pamlico Sound that have been damaged by trawlers. He said none of the previous management options have worked. He stated this proposal will have a huge economic impact to both commercial and recreational sectors and is preposterous.

Greg Howell, a recreational fisherman in the Pamlico Sound area, said there needs to be one plan, but instead North Carolina is constantly changing the rules. He stated North Carolina needs to be like other states like Louisiana where commercial fishermen can make a living and recreational fishermen can fish.

Glenn Skinner, a commercial fisherman from Carteret County and executive director of the N.C. Fisheries Association, said the data suggest no reduction over the time series. Commercial landings have declined in the same time period while recreational harvest has increased, so landings have been recouped. He said fishing on females is not good and spawning stock biomass has probably been destroyed. He stated this is the same thing we have always done. There is nothing to cap effort; effort will increase, and we will still be focusing on females. Direct harvest reductions do not result in overall benefit to this stock. He said slot limits have worked for red drum; it provides the opportunity to spawn and therefore build spawning stock

biomass. The Fisheries Reform Act recognizes the importance of both sectors, commercial and recreational, and the need to manage the fisheries. We need to keep the fisheries going too.

Eric Braddy, a recreational and commercial fisherman, said cutting harvest down to a season would be catastrophic because it will increase the effort and create more user conflicts between commercial and recreational fishermen. There are two different species, summer and southern flounder. He stated the data separates them, but management has not separated them. He asked the committee to not make anything more complicated than it already is.

Keith Bruno, a commercial fisherman from Oriental and owner of Endurance Seafood, said he is normally a fan of the division and smart fisheries management, but he had concerns with the presentation and does not feel the division has a handle on management of the species. He felt there was a lot of uncertainty in what the division presented. He had an issue with the fact that fishermen are still catching fish, but we have been overfished for 20 years. He stated the more fish that fishermen catch, the more restrictions are put in place; what is taken away with this amendment will not be given back in Amendment 3. He said the seasons proposed in Amendment 2 will create a rodeo opening that is bad for the commercial and recreational fisheries. He said the river-based flounder fishery is not represented on the committee. He said he does not agree with the random sampling the division does.

Jeremey Swanner, a recreational fisherman, said the more data we have, the better we are. If you take all gear out of the water, there will be no data. An incentive program for commercial and recreational fishermen is needed to help collect more data.

Greg Judy, a former division employee, said he would like to see an individual quota, like an ITQ (individual transferable quota), for the commercial fishery instead of a season. When everyone is fishing at the same time, it floods the market and an ITQ would allow fishermen to sell when they could get the best price. He said the division has tried to avoid rodeo openings in other fisheries, like shrimp trawling, but the proposed seasons would create one for flounder. He stated the pound netters cannot survive with the seasons that are proposed. The division needs to look at the Independent Gill Net Survey. He said it is good for other species, but not for flounder. He stated the fishery has not collapsed after 20 years of being overfished, so it is possible with these heavy reductions the fishery may recover more quickly than expected. He asked if regulations would be relaxed if this occurs.

Joe Belasi asked why other states care about what North Carolina does with its fish. He stated North Carolina is mismanaging the fishery sectors. He said we need to know where the mature fish are going; even if the fishery is shut down completely, if the fish are caught elsewhere it will not help the stock. He stated the division should not penalize everybody and needs to make some tough decisions. He does not believe the recreational fishermen have hurt the stock with the current size and bag limits.

Wayne Twiford, a commercial pound netter in Currituck County, said since the 1980s he has seen many size limit increases and declines since then, but now the division has backed itself into a corner because the spawning fish are being removed from the stock. Fishing on females is not good for the stock. He stated the proposed season dates will shut down the commercial fishery completely, especially pound netters. The environmental and weather effects need to be taken into consideration. This amendment will put us out of business.

Watson Stuart, a commercial pound netter from Currituck County, said he does not agree with the data on flounder catches; catches will fluctuate over time. He feels there is a lot of unfished water, and that the flounder in those areas is not accounted for; the Trip Tickets are not true.

Raising the size limit will not help the flounder stock as flounder are meat eaters; the bigger fish eat the smaller ones.

Jeff Koen, a full-time fishing guide, said money is important not just for the commercial fishermen, but the guides as well; the more you take away in a fishery, the less business the guides have. He said he does not agree with the proposal. If Amendment 2 is not good, then skip it and go on to Amendment 3; once you take something away, you never get it back. He said North Carolina needs to look at other states like Florida to see how they manage the fishery and learn from them.

Steve Midgette, a commercial fisherman, said part of the problem is that the creeks and headwaters are in trouble. Sedimentation studies in the creeks and rivers are needed, not just the basic water quality tests. He said we need to look at the environment, as these factors are key; North Carolina should look at what the other states are doing for the environment.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

After public comment there was a short discussion on whether to have further discussion on Amendment 2 or wait until the next meeting. Waiting to have further discussion would allow the committee members to talk to constituents and do some additional research. The AC's short discussion highlighted that not a single member of the public, based on public comment, seemed to support draft Amendment 2. The consensus of the AC was to table any further discussion until the March meeting. The AC will need to provide a recommendation to the division concerning Amendment 2 at its March or April meeting. The AC's recommendation can match the division recommendation, or they can develop a different recommendation.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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



ROY COOPER
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN
Secretary

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

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: March 19, 2019

SUBJECT: Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee Meeting

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

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

Absent: Robert Cox

Staff: Michael Loeffler, Anne Markwith, Steve Murphey, Kathy Rawls, Catherine Blum, Katy West, Lee Paramore, Carter Witten, Jesse Bissette, Brandi Salmon, Debbie Manley, Daniel Ipock, Odell Williams, Bryan Spain, Charlton Godwin, Dan Zapf, Candace Rose, Trevor Scheffel

Public: Approximately 18 members of the public were in attendance, of which seven spoke

MFC: Mike Blanton

Dr. Scharf called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Tom Roller to approve meeting minutes from Feb. 13, 2019, seconded by Kurt Tressler – motion was approved unanimously.

