

East Coast Forum
May 4-7, 2014 • Beaufort, NC
Identifying, Communicating, and Managing for Recreational Objectives
Summary and Guide to Additional Resources

The Fisheries Leadership & Sustainability Forum (“Fisheries Forum”) promotes professional development and continuing education by bringing together fishery managers and experts from a range of disciplines. The Fisheries Forum offers fishery managers opportunities to share experiences, build leadership skills, and enhance their understanding of fisheries law, policy, science, and economics. The semi-annual forums are the cornerstone of the Fisheries Forum and provide members of the regional fishery management councils with access to the latest research and an opportunity to discuss challenges and share success stories across regions. The forums focus on learning from experience and applying knowledge and problem solving skills to real world challenges.

For more information about the forums and to view material from past forums, please visit the [Fisheries Forum Information Network](#)

The 2014 East Coast Forum (“Forum”) examined the steps regional fishery management councils (“councils”) are taking to identify, communicate, and manage for recreational objectives. Recreational stakeholders hold distinctive values and priorities for federal fisheries management, and the recreational community represents a diversity of interests that include the for-hire industry, private recreational anglers, subsistence users, and business interests. The ongoing dialogue within and between NOAA Fisheries, the councils, and the recreational fishing community reinforces the importance of engaging recreational stakeholders in the management process, and acknowledging motivations and values that derive from the experience of fishing. The East Coast Forum provided fishery managers with the opportunity to reflect on the role of decision-makers in integrating recreational objectives into the management process.

The management of saltwater recreational fisheries is at a crossroads. As part of the conversation surrounding reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, managers and stakeholders are evaluating the challenges to recognizing and achieving recreational management objectives within the federal fisheries management framework. NOAA Fisheries has committed to strengthening its relationship with the recreational fishing community through its ongoing Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative, including the April 2014 [National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit](#), and the development of a new National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy to provide guidance and institutionalize the agency’s commitment to healthy recreational fisheries. At the regional level, councils are working through complex and often controversial management

challenges in response to recreational stakeholders with distinctive motivations and diverse perspectives.

Since the original Magnuson-Stevens Act was implemented in 1976, the recreational community has grown and changed dramatically. Responding to these changing stakeholder demographics is an institutional adaptation that involves the entire federal fisheries framework, including science, decision-making, implementation, and stakeholder engagement. At NOAA Fisheries, this institutional adaptation has involved internal restructuring, adapting programs and services, and building relationships to better serve the recreational community. At the council level, decision-makers play a vital role in this adaptation by setting objectives, developing policy, and engaging recreational stakeholders in the management process.

The 2014 East Coast Forum complemented the ongoing national discussion about managing for recreational objectives, by examining the concept of institutional adaptation from the perspective of decision-makers. Discussions reinforced that there are no simple solutions to complex recreational management challenges, and that decision-makers will play a vital role in navigating emerging challenges. The Forum provided participating council members and staff with the opportunity to:

- Share their experiences with regional recreational management issues, and consider how these issues are shaping the national discourse about recreational fisheries management and policy;
- Examine the steps councils have taken to identify recreational management objectives;
- Explore the roles and responsibilities associated with data collection and analysis in support of recreational fisheries management, with a focus on electronic reporting (ER) methods;
- Consider ideas and themes of discussion from NOAA Fisheries' April 2014 National Recreational Saltwater Fishing Summit;
- Share experiences navigating challenging discussions; and
- Discuss the efforts councils are undertaking to engage the recreational community in the management process, identify values and preferences, and support long-term planning.

The Forum agenda included presentations, panel sessions, and facilitated discussions, and was designed to encourage the exchange of ideas and perspectives between regions. The following summary is not comprehensive and is not intended to demonstrate consensus; rather it is meant to capture the salient themes of discussion and range of ideas discussed.

A full list of Forum resources, including the final agenda, is available on our website, www.fisheriesforum.org.

I. Themes of Discussion

Introduction and Forum context

The management of recreational fisheries is at a crossroads. While the 2007 Magnuson-Stevens Act has instilled greater accountability for achieving biological objectives, identifying and achieving social and economic objectives for recreational fisheries is a persistent challenge. This challenge becomes even more demanding as a growing recreational stakeholder base encounters the constraints of limited fishery resources. NOAA Fisheries' Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative, future reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and ongoing discussions about data collection, accountability, allocation, and other topics emphasize that managing for recreational objectives is an institutional adaptation that involves the entire fisheries management framework. Councils play a critical role in this institutional adaptation by engaging recreational stakeholders, and considering how their diverse values translate to management objectives.

