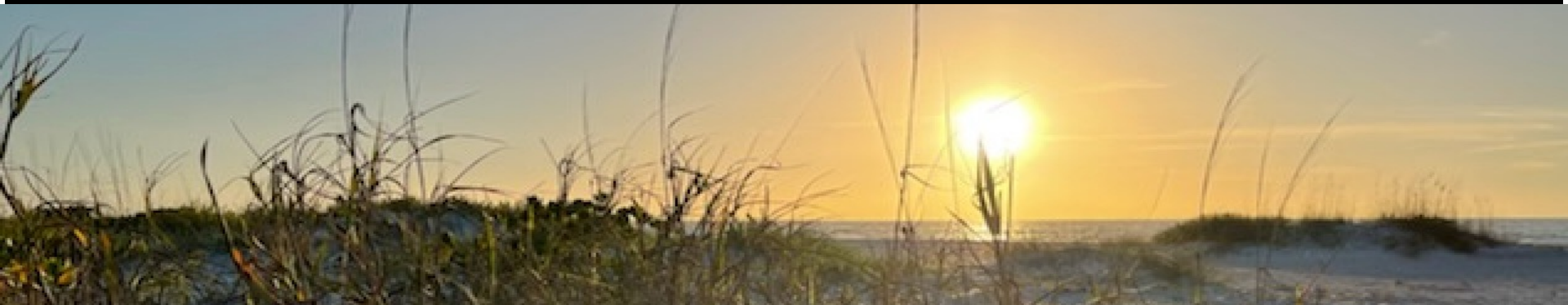**February 15 - 17, 2023**

CCC Communications Sub-Group Meeting Report

Meeting Charge

From October 2022 CCC Meeting:

- Communication tools, technologies, and approaches

- Engaging the public on complex management actions

- Advisory panel engagement and recruitment

- Communicating successes and challenges

Meeting Attendees

Emily Muehlstein – GMFMC
Carrie Simmons – GMFMC
Carly Somerset – GMFMC
Camilla Shireman – GMFMC
Mary Sabo – MAFMC
Maria Davis – NPFMC
Janice Plante – NEFMC
Amy Vandehey – WPFMC
Kim Iverson – SAFMC
Nick Smillie – SAFMC
Sandra Mondal – PFMC
Diana Martino – CFMC
Cristina Olan - CFMC

Public Comment

All Councils allow in-person and virtual public comment during:

- Council Meetings
- Advisory Panel (AP) Meetings
- Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Meetings*
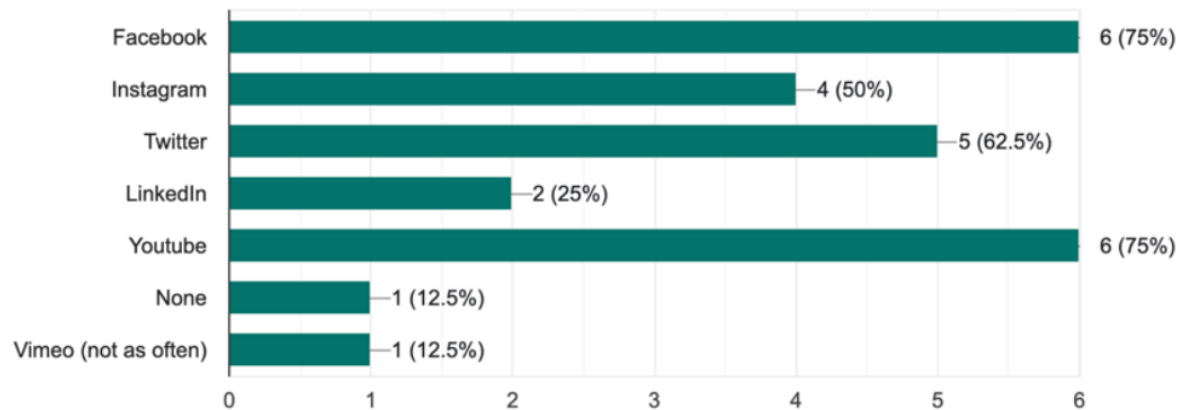- Public Hearings

All Councils add written comments to Council meeting briefing materials.

- Some Councils summarize and orally present comments on each amendment before final action is taken.

Social Media

Which social media platforms does your Council utilize?

