

APPROVED BY:  
  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**STATE-FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday October 19, 2022**

**San Antonio, TX**

Chairman **Scott Bannon** called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. The following members and others were present:

**Members**

Scott Bannon, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL  
Luiz Barbieri, FLFWC, St. Petersburg, FL  
Joe Spraggins, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Jason Froeba, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Chris Mace, TPWD, Corpus Christi, TX  
Jack McGovern (proxy for Andy Strelcheck), NOAA Fisheries, Saint Petersburg, FL  
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Allan Brown, USFWS, Atlanta, GA

**Others**

Richard Cody, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD  
Dan Ellinor, FLFWC, Tallahassee, FL  
Alexis Sabine, Texas Sea Grant, Corpus Christi, TX  
Julian Macoras, St. Thomas, USVI  
Adam Pollack, NOAA Fisheries, Pascagoula, MS  
Eric Hoffmeyer, NOAA Fisheries, Pascagoula, MS  
Jill Hendon, USM GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS  
Ted Switzer, FLFWC, St. Petersburg, FL  
Russ Dunn, NOAA Fisheries, St. Petersburg, FL  
Alan Lowther, NOAA Fisheries, Miami, FL  
Steve Brown, FLFWC, Cedar Key, FL  
Beverly Sauls, FLFWC, St. Petersburg, FL  
John Roussel, Zachary, LA  
Dean Aucoin, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Sean Morton, NOAA Fisheries, Charleston, SC  
Tim Sartwell, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD  
Rick Burris, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Doug Boyd, Boerne, TX  
Trevor Moncrief, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Porta Sapp, FDACS, Tallahassee, FL

**Staff**

Gregg Bray, FIN Program Manager  
Jeff Rester, SEAMAP Program Manager  
Steve VanderKooy, IFJ Program Manager

James Ballard, Sport Fish Restoration/Aquatic Invasives Coordinator  
 Charlie Robertson, Fisheries Restoration Coordinator  
 Debbie McIntyre, IJF Program Staff Assistant  
 Joe Ferrer, Systems Administrator, Ocean Springs, MS  
 Donna Bellais, ComFIN Programmer, Ocean Springs, MS  
 Cheryl Noble, Administrative Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS  
 Deanna Valentine, FIN Scanning Specialist, Ocean Springs, MS  
 Ali Wilhelm, Sport Fish Restoration/Aquatic Invasives Staff Assistant/Travel Processor  
 Angie Rabideau, Senior Accountant, Ocean Springs, MS

**Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Discussion and Final Approval of GulfFIN Funding Activities for 2023**

**G. Bray** provided a brief overview of the documents that were distributed to the group. He also discussed the summary of the activities for potential funding in 2023 that was developed by the FIN Committee. **R. Cody** from NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology (OST) stated the likelihood of operating under a continuing resolution resulting in level funding is high. For that reason, the preliminary proposed funding levels are utilizing 2022 amounts. The preliminary numbers show the GulfFIN line item at \$4.367M and RecFIN line item at \$2.558M. These totals reflect Congressional increases and increases to improve the amount of recreational sample days for MRIP surveys. With administrative fees removed, the amount available for FIN funding in 2023 totals \$6.926M. The original amount proposed for 2023 for all the jobs was approximately \$6.780M, which meant there is a potential surplus of approximately \$145K. The breakdown of the proposed 2023 funding is as follows:

2023 Proposed Funding		
GulfFIN line item	\$3,962,679	
Congressional increase - 2022	\$405,207	
GulfFIN - available		\$4,367,886
Gulf portion of RecFIN (1/3)	\$685,364	
MRIP base allocation funding	\$880,000	
2022 MRFMA Rec General Survey funds	\$900,000	
Congressional increase - 2022	\$93,476	
RecFIN - available		\$2,558,840
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</b>		<b>\$6,926,726</b>

After discussion, **L. Barbieri** moved to fund **Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities, Collecting, Managing, and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data, Operation of FIN Data Management System, and Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operation** for a total budget of \$6.780M and was seconded by **J. Froeba**. The motion passed unanimously.

This funding scenario would result in a potential surplus of \$145k. Until definitive funding amounts for 2023 are provided by NOAA Fisheries it is difficult to determine how to prioritize surplus spending. **G. Bray** stated that when accurate funding levels are obtained, GulfFIN would provide some recommended spending priorities for the S/FFMC to review and make a final decision on.

The committee also discussed funding for NOAA Fisheries SEFHIER program. The states and GSMFC staff have been assisting by implementing the dockside validation survey component. GSMFC staff have determined that approximately \$500k exists to support the validation survey in 2023. The proposed cost for continuing the validation survey at current sampling levels in 2023 is approximately \$1M. NOAA Fisheries SERO stated they are operating at a funding shortfall and no additional funds are currently available. The committee asked that Gulf States staff work with NOAA Fisheries and state scientific staff to have a technical meeting soon as to whether to continue the validation survey under a funding shortfall and how it would be implemented. State and Federal partners were all in agreement that finding a way to continue a validation sampling program would be preferred.

