

GULF OF MEXICO SEA GRANT REGIONAL EXTENSION MEETING

JULY 17-19, 2012

BILOXI, MS

BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND DISCUSSION NOTES

Wednesday Afternoon Breakouts

Safe and Sustainable Seafood Breakout Session Minutes

The Louisiana representatives discussed seafood quality certification and marketing programs. Building on the success of “Delcambre Direct”, they now have four regional web-based marketing programs up and running. Partnering with the state Agriculture, Health and Hospitals and Wildlife departments, a traceability and quality program is being initiated to start in early August. It was mentioned that the processing sector had some concerns about the direct marketing programs and the related effects on product availability and dockside prices.

Louisiana is also doing studies of derelict crab traps and ghost fishing by comparing catch rates of baited versus un-baited traps. There is work being done on artificial crab and crawfish baits using fishery processing waste and gelatin. Louisiana is currently importing bait from out-of-state and it is hoped this work will lead to the development of a local source. Non-indigenous species, particularly Asian carp are becoming more of a problem in Louisiana.

Florida reported that they have been busy conducting training in relation to the new HACCP guidelines. Beginning in 2014, all Florida shellfish harvesters will be required to have two hours of continuing education related to time-temperature controls stipulated by the National Shellfish Sanitation Committee. Sea Grant will be involved in providing this training.

Florida is also involved in some cooperative research with the Destin charter fleet evaluating various re-compression devices on reef fish, primarily red snapper. Thus far, the “Seaquilizer” seems to be showing the most promise.

Texas reported that new Gulf red snapper and Kemps Ridley stock assessments will be undertaken in the near future. The new BRD regulations have done away with the red snapper reduction requirements in favor of an overall 30% finfish reduction standard. Field evaluations are showing good results with the new “Ricky BRD” which consists of a pair of “fisheyes”. This BRD will probably be certified soon. Currently, there is an 88% TED compliance rate in the Gulf with most problems due to incorrect TED grid angles. Work continues with educating shrimpers and net shops about TED specifications. Evaluations in the inshore skimmer rig fishery have shown some potential problems with TED effectiveness in shallow water.

The Mississippi-Alabama program reported on the incipient new safety training requirements for commercial fishermen which are contained in the 2010 Coast Guard Authorization Act. Sea Grant and the private sector are involved in providing safety drill conductor training for fishermen in the Gulf. There is a need for more Coast Guard certified instructors. Mississippi has been approached about the possibility of setting up an oil spill response program for commercial fishermen modeled after the program which currently exists in Prince William Sound Alaska. Alabama and Louisiana reported on the success of the off-bottom oyster culture program which has led to a change in state regulation in Louisiana and the commercial-scale expansion in Alabama.

Boating/Waterfronts

Participants provided short summaries about current projects.

Several Sea Grant partners, including the National Sea Grant Law Center, Maine, Virginia, and Florida Sea Grants, are working to develop a "Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit." The project is funded by the Economic Development Agency. The National Working Waterfront Network also recently formalized its founding Steering Committee and will soon launch and begin accepting memberships.

Florida Sea Grant recently held a Florida Boating & Waterways Conference (Stem to Stern). Topics covered included: env issues/permitting, access/dredging, pilot mooring field (local gov. management). Also planning some Regional Workshops – maybe on non-econ valuation of infrastructure. Florida is also working on some comprehensive planning tools such as the Boating Access Survey (planning for anticipated boating in 2030) and the Boating Infrastructure Study (dredging). Also exploring community-based solutions such as "Keep a Clear Head" (Rewards Program)

Texas Sea Grant is still very active in the Texas Clean Marina Program with 350 marinas. Also involved in the Resilient Marina Program which is part of Resilient Coast-GOMA.

MS-AL Sea Grant updated group on the Alabama WWF Coalition/Program. A training workshop was organized for planners last year in Alabama, and one is planned for Mississippi early next year. Gulf Shores recently adopted a WWF overlay district. A WWF Festival is planned for Bayou La Batre, AL, May 4, 2013. MS-AL is also working on a WWF inventory/Socio-econ impacts (AL/MS) GIS and oil spill impact studies.

For Louisiana, the major issues include importance of public facilities for disaster recovery/planning, Safe Harbors (harbors of refuge). Group mentioned that Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) might be available to upgrade waterfront infrastructure. Shared information about a conflict in Bucktown (LA) over a new marina built with CDBG funding. 2 piers (comm/rec) owned/operated by Jefferson Parish, but currently no commercial use because of parish insurance requirements.

Regional Projects Discussion

Brainstorming List of Regional Projects:

- GoM Takings Project (Research)
- Regional Research Plan
- Hydro Restoration
- Climate COP
 - Storm Smart Coast/Connect
 - masgc.org/climate/cop
- Community Resilience Index
- Fisheries Committee (w/GSMFC Meeting). Meets 2x per year. Point person currently Tony R. (TX). Next meeting Point Clear, AL.
- Recompression Project (gear)
- Cost Survey/Econ Assess Charter Boats Gulf
- Economic Impact/Value Survey (new – SG Dir.)
- Off-bottom oyster aquaculture in Gulf (LA, AL) (Regional Consortium)
- Seafood at your Fingertips (FL right now) - Nutrition, cooking, seasonality, modules
- Dolphin Stranding/ Marine Mammal ID apps
- GOMA Projects through PITs
 - Homeowners Handbooks
 - Resilient Marinas
 - Land Use Planning for Resiliency
 - E/O Toolbox for Researchers
 - GCOOS Products & Services
- Seafood Sustainability-Steve Otwell
- Regional Website (gulfseagrant.org)

General Discussion:

NOAA Coastal Services Center being in Gulf has been a good thing – access to facilitators, training, and NOAA resources.

When envision regional project, often think that it is going to fit really well in all states. Not always true.

Maybe develop some parameters about what makes a good regional project. i.e., bottom-up, organic project might be better.

- When they are top-down to one person, it really depends on the person to make it truly regional.

Little bit of politics in play when you are putting in a regional ante, get situation where it becomes a rotation among the states (last year we funded yours, this year it is time to do mine). Not really the best way to do it.

Sometime directors take hit with regional projects trying to convince their institution that there is value to their institution or state.

Maybe better way to spend money to develop regional projects is to spend money on workshops so that people can network and cross-pollinate.

- Barrier is lack of funds for travel. Maybe use meeting to have break-out sessions to develop projects.
- Maybe have a list serve – Storm Smart Connect – something to foster communication.
- Regional website – debate out whether to leave it (just oil spill), get rid of it, or convert it to more of a blog format. Leaning towards the blog site, where individual programs could post updates. (gulfseagrant.org).

What works well: cooperative appointments – funding that allows you to work regionally. Gives flexibility to travel to other states in region or work in those areas. Maybe having a few people in a few focus areas that have the charge to work regionally.

Challenge – Regional Programming and Reporting/Metrics. Need to have program metrics for each state so that each program can report something related to the regional projects. Each program creates its own “project” within the regional project. But haven’t been as great at sharing that information.

- Can tag publications as regional in the national library.

Team-building exercise – rope course.