

(Attachment 5)

Full Council Session

Outreach Update: Marine Resource Education Program

**Marine Resource Education Program
for the
Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fisheries Regions**

Council staff is coordinating with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, NMFS SERO staff, and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council staff to bring the Marine Resource Education Program into the Southeast Region (including both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico).

Council staff (PIO) will provide a brief update on the progress to date.

Background:

The Marine Resources Education Program (MREP) is a professional development program for the fishermen and the fishing industry, designed to increase knowledge and understanding of fishery science and management. The program, first facilitated by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in New England, involves a curriculum disseminated in two separate components via three-day workshops, one focusing on fisheries science and the other on fisheries management. Members of the SAFMC have attended the workshops in the past and expressed interest in the program. More recently, Kate Burns and Alexa Dayton with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute provided an overview of the program during the 2011 Council Coordination Committee meeting in Charleston and received support from for extending the program from both the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils.

For additional information about MREP, including an overview of the curriculum, visit:

<http://www.gmri.org/mrep>

Efforts to Expand MREP:

- 1. Funding:** NOAA Fisheries Service has secured funding to expand the program to include the Southeast Region (South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico). Note that efforts are also underway to expand the program into the Mid-Atlantic Region. **Update: Complete**
- 2. Steering Committee:** Council staff has coordinated with Alexa Dayton (Training and Outreach, Gulf of Maine Research Institute), Kim Amendola (NMFS Southeast Regional Office) and Charlene Ponce (GMFMC) to provide recommendations for members of a Steering Committee to direct the program. (The key to MREP is that it is a program designed *by* fishermen *for* fishermen.) The Steering Committee will set goals for the Southeast MREP and determine content for the workshops. Steering Committee

members will include fishermen and industry leader representatives from both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions. In addition, representatives from the NMFS SERO, NMFS Science Center, SEDAR Program, and councils will support the Steering Committee to ensure the course content aligns with regional council and science processes. **Update: Nominations for the Steering Committee have been identified and confirmation of participation is underway. An initial meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for September 26-27, 2012 in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area. Council staff will provide an update at the Council meeting.**

3. **Joint MREP Workshops** – Dependent upon recommendations from the Steering Committee, the first MREP workshop in the Southeast Region will involve participants from both the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Council regions. Participants will include fishermen, fishing industry leaders, NGO representatives, agency representatives, and others. **Target: April-May, 2013**

Tasks include:

- a. Recruit program presenters
- b. Outreach campaign
- c. Identify advisors/moderators
- d. Select participants
- e. Conduct workshop
- f. Evaluation

4. **Individual MREP Workshops** – Following the joint 2013 MREP Workshop, workshops will be conducted in the South Atlantic Region and the Gulf of Mexico Region, targeting regionally-specific issues. Participants in the original joint workshop will be utilized to facilitate the region-specific workshops. **Target – 2014 onward**

MREP Contact:

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“While it is crucial for fishermen to understand the science and management tools used to regulate their industry, of equal importance is the need to deepen the familiarity of policy and science professionals with the workings of the fishing community. The Marine Resource Education Program is a sturdy bridge over the gap among fishermen, scientists and managers. It brings these diverse disciplines together in a neutral setting, providing an opportunity to explore both differences and common goals outside of the regulatory forum.”

Marine Resources Education Program