At Dr. Scharf's request, the members of the AC introduced themselves for the benefit of the members of the public present.

AMENDMENT 2: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE HARVEST

Division staff provided a brief overview of where the committee was in the process for draft Amendment 2 and reviewed the reduction options available for management (31%, 52%, or 72%). The committee members were reminded that Amendment 2 was a draft and is subject to change, and that the division is seeking the AC's input on this document to prepare it to go to the Marine Fisheries Commission (NCMFC). The AC recommendation will be included in the draft for the NCMFC. Staff will be presenting draft Amendment 2 to the NCMFC at the May 2019 business meeting; therefore, the AC will need to have a recommendation by the end of its April meeting. Based on questions from the committee, staff explained the AC recommendation is separate from the division's and the AC recommendation does not have to match. The AC can recommend reductions that are different than the three options provided, but the reason for varying from those options needs to be provided.

Several additional documents were emailed to the committee a couple days before the meeting. The AC quickly reviewed these materials, which included NCDMF's gig survey report; ASMFC's guidance document for summer flounder slot limits; commercial landings for the last 10 years by gear and area; and a memo on potential long- and short-term management strategies for southern flounder. Clarifying questions were asked about the data, including what the area designations were based on; these areas were designated by the waterbodies used in the Trip Ticket Program.

The committee began its discussion on draft Amendment 2 by expressing concerns about the division's proposed seasons. The concerns included that the division's proposal is too limiting, is not reasonable from a cost perspective for the operation of the pound net fishery, would create a derby fishery, would potentially increase user conflicts, and does not provide management flexibility for hurricanes and other major weather events. Hurricane Florence was used as an example since that storm hit on Sept. 14 and pound nets were not in the water until Oct. 1; based on the proposed seasons that would allow for no more than two weeks of fishing if something similar happened again.

The committee shifted its discussion to the twenty pop-off satellite tags that Dr. Scharf and the division had put out in the fall of 2018, which led to a general discussion on tagging and flounder movement. The results of the satellite tag work could help to inform the management discussion. Dr. Scharf reported that while many of the tags popped off early, it served as a test of concept. He is working with the manufacturer to determine why this occurred (i.e., possible faulty sensors). Tags that stayed attached for 4 – 6 weeks indicated the fish headed in multiple different directions (north, south, and due east). Conventional tagging studies (from the 1980s-present) have shown that southern flounder will move long distances south, but very rarely move north any great distance; northern movement tends to be seen mostly in the inshore waters. Natal homing has never been observed in the southern flounder populations. There was discussion on how the limited northern movement was determined if there were no tag returns, why larger fish are still seen in Pamlico Sound if all the fish travel south, and if there might be inshore spawning populations in certain areas. The committee asked if adding to the conventional tagging program would be a better option than satellite tagging. Staff indicated that satellite (and telemetry) tags are needed in order for the exact path of the fish to be followed to determine ocean spawning aggregations, post spawning movements, and where the mixing zones of fish from different states occur.

Discussion returned to draft Amendment 2. Several AC members stated the proposed seasons would end the southern flounder commercial and recreational fisheries, some members adding it

had come to this because of past NCMFC decisions concerning southern flounder management. There was a discussion about the effect of weather, particularly hurricanes, on the southern flounder population; some AC members said major storms are the reason for the low landings and the division is trying to manage for something that cannot be managed. Some AC members stated it does not make sense for the stock to be overfished and overfishing occurring for more than 20 years and southern flounder still be caught. This opinion was countered by other AC members who said landings are landings regardless of the weather, and statistically the landings have decreased to a point that the stock is in trouble and something needs to be done. The stock is coast-wide and the other states contribute to the population in North Carolina.

Next, the AC considered if all commercial gears should have the same season. The group discussed a committee member's suggestion to stagger the commercial fishery by gear over the time periods of non-peak landings allowing for more escapement and fishing throughout the year, reducing catch by close to 31%. For instance, under this proposal the gig fishery could operate April 1 through September 15, the large mesh gill net fishery August 15 to September 30, and the pound nets in October and November under a quota-based system. Division staff clarified that a quota could not be done in draft Amendment 2, so the AC would need to provide recommendations on what season in the fall would work best for the pound net fishery. The recreational (hook-and-line and gig) season would be similar to the commercial gig season, though the reduction would be closer to 18%. There was discussion on which sectors and gears had a bigger impact on the southern flounder stock, and which sector would be most impacted by the seasons as proposed by the division. The general consensus was the proposed seasons by the division would not be fully utilized as all southern flounder fisheries are weather dependent, thus fishermen would take a bigger reduction than proposed. Staff indicated this was taken into account when calculating the seasons, as 10 years of data were used; good and bad days were included in the calculations.

Division staff asked the committee what reduction value they could all agree on; this is a tough decision when trying to do what is best for the stock. Some members of the AC suggested a full moratorium until Amendment 3 is adopted. There was disagreement between committee members about whether this was appropriate and what the impacts to each sector would be. In order for the committee to reach common ground, the idea of a moratorium was set aside. By statute, it is required that management measures end overfishing in two years and end the overfished status in 10 years, both with at least a 50% probability of success. The proposed 52% and 72% reductions accomplish this. It is also possible to take a 31% reduction for the first two years (ending overfishing) and then adjust the reduction for the remainder of the 10-year period; however, it was noted that the reduction will most likely be greater than 52% or 72% to rebuild Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) due to the lower reduction in the first two years. Projections would need to be redone to calculate what those new reductions would be.

