



# Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

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## Coordinating Council Meeting February 5, 2015 4:15 pm

**The Westin Alexandria, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria, VA**

### **DRAFT AGENDA**

1. Welcome/Introductions – Coordinating Council Chair C. Patterson
2. Public Comment\* – C. Patterson
3. Council Consent – C. Patterson
  - a) Approval of Agenda (Attachment 1) - **ACTION**
  - b) Approval of Proceedings from October 2014 (Attachment 2) - **ACTION**
4. ACCSP Status Report
  - Program Update – Program Director M. Cahall
  - MRIP Transition Update – Program Director M. Cahall
  - Committee Updates – Operations Committee Chair T. Hoopes
  - Independent Program Review (IPR) Update – Program Director M. Cahall
5. Discussion on giving the Operations Committee more authority to recommend a different funding split than the 75/25 when necessary
6. Other Business
7. Adjourn – C. Patterson

\*See Public Comment Guidelines:

[http://www.accsp.org/documents/ACCSP\\_PublicCommentPolicyOct2013.pdf](http://www.accsp.org/documents/ACCSP_PublicCommentPolicyOct2013.pdf)

ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM  
COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Mystic Hilton

Mystic, Connecticut

OCTOBER 28, 2014

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The Coordinating Council of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program convened in the Grand Ballroom of The Mystic Hilton, Tuesday afternoon, October 28, 2014, and was called to order at 4:10 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Cheri Patterson.

CHAIRMAN CHERI PATTERSON: Welcome, everybody. We have an aggressive agenda here for an hour's period of time, so we'd like to move along. I'd like to start out with is there any public comment currently? Not seeing any, we'll continue on. Does anyone have any additional changes or additions to the agenda? Gordon?

MR. GORDON COLVIN: Madam Chair, I don't have an addition to the agenda; but if it's all right with you, I would like to, at this time, offer a brief comment on the action just concluded at our joint meeting. Our joint meeting ended so abruptly, I didn't get a chance to grab the microphone again and say this.

I would like to, on behalf of the Fisheries Service and the MRIP Program, recognize that the step taken today was a huge step and one that involved a great deal of effort, time, work and trouble by a lot of people. I want to express appreciation to ACCSP and most especially to its recreational technical committee, its staff; and we have to recognize the truly outstanding effort made by Geoff White from beginning to end on all of this. It took tremendous time, effort, energy, perseverance, patience and every other positive attribute you can imagine to bring us to this point successfully.

MR. MICHAEL CAHALL: If I may offer the additional comment, there are several high-quality craft brews in his future.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Seeing no changes to the agenda, it's approved by consent. Does anyone have any changes to the August 2014 proceedings, which is Attachment 2? Seeing none, the proceedings are approved by consent. Reviewing the action items from the August 2014 Coordinating Council meeting, we have approved the Outreach Strategic Plan during that meeting; and there are no new action items that were recorded, so we will move on to the next. We are going to Tom Hoopes and Rick Bellavance to review the recommendations of the two FY 2015 submitted proposals.

MR. TOM HOOPES: The Advisors and Ops met back at the beginning of the month and as in the past reviewed and ranked the proposals as submitted. Just to review the program priorities, you will see catch and effort and landings data being at the top – and this is from the 2015 RFP – with biological data, releases, discards and protected species data; and then, fourth, economic and sociological data.

There were 16 proposals submitted, nine maintenance, (one more from last year) and six new, (two more from last year) and then, of course, the Administrative proposal. The New/Maintenance funding split is the same. This is the sixth year we've been using a 75 percent Maintenance and 25 percent New split. This is the fifth year with sufficient New proposals. This slide is just to show where the administrative costs have gone the last 15 or so years.

I don't throw this up to throw Mike under the bus, but just to prove that costs are increasing and the numbers of staff are increasing. With a fixed budget, obviously, it's something to keep in mind in terms of funding these proposals. If we take the administrative grant with its fee, that makes up 55 percent of the 3.35 million, leaving 45 percent for the submitted proposals.

At 75 percent, that would be \$1.14 million for Maintenance and \$381,000 for New. Here are the Maintenance proposals. Hopefully, you can see that. These are the nine proposals, and they're in order of the number of years that they have been funded. You can see the Recreational Technical Committee proposal has been funded for 17 years; Rhode Island for 15; South Carolina and Maine for 13 years.

The Maine proposal is the portside bycatch compared to bycatch sampling; and then Maine also has the dealer reporting, which has been funded for eleven years; New Jersey, ten years; New York, eight years; and the combined ASMFC and Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council 4 years and the Southeast Fisheries Center for two years.

Again, I throw this up just to show that a lot of these Maintenance proposals have been on the board for quite a while. I think you're all familiar with them. You'll see their proposed amounts over on the far right side, including the fee, if appropriate. Then if we move to the next slide, you'll see the New proposals.

We have a proposal from Maine to create and expand a swipe card program; one from New Hampshire to improve lobster biological and catch effort data for Georges Bank; one from Rhode Island for continued web portal development for lobster settlement index data submission; and one from North Carolina to update and enhance Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Data Transmission Methods.

Then there are two from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, one for Atlantic Shrimp catch and effort automation and one to identify potential errors and development of a data flag system for the TIP Program. I've highlighted two of these New proposals because the first one will start actually with the Rhode Island proposal, if we go to the next slide.

The Ops and Advisors agreed that this proposal was not a fisheries-dependent proposal; and since ACCSP has not established standards for fisheries-independent proposals, ranked it accordingly. The second proposal had to do with the Maine swipe card project, and both Ops and Advisors agree and ranked this proposal on merit, but were concerned that funds were already being allocated to a similar project, but with a different software solution.

They recommended combining with the existing Massachusetts Swipe Card Project, which has already started, if possible. If we move on to the spreadsheet, I'll show how the proposals were ranked at this point. These are the Maintenance proposals and the ranking. If you can go back up a little bit, hopefully, everyone can see that, the ranking is the average between the Ops and

the Advisors, with the Recreational Technical Committee's proposal at the top. The ranking is in Column M, with South Carolina, second; Rhode Island, third; New Jersey, fourth; Maine dealer reporting, fifth; the Southeast Fisheries Center aging of biological samples, sixth; and then the combined Mid-Atlantic Proposal, seventh; the portside commercial catch sampling and bycatch at eight and the New York proposal at nine.

If we scroll down to the bottom, you'll see how the New proposals shake out. You'll see the North Carolina proposal ranked first; the Maine swipe card proposal ranked second; and the New Hampshire lobster project ranked third; the two Southeast Fisheries Science Center proposals, shrimp first, and the TIP program fourth and fifth and the lobster settlement proposal last.

