

MARINE RECREATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAM OPERATIONS TEAM ANNUAL MEETING

Crowne Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront, Jacksonville, Florida
November 19-20, 2013

Tuesday November 19, 2013

The meeting commenced with brief remarks and introductions, including a new member Steve Williams who is replacing Russell Porter as the representative from PSMFC. The morning focused on a review of recent MRIP activities, regional project updates, and presentations from the Communications and Education and Information Management Teams. After lunch, the group discussed the revised Terms of Reference and next steps for the Operations Team.

Recent MRIP Activities (Gordon Colvin)

The first presentation reviewed MRIP activities over the past year, including the highlights from the Executive Steering Committee workshop, implementation of the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, MRIP Implementation plan updates, and additional agency issues/decisions. Overall, the presentation addressed that the MRIP process can be complicated, but there have been major improvements in the level of acceptance and confidence in MRIP estimates from managers of the fisheries, attributing this to efforts of all of the MRIP teams.

One issue discussed in detail was how, under regional implementation, the FINs, states and Councils will work together to address compliance issues under electronic logbook reporting. This was addressed by the group stating that

- reporting requirements will need to be established prior to establishing the mechanism of achieving compliance,
- dialogue between partners must be incorporated into all issues (complete registry, enhanced validation, timely compliance, easy-to-use reporting technologies, shared resource commitments, etc.),
- ideally a coast-wide or region-wide standard should be established, and
- effort should be made to reduce duplicative reporting requirements to decrease burden on for-hire vessels.

Overview of Completed Projects and MRIP Certification (April Bagwill)

The second presentation was an overview of MRIP projects funded between 2008-2012, projects completed in 2013, and the peer review process and MRIP certification. Discussion centered on

the MRIP certification process and its importance for moving forward with implementation of methods.

Caribbean Update (Graciela Garcia-Moliner)

An update of two ongoing projects (funded FY13) was presented. The first project discussed was ‘Pilot study of the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) and spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) recreational fishery in Puerto Rico’ which had to postpone its first year of data collection due to a delay in finalizing the sampling design and to include six months data collection (four in season and two closed season). The second project, ‘Survey of Recreational Boat Fishers in the US Virgin Islands’ gave an overview of ongoing and upcoming tasks (updating the registration database maintained by the Government of the Virgin Island, developing the survey instrument, and pilot testing the design). There was a brief discussion concerning survey design, what type of information is collected in the original boater registration, and the amount of site overlap with the NMFS site register.

Western Pacific Update (Joshua DeMello)

Ongoing projects in both Hawaii and Guam were reviewed, with the majority of discussion centered on the Hawaii mail survey and military site access in Guam. Because the FY14 proposal for redesigning the Hawaii Marine Recreational Fishing Survey proposes to conduct a mail survey, angler category, expense category, non-response rates, and suggestions for the project team were discussed. The majority of the conversation after the Guam update centered on access to military-owned fishing sites (cooperation, Navy reaction to the study, who is allowed on the sites) and how the boat survey is conducted, including continuation of boat counts on military property after project completion.

Pacific Coast Update (Russell Porter)

The Pacific coast update provided information on seven ongoing projects

- WA Shoulder Months Supplemental Survey
- OR ORBS Significant Port Additional Sampling
- PSMFC Private Boat Angler Discard Camera Study
- PSMFC Electronic Data Collection II
- PSMFC Catch and Effort Data Supplementation
- OR ORBS Nehalem Bay Sampling
- PSMFC Electronic Intercept Sampling (iPads)

Effort Survey Project (Rob Andrews)

Results from the ongoing effort survey were presented showing that response rates to a mail survey were much higher than that of the current telephone survey; however, implementation of the mail survey will not occur in 2014 as previously discussed. Discussion focused on the use of incentives, comparing the mail survey estimates to the telephone survey, costs, concerns about timeliness, developing a plan to communicate project results and explain differences between telephone and mail survey designs, and the challenge of calibration if the differences are systematic and large. Resolving all of these issues will take some time, requiring MRIP to plan for implementing the new effort survey design in 2015.

Communications and Education Team Update (Leah Sharpe)

The presentation and discussion targeted ongoing efforts to engage stakeholders in 2013 and the goals and direction for 2014 including

- targeting the for-hire sector, expanding the “road show” to for-hire operators and stakeholders and on the West Coast (potentially also including the Gulf)
- updating the MRIP website for easier navigation
- expanding the membership structure of the CET

Information Management Team Update (Lauren Dolinger Few)

The presentation and discussion targeted the following listed topics, with additional discussion on collaborating with the FINs on the Vessel Directory and the potential issue of having vessel information displayed publicly (e.g. companies trying to obtain vessel information, field collected data that includes non-registered vessels).