The AC continued to discuss taking a 31% reduction with draft Amendment 2 or if a larger reduction needs to be taken. Various management options, including establishing slot limits, eliminating the recreational gig fishery and RCGL nets, and potentially eliminating commercial gill nets, were brought up in discussion. Eliminating the recreational gig fishery and RCGL nets would not result in a large reduction. There was no consensus on eliminating large mesh gill nets; several AC members felt that large mesh gill nets had already been greatly restricted, while others mentioned the issues surrounding gill nets, such as bycatch. Dr. Scharf reminded the AC that size limit changes would require gear changes that may not be feasible in the short-term. Additionally, projections would need to be redone to calculate reductions since the original reductions are based on the current regulations. Any impact to additional recruitment from

larger fish due to a slot limit may not be quantifiable due to limited fecundity data. The AC made several requests for additional data during the discussion, including:

- Reduction percent that would be achieved for a commercial gig season from April 1 through Sept. 30;
- Yearly totals by Incidental Take Permit (ITP) area of ex-vessel value and number of observer trips for the large mesh gill net fishery; and
- Reduction percent that would be achieved for a large mesh gill net season from Aug. 15 through Sept. 30.

The committee asked for clarification from staff on the timeline for draft Amendment 2 and Amendment 3. At the May 2019 NCMFC meeting draft Amendment 2 will be presented and the commission will vote to approve it to go out for public comment. There will be a 30-day public comment period during which regional and subject matter (Finfish) AC meetings will be held. After public comment draft Amendment 2 will go to the DEQ secretary for 30 days, and then to the legislative committee for 30 days. Since the goal is to have draft Amendment 2 approved for management in August 2019, there will most likely be a special meeting during the summer. If approved in August, management from Amendment 2 will be implemented following the meeting via the Fisheries Director's proclamation authority and we would manage under Amendment 2 until Amendment 3 is adopted. The timeline for the AC to make a recommendation for long-term management through draft Amendment 3 with implementation in 2020 would be the end of 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Scharf reviewed the guidelines for public comment. Due to the number of members of the public who wished to speak and the business the committee still needed to conduct, public comment was limited to three minutes per person.

Glenn Skinner, a commercial fisherman from Carteret County and executive director of the N.C. Fisheries Association, said when landings are reduced in one gear they are recouped in another gear, whether it is another commercial gear or recreational gear; everyone is fishing on what is available. There needs to be the same reduction for every gear. He said the biggest problem with taking reductions, both at the state and federal level, is that a reduction in the recreational fishery has never been achieved because you cannot predict recreational effort. Whatever reduction is achieved will be on the commercial fishery. Until 2010, we never saw a reduction in recreational fishery effort and that was probably only because the stock declined. The AC will not come up with something that would meet or exceed the division's recommendation, because they will not be able to agree on it. He said the AC needs to vote to oppose Amendment 2 and move on to Amendment 3, and let the division and NCMFC worry about Amendment 2.

Larry Boomer, from Swan Quarter, was a commercial fisherman until 1980 and is now a recreational fisherman. He wants North Carolina to enact a gill net ban, as he stated this is the solution to the flounder problem; North Carolina and Mississippi are the only states that allows such a destructive fishery. A ban would also end the sea turtle and marine mammal interactions. He said that it would be appropriate to set the minimum size limit at 19 inches. If the size limit is increased fish from 15-18 inches would survive and many of those would be able to reproduce. He said that letting the commercial fisheries occur in the most productive time of the year, when the fish are moving to the ocean to spawn, is a bad idea; if the idea is to increase spawning biomass killing the breeders is not going to work. Look after the resource and not the

commercial fishery. He stated as the proposal stands the commercial fishery will have the same season as last year [due to Hurricane Florence] and the recreational fishery will have only a six-week season. It also does not make sense that the recreational fishery can only have four fish, while the commercial has no limits. He said he personally does not think that the recreational fishery hurts the stock, that gill nets are the issue. He also stated that based on his experience he does not believe the information on recreational discards is correct as presented.

Watson Stuart, a pound netter from Bells Island, Currituck, said that he did not think the data on the trip tickets was correct. He felt that weather had a lot to do with the landings and that the flounder are not in trouble. The proposed seasons are not long enough for a pound netter. He stated there is a lot of work that goes into pound nets, and once pound nets are gone they are going to be gone forever, as no one will be around to teach the younger generations. He said to drop the minimum size limit back to 13 or 14 inches and restored the amount of gear that is allowed to be used; if this is done then the trip ticket landings will increase. The increases in size limits have led to the bigger fish eating the little fish, which is not helping the stock.

Chris Hickman, a commercial fisherman from Hatteras, stated that the only real information was from the landings. There were a lot of estimates being used. His biggest issue is one species is being used to manage all the flounder species. He stated he does not support a slot size because all the pressure is put on one group of fish and not across the marketable population. Managing for big fish does not necessarily work; more eggs may be produced but that does not mean they are more viable at 18 inches than at 15 inches. It has been used in other fisheries and has not worked. He said that we need to pay attention to water quality and habitat degradation. We have been overfished for 20 years and we are still harvesting flounder, which does not make sense. Regulations are what create discards.

Kelsey Aiken, a commercial gigger and gill netter from Hatteras and part owner of Jeffery Seafood, said it is obvious that there needs to be some reduction, and everyone is going to be affected. At his fish house a 72% reduction would cause them to lose all the pound netters, and only keep a few gill netters and giggers. It would take away a third of the income from the fish house, which would be crippling. The reduction takes away not only from the fishermen but decreases the economic value to the state (i.e., restaurants). He stated that he understands there needs to be some reduction, but the reduction should be the same across the board. He agreed with other speakers that the pound nets will not be able to set if the fishermen are only allowed a month. The restrictions on gill nets to a month would mean that some may fish, but others may leave the fishery. He wondered where the flounder that people want to eat was going to come from. He stated the reduction did not need to be 72%; that sort of reduction will ruin Hatteras. It is impractical.

Greg Judy, a commercial gill netter who fishes in the river, said that after listening to the committee discussion he agrees with the previous speaker: everyone is in this together and everyone needs to take the same reduction. He stated that there are three major sections: pound nets, gill nets, and recreational. He would like to see a reduction between the 31% -50% range to get through the first year. He stated that he did not like the seasons, but the Fisheries Reform Act was written in a way that there cannot be individual quotas.