**CHAIRMAN PATTERSON:** The Operations Committee had noted that Maine had the option to work with the State of Massachusetts in creating a swipe card dealer and harvest reporting system, which we collaborated between Maine, Massachusetts, and NOAA Fisheries for another perspective ranking process. Then it cascaded into including other projects.

I'd like to go over with you how some of these collaborative adjustments have occurred. If you would like, we'll go back to the spreadsheet to see how many are now funded based on this collaborative adjustment. Maine is going to be working with Massachusetts, NOAA and ACCSP to develop a swipe card project, which ACCSP will take \$40,000 from their proposal to help work with this swipe card project, which frees up about \$190,000.

We approached New York to see if they would be willing to be funded for five months in this FY period, because they haven't even started utilizing their FY-14 funds yet. They've had a late start up. They said that they were fine with that, and that puts them a year and five months of funding under their project.

The five months will allow them to get into the next proposal cycle so that there would be no interruption. We talked with the Management and Science Committee yesterday to see if it would be possible to reduce the Mid-Atlantic trawl budget in order to be able to fund all of the Maintenance projects.

Now, if we go over to the new projects, what this does with moving money around between the Maintenance and the New projects is it continues to fund the North Carolina data feeds and the Maine swipe card, but the Maine swipe card is reduced down to \$40,000. It will also include now the New Hampshire lobster biological sampling.

Actually, if this is agreeable, it looks like we can fund more projects; however, the caveat is that ACCSP has in their funding decision document that 75 percent of the available funds will go to Maintenance projects, and 25 percent will go to New projects. If we go with this collaborative process of rearranging funds to fund all of these projects that I suggested, then the funding split becomes 88 percent Maintenance and 12 percent New.

Now, NOAA Fisheries has been extremely generous over the last three years and has found for ACCSP about \$150,000 to bring up the overall budget to 3.5 million, which is what it was originally. It has been reduced to \$3.35 million and NOAA Fisheries has been great at providing an extra \$150,000.

Last year we were actually able to utilize that to fund all of the projects. If we do get this additional funding – and as we all know, funding is definitely something that is up in the air, and it's not consistent or it might not be consistent – but if that additional funding does become available, then a suggestion would be to make the Observer Project whole – they are reduced only by 10 percent – and to fund the next New project, which is the Southeast Fisheries Science Center Shrimp Project.

If that is the case, the split becomes 82 percent Maintenance/18 percent New; so at least we're getting a little bit closer to that 25%/75% split. If we can go to the spreadsheet, please, if you could scroll off to the right, right now what you see in pink is where the cutoff is for the Ops and Advisors ranking of the projects. That's the cutoff.

If you look way off to the right, then you see that the last column on the right shows that all the projects under Maintenance are funded. If you move down to the New projects, you see in the pink again where the Ops and Advisors have their cutoff based on the funds available with the 75/25 percent split; and then the cutoff is way off on the right with this collaborative process that we've been talking about. Does anybody have any questions in regard to this? Mark.

MR MARK ALEXANDER: You did say that if that \$150,000 comes through that the shrimp project, which is currently in pink in both those columns, would be able to be funded?

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Correct. We didn't include that here, because the \$150,000 isn't in our pockets yet. Anybody have any questions? Terry.

MR. TERRY STOCKWELL: I don't have any questions, but I'm ready to make some comments whenever you are ready to accept them.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Okay, no other questions? Okay, Terry, please go forward with the comments.

MR. STOCKWELL: I spent a significant amount of time late last week scrambling with staff and working with Cheri trying to figure how we can collaborate on the two swipe card proposals. It was pushing uphill for a little while, but we got our staffs working together pretty well. In continuing to collaborate with Cheri and supporting the direction that she was going, I think the Ops Committee is coming up with a proposal that makes a whole lot of sense to me.

To fund all the Maintenance programs in a time when there is no state money – some of them are keystone. We just discussed the Portside Monitoring program in the business session and to add at least one more new project would be win-win. I would be prepared to make a motion whenever you're ready, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: I'd like to see if there are any more comments. Go ahead, Terry, make your motion.

MR. STOCKWELL: I would move to adopt the collaborative adjustment proposal as developed by the Ops Committee and on the board as presented today.

MR. JAMES J. GILMORE, JR.: I'll second that.

MR. COLVIN: Just for clarification; does this motion speak to the proposed distribution of \$3.35 million or the distribution of 3.5 million.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: This is the \$3.35 million. It does not include the \$150,000.

MR. COLVIN: I suggest then that be added to the word of the motion.

MR. STOCKWELL: I'm feeling very friendly, Gordon.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: So, did you want to go ahead, Gordon?

MR. COLVIN: Well, a couple of things. First of all, for the record, may I ask the Chair of the Operations Team if that proposal is the Ops recommendation? I don't think it is. I think it was built after and flowed from Ops recommendation, so I think we need a little clarity on that. I would request that it be specific as to a funding level of \$3.35 million, because I think we'll need another motion at a funding level of \$3.5 million.

MR. HOOPES: That's correct. That was not an adjustment made by the Ops Committee, but the swipe card change was done collaboratively between Mike and myself and Maine and NOAA Fisheries.

MR. CAHALL: I might suggest that we have the language right there, adopt the –

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: We're trying to put the language up; just a minute.

MR. CAHALL: – adopt the funding as recommended today. I mean, you have it up; it's on the spreadsheets. We already have it. I don't think we need to say anything else.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: We had a question from Rick or a comment from Rick?

MR. RICK BELLAVANCE: Just a comment and I guess it's similar to what Gordon brought up. This is also not the Advisors' position either. While I think in spirit the Advisors support what is happening here and they recommended something similar; I don't think they would have a problem with it, but it's not coming from them either; so just to clarify.

Also, the second point would be is it worth noting that we are changing the distribution percentages for this particular year from 75/25 to 88/12. Is that something that needs to be recorded for further clarification? That's the question I have.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: It is currently recorded, because this whole conversation is recorded at this point in time. There was somebody down here that had a question in this corner?  
Robert

MR. ROBERT H. BOYLES, JR.: Yes, Gordon clarified it; I don't think this is what is coming out of Ops.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Okay, so the motion in front of us right now is to adopt the Collaborative Adjustment Funding as recommended by the Coordinating Council based on the \$3.35 million. Is there anything that needs to be changed in that? Does anybody have any comments on what is drafted currently for the motion? Gordon.