- new data management guidance
- completed and ongoing core projects (MDMS, Site Register, ORBS database improvement, new data queries, SRHS Database upgrade completion)
- the need for incorporating metadata
- Vessel Directory quality management, process improvement, and data reconciliation

Budget Discussion

There was an additional discussion, not listed on the agenda, concerning the cost of implementation and future budgets. Concern was expressed about where additional costs for the APAIS came from this past year; however it was explained that for the past several years money has been put aside for implementing new surveys. The cost of maintaining the National Saltwater Angler Registry (NSAR) has also decreased substantially as states have become exempted from NSAR, freeing funds for FY14. Other topics discussed were the need to discuss FIN funding

(will occur at a higher level than the OT), MRIP versus MRFSS costs, priority shifts for future base funding, and the need for an overall budget.

Terms of Reference

Following the Implementation Workshop in July, the ESC expanded the role of the OT to include oversight of the operational aspects of MRIP implementation. Specifically, the ESC requested that the OT's terms of reference be amended to include the role of identifying the limits of resolution, precision, scope, etc. for MRIP support of implementation programs, as well as developing a method to prioritize MRIP investment in implementation. A revised TOR was drafted (attached) and distributed prior to the OT meeting.

The OT agreed to adopt the revised TOR and had substantive discussion about how to execute the additional responsibilities.

Major Themes of Discussion:

- OT involvement in determining prioritization criteria is necessary but will be a complex process
 - Cross-regional process for prioritization
 - Each region may have a different focus and have competing needs
 - Politics are bound to play a role, however the OT is tasked to outline an objective process
 - Should the criteria take into account the amount of funds States put forth for surveys (e.g. cost-sharing)?
- The responsibility of the OT will be to identify criteria and outline the process for prioritizing implementation of survey designs, **not** to establish a second RFP or make specific implementation project funding recommendations
 - Develop a set of metrics to evaluate and assign priorities
 - Establish a rational process based on regional needs for identifying how to allocate money and target effort where it is needed
- In the future, the OT may need to assess membership based on current needs and increased inclusion of partners (for example, the Director of the Office of Sustainable Fisheries was asked to join the ESC following the Regional Implementation Workshop)
- There is a need to define the 'base' scope of MRIP, as well as program goals for precision, resolution, timeliness, etc. Priorities for investment must be assessed relative to these base goals.
 - General survey vs. more species specific surveys?
 - Based on federal funding? Additional State funding?
 - Will the OT establish a 'universal' base PSE target that regions may accept or choose to modify?

Next Steps

- Identify current criteria being used by partners (e.g. ACCSP, FINS) to identify priorities

- The ESC will be apprised of where the OT stands after identifying initial criteria (see above), with the expectation that they will then set a timeline for the OT to develop prioritization criteria

Wednesday November 20, 2013

The morning and part of the afternoon focused on evaluating and ranking the FY14 project proposals; the remainder of the meeting focused on future MRIP priorities and the RFP process.

Future RFPs

Overall, all team members were happy with the new RFP guidelines (attached) and found them to be useful. Suggestions for the future included:

- Future RFPs should request an itemized budget that distinguishes between phases or independent activities; this would allow for more flexibility when reviewing proposals
 - however, any team member can already make this request for clarification directly to project teams when reviewing proposals
 - In the future, ST1 staff can complete a preliminary review of project budgets prior to OT review and request more detail when appropriate.
- Add guidelines in MDMS so it is on hand while reviewing and submitting proposals

OT members generally are satisfied with the current RFP process, both in terms of the quantity and quality of proposals that are submitted.

Future MRIP Priorities

The team had an open discussion about future priorities for research and development. Possible project areas include the following:

- Private access
- Discards
 - review information to-date
- Trailered guideboats
 - have a boat stratum and produce domain estimates for catch estimates
- Atlantic coast for-hire sector
- Ways to estimate catch and effort from logbook and validation data (Kaiser report) (hybrid approach)

The OT may want to consider topic-specific working groups to address outstanding needs (such as discards and private access), similar to the structure that was developed at the inception of MRIP. Other issues that may be relevant during the coming year include the following:

- May need to start reporting to Congress on a more regular basis
- the issue of a new NRC review was brought up, but it was determined this should be delayed until there is a critical mass of projects implemented or finished so time and cost is more efficient for the review
- need to have products and feel confident about dollars spent
- need to account for unfinished projects

FY14 Proposals

The OT received 16 proposals for consideration. The Team recommends all 16 projects for funding, with funding for some projects contingent upon follow-up by the project team. Funding recommendations and conditions for funding are provided in Table 1. Projects are listed in priority order. In the event of insufficient funding to cover the costs of all recommended projects, the OT recommends funding projects at 100% of requested funding levels beginning with the highest priority projects and funding as many projects as the budget permits. Funding for FY14 is still in flux and the earliest expected is January.

