



# Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan Regional Constituent Workshop #1 Southwest Region - Seal Beach, California May 4, 2004

The inaugural Regional Constituent Workshop supporting the development of the new National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan for 2005-2009 was held at the Seal Beach City Council Chambers, Seal Beach, California on May 4<sup>th</sup> for constituents in the Southwest Region. The series of regional workshops was 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.

The attendees were welcomed by Bob Fletcher, Sport Fishing Association of California and by Rod McInnis, NOAA Southwest Regional Administrator. Following the opening remarks the attendees participated in a facilitated session designed to elicit ideas from each individual, share the ideas and prioritize them through small group interaction, and then develop a single group affinity diagram that represented the key attributes and characteristics of the attendees. The following diagram represents the product of this exercise. After reviewing the affinity diagram as a group, 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

Ecosystem Based Management	Cooperative Governance	Opportunities	Regulations	Credible Data	Implementation and Execution	Effective Application of MPAs	Outreach
Ecosystem Wide Management (Modeling)	Require Better State-Federal Coordination for (1) Collection of Biological Data; (2) Management; (3) Enforcement	Lots of Fish to Catch	Understandable Regulations	Accuracy of Catch Data (All Anglers)	A Strong Office of Recreational Fishing Within NOAA and Everything in One Place to Manage Fisheries	More Information on Effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas	Better Communication Between Researchers, Managers, and the Public
Research for "Ecosystem" Management	States and Feds Working Together	Provide Maximum Access and Opportunity to Anglers Throughout the Year	Regulations are Easy to Access and Understand	Post Release Survivorship and Conditions	Training and Employment Opportunities	Use MPAs as a Management Tool Only When Clear, Peer Reviewed Science Justifies Their Use	Anglers as Active Participants in Science Efforts
Protect Environment for Fish	Require High Level of Cooperative Research between State, Federal Gov't, and Party/Charterboat Industry	Secure Rights to a Share of Quota to Maximize Recreational Fisheries (i.e., greater ownership of management)	Good Enforcement of Regulations	Assess the Value of Fish Caught by Recreational Anglers			Promote Catch and Release Programs
Use Risk Analysis to Set Management Priorities	Encourage Government to Put High Priority on International Management of Highly Migratory Species	Bycatch Reduction	Simpler Regulations	Accurate Fisheries Data			
Mapping Toxins Through Trophic Levels (pred. & prey)		Ocean Parks - Protection of Habitat for Recreational Fishing		Provide Funding for Conducting Frequent, Timely, and Believeable Stock Assessments on Species Important to Recreational Anglers			
Improved Water Quality		Exceptional Angling Opportunities by Using Ocean Parks, Artificial Reefs, Stocking, "Kids Fishing Programs", etc.		Demand Timely and Accurate Catch and Effort Data That is Believeable to the Recreational Fishing Community			
		Improved Habitat (Artificial Reefs)		More Behavioral Information			
				Studies on Catch and Release Mortality and Possibility of Catch and Release Areas			

During the group discussion of the draft Strategic Plan in the context of this product, most of the attendees noted the significant number of items listed within the theme of Data Credibility, but were not surprised that there was an emphasis here. The challenges associated with determining what data are credible and who decides what data are credible were discussed, with the overarching view that the data had to be believable and make sense in the eyes of the angler, particularly given the perception that shortcomings have existed in these data in the past. The group concluded that this area would present the greatest implementation challenge for the government.

The attendees noted the attributes related to Regulations and discussed their application as a means to achieving higher levels of compliance within the Recreational Fisheries community. The importance of regulations that are accessible, easy to understand, and simplified as much as possible—even as the governance becomes more complex—were stressed by the group. Suggestions were made to examine some of the existing applications where either effective enforcement was taking place and the reasons why compliance was not taking place under certain circumstances to develop ideas on strengthening the effectiveness of regulatory guidance.

Considerable time was devoted to discussing the motivations of individual anglers and their potential roles in managing Recreational Fisheries resources. At a fundamental level, these motivations include the desire to fish, to enjoy fishing, to conserve and sustain the fish population, and in some cases to make money. It was felt that the government would be able to gain greater participation by individual anglers in the management process and enjoy a higher level of voluntary compliance if the incentives of individual anglers could be harnessed and used. Anglers would like to feel some sense of ownership of the process. The group also emphasized the importance of open, two-way communications, outreach that pulls anglers into the system, and a physical presence through initiatives such as regular symposia analogous to RecFish 2000 and holding fisheries council meetings in locations based on the proximity of constituents with a particular interest in ongoing decisions. Several attendees noted the value in having the Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service represent the interests of Recreational Fisheries in local venues within the region.

The group also discussed the scope of the Strategic Plan and identified some of the “non-traditional” consumptive and non-consumptive constituents such as SCUBA divers and wildlife watching. It was noted that non-consumptive fishing within the “traditional” Recreational Fisheries community—that is, those engaged in regular catch-and-release fishing—is a growing body that needs to be considered.

The attendees also discussed the importance of having sufficient resources to support data collection and analysis activities, and working collaboratively across all levels of management.