



## Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan Regional Constituent Workshop #2 Southeast Region – Dania Beach, Florida May 10, 2004

The second in the series of Regional Constituent Workshops supporting the development of the new National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan for 2005-2009 was held at the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) Hall of Fame and Museum, Dania Beach, Florida on May 10<sup>th</sup> for constituents in the Southeast Region. The regional workshops were designed to provide Recreational Fisheries constituents the opportunity to share their vision of an effective and successful Federal Recreational Fisheries Program, describe the characteristics and attributes of this Program, and discuss them in the context of a review of the draft NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan.

Rob Kramer, IGFA President, welcomed the attendees and shared his goals for the planning process. Opening remarks were also provided by Roy Crabtree, NOAA Southeast Regional Administrator. Following introductory comments by the workshop team, the attendees participated in a facilitated session designed to elicit ideas from each individual, share these ideas and prioritize them through small group interaction, and then jointly develop an affinity diagram representing a collection of the key attributes and characteristics of the group. The following diagram represents the product of this exercise. After a plenary review, the current draft of the Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan was introduced and the attendees were afforded the opportunity to comment on the contrasts and similarities between their group product and the draft Strategic Plan.

Results of Affinity Diagramming Process: Characteristics and Attributes of the Future Federal Recreational Fisheries Program

Law Enforcement	Management Guidelines	Interagency Coordination	Research	Transparency and Accountability	Management Philosophy	Two-Way Communications	Sustainable Fisheries	International Policy
Better Domestic Law Enforcement	Equitable Budget Allocation to Fisheries Benefit - Incentives for Compliance	Promote Cooperation Between Stakeholders and Coordinate International, State, and Federal Fisheries Management	Solution-Specific Research	Transparency	Management Objectives Based on Science, Not Politics	Two-Way Communication for Outreach, Education, Marketing, Media, and Public Relations	Stop All Overfishing Now	International Sanctions to Promote Fish Conservation
Enforce Magnuson-Stevenson Act to Stop Destruction of Habitats	Strong Agency Infrastructure	Coordinate with Other Agencies to Address Coastal Development	Coral Reefs Given Protection	Management Process Needs to be Transparent to Recreational Fishermen	Maintain Balance Between Recreational and Commercial Communities	Better Understand How to Communicate with Recreational Fishermen	Outlaw Longlining	Protect U.S. Fishermen Against IUU Fishing (International)
	Quantitative Management Goals		Water Quality - Critical to Any Ecosystem Analysis	The Management for Recreational Fisheries has an Open Process to Encourage Stakeholder Involvement and Communication	Keep Politics Out of Management	Educate Recreational Fishermen on How Fisheries Management Works	Rebuild Overfished Stocks as Soon as Possible	
	Staff Trained in Area of Expertise		Make Use of Latest Technology for Data Collection			Improve Public Outreach	Decrease Bycatch Mortality	
	Recreational Ombudsmen on NOAA Fisheries Staff		Recreational Fisheries Management Authority Utilize Standards such as Maximum Sustainable Yield			Make Regulations Easy to Obtain and Understand	Protect Forage Species	
	Arbitration (Binding) to Resolve Allocation Issues		Continue Cooperative Research Initiatives			K-30 Education and Outreach - Teach Proper Handling and Release Techniques		
			More Cooperative Research and Management with Recreational Community			Strong Internal and External Communications		
			Equitable Research Funding for Recreational and Commercial Species					(other)
								Elevate Fisheries to Cabinet-Level, i.e., Department of Fisheries

The subsequent group discussion of the draft Strategic Plan included comments on the need for international involvement in Recreational Fisheries management efforts and the potential NOAA role in those efforts. The attendees felt that the U.S. should be exerting its influence in appropriate international organizations to achieve a greater level of compliance from non-U.S. fisheries and minimize illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. It was observed that this desired international participation was not readily evident in the draft Strategic Plan and perhaps required greater emphasis. The group concluded that this area would present one of the greatest implementation challenges for NOAA.

An observation was made that a large number of the characteristics and attributes developed by the workshop attendees emphasized conservation-related initiatives. One constituent described this emphasis as “a concern that there are enough fish for the fish’s sake.” Several attendees felt that fisheries conservation should be a dominant factor in allocation decisions. Additional related concerns included the need for timely water quality and essential fish habitat (including coral reefs) protection and the mitigation of coastal development impacts, with preventative measures put into service prior to the need for crisis recovery efforts. The group noted the potential for conflict between commercial interests and conservation goals related to fisheries sustainability initiatives due to boundary conditions placed on NOAA by the Department of Commerce, and thought that there was a need for better socioeconomic representation in the government’s fisheries management efforts.

The attendees also felt strongly about the “transparency” of Federal management efforts and believed that constituent visibility into the regulatory process would motivate them to become more willing and active participants in Recreational Fisheries management. This transparency would also give anglers a sense of ownership of the process. Several of the constituents shared personal observations of good angler compliance with regulations in communities with active participation in fisheries management efforts. It was felt that this active participation could also pay dividends in improving and adding credibility to the government’s data collection efforts.

Several ideas for improving two-way communications between Recreational Fisheries constituents and the government were offered. The attendees encouraged the government to look for new and innovative ways to reach individual anglers, such as additional advertising through the media and posting notices in locations frequented by anglers (e.g., bait shops, fuel piers, etc.). Most felt that there was good value in efforts to interact directly with anglers engaged in fishing activities, in that these stakeholders could provide their own ideas on how they could best be reached and included in the process. The attendees encouraged the idea of including a NOAA Fisheries booth at local conferences, in association with fishing tournaments, and at other venues popular with large groups of anglers.

In reference to the ongoing development of the draft Strategic Plan, a suggestion was made to identify changes and additions in subsequent drafts of the Plan by color coding or cross-referencing them so that the public could see where and how feedback from the constituent community impacted the Plan. Most agreed that this would give constituents a sense of value and confirmation that their recommendations were actually making a difference.