Perry Beasley, a commercial fisherman, stated that he does not believe in the science and it is faulty. You cannot compare apples to oranges; numbers and tonnage for 13-inch fish cannot be compared to that of 15-inch fish. The number of participants in the fishery is down; we are putting people out of the business. He said that the flounder fishery is a weather dependent fishery. He referenced a recent issue of the Tradewinds Magazine that cited the division's 2018

License and Statistics annual finfish pounds by sector. He said that we are estimating the recreational numbers and that hard numbers are the truth (i.e., trip tickets), but he does not believe the trip tickets or the division. He asked if we are punishing the wrong people and he recommended a 13-inch minimum size limit. He said an economic study is needed to show the value of the fishery.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

After public comment, discussion continued on draft Amendment 2 as the committee tried to reach a consensus on a reduction value. A reminder was provided that this document is a draft and the division recommendation could change; the chair asked that the committee focus only on their recommendation, not the division's, and what they felt would be reasonable management. The committee asked how 50%, 60%, and 72% reductions would change the number of open days in the fisheries for the proposal discussed earlier in the meeting about staggering the commercial fishery by gear over the time periods of non-peak landings. Staff said they would bring this information back at the next meeting, as currently the calculations are done for all commercial gears by area (not broken down by gear).

Discussion turned to the possibility of rejecting draft Amendment 2 and focusing all the committee's effort on developing long-term strategies for draft Amendment 3. Several members of the committee said that draft Amendment 2 was rushed and only responsible long-term management was needed instead of implementing short-term management first. There were concerns that once reductions occur regulations would not be relaxed and that from a financial perspective, people need time to prepare for the loss of income. There was concern raised from other members that if the AC did not provide a recommendation that the NCMFC would have no recommendations to consider other than the division's. The option for the 31% reduction was brought up again as a reasonable option since it met the statute requirement to end overfishing, and draft Amendment 3 would likely be adopted within the two-year timeframe. Several members of the committee expressed support for reductions greater than 31%. Shifting allocations between gears was also mentioned again. Division staff reminded the AC a smaller reduction now means an even larger reduction later.

It was noted that the AC had one more opportunity at its April 2 meeting to make a recommendation before draft Amendment 2 will be forwarded to the NCMFC. Staff asked the AC to provide guidance so that the appropriate data could be presented at the next AC meeting to help them make this recommendation. The AC agreed that staff could use the proposal from earlier in the meeting about staggering the commercial fishery by gear over the time periods of non-peak landings to guide the seasonal aspect of the data. The AC requested that data be presented for 31%, 40%, 52%, and 72% for the four fisheries (pound net, gill net, commercial gig, and recreational). The areas (northern, central, and southern) proposed by the division were to be used for the commercial fisheries. There was additional discussion about the dates that could be selected for the different fisheries, including an April start date for the commercial gig fishery, possibly a June 1 through Sept. 15 season for the recreational hook-and-line fishery, and April 1 through Oct. 1 for the recreational gig fishery. Overlap of the commercial fisheries was also discussed. The committee asked what the reductions likely be in year three if the committee did not recommend at least a 52% reduction now. Staff said they would talk to the stock assessment scientist to determine if that information could be provided at the next meeting.



ROY COOPER
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN
Secretary

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marine Fisheries Commission
Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee

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

DATE: April 4, 2019

SUBJECT: Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

The Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, April 2, 2019 at 4 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, Keneth Johnson, Mary Ellon Ballance, Joe Romano, James Williams, Kurt Tressler, Bradley Styron

Staff: Catherine Blum, Michael Loeffler, Kathy Rawls, Jennifer Lewis, Carter Witten, Alan Bianchi, Daniel Ipock, William Boyd, Brandi Salmon, Jesse Bisette, Jason Rock, Dan Zapf, Steve Murphey, Trevor Scheffel

Public: Approximately 36 members of the public were in attendance, 11 who provided comments.

MFC: Mike Blanton, Cameron Boltes, Sam Romano

Fred Scharf called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Mary Ellon Ballance to approve agenda, seconded by Michael Oppegaard – motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Joe Romano to approve meeting minutes from March 6, 2019, seconded by Mary Ellon Ballance – motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION ON PREVIOUS DATA REQUESTS

Division staff gave a presentation about data and additional management options the committee requested during discussion on draft Amendment 2 at its March 6 meeting. Items included a breakdown of commercial data by gear, areas, and seasons. Additional management options presented for discussion included elimination of the recreational gig fishery, elimination of the Recreational Commercial Gear License large mesh gill net fishery, and non-quantifiable management options such as trip limits and gear changes to be implemented with season closures. The presentation also included an updated division recommendation.

The committee began discussion on the commercial data by gears by expressing concerns about not being able to predict fishermen's behavior about switching gears, potentially resulting in the ability to harvest during more of the year and required reductions not being achieved. Staff explained the non-quantifiable management options are intended to be an option to help mitigate this concern and prevent overages. Discussion also occurred about the accuracy of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data. Staff reminded the committee the recreational reduction estimates are based on two-week increments of MRIP data, the finest level of detail appropriate for this data. The committee expressed a need to know more about recreational discards and recreational harvest. Discussion shifted to finding better ways of data collection from the recreational gig fishery. The research recommendations section of the FMP is a centralized place to list data needs like this for the fishery.

Discussion shifted to draft Amendment 2 and concerns about not knowing how the FMP will affect the rest of the calendar year. Committee members expressed a need for fishermen to have more time to prepare for the financial impact this reduction will cause. There was also discussion about the need for a coastwide reduction and about the other states also implementing the necessary management measures. The committee again weighed the pros and cons of implementing seasons versus quotas (which cannot be developed in the timeframe of Amendment 2.)

Concerns continued to be expressed by some members of the committee about getting all the available data, the impacts of weather, and more time for all options to be explored. Another viewpoint focused on adequate levels of reductions not being implemented previously, resulting in the current situation. Other items of discussion included not seeing an increase in recruitment despite reductions that have already been made, the need to protect larger fish, and the harvest rate is still too high; this pattern is seen in all four states, not just North Carolina. Staff restated the task at hand is to recommend how much reduction is needed and how soon that reduction is implemented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Scharf reviewed the guidelines for public comment. Due to the number of members of the public who wished to speak and the business the committee still needed to conduct, public comment was limited to three minutes per person.