MR. COLVIN: I just think that for the record it would be useful for the mover and seconder to concur or take note that the recommendation referred to in the motion is that which was made by Madam Chair earlier in this discussion as opposed to other recommendations which are also part of the record.

MR. STOCKWELL: So, Gordon, you're recommending that as recommended by Madam Chair?

MR. COLVIN: I think if we just get that on the record; it doesn't even necessarily have to be in the motion.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: So, that's okay, Gordon, what's here? Okay; let's vote on this, please. Everybody with a yes, raise their hands; everybody with a no; any abstentions? Motion passes; twenty yeases, 0 no's, 0 abstentions. Thank you. We'll move forward now with the Status Report from Mike Cahall and Tom Hoopes. Go ahead, Gordon.

MR. COLVIN: I believe we need a second motion to address how we would dispose of funds if we receive \$3.5 million, which we have not voted on. I would offer a motion that in the event we receive \$3.5 million; that we disburse the difference as outlined earlier by the Chair, which was, I believe, to add 10 percent to the Observer Project and fund the South Atlantic Shrimp Catch and Effort Automation Project.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Mark seconds. Gordon, does that read correctly? Is there a discussion on this motion? Let's move it to a vote. Motion is to disburse funds in the event of funding of \$3.5 million by fully funding the ASMFC Observer Project and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center Shrimp Project. Motion is by Mr. Colvin, seconded by Mr. Alexander. Move to a vote. Everybody, yes, please raise your hands; anybody, no; any abstentions? Motion passes; twenty, yes. Yes, Bob.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: Just a question on intent on the last motion. I assume that if we end up with not exactly \$3.5 million, it's \$3.48 million or \$3.52 million or something along those lines, that it's still within the Chair and the Director of the ACCSP to have enough discretion to move that money consistent with the intent of this motion; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Yes, that is correct. Gordon?

MR. COLVIN: I think also the Executive Committee is in a position to act consistent with the intent expressed with these kinds of these motions once final funding is received if we can't get back to the Full Council. We discussed this in Executive Committee this morning. The fact of the matter is that both of these levels, \$3.35 million and \$3.50 million, are our assumptions about what we might get.

The fact of the matter is there is no federal budget, and there is uncertainty about when and how much. It's likely that actual amounts will differ somewhat. They often do; and while we'd like to get the three and a half million we've been getting and we'd like to provide it, we have to wait and see what Congress does before we can be sure.

MR. CAHALL: Typically, we've been given discretion to take care of it if we get sufficient funds. The Executive Committee can easily be called into session if we get something unusual or unexpected.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Okay, moving on to the Status Reports. Mike and Tom Hoopes.

MR. CAHALL: I don't have any slides for the program updates because frankly you've seen a lot it already. We've been focused primarily in recent months on the MRIP work. That has taken up quite a bit of staff time, including the Percent Standard Error (PSE) Workshop, which I think was successful, and also in doing the preparation for the funding decision process.

We're also moving forward with the deployment of the Trip Reporting System. We have an agreement at this point, and it looks like we're going to be rolling that out with them in the first quarter of 2015. Beyond that, you're pretty much seeing the result of all the staff work, and I didn't see any point in putting too many more slides in front of you. I'll turn it over to Tom.

MR. HOOPEES: I'm going to run through a number of slides, if you can just go to the next one, and briefly touch on each of the committee activities the last year. ACCSP staff put these slides together; I'm very grateful for that. I will try and touch on the more important points. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop me along the way.

Before I start, from my perspective, besides all of the work that has been going on that is independent program review related or APAIS transition related, it seems to me that the Program has morphed into something where we're not just trying to get data, we're actually enhancing and improving the data that we're collecting; and I think you'll see a lot of that in these slides.

It is a testament to the Program staff and all of the partner folks. If we move to the Operations Committee and then the next slide, briefly, as mentioned, we met in October to review the proposals. We've made a recommendation on the APAIS Transition Plan; and committee members were added to the Annual Award for Excellence Subcommittee.

A lot of the committee members are involved in different subcommittees for the independent program review, including governance, funding, the standard operating procedure process and build-out and change of management; so there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes on these subcommittees.

We move on to the next slide and we go to the Advisors. Again, the Advisors met with us in person in early October; also made recommendations on the APAIS Transition Plan, and members were added to the Annual Award for Excellence Subcommittee. They were also tasked in creating a list of festivals and venues where the program can be promoted.

If we move on to the Recreation Technology Committee; obviously, a lot going on with this committee. First of all, there was a workshop back in late September looking at PSE. The

proceedings from that workshop are being developed. The Committee met on September 25 to approve the APAIS Transition Plan and also to discuss For-Hire logbook developments, particularly with developments going on in North Carolina, the SAFIS handheld application, and the MRIP Inventory Project. Developing projects last year and going into 2015, obviously, to support the APAIS transition state conduct and to develop a PSE standard based on the workshop outcome. In addition, developed For-Hire Logbook Reporting Standards in coordination with MRIP and developed opt-in reporting standards. I might mention some of the details on the opt-in.

It looks like a subcommittee was formed to draft volunteer reporting standards for recreational data. The work is based on a 2012 Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council Workshop and is expected to support collection of these data for specific purposes, such as collecting biological data on released fish, hard parts for aging, and presence-absence information.

If we move on to the Bycatch Prioritization Committee, this committee is busy developing a new matrix. They met in late September. Matrix rows and columns were reviewed in conjunction with objectives, procedures diagram, which you will see on the next slide, to ensure that all necessary and no extraneous columns were present in the matrix.

The activities for January will include building out this procedure and developing a matrix key and incorporating this process into the Standard Operating Procedure document. The matrix will be populated, reviewed, and completed by the group for approval in January 2015. The next slide shows this process and I know you can't read it but it shows the complexity of the process and the contingencies that are built into developing this matrix.

I'm sure that if you wanted to look at it in more detail, we could make it available to you. The next slide shows – one of the key items in the matrix is coming up with a unique list of fleets defined by gear and area. In the South Atlantic, that was a little deficient, so the Committee has been working to build out that list.

I believe it is expected the final items will be accepted and incorporated into the matrix in January. If we move on to the Biological Review Panel, that group is working on a module implementation, mapping existing data into new table structures and testing, using existing queries and soliciting datasets for use in testing initial log procedure and queries.