The 2014 East Coast Forum explored the role of decision-makers in identifying, communicating, and managing for recreational objectives. Participating council members and staff shared experiences and lessons learned, explored regional and national issues, and contemplated the leadership challenges of navigating emerging recreational management issues. In order to maintain the focus of Forum discussions on council roles and responsibilities rather than specific management strategies or decision points, Fisheries Forum staff emphasized the following points:

- **Definition:** “Managing for recreational objectives” was defined as the process of understanding what the recreational community values from their participation in federal fisheries, how these values might translate to management objectives, and how these values and objectives inform the balance of user groups and tradeoffs built into the management process.
- **Context:** The Forum explored broad management topics within the context of the longer trajectory of recreational fisheries management, focusing on changing dynamics and the recreational community's evolving relationship with management.

Recreational fisheries reflect the tremendous diversity of ecosystems and stakeholders managed under the federal fisheries management framework. Forum participants explored regional differences in how recreational fisheries fit within each council's portfolio of managed fisheries. Variations in geography, climate, and accessibility, as well as social, economic, and political factors, all contribute to differences that include:

- The diversity of recreational interests, including for-hire, private recreational, and subsistence users, and overlap between groups and with commercial fisheries;
- How each of these groups engages in the council process, their organization, level of sophistication and understanding of the council process; and

- The complexity of recreational management issues and amount of council time spent discussing recreational fisheries.

Despite this diversity, the similarities of managing recreational fisheries can be more pronounced than the differences. Forum participants described similar challenges of recognizing the values and motivations that distinguish the recreational community as a whole, while also acknowledging that this community includes diverse needs and expectations. Across regions, recreational management challenges tend to coalesce around the issues of allocation, accountability, and management uncertainty that underpin expectations for access and opportunity. Another shared challenge is the rapid growth and evolution of recreational fisheries, and how this trajectory has shaped relationships and expectations from management. Advances in technology, safety, and the accessibility of fishing opportunities in federal waters over a short period of time contributed to increasing participation, driving a rapid trajectory from unregulated to highly regulated recreational fisheries. Within the recreational community, perspectives on the impacts of recreational fishing, the need for management, and expectations for access have often evolved more slowly.

Forum participants also described the shared challenge of “managing success.” While managers may define success in terms of achieving biological targets, stakeholder perceptions of success are shaped by perceptions of access and opportunity. In recreational fisheries the gains of rebuilding are distributed across a large pool of stakeholders, and angler participation and behavior are difficult to predict. Achieving and maintaining biological targets can in some cases result in more restrictive and variable regulations, and the perception of decreased opportunity.

Managing for recreational objectives involves multiple layers of complexity: a diverse spectrum of values and potential management objectives, complicated perceptions of success and expectations from management, and a large stakeholder base that continues to evolve and change. Forum participants shared perspectives on the role of councils and the council process in responding to this complexity as part of a larger institutional adaptation. Discussions reinforced that managing for recreational objectives is not an endpoint, but a process of “moving the goalposts” forward to navigate evolving relationships and emerging challenges. Most prominent among these challenges are reconciling shared values with diverse needs, recognizing the different needs of the for-hire and private recreational fisheries, and examining expectations for stakeholder engagement—as well as acknowledging the tension and sometimes controversy that accompanies change.

The following sections explore councils’ role in managing for recreational objectives in three categories.

- Part A: Process and leadership
- Part B: Outreach and engagement
- Part C: Data and analysis

A. Process and leadership

Within the broader institutional adaptation of managing for recreational objectives, some adjustments can only occur through the council process of setting objectives, making tradeoffs, and balancing the needs of multiple user groups through decision-making. An important dimension of each Forum discussion focused on the responsibilities that fall most squarely within the council process, and provide opportunities for leadership and innovation. The prospect of managing for recreational objectives asks decision-makers to question assumptions, explore new territory, and acknowledge contrasts and occasionally controversy as part of the process of institutional adaptation. Participants identified the following considerations, challenges, and decision points their councils have encountered related to managing for recreational objectives.