Glen Skinner, Executive Director of NCFA, opposed Amendment 2. He said there is a settlement agreement that prevents action on southern flounder until an amendment is complete. He stated the process is being handled like a supplement, not an amendment. He advised the committee to take no action on amendment 2 and instead take the time to do an amendment that implements measures over the long term, so the results can be seen.

Michael Peele, from Hatteras, does not support Amendment 2. He said seasonal openings to achieve a 72% reduction will cause economic impacts that will force fishermen out of the fishery. He expressed concern about retaining a local source of seafood in the state. He questioned the percentage of flounder that are recorded as southern flounder versus summer flounder.

Chris Hickman, from Hatteras, said he has concerns about using management similar to what has been implemented over the last 30 years and expecting a better result. He suggested more research is needed in on the eastern side of Pamlico Sound and about distribution of southern flounder and summer flounder. He thinks we need new research using flounder tagging.

Kelsey Aiken, a commercial fisherman and part-owner of a fish house, opposed Amendment 2. He believes it has happened too quickly and the effort needs to be put toward Amendment 3 instead. He said most fish houses cannot survive a 52-72% cut. He believes there should be some reduction and change, but not in such a short amount of time.

Gregory Judy suggested a 31% reduction in the first year and a 52% reduction in the second year. This allows fishermen time to adjust for income loss.

Wayne Twiford, Jr., from the Currituck Sound area, does not support Amendment 2. When making a decision, he asked the committee to keep in mind their decision will affect many livelihoods, and fishermen cannot survive a 72% reduction this year. He said cold stuns, hurricanes, Oregon Inlet bridge construction, and other events cause uncertainty in the fishery and those factors need to be considered. He recommended more tagging research to get additional data on fish migration.

Watson Stuart, a pound netter from Currituck, does not support Amendment 2. He said the proposed reduction will cause fishermen to rely on multiple gears to catch enough fish. He said ice was a major factor in the fishery two years ago and this needs to be considered. He thinks once southern flounder leave the inlet they do not return. He also believes the new Oregon Inlet bridge is a factor for fish migration.

Hunter Stuart, from Currituck, agreed with concerns mentioned about the impacts of cold stuns. If gear continues to be reduced, then catch will be reduced too, so the stock assessment is just reflecting a reduction in catch. He said there is no proof that management measures implemented so far have worked and he wants a guarantee that additional management measures will improve the fishery.

Keith Bruno, a commercial fisherman from Oriental, does not support Amendment 2 because it is like a supplement and effort should be put into Amendment 3 instead. He said the real focus seems to be on removing gill nets from the water. He thinks fishing effort will shift to crabbing or fishing for other species for fishermen to survive. He expressed concern about dead discards from setting daily limits on gill nets. He said there is room for all fishermen in the fishery.

Jonathan Edwards, a recreational fisherman from Winterville, thanked the division for identifying the problems with this stock. He said we need to reduce harvest and gill nets are a problem, but pollution and the environment also play a big part.

Jeremy Swanner, a recreational fisherman from Bath, said it is hard to believe the data, but if it is true and there is a problem, action is needed without bias. Everyone loses if there are no fish left. He suggested implementing a more concentrated tagging program. He expressed concern about increased pressure on spotted seatrout. He wants to see something proactive implemented instead of something reactive.

AMENDMENT 2: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE HARVEST

After a break, discussion continued leading to a vote by the committee on its recommendation to the Marine Fisheries Commission on draft Amendment 2 to the Southern Flounder FMP. There was consensus that the southern flounder stock needs more protection by taking regulatory action to reduce harvest rates, but the discussion focused on determining the magnitude and timing of the reductions.

Motion was made by Mary Ellon Balance to take no action on Amendment 2, seconded by Joe Romano. Motion failed 3 to 5.

Next, the committee revisited the infrastructure needed to implement a quota monitoring system. Staff reviewed the process of getting this in place, which cannot be completed for the fall of 2019. The committee also discussed the pros and cons of equitable reductions across all sectors.

Motion was made by Tom Roller to implement a 31% reduction for all sectors in 2019, except that the recreational gig fishery will coincide with when the hook-and-line fishery occurs. Season start dates will be Aug. 1 for pound nets, Aug. 1 for commercial large mesh gill nets, and April 1 for commercial gigs. Reduce recreational hook-and-line and gig fisheries total removals by 33% to best align with MRIP estimates.

Then starting January 1, 2020 adopt the Division of Marine Fisheries recommendation for a 52% reduction with the following changes, calculated by Northern, Central, and Southern regions:

- Pound net fishery, 40% reduction, fishery start date Sept. 15.**
- Commercial gig fishery, 40% reduction, fishery start date April 1.**
- Large mesh gill net fishery, a reduction to make up the difference to yield a 52% reduction for the commercial fishery overall, fishery start date Sept. 15, recognizing**

that the division proposal for the Recreational Commercial Gear License large mesh gill net season of Sept.15-Sept. 30 may be changed by this final percent reduction.

In addition, Jan. 1, 2020, implement a 1500-yard limit for large mesh gill nets in Management Unit A, and implement a 1000-yard limit for large mesh gill nets in Management Units B, C, D, and E.

Starting in 2020, the season for recreational hook-and-line and gig fisheries will remain July 16-Sept. 30. Seconded by Michael Oppegaard. Motion passed 7-2.

Staff will incorporate the committee's recommendation into draft Amendment 2 to present to the Marine Fisheries Commission at its May 15-17 meeting. The commission is scheduled to vote on approval for the draft amendment to go out for public and standing and regional advisory committee review and comment. The next Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee meeting is expected to be June 3 at 6 p.m. at the Central District Office in Morehead City; the May 8 committee meeting will likely be canceled.