The Milestone 1 (implementation of new database design, test load and initial queries) deadline is set for the end of March 2015, which is on track. Smaller activities include developing a list of queries and input parameters and result tests, and the time line for that is in January. And then also working on the definition of resilience, which appears to be somewhat vague, the group will be presenting a new definition based on the Productivity and Sustainability Workshop developed by the National Standard 1 by NOAA Fisheries Sustainable Fisheries.

If we move on to the Outreach Committees, there are several things going on there. Working on Train the Trainer and creating videos; there's a survey out to remodel the data warehouse. Outreach is being developed for handheld Etrips. An RFP has been released for an updated website and a nomination committee has been developed for the Excellence Award.

And as you can see, a new logo has been developed for the data warehouse, the digital fish. We move on to the Information Systems Committee. This committee has been tasked with a number of items, most notably Change Management, Quality Assurance-Quality Control (QA-QA) and Auditing. Those projects have been ongoing this year and will continue through 2015.

The Change Management Group has been working on a draft currently. Audits have been identified within dealer and harvester reporting. A draft is being developed and the QA-QC Group had an initial meeting in August. If we move to Commercial Technical Committee, the catch source field or column or data attribute has been incorporated into SAFIS after I think about two years of work, about a year and a half to two years of work. This is a lot of work to make this happen, because it affected all of the systems that are being used in SAFIS.

A new standard definition was drafted and accepted, and we recently discussed final issues for updating the historical data and then implementation into the warehouse will begin. Summarized feedback and recommendations for updating the warehouse interface requirements was also discussed. If we move on to the next slide, the Conversion Factor Project; data from partners was compiled, outliers have been reviewed and discussed with partners, and preliminary correlations have been run for all finfish species to calculate conversion factors. That's about it. Any questions? Gordon.

MR. COLVIN: Tom, you made reference to a project to develop standards for opt-in recreational data collection programs building on the MRIP Workshop that Jason Didden organized a couple of years ago. There is also an MRIP project that Rich Cody is managing that is looking at evaluating those kinds of projects; and it seems like there is an opportunity for coordination there. Mike, maybe that's something at the upcoming MRIP Operations Committee meeting that you and Rich could put your heads together and see how to coordinate those.

MR. CAHALL: I'll talk to him at the meeting. That's a good suggestion.

MR. COLVIN: It's not readily obvious because the original project that he had approved has changed quite a bit; and I think the new project, as it's being organized, will be a better fit.

MR. BELLAVANCE: Just a quick point; I just wanted to recognize Jerry Morgan in the back. He's our new vice-chair. We elected him at our last committee meeting, so he'll be sitting up here next year. He's from Connecticut, so he took time out of his day to come here and see what we all do here. Thanks, Jerry.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Welcome, Jerry. Any other questions? Now we'll move into reviewing the progress of the Independent Program Review Recommendations. I could probably provide that update. Right now we have an ad hoc or workgroup that is looking at the governance issues between ACCSP and ASMFC or any other type of governance organizational processes also.

Right now there is nothing new to report. We have conducted a survey. The survey results will be going out to the workgroup shortly, and the workgroup should be meeting within a month or two for a conference call, so we'll have more update to provide at the next meeting. We can move on to Bob Beal to provide the Funding Subcommittee Update.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: The Funding Committee has met twice via conference call. Just as a reminder, this group was tasked with looking at the funding approach toward the competitive proposals that were just talked about earlier; the 75%/25% split and how long-term Maintenance programs should be funded and what is the appropriate way or appropriate length of time that projects should be funded through ACCSP before they should be taken over by other funding sources.

The Committee is making a lot of progress. We have a white paper drafted that explores different funding scenarios. It explores modifying the 75% Maintenance/25% New projects split; it explores the pros and cons of sunseting funding for long-term Maintenance projects. There are scenarios where funding will be cut 10 percent per year for five years and zeroed out in the fifth year; and different scenarios like that look into how ACCSP wants to put forward its long-term strategy for funding these competitive proposals from the partners.

The group has had a lot of discussion on the realities of funding for the states. In that I mean that there are a lot of programs within the states that simply – if ACCSP doesn't fund them, it doesn't appear that there is another funding source right now; so how do we work with the states or what do we do with those projects to prevent backsliding and data streams from being discontinued that are critical for ACCSP and a number of fishery management programs up and down the coast?

That dialogue is still going on. Mike, Ann and I are working on another draft to the document. We're going to have another call of the Funding Subcommittee before the end of the calendar year, hopefully, or early next year, and then we'll forward that funding paper to the Ops Committee for their consideration prior to the February meeting of this Coordinating Council.

The plan right now is to bring the white paper and the Ops Committee perspective to the Coordinating Council in February. Any changes that the Coordinating Council feels that should be made can be implemented and taken into account in the next funding cycle that ACCSP will go through or at least the next proposal cycle and review.

That's the time line. It's a good committee; they are doing a lot of work, but there are some tough realities that they are having to wrestle with. That's the update. I will be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Any questions for Bob? We'll have an update from Mike Cahall on the general Independent Program Review (IPR) progression and the Standard Operating Procedures Subcommittee.

MR. CAHALL: I'll start with the SOP subcommittee, although it's all integrated together at this point. The Operations Committee approved the first draft of the Standard Operating Procedures at their last meeting. This included the recommendations in the IPR that we decided would best be addressed by creating a standard procedure around that recommendation.

This included all of the short-term items that were assigned to staff and to the Operations Committee as well. In doing so, between the approval of this Strategic Plan and at the prior Council meeting and the approval of the Outreach Plan, a number of the Independent Program Review recommendations have advanced.

In March of 2014, which is the last time we gave you a status, at that point 65 percent of the short-term recommendations had been completed. By completed we mean either an action had been specifically taken or the recommendation was integrated into a plan that was being executed. Short to midterm recommendations; 58 percent of them had been completed. The midterm recommendations – and there are only a couple of these – 48 percent.

Again, the major milestones that moved these forward were the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the adoption of the Outreach Plan, and the creation of a Standard Operating Procedures Document. In the current status, when I sat down and reviewed them all with the Independent Program Monitoring Group, we went through all 67 of them. We made decisions collaboratively about where they stood; and we've made some significant progress.

Eighty-five percent of the short-term recommendations are now listed as completed. Ninety-two percent of the short and 63 of the midterm recommendations are shown as completed. I've got this shown sort of as a pie chart. The best part of this pie chart is there is no glue on it anywhere. Everything is moving. We have completed a total of 28. We have 24 that are underway, and we have 15 that we have least taken preliminary steps to moving forward with.