Examine the meaning of “recreational objectives.”

The term “recreational objectives” is used conceptually, but with little clarity about how councils might actually set management objectives at the stakeholder group level. Participants questioned, do councils actually set recreational management objectives? At what level should these objectives be defined? For now, the term recreational objectives is used to describe acknowledging and operationalizing what recreational stakeholders value, but introduces important process questions that still need to be explored.

Reconcile shared values and diverse needs.

While recreational fishing is distinguished by values that derive from the experience of fishing, the recreational community also encompasses a broad array of interests and opinions. Articulating shared values can lend focus to the concept of managing for recreational objectives, yet diversity within the recreational community makes it difficult to converge on what these shared values should be. There are different perspectives on whether emphasizing shared vision—or diversity—is the more effective pathway for identifying what recreational stakeholders value.

Accept tradeoffs and incompatibilities.

The recreational community defines opportunity in different ways. There are inevitable tradeoffs and incompatibilities between values and potential management strategies, for example, retention and release, regulatory stability and flexibility, and combinations of seasons, size, and bag limits. With a large stakeholder base, it’s challenging to assess how stakeholders perceive tradeoffs and areas of potential compromise.

Consider motivations as well as values.

Recreational fishing generates values that include being outdoors and spending time with family and friends, but these values derive first from the motivation—and the opportunity—to catch fish. Forum participants emphasized that while these values are important in their own right, it’s important that decision-makers not dissociate them from the primary motivation of catching fish.

Acknowledge the contrast between for-hire and private recreational interests.

There are significant contrasts between for-hire and private recreational stakeholders, in terms of how they engage in management, their motivations and priorities, and how each group's needs translate to management strategies and align with data capabilities. There are more immediate opportunities to improve accountability and manage for specific objectives within the smaller and well-defined for-hire industry. However, focusing on one component of the recreational community can deepen these distinctions and create tension within the recreational community as a whole.

Examine expectations for angler engagement.

Engagement with the recreational public is essential for informing management objectives, yet fundamentally different than engaging commercial stakeholders. While targeted outreach and communication can help build and maintain relationships, decision-makers also need to examine expectations for engaging a stakeholder base that is large and diffuse, and whose motivations and ability to engage differ from other stakeholder groups. What represents "successful" outreach and engagement of the recreational, and particularly the private recreational sector, deserves careful and continued consideration.

Take ownership of stakeholder feedback.

Outreach, visioning, and long-term planning efforts can help support goal-oriented management (what are we managing for?), and build relationships with a broader network of stakeholders. These processes generate feedback and perspectives, and create stakeholder expectations, but do not result in clear objectives or a mandate from the public. The responsibility for interpreting and acting on this information, and communicating the rationale for taking action, resides with decision-makers.

Explore new territory.

Managing for experience-based values such as abundance or trophy angling suggest a definition of optimum yield that differs from the objective of maximum sustainable yield. Reconsidering the relationship between OY and the deeply ingrained concept of MSY requires managers to explore new territory. For example, would stakeholders actually accept reducing catch in order to optimize other attributes of the fishing experience related to abundance? How would managers reconcile different yield objectives for mixed-use fisheries?

Explore multiple pathways for operationalizing objectives.

Recreational values and objectives can be operationalized through many different procedural pathways. Promising opportunities for further council exploration include the structure of recreational accountability measures, and increased regulatory stability, for example through consistent seasons or year-to-year regulations.

B. Outreach, engagement, and identifying recreational objectives

Engaging the recreational community in the management process is vital to understanding the range of recreational values, and considering how these values translate to management objectives. Participants identified the following similarities and shared challenges with regard to engaging the recreational community.

- **Value proposition:** The general value proposition behind stakeholder engagement in the management process is similar across stakeholder groups as well across regions: sustained participation and input into the management process throughout the life cycle of an issue lead to greater support, buy-in, and compliance.
- **Challenges:** Engaging the large, diffuse, and diverse spectrum of recreational stakeholders is challenging. The for-hire industry tends to be the most organized and engaged, and participate as business owners. Private recreational anglers, for-hire clients, and subsistence users are more difficult to engage. The perspectives, incentives and motivations for engagement, level of sophistication, and understanding of the management process vary across components of the recreational community and at the national, regional, and state levels. Engagement by private recreational stakeholders is more likely to be motivated by crisis and frustration, focus on controversial decision points, and occur late in the process.

