



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Habitat Committee Virtual Meeting Summary

June 24, 2021

ASMFC Staff Present: Lisa Havel and Toni Kerns

Habitat Committee Members Present: Russ Babb (NJ, Vice Chair), Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Tiffany Birge (VMRC), Josh Carloni (NH), Lou Chiarella (NOAA GARFO), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Cindy Cooksey (MMFS-SE), Dave Dippold (PA), Claire Enterline (ME), Alexa Fournier (NYDEC), Jimmy Johnson (NC, Chair), Sharleen Johnson (SC), Robert LaFrance (CT), Wilson Laney (NCCF), Paul Medders (GA), Randy Owen (VA), Mark Rousseau (MA), Eric Schneider (RI), Kent Smith (FL), Rusty Swafford (for Ginny Faye, NOAA SERO), Marek Topolski (MD), Pace Wilber (NOAA SERO), and Kate Wilke (TNC)

Other attendees: Trish Murphey (APNEP)

The meeting began with Jimmy Johnson introducing new members Dave Dippold and Randy Owen, and noting the absence of a hand-raise feature for participation. The agenda and previous minutes were approved. Jimmy then opened the floor for discussions on the Habitat Hotline, with Lou Chiarella and Trish Murphey present to address living shorelines.

Lisa Havel updated the group on ACFHP, including recent changes in the NFHP Board and funding distribution uncertainties. ACFHP secured top-tier funding for projects in North Carolina, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, and received NOAA Recreational Fishing funding for a reef ball project. The Melissa Laser awardee was selected, with plans to present awards for 2020 and 2021 in the fall.

Wilson Laney discussed concerns regarding proposed year-round dredging at North Carolina ports, which was opposed by many agencies. This issue is now being considered for other projects, raising concerns about impacts on fish and fisheries. The ASMFC sent a letter of concern, and Wilson will follow up with other Corps Districts. Updates were also provided for dredging impacts in Georgia and Florida.

The discussion on Living Shorelines was deferred due to Lou Chiarella's absence, but he later provided an update on the impacts of living shorelines on SAV and proposed an Addendum to the 2018 SAV Policy. Concerns from states and the Policy Board were addressed, and Lou suggested including examples of good projects in the draft.

Other topics included updates on blue carbon initiatives, with Michelle and Claire reaching out to Phil Colarusso (EPA) and Kent and Kate exploring blue carbon use in the Gulf of Mexico. Discussions also covered updates on the NEFSC Habitat Vulnerability Assessment and the Climate Change Document, with Claire volunteering to tackle coastal resiliency.

Vision: Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Lisa provided an update on the FHOC Designations document, which aims to clarify habitat areas for ASMFC-managed species. The document is nearing completion, pending updates from Wilson and review by Technical Committees.

The meeting concluded with discussions on scheduling the next meeting, potentially in-person or hybrid due to travel restrictions. Wilson will transcribe his notes, and the meeting was adjourned.