Our next steps are going to be in January. The Operations Committee will sit down to address the remaining midterm items. There are a number of those that are assigned to staff, a number that are assigned to Ops, and we will be working those through to try to get them integrated. We expect all of the recommendations to be addressed by midyear in 2015. That's it for the IPR.

We've made a lot of progress, and I will comment that I think that although it was a very painful process at times, a lot of really good things have come from it; and some changes in the program for the better have occurred as a consequence.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Any questions for Mike? The next item on the agenda is just if there needed to be any further discussion based on the vote that was just taken with the Policy Board and the Coordinating Council or if there are any questions from this group on processes of transitioning to the MRIP/APAIS. Are we all set with that? Good to hear.

Other business; I just have one item, we have Bob Mahood, who will no longer be a representative for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The next person coming on to represent the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council will be John Carmichael. The three fishery management councils voted to also have John Carmichael be the representative on the Executive Committee.

I would also like to thank Tom Nies, who is with the New England Fishery Management Council, for coming to his first Coordinating Council meeting. Again, Tom, I really appreciate your coming and showing your support and your participation in the process. Is there any other business anybody else would like to bring forward? Seeing none, would we like to adjourn? Is there a second to adjourn? We're adjourned, thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 o'clock p.m., October 28, 2014.)

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**DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
ISFMP POLICY BOARD  
AND THE  
ACCSP COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**Hilton Mystic**  
Mystic, Connecticut  
**October 28, 2014**

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3. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 9).

## ATTENDANCE

### Board and Council Members

Terry Stockwell, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Bernie Pankowski, DE, proxy for Sen. Venables (LA)
Cheri Patterson, Chair ACCSP CC	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
G. Ritchie White, NH (GA)	John Clark, DE, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)
Doug Grout, NH (AA)	Tom O'Connell, MD (AA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Lynn Fegley, MD
Paul Diodati, MA (AA)	Russell Dize, MD, proxy for Sen. Colburn (LA)
Bill Adler, MA (GA)	Bill Goldsborough, MD (GA)
Mark Gibson, RI, proxy for R. Ballou (AA)	Rob O'Reilly, VA, proxy for J. Bull (AA)
Rick Bellavance, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Louis Daniel, Chair ISFMP
Mark Alexander, CT (AA) ACCSP	Robert Boyles, Jr. SC (AA)
James Gilmore, NY (AA)	Spud Woodward, GA (AA)
Brandon Muffley, NJ, proxy for D. Chanda (AA)	Nancy Addison, GA (GA)
Tom Baum, NJ, proxy for D. Chanda (ACCSP CC)	Martin Gary, PRFC
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)	Patrick Geer, GA
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Asm. Andrzejczak (LA)	James Estes, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Leroy Young, PA, proxy for J. Arway (AA)	Tom Nies, NEFMC
Mitchell Feigenbaum, PA, proxy for Rep. Vereb (LA)	Gordon Colvin, NMFS (ACCSP)
Loren Lustig, PA (GA)	Steve Meyers, NMFS
	Wilson Laney, USFWS (ACCSP)

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

### Ex-Officio Members

#### Staff

Bob Beal	Mike Cahall
Toni Kerns	Geoff White

#### Guests

Jack Travelstead, CCA	Russ Allen, NJ DFW
Derek Orner, NOAA	Arnold Leo, E. Hampton, NY
Steve Meyers, NOAA	Harold Mears, NMFS
Ross Self, SCDNR	David Hilton, NMFS

The ISFMP Policy Board and ACCSP Coordinating Council convened in the Grand Ballroom of The Mystic Hilton, Mystic, Connecticut, on October 28, 2014, and was called to order at 3:15 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Louis B. Daniel, III and Chairman Cherie Patterson.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIRMAN LOUIS B. DANIEL, III: All right, if everybody could take their seats, we will convene the ISFMP Policy Board and the ACCSP Coordinating Council. On behalf of Cherie and myself, welcome to the ISFMP Policy Board and ACCSP Coordinating Council Meeting. I'd like to thank you for being here.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

You've got an agenda where we will review the Transition Plan for State Angler Point Access and confirm the timeline. Is there any concern for the agenda; are there any additions or other business that I need to know about before we start? Seeing none; the agenda would be approved by consensus. Is there anyone in the public that would like to address the board on items that are not on the agenda? Seeing no interest; I will turn it over to Cherie.

### **REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF THE TRANSITION PLAN FOR THE STATE CONDUCT OF ANGLER POINT ACCESS INTERCEPT SURVEY**

CHAIRMAN CHERIE PATTERSON: We're going to start out with a review of the status of the Transition Plan for the State Conduct of Angler Point Access Intercept Survey by Geoff White, who has been working diligently with the recreational technical committee and the operations committee of the Coordinating Council to come up with these thoughts, processes and how to go through the transition. Geoff.

MR. GEOFFREY G. WHITE: Thank you all for your interest and your staffs' work to help develop this proposal. MRIP has been fantastic

in their support and their staff as well as Gregg Bray at the Gulf Commission, where we're trying to learn as much as we can from them in the process.

Today I'd like to step through the proposal, the agency role, the implementation options and the timeline and let you know exactly where we are at. As you know, MRIP is a suite of surveys composed of three different components, collecting effort data and then the dockside interviews, the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, or APAIS.

The box in yellow there is really the focus of what we will be looking at for the proposal; but a combination of the effort and the observed catch gives the expanded estimates. What is it that the proposal comes down to for the states; really the field component of the dockside data collection following the procedures set by the MRIP Access Point Angler Intercept Survey.

A big change in this is really also who the central coordinator would be. At the moment that is a contractor. This proposal was really developed at the request of the states and with the support of MRIP to align the data collection model with that of the Gulf of Mexico and Pacific states where the commissions are the central coordinating body.

That is listed here in the center of this slide. ASMFC and ACCSP would become the primary contact for NOAA Fisheries; and the states, the coast-wide implementation and administration would go through the commission; and ACCSP would act as the central data entry and quality control and data delivery to NOAA Fisheries and MRIP.

The survey design, the protocols, and the estimation routines still stay with the lead design at MRIP. The target date for this is January of 2016. Just as a quick review and why is this being approached, what are the benefits really to improve data quality via staff retention, the fish identifications, the public relations are having state staff at the dock with a local interest

invested in getting the information correct from the anglers and passing that right up.

The flexibility note really speaks to both the contracting and the procurement as well as to streamline the process for implementing changes to the methodology as well as applying local knowledge; so that goes down into the weeds of the state registry; can you get from one site to another to be in a cluster; what are the times of day where the fishing pressures are appropriate?

