

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**

**Council and Advisory Body Meeting Communication Protocol Topics**

1 Pre-meeting

A Publicizing - What is provided (press release, announcements, etc.)? How is it provided (email, snail mail, etc.)? Who are the recipients (e.g., distribution lists)?

(1) Meeting Announcement sent via Constant Contact and posted on the Council Website. Distribution list includes stakeholders, media, and others who self-subscribe to our email list. We do not have the list broken down by recipient category.

B Communication with Council/Committee members

(1) Communicate largely through email (group lists).

C Document distribution

(1) Meeting materials are posted on our public file server and our web site.

2 Coordination with other local/federal agencies and NGOs

(1) We have an Outreach and Education Technical Committee, which includes Communicators from NOAA and the States, as well as Sea Grant and NGOs. We're attempting to do more coordination with them and their resources to get our messages out. We recently restructured this committee and will hold our first meeting in May. The idea is to have more "boots on the ground" so to speak.

Additionally, we use NOAA Fisheries Bulletins for some of our communications, rather than reinvent the wheel. We simply repackage and send out to our email lists. This ensures message consistency.

3 During the Meeting

A What technology/copy room/office is available and for whom?

(1) We hold most of our AP/SSC meetings in-house. For Council meetings, we bring our own copiers, one for staff and one for the public (though they rarely ever use it). Any documents that become available during the meeting are emailed out and posted on our website for public access. Internet access is available to all.

B Broadcasting (audio/video, webinar, etc.) including voting issues and other policy issues.

(1) We stream the audio and screenshot over the internet via GoToWebinar.

C Public interaction during meeting - How is public allowed to comment (e.g., via teleconference)? Are there specific timeframe(s) for public comment?

(1) The public can speak during the public comment portion of our meeting, which is typically Wednesday afternoon (3-4 hours). Speakers are allowed three minutes. Comments are accepted via email and online comment forms during the meeting, and are posted on the website for Council and public review. For public hearings and scoping meetings there is not time limit. Comments are generally made in-person, via email, or through the online comment forms. We also usually hold at least one webinar with each round of public hearings and/or scoping meetings, during which time we do take comments through the webinar. Other than that, comments are not accepted during meetings via “teleconference”.

(2) We generally request that comments be submitted by the Friday before the Council meeting begins; however, we continue to take/post comments throughout the duration of the Council meeting.

D Distribution of materials during meeting and what is the medium (paper handouts, website uploads, etc.)?

(1) Almost entirely electronic via email and website. There is an occasional handout, usually brought in by the public.

E How press is handled during meeting - Request for Interviews; Guidelines on cameras and microphones.

(1) I (or our outreach specialist) will generally approach any media that enters the room and offer assistance. I find out what they’re looking for and serve as the liaison between the media and the Council, setting up interviews as necessary. I also provide direction on where they should set up equipment so as not to interfere with the meeting.

#### 4 Post meeting

A Getting meeting decisions out to the public (newsletters, website, social media, etc.)

(1) We prepare a “Council Update” and send it out the Monday/Tuesday following the Council meeting, which typically end on Friday. Also field media calls and post big decisions on facebook.

B Press releases – who drafts, how distributed, when?

(1) For Council initiated press releases, I draft them and have technical staff review. They are distributed via Constant Contact. We also repackage NOAA Fishery Bulletins and send those out to our stakeholders to ensure all bases are covered.

C Meeting materials – What is stored and where (e.g., documents, actions, minutes, audio/video); Public access; Searchable

- (1) All meeting materials and audio are stored on our server. Most documents are also kept on our website. GoToWebinar recordings are stored on an external drive. There is public access to meeting materials and motions. Audio and verbatim minutes are available upon request.

5 Areas to improve

A Areas your Council is looking for solutions: information distribution, broadcasting meetings, teleconferencing?

- (1) We're interested in all of the above – learning about any new technology that would help us improve our current methods. Particularly how Briefing Book Materials are posted on the web, video production, and alternatives to broadcasting meetings via GoToWebinar.

B Finish this sentence: I wish our Council had the ability to do more outreach. With the proper resources, we could reach out to more people and establish greater trust and establish ourselves as the go to source for all fishery issues and possibly mitigate the amount of misinformation/disinformation that circulates among the various stakeholder groups.