Forum participants and speakers shared their experiences and approaches to outreach, education, and communication with their recreational stakeholders, and how these efforts have supported recreational engagement. Engaging the recreational community lays the groundwork for considering recreational values, but the attributes and values that distinguish the recreational community also challenge managers' expectations for meaningful engagement, and how to incorporate this input into decision-making.

The "common currency" of recreational interests includes tradeoffs.

Participants felt that there is more underlying alignment of interests among commercial stakeholders, who share the motive of profit. Recreational stakeholders, in contrast, are united by the common currency of "opportunity," which can be defined in many different ways and includes incompatibilities and tradeoffs (for example, between regulatory stability and flexibility). Discerning the full range of recreational perspectives and incorporating these perspectives into decision-making is consequently more difficult.

Recreational engagement is perceived as most effective at the state level.

The recreational community is perceived as being more engaged and more successful at communicating their interest at the state level, and state managers are likewise perceived as more engaged and attuned to the recreational community's interests. While this contrast can be viewed as a shortcoming, participants pointed out that "all fisheries are local" and that councils can leverage these closer working relationships to help expand their own networks.

Longer-term planning involves leadership follow-through.

Several council regions have engaged in broad outreach efforts to engage the recreational community, and in some cases leverage this information for longer-term and more proactive planning. In contrast to formal and issue-specific opportunities for public input, these venues accommodate a broad range of input, are perceived as less intimidating, and are accessible to a wider cross-section of the public. While these strategies are valuable, they are also an investment of time and effort, and require leaders to follow through to maintain relationships and demonstrate how information is used.

Successful outreach and engagement is difficult to define.

The definition of successful outreach is elusive given such a large and diverse user base. Participants described a wide range of goals including uncovering new perspectives, building larger networks, particularly among private anglers and other groups that are more difficult to reach, addressing misinformation, and improving the public's understanding of the management process. At the same time, participants recognized that outreach and communication don't necessarily translate to engagement. "Successful" outreach can take other, less measurable forms including maintaining relationships, and ensuring that stakeholders are able to find information, ask questions, and understand the management process, whether or not they choose to engage.

C. Data and analysis

Electronic monitoring

Recreational catch and effort data is fundamental to providing access, ensuring accountability, and supporting the implementation of recreational management strategies. The quality and credibility of recreational data, both real and perceived, is a leverage point that can strengthen or undermine the potential to engage recreational stakeholders and achieve recreational management objectives. Recreational data improvements, and in particular the potential applications for electronic reporting (ER) methods, are an important part of the broader discussion of managing for recreational objectives.

Forum participants discussed the role of councils and council members in supporting recreational data improvements, focusing on opportunities to facilitate a constructive process and dialogue around objectives for the implementation of ER methods. While the level of interest and potential applications for ER vary by region, participants identified shared challenges and observations related to exploring ER methods and achieving stakeholder buy-in, drawing on experience from commercial as well as recreational fisheries.

Aligning data capabilities and management objectives: which comes first?

Forum speakers reinforced that ER is not a solution to all recreational data challenges, but a data collection method for supporting specific management strategies and objectives. Evaluating the utility of ER as a data collection method begins first with identifying clear management objectives, and then assessing needs for data timeliness,

accuracy, and precision. However, this process invokes the same challenges of engaging stakeholders, identifying tradeoffs and translating values into management objectives, which can make it difficult for data collection discussions to gain traction. As part of an exploration of management objectives, it's also important to consider the alignment between management complexity and data capabilities, and the opportunities that ER could help support.

Perceptions and expectations need to be managed and understood.

The recreational community's enthusiasm and interest in ER can help support broader discussions about recreational management objectives and data improvements, but it's also important to manage expectations for how ER can be used and what outcomes it can support. While ER is best suited to particular management objectives and data collection priorities, there remains the tendency to incorrectly equate ER with "better data." One reason for this is a tendency to conflate ER as a data collection method with a "count every fish" census approach, which is often perceived as more credible among stakeholders who value having an individual connection to the data provided. Another challenge is the public's expectation that technology should be an asset, and that enhanced technology should translate to improved data. While a well-designed sample survey may be the best fit for management needs in many circumstances, the public's tendency to value large sample sizes and ER methods can undermine perceptions of data quality.