Motion was made by Mary Ellon Ballance to adjourn, seconded by Michael Oppegaard. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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



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DRAFT

March 7, 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 February 28, 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, Perry Beasley, Sammy Corbett, Thomas Roller

Staff: Jason Rock, Corrin Flora, Debbie Manly, Katy West, Joe Facendola

Public: Glenn Skinner, Luke Ingraham, Taylor Barefoot, Hunter Croom, Phillip Smith, Ronnie Ingraham, Vic White, David Gallop, Aaron Gallop

MFC: Mike Blanton, Sam Romano

Chairman Romano called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Corbett moved to approve the agenda and Beasley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the draft minutes from the December 6 meeting. Corbett moved to approve the minutes from January 24, 2019, seconded by Marshall with the request to amend the crab dredge motion vote results to reflect a 5-0-1 vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Members of the public provided comment during the formal public comment period. Glenn Skinner shared concern of the trend to do the least possible for stocks in concern. He urged the AC to follow statutory requirements and meet the required reductions. Taylor Barefoot supports

prohibition on immature females and looking at closure times to meet reduction requirements. Phillip Smith spoke on the importance of water quality, especially regarding diamondback terrapins. David Gallop noted differences in crabbers in the Albemarle and Pamlico sounds. He urged the division to think outside the box with crab survey sampling for a complete population assessment and noted he is not in favor of terrapin excluders or biodegradable panels.

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 “Achieving Sustainable Harvest in the North Carolina Blue Crab Fishery”. This was the second-time staff presented this issue paper to the committee. The presentation included several options and combinations of options which were added after committee input from the initial presentation. Options included maximum harvest size of mature female crabs, minimum size of mature females, limiting harvest on immature females, late season closure, and cull tolerance. Additionally, the presentation included an adaptive management framework for the blue crab fishery. There was additional discussion from the committee about size limits, survey methods, shorter pot attendance times, and the 2016 revision. Staff clarified differences from the prior traffic light assessment acceptable revision measures and the current stock assessment with overfishing and overfished being defined as the basis for meeting the statutory requirements for achieving a sustainable harvest.

The committee made two recommendations for which they would like to see reduction calculations. The first included a January closure of the fishery, a 5-inch minimum size limit on mature females, prohibition of immature females, 5% cull tolerance, and adaptive management. With this recommendation, the committee asked staff to calculate additional closure periods in two-week intervals.

The second committee recommendation included adaptive management, a 6.75-inch maximum size of mature females and to keep rules in place from the 2016 revision and see if they meet requirements with enough time. The second recommendation also included a request for staff to investigate other forms of immature crab sampling for stock assessments such as peeler pots.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUE PAPER: ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK TO IMPLEMENT THE USE OF TERRAPIN EXCLUDER DEVICES IN CRAB POTS

Division staff (Facendola) gave a presentation to the committee on the fishery management plan issue paper to “Establish a Framework to Implement the use of Terrapin Excluder Devices in Crab Pots”. This was the second-time staff presented this issue paper to the committee. The presentation included a summary of the proposed framework to be used to create diamondback terrapin management areas, factors to minimize impact to the blue crab fishery and maximize diamondback terrapin protection, and impacts on the blue crab, whelk, and stone crab fisheries. Discussion covered research, terrapin biology, a new pot design, and targeted area closures.

Perry Beasley made a motion to use science on locally specific pot funnel design to reduce terrapins and identify individual creeks with terrapin population hot spots that would be closed to potting. Sammy Corbett seconded the motion.

Motion passed 3 to 1 with 2 abstentions.

Having no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

cc: John Batherson Laura Lee Jason Walker
 Chris Batsavage Dee Lupton Biological Supervisors
 Catherine Blum Shawn Maier Committee Staff
 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



ROY COOPER
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MICHAEL S. REGAN
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STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

April 12, 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 March 21, 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, Perry Beasley, Sammy Corbett, Thomas Roller, Robert Bruggeworth

Staff: Jason Rock, Corrin Flora, Debbie Manley, Katy West, Daniel Ipock, Odell Williams, Jeff Dobbs, Daniel Zapf

Public: Glenn Skinner, Dana Beasley, Rob Rollason, Wayne Twiford Sr., Wayne Twiford Jr., Wayne Twiford III, Eric Braddy, Penny Perry, Watson Stuart, Jason Dennis, David Gallop, Hunter Stuart, Frank Helms, Kent Ansell

Chairman Romano called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Corbett moved to approve the agenda and Beasley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the draft minutes from the February 28, 2019 meeting. Marshall moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Corbett. The motion passed unanimously.

Members of the public provided comment during the formal public comment period. Wayne Triford Sr., Wayne Twiford Jr., Wayne Twiford III, David Gallop and Watson Stuart supported the committee in keeping discussed regulations which are currently in place. David Gallop additionally expressed his concern in a 6.75-inch maximum size for females and showed interest in separate regulations for the northern and southern portions of the state. Hunter Stuart noted ghost pots work as artificial reefs; while the cost of business and the resource self-regulate the

crab fishery. Frank Helms encouraged expanding crab markets and more crabs will be landed. Kent Ansell noted that the entire crab industry is conditional and dependent on the market and where a crabber is in the state; while the biggest problem to blue crabs is development and water pollution.

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”. This was the second-time staff presented this issue paper to the committee. The presentation included several options and combinations of options which were added after committee input from the initial presentation. Options included cull ring size, number, placement, and exemptions; biodegradable panels; crab trawl tailbag mesh size; limiting harvest of sponge crabs; peeler crab size limits; and effort control. There was additional discussion from the committee about sustainable harvest, peeler size limits, sponge crabs, and regulations in place from the 2016 revision.