**** Prioritization was conducted by Operations Team members, not participants****

Rank	Project Title	Cost	Comments
1	Testing for Measurement Error in a Recreational Fishing Mail Survey	\$158,277.67	
2	Estimating Recreational Fishing Effort from Onsite Survey Data	\$30,000.00	
3	Simulation Study to Evaluate Alternative Estimators of the Mean Avidity of Marine Recreational Fishing Participants from Access Point Survey Data	\$45,000.00	
4	Determining Optimum Sample Sizes for the Atlantic For-Hire and Large Pelagics Telephone Surveys	\$0	Include the Gulf of Mexico in the analysis of the For-Hire Survey

5	Pilot surveys of shoreline fishing effort for HMRFS	\$175,466.00	
6	Additional Large Pelagics Telephone Survey Data Collection to Address Potential Biases with the Large Pelagics Intercept Survey	\$135,150.00	
7	For-Hire Electronic Census Reporting of Red Snapper Catch Data in Alabama	\$35,000.00	
8	Electronic Data Collection for Angler Intercept Surveys: Expand and Extend	\$39,000.00	
9	For-Hire Programs: Inventory, Certification, & Integration Planning	\$99,000.00	
10	A Video Monitoring System to Evaluate Ocean Recreational Fishing Effort in Astoria, Oregon	\$116,371.00	
11	Electronic Data Collection by Groundfish Observers - Pilot Project	\$126,677.00	
12	Electronic Data Collection Expansion - Washington	\$76,620.00	
13	Developing and implementing specialized surveys to document fishing methods and event not adequately addressed by the existing creel survey	\$287,600.00	
14	Private Recreational Angler Electronic Census Reporting of Red Snapper Catch Data in Alabama	\$40,000.00	
15	Pacific Coast Fish Identification Application	\$25,000.00	

16	Implementation of the iSnapper smartphone application to collect data across all recreational sectors in the Gulf of Mexico	\$398,734.00	The design of the for-hire component is inconsistent with the recommendations from the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study. Consequently, the OT recommends that this component be eliminated and that the project focus on the panel study. The OT requests that the project team revise the proposal and budget accordingly. The OT also recommends that the project consider any recommendations resulting from the recent red snapper workshop.
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MRIP Operations Team Annual Meeting

Crowne Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront, Jacksonville, Florida

November 19-20

Participant	Organization
Rob Andrews	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology
Mike Armstrong	Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
April Bagwill	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology
Dick Brame	Coastal Conservation Association
Mike Cahall	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
Pat Campfield	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Bob Clark	Alaska Fish & Game
Richard Cody	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Gordon Colvin	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology
Josh DeMello	Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council
Jason Didden	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Dave Donaldson	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Lauren Dolinger Few	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology
Mark Fisher	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Graciela Garcia-Moliner	Caribbean Fishery Management Council
Pres Pate	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology
Russell Porter	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Ron Salz	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology
Leah Sharpe	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology
Cindy Thomson	NOAA Fisheries, Southwest Fisheries Science Center
Steve Williams	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

**Marine Recreational Information Program, Operations Team
Call For Proposals
FY 2014**

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is soliciting proposals to support the continued development of improved data collection designs for monitoring marine recreational fishing catch, effort, and participation. If the proposal is approved and recommended for funding by the MRIP Operations Team, the project team will be asked to provide a more detailed project plan.

Proposals that address one or more of the following priorities (in no particular order) will receive preference for funding consideration. Additional scoring criteria are provided below.

1. Projects that further develop or test recommendations from MRIP-funded reviews of existing data collection designs or previous MRIP pilot studies (i.e. follow-up studies)
2. Evaluation of ongoing catch and effort surveys administered by state natural resource agencies or the Federal Government;
3. Assessment of data needs (e.g. precision, resolution, timeliness, etc.) to support science and/or management;
4. Development of methods to estimate catch and effort at greater levels of temporal and spatial resolution, including both design- and model-based approaches;
5. Assessment of non-sampling errors, such as non-response error, coverage error, and measurement error, in recreational fishing surveys;
6. Development and testing of new technologies, such as electronic data capture and online reporting, to support recreational fisheries data collection;
7. Optimization of sampling allocations within and among recreational fishing surveys to satisfy stakeholder needs for precision; and
8. Projects that address recommendations from the National Research Council (NRC) Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods¹

Proposals should have clear objectives and describe how project results will address MRIP priorities. Proposals that do not clearly address research priorities may not score well. All proposals must identify a single project leader who is affiliated with a government agency or not-for-profit organization. Project leaders are the point of contact for the project and are expected to submit monthly status reports. In addition, proposals must identify a specific mechanism (e.g. grant, cooperative agreement, contract, etc.) for transferring funds from the NOAA Fisheries Office and Science Technology to an entity that will administer the project.