The committee also discussed continuation of the GulfFIN Biological Sampling program. This program collects age structures and additional biological measurements from the recreational sector for a large number of federal and state managed species. Current proposed budgets put the project cost at nearly \$1.4M for 2023 but only \$1M exists in available funding. After discussion the committee made the following motion:

**Motion: The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved to accept the proposed funding for the GulfFIN Biological Sampling program for 2023 for a total budget of \$1M and to forward this onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

This represents a funding shortfall of \$318k. **G. Bray** will work with state program managers to obtain revised budgets and statements of work for 2023 under the funding shortfall.

**Discussion of SEAMAP Funding Activities for 2023**

**Jeff Rester** provided some background on the SEAMAP budget and surveys for the Gulf of Mexico. The FY2022 SEAMAP appropriation was \$5.125 million and Rester stated that SEAMAP received approximately \$4.78 million for fishery independent sampling for all three SEAMAP components. All three SEAMAP components based their FY2022 budget on level funding of \$5.125 million. The total proposed for the Gulf was \$2.10M.

The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee reviewed the various SEAMAP surveys along with their associated costs. For FY2023, SEAMAP will continue the current SEAMAP survey work and sampling effort and hope that level funding or additional funding will be appropriated. After discussion the committee made the following motion:

**Motion: The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved to accept the proposed funding for SEAMAP surveys for 2023 for a total budget of \$2.10M and to forward this onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and Final Approval of IJF State Research Funding (SuRF) for 2023**

**S. VanderKooy** provided a summary of the SuRF funding for 2023. In 2022 the IJF program received \$1.16M that was directed to the states for research efforts. That results in \$232k in 2023 for each state. Each state has different proposals to utilize this funding and a brief description of state projects was provided to the committee prior to the meeting. The proposals are in review with NOAA Fisheries and VanderKooy hopes to receive feedback or approval soon. VanderKooy hopes to be able to meet a January 1, 2023 start date.

**Motion: The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved to accept the proposed funding for IJF State Research Funding for 2023 for a total budget of \$1.16M and to forward this onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Menhaden Advisory Committee Report**

**Ray Mroch** (NOAA Fisheries) presented a review of 2022 fishing season. There were very few weather days to keep the fleet off the water in 2022. The final expected landings will be around 487,000 metric tons.

**Carey Gelpi** (TPWD) reported that a total of 1.9M lbs had been landed against the 34M lbs Texas cap in 2022 which was 6% of the available catch.

**Dr. Kim De Mutsert** (USM) gave an overview of the two ecosystem-based models that have been developed in the Gulf related to menhaden. Critical to both models is the need for expanded diet data for a number of potential predators.

**Ray Mroch** stated that an annual forecast of project landings has been provided for the past 50 years. He explained the model is simple using the previous year's catch and effort to predict subsequent seasons catches. Mroch will continue to provide the committee with forecasts prior to the beginning of each season even though the MAC may not formally meet in March.

The Committee received an update from **Dr. Robert Leaf** (USM) and his graduate student, on the Harvest Control Rule (HRC) and annual abundance Indices. The Harvest Control Rule is a potential tool to restrict the fishery when there are detectable shifts in menhaden abundances in the Gulf which the industry can use in their MSC certification to adjust harvest levels based on the indices.

The MAC discussed the suite of reference points which were provided as part of the assessment results in SEDAR63 and GDAR03. Currently the limit and thresholds are based on a historical average that we don't want to exceed. The Commission hosted two workshops in 2019 to look at

the options for managers then COVID hit and we have not progressed.

The MAC provided the following motion:

**Motion: The MAC requests approval to hold an additional facilitated workshop to develop the biological reference points for management to define overfishing and overfished status for the Gulf Menhaden stock.**

The MAC chair rotated to the Federal seat so until a replacement is trained, Ray Mroch was elected as the MAC chair.

**Review of NOAA Fisheries Saltwater Recreational Fishing Policy**

**Russ Dunn** provided a presentation on the update to the National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Policy. The policy provides the public insight into NOAA Fisheries decision making on recreational fishing issues. The policy was updated based on findings from the 2022 Recreational Fisheries Summit. The policy is focused on supporting diverse healthy ecosystems, promoting broad public access to fisheries resources, maintaining strong partnerships between state and federal management entities, advancing innovative approaches and solutions to evolving science and management challenges, providing world class science to inform decision making, and continued improvement of communication with the public. NOAA Fisheries is still receiving comments through partner discussions and public webinars. The goal is to have an updated policy in June 2023.

**Election of Officers**

**Jason Froeba** was nominated for chairman and **Luiz Barberi** was nominated for vice-chairman. The nominations were closed and both were approved unanimously by the committee.

*There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.*