Sammy Corbett made a motion to leave in existing rules put in in 2016 and do not adopt anything else at this time. Except with 2 options on cull rings: 1) 2 cull rings in proper corner placement or 2) keeping the 3 cull rings with 1 in proper placement. This motion pertains only to rules from the 2016 revision which were discussed in this issue paper. Motion passed 6 to 1.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUE PAPER: BOTTOM DISTURBING GEAR IN THE BLUE CRAB FISHERY

Division staff (Rock) gave an update to the committee on the fishery management plan issue paper to “Bottom Disturbing Gear in the Blue Crab Fishery”. This was the second-time staff discussed this issue paper with the committee. The staff summarized language clarification made to the issue paper after committee comments. Discussion covered the limited number of participants in the fishery and misconception of bottom gear. The committee held their initial (1/24/19) standing on the issue.

The committee inquired with staff what issues would be discussed at upcoming meetings. Discussion covered environmental issues of runoff and predation. Staff explained the data limitations which make an issue paper on predation not practical and this would be an appropriate research recommendation.

Having no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 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



ROY COOPER
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN
Secretary

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

April 30, 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 April 25, 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, Perry Beasley, Sammy Corbett, Thomas Roller, Robert Bruggeworth

Staff: Jason Rock, Corrin Flora, Debbie Manley, Katy West, Kathy Rawls, William Boyd, Odell Williams, Daniel Zapf, Anne Deaton

Public: Penny Beasley

Chairman Romano called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Romano entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Roller 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 March 21, 2019 meeting. Seigler moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Marshall. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUE PAPER: EXPAND CRAB SPAWNING SANCTUARIES TO IMPROVE SPAWNING STOCK BIOMASS

Division staff (Rock) gave a presentation to the committee on the fishery management plan issue paper “Expand Crab Spawning Sanctuaries to Improve Spawning Stock Biomass”. This was the first-time staff presented this issue paper to the committee. The presentation included several options and combinations of options on adding new sanctuaries, expanding existing sanctuaries,

and a potential migration corridor. There was discussion from the committee about activities in these regions besides commercial crab pots, previous tagging studies, size of proposed expansions, and time frames of closures. Staff clarified the boundaries in the paper are only a starting point for discussion and subject to change. The committee asked the division to look further into moving the boundaries Drum Inlet sanctuary to cover Ophelia Inlet which opened when Drum Inlet closed.

Sammy Corbett made a motion to leave the existing sanctuaries the size they are with the dates that are in place now. Using the 2016 proposal of new sanctuaries do Topsail Inlet, Rich Inlet, Mason Inlet, Lockwoods Folly Inlet, Masonboro Inlet, and Browns Inlet. Add Beaufort Inlet smaller proposal area. With these new sanctuaries being closed to blue crab harvest March 1-October 31 with the same restrictions as current sanctuaries. The motion was seconded by Beasley. This motion pertains to proposed rules from the 2016 revision which were discussed in this issue paper.

After discussion by the committee, **Ken Seigler offered a motion to amend by adding Bogue Inlet as well to the list of new sanctuaries.** Bruggeworth seconded the motion to amend. The motion to amend passed unanimously. **The amended motion read to leave the existing sanctuaries the size they are with the dates that are in place now. Using the 2016 proposal of new sanctuaries do Topsail Inlet, Rich Inlet, Mason Inlet, Lockwoods Folly Inlet, Masonboro Inlet, Browns Inlet, and Bogue Inlet. Add Beaufort Inlet smaller proposal area. With these new sanctuaries being closed to blue crab harvest March 1-October 31 with the same restrictions as current sanctuaries.** Motion passed unanimously.

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUE PAPER: ADDRESSING WATER QUALITY CONCERNS IMPACTING THE NORTH CAROLINA BLUE CRAB STOCK

Division staff (Flora) gave a presentation to the committee on the fishery management plan issue paper “Addressing Water Quality Concerns Impacting the North Carolina Blue Crab Stock”. This was the first-time staff discussed this issue paper with the committee. The presentation included background on estuary systems, drainage basins, and land use; current water quality plans and rules; federal, state, and local agencies implementing water quality rules; algal and toxin impairments; and Best Management Practices. Discussion covered environmental pressure, cooperation between interest groups (especially commercial and recreational fishermen) to address water quality being of utmost importance to coastal communities, blue crabs being ubiquitous to coastal North Carolina waters, and having water quality take precedence for the state after years of fisheries managers asking for an emphasis on water quality standards.

Mike Marshall made a motion to support all management options in this paper. Support making the highest priority option four tasking the CHPP steering committee to what is suggested here and follow up with each of the other recommendations as that step is justified. Have the habitat staff report back to the Shellfish/Crustacean AC with progress. Corbett seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff made the committee aware of the updated Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch blue crab fishery rankings to be released in May. A short discussion covered reasoning behind rankings, MSC certifications, and public perception vs markets.

Having no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 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
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MEMORANDUM

TO: N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Commercial Resource Fund Committee and the Funding Committee for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund

FROM: William Brantley, Grants Program Manager
Division of Marine Fisheries, NCDEQ

DATE: March 14, 2019

SUBJECT: MFC Commercial Resource Fund Committee and Funding Committee for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund Meeting Minutes

The MFC Commercial Resource Fund Committee and the Funding Committee for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund met at 1 p.m. on Thursday, March 7, 2019 at the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Washington Regional Office. The following attended:

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

Funding Committee for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund Members: Ernest Doshier, Glenn Skinner, Andrew Berry, Steve Weeks

Absent: Doug Todd, Gilbert Baccus

DMF Staff: Dee Lupton, William Brantley, Katy West

Public Comment: Cheryl Pigott

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chairman Doug Cross called the meeting to order for the MFC Commercial Resource Fund Committee.

Chairman Ernest Doshier called the meeting to order for the Funding Committee for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund

At the direction of the Chairmen, William Brantley read the reminder of the duty to avoid conflicts of interest (N.C.G.S. 138A-15e). Chairmen Cross and Doshier both stated there were no known conflicts of interest with their respective committees.

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

Glenn Skinner made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Steve Weeks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes from the December 19, 2018 MFC Commercial Resource Fund (CRF) Committee meeting were reviewed.

Doug Cross made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mike Blanton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes from the October 18, 2018 Funding Committee for the Funding Committee for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund meeting were reviewed.