That state registry is critical to where the samples get chosen from and how the estimates get expanded out and where the sampling is occurring; so using the state's local knowledge there is incredibly important. The great benefit here is to enhance the partnership. It's not just them versus us. We're all in this together to get the best data collection, work with the anglers, and in the end these stewards of the fishery resource that we all work so hard to keep going.

MRIP is really about the recreational technical committee acting as a funnel to coalesce the ideas and the requests and the thoughts of all the different states to go to MRIP and say these are the core items that we would like to continue to work on. It has proven to work pretty well in the Gulf of Mexico, and that's the model we're looking to follow.

To be honest, it is a challenge for six states who have not been doing this task before. The six or seven states that are either doing it now or have done it in the past; this is a pretty straightforward reach. For those of us -- I say us because ASMFC and ACCSP would be new to this process as well -- it's a little bit more of a new task to learn; and from what I've heard, we and the states are up to the challenge.

There's always a concern over possible funding erosion, level funding eroding, what's going to happen as the years go through? One of the things that we've looked at in the drafting of the cooperative agreement is really to align the base-sampling levels with the available funds. If

there is an erosion, then some of the base sampling would go down.

If there is additional funding available, then that base sampling could go up. We've been looking at the contingencies and working with Bob and the states and MRIP to recognize that if the funding is eroded, for whatever reason, that the states and the commission would be protected from having to fill that gap in the funding to collect those same samples again. These are some of the highlights of the benefits and the challenges of what we're approaching.

In the May workshop about the state conduct; we did go over the roles and responsibilities of each agency. I wanted to quickly highlight those again. NOAA Fisheries would lead the survey design and the protocols, enter into the cooperative agreement with ASMFC, maintain the angler site and vessel registries and perform the site assignment draws.

That's kind of a critical component to the statistical setup of the survey and how these samples get drawn. After the data work is collected by the states and entered into ACCSP, that would be delivered to NOAA Fisheries, where at the end of the wave they perform the central calculations of the estimates and the presentation of that information out to the public.

As central coordinators, ASMFC and ACCSP would coordinate the survey from Maine to Georgia. As a reminder, Florida is done through the Gulf Commission. We would be executing the state contracts and payments, administration of the hiring, pay and the benefits of the centralized staff as well as some staff that would be located out in the states where we've had some requests for help; also to provide the central training materials and procedures and forms to the states, most of which are already developed by MRIP.

We would be performing the data entry and the QA-QC of the intercepted forms. That would be through scanning and optical character

recognition of the data, getting it quickly into a database format. The way the Gulf does it is those images are shared back with the states via electronic format so they can quality control and check those data moving on in the future.

Finally, of course, deliver the intercept to MRIP on the schedule of the statement of work in the contract. Of course, of most interest to you the state agency roles, contract directly with ASMFC to do the data collection tasks, provide supervisors, biologists and field staff and the scheduling and the normal activities around getting folks to the site assignments as they're drawn and even request the number of add-ons and things that go with that.

The staff training note here is really a shared task between ASMFC, ACCSP and the states. We do expect some transition training for the lead biologists to occur centrally. We do expect to do probably annual training of field staff supported by the central staff, but it's also listed here under the states because we expect during higher sampling time periods or staff turnover, that the states are going to need the ability to train their field samplers quickly and get them right out in the field.

After conducting the intercept survey, following the MRIP protocols, they provide those data sheets to ACCSP and participate in the QA-QC of the data. The plan that you have seen before had four different implementation methods. Option 1 was the status quo, to maintain this survey data collection with the contractor.

Options 2, 3 and 4 have NOAA/MRIP as the lead on design, the central coordinator and data processing being ASMFC and ACCSP. The preferred option was Option 4, where the state would hire all of the staff conducting the field component of the APAIS. At this point we have budgets from all the states.

We have nine states that have selected Option 4 to proceed with the survey. Those are Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South

Carolina and Georgia. We have four states who have requested some staffing help through ASMFC, which was listed as Option 3.

While those staff will be hired through ASMFC, they would be locally positioned and supervised out at the state level. Those states are Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey and Delaware. The current budget projections are approximately \$4 million for 2016, which is right within the range of the current contractor cost of \$4.5 million for 2014 and 2015. Option 3 states some questions about how many staff would need to be added via ASMFC; this slide summarizes the different agencies and the full-time and part-time staff, but it does total out as 20 new full-time employees via ASMFC plus ten part-time field staff.

The transition plan, which was included in your briefing materials, was approved by the recreational technical committee and the operations committee. I was impressed with how well they worked together to offer up help to neighboring states or those that were already doing the survey to learn how to do it; to work on the budgets; to discuss the issues and come to agreement on the roles and responsibilities and tasks associated with the survey.

This happened in the final run in September during their meeting. It was fantastic, the level of cooperation and collaboration that occurred at that point. They were able to confirm the state implementation methods that I just went over; and they made some modifications to the draft statement of work for the cooperative agreement as well as the state contracts. Those were listed as appendices in the materials that went out to you.

It may seem like a lot detail, but the good news is those who have gone over that spent a lot of time going over it and agreeing to those details. To get to 2016, those of us that are new to the process recognize that we are going to need some transition support; and MRIP is supportive of that. We also have gotten budgets from ASMFC, ACCSP, Rhode Island, New York,

New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia to obtain the staff and equipment materials necessary, implement the processes, complete the training and spend some time in November and December of 2015 doing dry-run data collection, go through the process, do the interviews, learn the questions, fill out the time sheets, pass the data through and make sure that we have the scanning functioning and we can provide the clean data to MRIP on the time identified.

### **TIMELINE AND PROCESS TO COMPLETE TRANSITION**

These are all things that are just the necessary steps and the things that folks have told us are appropriate to have the transition go as smoothly as possible. The specific time line of this, as you can see, is January 2015 will be to compile the final budgets and hire an ACCSP APAIS program manager. They would work with ASMFC and the states to finish the cooperative agreement package and get that submitted to NOAA.

In that same time line of March through June, while NOAA is reviewing that package, drafting up the state contracts as there needs to be some time for legal review in many of the states for that as well. The goal is for July to have the transition funding available, be able to hire and train the state lead biologists as well as some more of the ACCSP staff; and as the processes are put in place in October, hire and train the state field staff and do the test data collection in November and December.

