

Saltwater Angler Registry/License Study Group

October 15, 2008

Medeiros Studios, 6 Arnold Road Coventry

Minutes

In attendance: Steve Medeiros, Bob Ballou, Ed Kearney, Bruce Getchell, Rich Hittinger, Al Conti, John Rainone, Frank Blount, Rich Lafaille, Mike Bucko, John Mazurak, Daniel Maia, Fred Brown

Steve Medeiros welcomed everyone.

Bob Ballou noted that the meeting was being held in response to the 9/22/08 letter from DEM Director Michael Sullivan, which asked for the group's participation in a study of the marine recreational fishing registry/license issue, as it pertains to Rhode Island. Ballou noted that the Director had asked Steve Medeiros to co-chair the group, and that Steve had agreed to do so, joining Ballou in that role.

Ballou distributed an agenda for the meeting, as well as a discussion document linked to the agenda.

1. Process

It was suggested, and the Group agreed, that the *purpose and approach* for the Study Group would be as follows:

- Assess implications for RI fishermen of new federal requirements associated with the National Saltwater Angler Registry
- Consider alternatives
- Recommend best course of action

It was suggested, and the Group agreed, that the *outcome* of the process would be as follows:

- Written summary, reflecting the sense of the group on the various issues
- Any recommendations/opinions will be advisory, and have no binding impact; but if thought through well, they will likely be influential
- To be made available to all RI recreational fishermen, DEM Director and Governor, and RI General Assembly, as well as any other interested parties

2. Group

With regard to membership, Ballou noted that it was the Director's intent to have the group be reflective of the State's recreational fishing community, and be inclusive, but manageable.

The group discussed the issue of whether any others should be added, and it was agreed that the West Bay Anglers should be asked to participate.

It was suggested that one or more representatives from the media, representing recreational fishing interests, should be included; but the Group felt that it would be better to seek their involvement as objective reporters, rather than ask them to serve as members.

It was also suggested that more tackle shop owners/interests should be included as members; but the Group felt that Mike Bucko and Al Conti could adequately represent the interests of that sector. It was also noted that any/all tackle shop owners would be welcome to attend the meetings and express their thoughts and opinions.

With regard to *roles & responsibilities* of the Group members, it was suggested, and the Group agreed, that the three key standards should be:

- Attend all meetings, if possible
- Be open-minded, and respectful of others and their opinions
- Focus on what's best for the fishermen and the fishery resources of the State

It was suggested, and the Group agreed, that the key *functions* of the Group should be to:

- Understand all relevant issues, and digest all relevant information
- Draw upon insights and perspectives of those who the members know and represent
- Offer suggestions and recommendations
- Within the group:
 - Seek consensus, while noting and reflecting minority views
 - Avoid votes; pursue the "sense of the group"

With regard to *internal communication*, the group agreed that it would use an email chain to communicate within the Group. Medeiros volunteered to set up a group email for that purpose.

3. Meetings

The Group discussed locations and dates and times for future meetings. It was agreed that all future meetings would be open to the public, and that those who attend would be afforded an opportunity to ask questions or offer comments. If necessary, the Group agreed to consider time limits on public comments, so that everyone would have a chance to comment and the meetings would be kept manageable. It was agreed that meeting locations would rotate, and include both west bay and east bay sides, as well as northern and southern locations. Medeiros recommended

the Coventry-West Greenwich Elks Club for the next meeting, and the Group agreed. November 10 was offered as a potential date, with November 17 as a fallback. The group agreed that each meeting should last no more than 2 hours.

The Group agreed that minutes of all meetings would be kept, and made available to anyone upon request. The members agreed to search for an individual who would be willing to serve as Group Secretary. In the meantime, Ballou agreed to write the minutes for meeting underway.

4. Outreach & Communication – General Public

With regard to external communications, Ballou noted that the DEM website (www.dem.ri.gov) would be available for posting links, documents, meeting notices, minutes, etc. It was suggested that the Group should screen all materials before they are posted, to help maintain the validity and integrity of the information.

Ballou also offered to establish a one-way Listserve through DEM, whereby anyone from the general public who wished to be notified via email of future meetings could avail themselves of that opportunity.

It was suggested that it might be useful to seek RSVP's in response to meeting notices, but Ballou noted that the Listserve would not allow for that type of two-way communication. The Group agreed to further explore the issue if necessary.

The importance of good press coverage was noted. The Group suggested that Tom Meade and Peter Lord from the Providence Journal, Zach Harvey from The Fisherman, and Neal Larsson from On The Water magazine would all likely be interested in the process and would hopefully want to cover it. Ballou noted that he would work with Medeiros on a press release for the Nov 10 meeting, and issue it in advance of the meeting.

5. Issues to be Covered

The Group reviewed a list of potential topics to be covered, and agreed to proceed in an iterative fashion. Importantly, it was decided that the process should begin with a careful examination of the new federal program. Based on that assessment, the Group would decide whether or not to proceed with consideration of an alternative state license program. With that in mind, the following potential issues were identified:

- National Saltwater Angler Registry
- Revenue protection
- Other state programs, e.g., Massachusetts, South Carolina
- Prospective State Program for RI
 - Legal issues
 - Nature
 - Cost
 - Ease of obtaining license
 - Reciprocity with other states
 - Enforcement/penalties
- Status of RI's Marine Fisheries Management & Recreational Boating/Fishing Infrastructure Programs
 - Current budget, revenue sources, staffing, activities

- Needs, and costs of meeting those needs

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8 pm.

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Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Process
 - a. Purpose & Approach
 - b. Outcome
3. Group
 - a. Membership
 - b. Roles and responsibilities
 - c. Function
 - d. Communication
4. Meetings
 - a. Locations
 - b. Dates & Times
 - c. Public involvement and input
 - d. Minutes
5. Outreach & Communication – General Public
 - a. DEM website, listserve
 - b. Club/association newsletters, websites
 - c. Media
 - d. Blogs
6. Issues to be covered