Glenn Skinner made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Steve Weeks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chery Pigott spoke during the public comment session to introduce herself and company, BG Digital Group as a Morehead City marketing and advertising organization that had business experience with fishing organizations and welcomed the opportunity to do business with the funding committees.

COMMITTEE BRIEF OF RFP REVIEW PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

William Brantley briefed the committees on the initial review process for the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund Public Relations (PR) RFP and the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund Economic Impact Analysis RFP. The committees would have the opportunity to ask applicants questions specific to their proposal, and applicants would be able to interact with the committees to understand their vision for the application scopes and projects.

PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN RFP APPLICATION INITIAL REVIEW

S&A Cherokee / Blue Red Marketing – Adam Tesh and Chuck Norman

Representatives stated they had experience with other government agencies, NC Farm Bureau and other groups in hard-to-reach areas. They also stated they were part of a PR Global Network that had members with experience in PR work with the State of Alaska's fishery. Glen Skinner mentioned that the applicants had worked with the N.C. Fisheries Association before and clarified that proposed budget could be cut back if the committees did not want to encompass all projects proposed.

BG Digital Group – Cheryl Pigott

Representative stated they had worked with a N.C. fish market to produce a story aspect to their campaign. BG Digital had also worked with a recreational fishing brand that allowed them to get on the water for footage and they had marketing experience with storytelling. They proposed

to develop a message that could be used for social media, video messaging and to develop a “sea to table” experience.

Crosby Volmer LLC – John Lewis

Representative stated that their focus had been with industries that needed a public policy campaign to educate the public. Methods used to work with policy makers include bringing legislatures in to meet directly with industry members, targeted social media, op-eds, and media outreach. Glen Skinner asked about effective tactics to reach the public, which John stated a multi-faceted approach to include working with policy makers would be efficient.

French West Vaughan – Charles Upchurch

Representative stated they had worked with the N.C. Pork Council, N.C. DOT’s “*Click It or Ticket*” and “*Booze It and Loose It*”, N.C. Rail, and the N.C. Ferry system. Upchurch stated that they were familiar with campaigns that implemented industry-with-heritage. His agency would work collaboratively with the committees to direct the proper methods to build creative development.

Committee members shifted the focus of the PR RFP application review to a workshop-type format to give applicants general feedback and vision directly from the committees.

Committee members each gave points of what they wanted to see in a PR focused campaign, and bulleted summaries were written out for applicants to see. Common themes revolved around providing a message, validation, sustainability, awareness of bycatch reduction and current research the industry is involved with.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS RFP APPLICATION INITIAL REVIEW

North Carolina State University – Drs. Jane Harrison and Chris Dumas

Application comes from a collaboration of Harrison (N.C. SeaGrant), Nash (N.C. SeaGrant), Sutherland (NCSU), Edwards (NCSU), and Dumas (UNCW). Dumas described how their practical application would be heavy on the distribution and supply chain, backward and forward linkages, and implement survey incentives to entice respondents. Survey would encompass every commercial fisherman and dealer within the State. Study would be a large data-gathering project covering the state. Steve Weeks asked the applicants to expand on durable goods within the proposal. Dr. Dumas further explained the detail that would be included in forward and backward linkages. Dr. Harrison stated they could stay in communication with the committees to ensure they are gathering the information they need. Doug Cross asked about the consumer survey portion of the study. Drs. Dumas and Harrison explained that this consumer survey would be contracted out to a set number of respondents to understand willingness to pay. Glenn Skinner inquired about the timeline to conduct the study. Drs. Dumas and Harrison asked that if study was funded, that the industry promote the survey to obtain the most accurate data. Division of Marine Fisheries Deputy Director Dee Lupton inquired about the raw data that would come from the study, and that the applicants specify with clarity that the data would be available to the Division. Glenn Skinner asked the applicants if they could come back with a budget to support using certified mail. The committee inquired about the cost of incentives. Members

asked if the applicants could come back with a budget to reflect 50% and 25% of the budget for incentives.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Glenn Skinner discussed a donation by N.C. Farm Bureau to the commercial fishing industry of \$40,000. N.C. SeaGrant would potentially accept the money, with possible collaboration of the N.C. Coastal Federation. Skinner proposed discussion to the funding committees that they provide funds to match or enhance the \$40,000 project. Mike Blanton stated the committees should see a proposal and budget prior to voting on a funding decision.

Steve Weeks made a motion to match \$40,000 from N.C. Farm Bureau subject to reviewing it, after the proposal is complete, and reviewing total cost of the project.

Glen Skinner seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mike Blanton made a motion to consider the Funding Committee's motion for the oyster pilot project after the proposal is presented to the joint committees.

Sam Romano seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mike Blanton asked the committees to consider a funding request from Sara Mirabilio, of the N.C. SeaGrant, regarding the N.C. Fish Camp (January 2020). Mirabilio gave a short presentation detailing the Fish Camp, with an expected budget of \$54,635 + the indirect rate. Mirabilio also stated she could provide a scope of work and budget to the Division.

Doug Cross asked Ernest Doshier for concurrence to table the topic until Mirabilio could provide a budget and scope to the Division.

Dee Lupton, in response from the MFC Funding Committee's request, brought up project proposals to the Committee developed by the Division. Doug Cross asked members to consider the projects for discussion at the next meeting.

Sam Romano mentioned potential projects for the committees to consider for future funding. These included a flounder tagging study, an impact study on the positive production effects of trawling, water monitoring and connected landings, an inland distribution center, establishing a legal retainer fund, and establishing an endowment fund.

Andrew Berry asked if the Division could come back with a presentation on the tagging program. Dee Lupton concurred that the Division would attempt to bring forth at the next meeting.

Steve Weeks asked for a current budget report at the next meeting to see the amount that was in the fund.

**Mike Blanton made a motion to adjourn.
Sam Weeks seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Ernest Doshier made a motion to adjourn.
Andrew Berry seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

WB

DRAFT