Voluntary angler reporting is an especially important opportunity to leverage enthusiasm while managing expectations. While innovations in ER are prompting interest in voluntary reporting, sampling and validation challenges mean that managers may be least able to use data from stakeholders who are most motivated to contribute. Forum participants discussed other opportunities to utilize voluntary data, for example to indicate presence/absence or generate additional length and weight measurements, but also noted the public's expectation that if data is collected, it should be used and should lead to improvements.

ER can reinforce distinctions within the recreational community.

The development of ER methods in for-hire fisheries is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between data credibility, engagement, and identification of objectives, although it also reinforces distinctions within the recreational community. ER is presently more feasible in the for-hire industry than among private recreational anglers, which impacts the exploration of management objectives among each group and within the recreational community as a whole. For-hire operators are a small and well-defined group of users, with more transferable experience from commercial fisheries and between regions, and with ER there is high "bang for the buck" by improving accountability among a group that can account for a large portion of recreational catch. Participants also noted the importance of ensuring and incentivizing compliance in the design of ER programs, which is more feasible in federally permitted for-hire fisheries.

Integration of recreational economic data

Understanding the economic contributions of recreational fishing, and improving recreational socioeconomic data, was one of five signature issues identified through the first National Recreational Saltwater Fishing Summit in 2010 and resulting national action agenda. Forum participants reflected on the challenge of integrating economic information into decision-making, as well as that of communicating to stakeholders how economics informs the decision-making process.

Economic information isn't hardwired into the council process.

Council discussions in recent years have been dominated by National Standard 1 and the requirements to set annual catch limits and accountability measures. In contrast to economic data, biological and stock assessment information and analysis is overall more prominent in the council process, more widely reflected in council member expertise, and more likely to feed directly into presentations in support of council discussions. While some participants felt that their councils get “caught up” in discussions of economic data, the group felt that councils can build greater proficiency and capacity to integrate economic information into decision-making. Another challenge is relating the economic impacts of a particular action to the bigger picture cumulative effects of how decisions and external factors interact to impact stakeholders.

The integration of economic data begins with management objectives.

Perhaps the biggest challenge of integrating economic data into decision-making is that decision-makers, stakeholders, and economists have different perspectives and expectations for how information should be used. Stakeholders' expectations for the use of economic data are often based on justifying or building support for a policy position, and these expectations can exist at the council level as well. Forum speakers emphasized that economic data is just one more information input, and that the way in which this information informs decision-making is ultimately a matter of management objectives and how decision-makers choose to weigh information.

Conclusion

Managing for recreational objectives will continue to be an institutional exploration, as well as an adaptation. Responding to changing stakeholder demographics involves the entire network of roles and relationships within the federal fisheries management framework, adapting along different timelines. Parts of this adaptation, particularly at the NOAA Fisheries level, involve the organizational elements, the data and analysis capabilities, and the policy guidance to institutionalize recognition of recreational values. Other aspects, including the decision-making process, represent an ongoing process of building capacity to factor recreational motivations, values, and relationships into the balance of tradeoffs that shapes the fisheries management process.

Discussions at the 2014 East Coast Forum demonstrated that building this capacity at the council level involves new responsibilities and opportunities for leadership. These include exploring recreational management objectives conceptually and in practice, acknowledging shared values as well as diverse opinions, and considering expectations for successful stakeholder engagement. The recreational stakeholder community will continue to be large and dynamic, to engage differently than other stakeholder groups, and have different perceptions and expectations for successful management. Managing for recreational objectives is not just a matter of what makes the recreational community distinctive, but also of better integrating this group into a management process designed to accommodate competing values and tradeoffs. In this setting, tension and occasionally controversy are not representative of failure to adapt, but the process of change itself.