That puts us to the Go Live date, January 1, 2016. That, of course, affects North Carolina directly. Massachusetts through Georgia would begin field intercepts March 1, 2016; and New Hampshire and Maine would begin on May 1, 2016. Some of that time in between January 1 and when the other states come on line, would, of course, be spent updating the state registry, putting in the requests for how many state additions and sample draws would occur and the staff

planning. et cetera. This leads us to the recommendation from the Operations Committee to move forward with the transition to state conduct of the APAIS in 2016 as documented in the transition plan with preparation starting in 2015. The advisors have also been part of that recommendation.

The action for today is really to look at this recommendation and discuss it. If you choose to adopt it, that would allow time for development and review and approval of all these draft agreements, the contracts. There are states and timelines where the delays are a couple of months for the legal reviews. We are in place to be ready to put staff in the necessary places in July of 2015 to move forward for 2016.

**CHAIRMAN PATTERSON:** Are there any questions for Geoff?

**MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT:** One thing, as I was looking over the plan here that I noticed – and it's unique to New Hampshire – is that it said that we were going to start May 1. For the past 15 years New Hampshire has also been conducting Wave 2 For Hire Survey, because we have a relatively significant headboat activity that goes on during Wave 2.

In fact, in the budget we provided that I worked out with my staff, it included those three headboat trips that we have. I didn't see it in the plan that says we're going to start implementing May 1 as opposed to March 1 with that. I was wondering if that is something that can be amended or included in the process.

**MR. WHITE:** We can definitely make those adjustments for you.

**MR. JOHN CLARK:** I just had a question about the logistics. As one of the states that right now is just contracting out the MRIP; this timeline seems very ambitious to go hire three full-time equivalents, the part-times. Can you just walk through how you envision this going and where the money is coming from? Will we be funded up front to hire these people?

Is this something that we'll hire – I know some of the staff is supposed to be hired through ASMFC, I believe, and some the state is responsible for, but will the funding be coming from MRIP to do this? I mean, just some of the basic things like we'd have to find space to house people that -- office space and things like that. I'm just curious. If a state does fall behind on this timeline here; is the possibility to contract out for another year still there?

MR. WHITE: That has been discussed, but it is something we'd rather not do and MRIP would rather not do. I know that those that have provided budgets to us are accounting for office space for their lead biologist or the full-time staff. They are not expected to have office space for all of the field staff.

But in terms of the dollar flow, once the cooperative agreement is in place and the money is available, then contracts can be signed between ASFMC and the states. Then my expectation would be that the states would be reimbursed on a periodic basis; whether that's monthly or quarterly, I don't know at the moment. It would be based on the individual contracts as that gets worked out.

MR. CLARK: We would like to implement this. As I look at the timing and everything, obviously, we're going to have to move pretty quickly, particularly when it comes to hiring people. That can take a while getting everybody trained and up to speed. I'm not saying that we can't do it, but, like I said I'm just wondering if there is a fall-back position there.

MR. WHITE: Mike and Bob have certainly been committed to doing what it takes to get this in place.

MR. ROB O'REILLY: It is not a huge concern, but to talk about erosion of the base sampling today before things have even started might be a portent of things to come, I guess; it would be really nice to think that we could try to avoid that as we go forward by any means, because we watched for years where the base sampling,

because of the costs when intercepts were the vogue as opposed to assignments now, that it really compromised the ability to get good precision and even do regional management for some species.

I know that's placed out there, Geoff, that you said it, but I hope there can be some way that we move forward, that's really not something that happens. The other thing I'm wondering about is for the incredible infrastructure this is going to take for some states to develop. It would be good to know -- and I've have had some information on how much the state will be responsible for, but if that's spelled out pretty clearly, that would be good.

Then if there is any erosion in funding sources for that infrastructure, that places a state in sort of a tough spot. Those are two things, two sorts of comments. And then a question is it was our understanding not to look at Wave 1 at this time. Of course, North Carolina has the Wave 1 sampling. Virginia for years has lobbied in different arenas with the idea to get funding for Wave 1; and I'm wondering what was the basis for that recommendation not to try and provide anything for Wave 1 at this time; is it strictly financial?

MR. WHITE: Let me see if I can cover all of that. Number 1, in terms of the infrastructure and what is expected of the states, MRIP has certainly committed to paying for the field component of this. They have asked that some supervisor time be supplied as in kind by the states; and there is support in the transition budget for that.

In terms of Wave 1, North Carolina, to my knowledge, is the only one where the Wave 1 is done for both the effort and the intercept survey. The plan was to move forward for 2016 without adding new changes to the survey. If the state wanted to do Wave 1 as an intercept survey, I can't imagine why that would be impossible from a state add-on perspective, but that wasn't what we were approaching it as a base sampling development. There wouldn't be any of the

effort survey to match up with that for Wave 1; so at the moment the direction was to move the survey as it is and not to add Wave 1. What else did I miss?

MR. O'REILLY: It's just the idea that we're starting out -- some states, I think five, I may have that mistaken, have already been involved in their own surveys for MRIP or previously MRFSS. I know Connecticut was involved and then not involved. But on the base sampling, I think that's a critical element for MRIP and to make sure that everyone gains confidence as MRIP becomes, I'll say, more stable and incorporates the modernization that it's capable of doing. If we start out thinking that base sampling is going to be a target for erosion, it makes me a little bit uneasy.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Is there anybody else who wants to make a comment or have questions?

MR. BRANDON MUFFLEY: A couple questions or points; something to what Rob is getting. I'm wondering if there is any information from the Gulf states' experiences when they began to take over this program, how the NMFS level of funding for their implementation of the program has changed or not changed over their time frame, because I see we're asking for \$4.8 million for 2016.

We all know costs don't go down; they go up to continue to do this sort of work. Is there a commitment? I know budgets are -- no one can forecast what's going on with budgets, but I think there needs to be some sort of commitment that as costs go up the budgets out to the states are going to increase accordingly. Related to that, is there a commitment to fully fund the state budgets that have been submitted. Is that where we're going? With what those states have submitted, there is enough funding in there to fully support what the states have provided to date?

MR. MICHAEL CAHALL: What we've been told so far -- there are a couple of things to

consider. First of all, erosion may occur. It's possible it would occur whether it was a contract effort or whether it was a state effort or they were all ASMFC employees. Secondly, it's very difficult, especially in this current environment, to predict the budget.

As you know, for example, we're going to come into a lame duck session of Congress shortly, and all bets are off on exactly how things are going to happen. I think we have to be honest about that. In terms of a comment on what was going on in the Gulf, it's true they were level funded for a number of years.

However, I think over time the problems that occurred under those circumstances became recognized; and the Gulf got a significant plus-up this year that closed that funding gap. I think they are now sampling at higher levels than they had been in prior years. But it's very difficult to forecast budgets; we don't know what's going to happen exactly.