8 responses

Platform	Value
Facebook	6 (75%)
Instagram	4 (50%)
Twitter	5 (62.5%)
LinkedIn	2 (25%)
Youtube	6 (75%)
None	1 (12.5%)
Vimeo (not as often)	1 (12.5%)

Facebook reaches Council audiences most effectively for two reasons:
- User demographics align with the typical demographics of Council audiences.
- App allows content managers to add web links in posts and there is no character number limit.

Instagram does not allow for direct links in posts to more effectively drive users to Council content

Social Media

If done properly, social media can be an effective mechanism for:
- Spreading awareness
- Sharing news (controlling the narrative)
- Encouraging participation in the Council process

West Pacific	• Uses a social media scheduling program
Caribbean	• Estimates 25 hour/week commitment
South Atlantic	• Provides content but does not engage in back-and-forth conversations
Gulf	• Uses social media as a primary communication platform

Websites

Appropriateness of linking to the NOAA Institutional Repository in addition to hosting final Council Amendments:

- Only North Pacific Council is doing it this way, and not all Councils agreed with this approach

Accessibility

- There are plug-ins that audit sites and widgets that allow users to modify the colors, font, and contrast
- PDFs allow Optical Character Recognition that allows text to be searchable and readable by a screen reader.

Meeting Practices

Meeting formats and audiences vary greatly across Councils making it difficult to directly compare meeting set-up and structure.

- Daily attendee sign-in during Council meetings:
  - Is there a legal requirement?
  - Is there a functional requirement?

Meeting Practices

MSA requires Councils to post meeting notices in places beyond website posting and email notifications:

Timely public notice of each regular meeting and each emergency meeting, including the time, place, and agenda of the meeting, shall be provided by any means that will result in wide publicity in the major fishing ports of the region (and in other major fishing ports having a direct interest in the affected fishery), ==except that e-mail notification and website postings alone are not sufficient.== ((16 U.S.C. 1852 *et seq*.) MSA(302) sections 97-453, 99-659, 101-627 (i) 104-297, 109-479 (2) (C))

- Some Councils regularly pay for placements in local newspapers

- Other Councils do not make non-digital efforts

Engaging the Public in Complex Management

The products produced by each Council to communicate during different stages of the management process vary greatly across Councils due to:

- Differing audiences
- Communication staffing and bandwidth

Hosting Federal Regulations may only be appropriate in regions with large recreational audiences (Southeast):

- Serves as a primary mechanism for driving people to the Council websites
- Requires dedicated staff time and is a large responsibility

Engaging the Public in Complex Management

Readability exercise: The Flesch-Kincaid Scale is based on:

- Sentence structure (active vs. passive voice)
- Number of words and syllables per sentence

Group was unable to re-write the intro paragraph on the Gulf Council's website to make is accessible to a 7th grade reading level.

- Complex fishery management topics may not always be easily simplified for all audiences.
- A recommended approach is to create simple materials with links to more complex materials for more advanced or involved interested parties.

Advisory Panels

A majority of Councils have AP orientation materials

Half of the Councils require members to undergo fisheries background checks

Challenges with recruiting, meeting attendance, and engagement.

- Daily stipends provided by some Councils
- Alternate members permitted by Pacific
- Virtual options bolster attendance but not necessarily engagement
- Some Councils invite AP Chair to report out to Council

Communicating Successes and Challenges

Cautioned against using the term 'successes' to avoid alienating audiences

Individual Councils should highlight:

- Opportunities for public engagement
- Transparency in the Council process
- Engagement in the management process
- Ancillary/innovative efforts

Communicating Successes and Challenges

Action Item: Each Council should highlight the fisherycouncil.org website by sharing it and the resources it contains with its communication network

Action Item: The host Council will develop a press release with help from the communications counterparts from fellow Councils announcing the final America the Beautiful 30x30 report and publish the report on the fisherycouncils.org website.

Action Item: Each year, the host Council should take the lead on developing press releases to highlight CCC positions and accomplishments. Those releases should then be shared across each individual Council's communication networks.

CCC Host Council Responsibilities/Onboarding

Challenging to keep track of host Council responsibilities

Action Item: Develop a CCC hosting guidance document that describes responsibilities and provides helpful details to ensure success. Create a shared Google drive with logos, letterheads, and past examples of meeting summaries and press releases.

What's Next?

The Communications Sub-group requests to meet in 2024:

- Begin planning the roll-out of the 50th Anniversary of the RFMC in 2026

- Engage in professional development as a group
  - Alan Alda Communicating Science Program