



GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Public Announcement

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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NOAA Office for Law Enforcement to Conduct IFQ Q&A Session, NOAA Fisheries to Hold Scoping Meetings on MSRA Environmental Review Procedures, and Comments Solicited on Incorporating NEPA Policy into the Magnuson-Stevens Act

- NOAA Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) will conduct a final update and Q&A session on the red snapper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system.

When: Wednesday, March 28, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.

Where : Embassy Suites Hotel in Destin, Florida.
Coast meeting room

The session, held in conjunction with the March Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting, will take place in the. The workshop is to provide an opportunity for red snapper IFQ fishers and dealers to get clarification on questions related to the IFQ program.

- NOAA Fisheries will hold a scoping meeting to solicit public input on annual catch limits and accountability measures contained in the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act (MSRA).

When: Tuesday, March 27, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Where : Embassy Suites Hotel in Destin, Florida.
Coast meeting room

- In addition to the scoping meeting, NOAA Fisheries is also soliciting public comment by mail or e-mail on the following issues related to incorporating the process of the [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) into the Magnuson-Stevens Act](#):
 1. In the context of fishery management actions, how should NOAA Fisheries, in consultation with the Councils and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), revise and update agency procedures for compliance with NEPA?
 2. What opportunities exist to improve efficiencies in the NEPA process that may not have been applied in the past?
 3. How should the Councils and NOAA Fisheries ensure that analysis is conducted on an appropriate scale for various types of fishery management actions? What criteria should be developed and applied to ensure that the level of analysis is commensurate with the scope of the action?
 4. Should NOAA Fisheries consider eliminating the distinction between an environmental assessment (EA) and environmental impact statement (EIA), and instead, rely solely on an integrated environmental impact analysis?
 5. How should a "reasonable" range of alternatives be defined for purposes of the new procedures?

6. What opportunities exist to develop a more effective scoping process? Should scoping occur at Council meetings and should Council meeting agenda notices serve as a traditional Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental analysis?
7. Should the environmental analysis for different types of fishery management actions be developed on a different scale based on the action's duration or effect?
8. What key features of the current NOAA NEPA process or of CEQ's regulations should be modified in the new procedures?
9. How should emergency actions be treated under the new procedures?
10. To what extent does the public feel that shorter comment periods (e.g., a minimum of 30 days) could affect your ability to participate effectively in the NEPA process?

Comments should be directed to NEPAprocedures@noaa.gov and must be received by April 20, 2007.

- The Council would also like to receive comments on [draft language](#) for including NEPA within the MSA. Copies of the proposed language are available from the Gulf Council. Comments on the language can be mailed to 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607; e-mailed to gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org; or faxed to 813-348-1711.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans designed to manage fishery resources in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

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