¹ NRC (National Research Council). 2006. Review of recreational fisheries survey methods. Committee on the Review of Recreational Survey Methods, Oceans Studies Board. The National Academies Press. Washington, DC. 187 pp.

Expectations: MRIP projects are expected to result in a final project report that provides substantive and meaningful discussion of project results, including recommendations for follow-up action. All completed project reports will be reviewed by the MRIP Operations Team and Executive Steering Committee and will be posted to the MRIP website. In addition, project results that are deemed “influential” as defined in the Information Quality Act, and/or that recommend implementation of new methods, or request MRIP certification, may be subject to an independent peer review at the agency’s discretion. Project Teams will be asked to provide written responses to comments and recommendations resulting from such reviews as a part of the final project report.

All proposals must be submitted through the MRIP Data Management and Standard (MDMS) reporting tool (<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/apex/f?p=mdms>). Instructions and support will be provided. To gain access to MDMS contact April Bagwill april.bagwill@noaa.gov.

Proposal Elements:

1. Overview

- a. Project Name
- b. MRIP Operations Team Sponsor: Each project must be sponsored by an individual member of the MRIP Operations Team.
- c. Project Description: Description of the project including benefits, relationship to MRIP priorities, and intended outcomes.
- d. Objectives: Concise list of project objectives.
- e. Background: Description of the circumstances necessitating the proposed project, including prior research and the current state of relevant knowledge. Project teams are encouraged to review relevant reports from completed MRIP projects, which are available on the MRIP website (<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mdms/public/public.jsp>).
- f. References

2. Methodology

- a. Methodology: Description of the methods that will be used to achieve project objectives.
- b. Geographic Coverage: Geographic area in which the project will be conducted.
- c. Temporal Coverage: Time frame in which the project will be conducted.
- d. Frequency: Frequency of data collection.
- e. Unit of Analysis: Level at which data will be collected (e.g. angler, trip, fish, etc.).
- f. Collection Mode: Method of data collection (e.g. in person interview, telephone, mail, web, etc.).

3. Assumptions/Constraints

Are there any assumptions about the completion of other projects or external factors that may constrain the success of this project? In general, the portion of scope that deals with the limits of the projects should be identified here.

- a. New Data Collection: Is this a new data collection that may require approval from the Office of Management and Budget?
- b. Funding Vehicle: Specific mechanism for transferring funding from MRIP (NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology) to the project team. Project teams are encouraged to identify existing funding mechanisms (e.g. direct transfer of funding to NOAA Fisheries regional office or science center, existing grant or cooperative agreement between NOAA Fisheries and another entity (state, commission, council, etc.). Project teams should work with OT sponsors to identify potential funding mechanisms.
- c. Data Resources
- d. Other Resources
- e. Regulations
- f. Other

4. Final Deliverables

Describe any deliverables, including reports, improvements to other MRIP projects, or other outcomes which will be produced before the completion of the project. Parts of the scope that deal with the ultimate outcome of the project should be identified here. NOTE: A final report is required.

- a. Additional Reports
- b. New Data Set(s)
- c. New System(s)

5. Leadership

Identify members of the project team, including name, role and affiliation

6. Schedule

Identify relevant project tasks and milestones and provide estimated start and completion dates for each.

7. Cost

Provide item-level costs for project components. Examples of specific items include travel, consultant support, supplies, data collection costs, etc.

Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria (30 pts).

1. Importance and Applicability (10)
 - *Does the project address one or more MRIP priorities?*
 - *To what extent will the project have a measurable impact on the issues identified?*

- *If successful, will the project result in improved data collection or analysis methods?*
2. Technical/Scientific Merit (10)
 - *Are the methods a sound approach to investigating the issue?*
 - *Are the methods used generally accepted by the technical and scientific community?*
 3. Overall Qualifications of Project Team and Project Feasibility (5)
 - *Is the proposed timeline feasible?*
 - *Are the team members qualified to carry out the proposed methods?*
 4. Project Cost (5)
 - *Is the budget appropriate for the project?*
 - *Will the proposed project need future funding?*

Tentative Timeline

August 9	Call for proposals sent to Operations Team
October 18	Proposals Due
November 19-20	Operations Team meets to discuss proposals and make recommendations
November 29	OT presents funding recommendations to ESC
January 31	Project Plans Due
February 21	Operations Team call to discuss project plans and make recommendations
February 28	Final funding recommendations to ESC
March 3	Funds BOP'd to FMC's