MR. GORDON COLVIN: Just to get at the very last part of Brandon's question, I think Mike answered the earlier part well. The Service is sitting here today very strongly prepared to support action on this recommendation that's coming from the Operations Committee. I think that answers the question about our commitment to funding initially, Brandon.

MR. JAMES J. GILMORE, JR.: I think we all probably have the same concern about that erosion of funding; because if funding drops, then essentially we're going to sample less than the accuracy of the estimate may drop. The big change -- no one has said it -- we are going to be MRIP. We are no longer going to be, well, those guys aren't doing a good job. We will be a good part of MRIP.

So, when we get to that point, we're going to have more of a vested interest in making sure this works well. Here's a simple question. In the cooperative agreement, or however we're doing this, do we have an escape clause? I don't

think this is going to happen, and I completely understand, Gordon.

I know they're going to be committed to this, but new administrations come in; funding changes, and the next thing you know if this turns out to be that we don't have enough funding to do this; do we have a way to get of it later on? Most cooperative agreements we do in the state, we have an escape clause if suddenly there's a change in the contract later on. Thanks.

MR. CAHALL: Certainly, that could be negotiated. The cooperative agreement hasn't been written yet, and I can't imagine that those kinds of things couldn't be included in it.

MR. CLARK: Just following up on what Jim and Brandon have said; obviously, the big concern is the funding and going from a contractor where we can only pay them a certain amount, that's different from us now having employees that we have to then find out how we can handle them. Earlier, when you talked about the benefits, you said it improves data quality.

In the spring I sat through the presentation, which was very interesting about the different state programs; the one thing I found disappointing then was that for all that; I didn't hear that the PSE's had really improved in those states that were doing it over the states that were contracting the MRIP out. If the funding does erode in that case, how do we expect better data out of this than we're currently getting?

MR. WHITE: I think part of that depends on how you define better data. It is true that when this was originally brought up and when the Gulf took this on, when they had state staff doing it, they were collecting a higher number of intercepts, because they were staying on past the quota system.

With the changes in the MRIP methodology to the site assignments, that is a little bit different in terms of what you're purchasing with your staff time. The improvements in better data

have been related to me as better staff longevity. You get better interaction with your anglers. You get more interviews because they're not feeling like there is somebody in a state uniform and somebody that is a known entity that they are going to walk up to and they're going to continue the interview, because they think that state person is more vested in the outcome.

MR. CLARK: I understand all that. I appreciate those intangibles; but where it comes down to actually using this data, we have not seen the improvements in the PSE's. Do we expect to see better estimates; because let's face it we're using a lot of this data in our management now. I was just curious.

MR. WHITE: The state involvement in the pressure and site selection, I think increasing the changeover to getting on the effort side more data – and one of the things that has happened is with the changes of the MRIP survey methodology, the additional funds to the effort side of the survey haven't been there for the additional sampling for that for the last several years.

The recreational technical committee has certainly seen higher PSE's associated with lower sampling on the effort side as well as the combination to what's changing on the intercept side. I believe this is going to get better, and we are going to have to be a little bit patient. I think Gordon has some additional comments here.

MR. COLVIN: I think from our perspective the benefits that will derive or accrue from implementing the proposal that's before us today were very well described by the various speakers at the workshop that was held by the commission earlier this year.

A lot of those are benefits associated with improving stakeholder perceptions of the quality of the work; let's be honest. In addition, I would think that – and we haven't really studied this, but I would think that over the long run we would see improvement in response rates when anglers are approached potentially by state personnel that are local and whom they trust

than contract employees; and that's one specific area where the data might be enhanced. But for the most part, it is sample size that dictates precision, and only sample size.

We wouldn't expect to see an improvement to the precision of the estimates unless we get a lower rate of refusal, a higher rate of response. Another thing I'm hearing here; I'm hearing in this discussion interest expressed in improving the data collection program in several ways. I've heard two and I'm waiting to hear the third, and I'm sure I will. I've heard interest in Wave 1 sampling.

I've heard interest in improving the precision of the catch rate estimates that are derived from this intercept survey, and I think the other one that may or may not come up yet is geographic coverage. We've discussed all of these things in ACCSP venues for the last several years since MRIP has started.

Basically, they've all been addressed in the updated standards. We have standards now that have addressed an ideal approach to Wave 1 sampling, standards that address improved performance of precision pending the development of technical recommendations; and actually there is a fourth one, and that's improved timeliness, the delivery of preliminary estimates earlier than they presently are delivered, which is 45 days after a two-month sampling interval.

Our approach all along has been to get our basic survey changes made and then move on to a discussion with our partners about setting priorities, evaluating the tradeoffs among investments in these kinds of improvements. We have information beginning to come to us that will help us do a better job of that.

Recently a report was completed for our MRIP operations team that evaluated Wave 1 sampling in the Mid-Atlantic Region. That report will help to inform deliberations in decision-making about how high a priority that might be and how feasible it might be. In September ACCSP

conducted a workshop in Baltimore to help us gain insight as to how different levels of precision of catch estimates might affect scientific and management uncertainty in the decision-making.

When that workshop report comes out before the end of the year, that will be useful information in helping us do that kind of an evaluation. We're not going to have and we're probably never going to be able to generate enough funding to meet all of our ideal sampling and estimation needs; but we can work together to invest wisely, understanding what our options are for tradeoffs.

First, we need to take the first step, though, and get the basic framework in place. I think that's a big step we want to take today to help us do that. The funding uncertainty issue, clearly, we understand; I think we all do. I think Mike pointed out what we were able to do for the Gulf states this year.

We won't always be able to do that. We won't always have some money that we can identify to help restore lost capacity. We all need to work together to maintain and build funding support for these programs regardless of whose boots are on the ground implementing them. The data that we need is part of our program responsibility.

I think what is really important in that context is kind of the other discussion, the kind of discussions you're going to have tomorrow with the regions and the discussions that the Interstate Fisheries Commission Directors are having with the leadership of NOAA and the administration on budget planning. I would think that's really where the answer to maintaining capability and finding the means to build capability will be found.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Does anybody else have anything to say; questions; comments? Are we ready to move forward with the action item at hand? **You have the motion to adopt the recommendation of the ACCSP Operations Committee. Everybody for yes,**

**please raise your hand; everybody against;  
anybody abstaining? Twenty-two for;  
nobody against; no abstentions.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Is there any other business anybody would like to bring up? We are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 o'clock p.m., October 28, 2014.)