II. Forum Presentations

Opening discussion: The evolution of recreational saltwater fishing

Rip Cunningham, Conservation Editor, *Salt Water Sportsman*; former chairman, New England Fishery Management Council

Rip Cunningham reflected on the history of saltwater recreational fishing from his career in outdoor journalism and his management experience as a three-term member of the New England Fishery Management Council. The recreational angling community's values and relationship with management reflect a period of rapid growth and evolution. Mr. Cunningham described how advances in boating, equipment, tackle, and technology, along with economic growth, led to increasing accessibility and participation in saltwater recreational fishing, as well as an increasing need for management. Today, strong stock status and the opportunity to catch fish are the most important drivers of recreational participation. Mr. Cunningham emphasized the economic and conservation benefits generated by the recreational fishing industry, concluding that it is incumbent upon the recreational fishing community to represent its interests more effectively, and for managers to recognize the recreational industry as a key stakeholder.

Presentation and discussion: Economic analysis of recreational fisheries

Dr. Rita Curtis, Chief, Economics & Social Analysis Division, NOAA Fisheries Office of Science & Technology

Dr. Rita Curtis described the models and research methods NOAA Fisheries uses to explore the economic effects of fisheries management actions and alternatives, and to meet the National Standards, NEPA, and other federal mandates. Dr. Curtis reviewed the management applications of different models and data inputs including economic impact and valuation models, for-hire cost and earnings and angler expenditures, stated preference surveys, a social indicators toolbox, and BLAST, a promising new bioeconomic model recently piloted in New England that combines information about angler preferences with stock assessment models to evaluate a wider range of management alternatives. Dr. Curtis also summarized highlights and feedback from NOAA Fisheries' recent Recreational Fisheries Constituents' Economics Workshop, which convened economists and recreational constituents to discuss data collection and research and perceptions of how recreational economic data is integrated into decision-making.

NOAA Fisheries' Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative

Danielle Rioux, Recreational Fisheries Policy Specialist, NOAA Fisheries

Danielle Rioux provided an overview of NOAA Fisheries' Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative, implemented to build trust and strengthen relationships between the agency and the recreational community. The initiative began with the appointment of a new recreational fisheries policy advisor, a Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

(MAFAC) working group, and regional recreational fisheries coordinators, the 2010 Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Summit, and the 2010 National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Action Agenda. Ms. Rioux described the progress that has been made in five key areas since the first Summit, including fishing opportunities, recreational catch and effort data, socioeconomic data, communication, and institutional orientation. The 2014 Summit built on this foundation by exploring five new themes: angler satisfaction and management, healthy recreational fisheries, science and data, successful relationships, and regional engagement. NOAA Fisheries has committed to the development of a National Marine Recreational Fisheries Policy and an updated National Action Agenda to be released in 2015.

Panel discussion: Engaging the recreational community

Emily Muehlstein, Fisheries Outreach Specialist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Dr. Michelle Duval, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries; Vice Chairman, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Mary Clark, Communications Program Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Emily Muehlstein, Dr. Michelle Duval, and Mary Clark described the strategies their three councils have adopted to reach out to the recreational community, share information, elicit ideas and perspectives, and support long-term planning.

Ms. Muehlstein provided an overview of the Gulf Council's communications goal and desired outcomes for stakeholder engagement, including improved participation, relationships, and compliance. The Council utilizes a wide range of outreach strategies to engage recreational stakeholders, including social media, field visits, online engagement, and more recently a council-directed series of Recreational Angler Participation (RAP) sessions intended to engage private recreational anglers in exploring problems and solutions. Ms. Muehlstein reviewed the advantages as well as the challenges associated with each strategy, including the relationship between stakeholder feedback and policy response.

Dr. Duval described the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's snapper grouper visioning project, an effort to move away from crisis management by developing a long-term blueprint for the fishery. The Council held a series of visioning port meetings in each state, intended to engage commercial and recreational stakeholders as well as chefs, the tourism industry, and other voices to explore what's working and what's not. Dr. Duval reviewed some of the prominent themes and concerns raised at these discussions, as well as lessons learned that the council may apply to future outreach and engagement efforts. The Council's next steps will include reviewing the feedback from these meetings to begin developing a draft Vision Blueprint to guide management of the fishery over the next 5 years.

Ms. Clark provided an overview of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's visioning and strategic planning process, initiated to help build relationships and define stakeholder expectations for successful management. The council used a variety of outreach methods including surveys and roundtable port meetings to engage a range of stakeholders and elicit feedback on a broad scope of issues. Ms. Clark shared some of the concerns raised by recreational stakeholders, and described how this feedback translates into recommendations to help guide the council's ongoing engagement with the recreational community.