

Report

2018 Southern New England Recreational Fishing Symposium *The Magnuson-Stevens Act: How To Make It Work For Recreational Fishing*

Co-sponsored by



Rhode Island
Saltwater Anglers
Foundation



Crowne Plaza Hotel Warwick, RI, January 26, 2018

Prepared by the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association

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Executive summary

Recreational saltwater fishing plays an important role in Southern New England’s ecology and economy as well as throughout the United States.

According to NOAA, recreational fishing in Rhode Island and Massachusetts has an economic impact that surpasses commercial fishing. Commercial fishers provide a nutritious food source for people who have no access to fish, however, both recreational and commercial fishing are important to our economy.

The [‘Fisheries Economics of the United States’](#) report published by the Department of Commerce and NOAA relates that recreational fishing in Rhode Island had sales of \$332-million in 2015. The report says commercial fishing had sales of \$290- million in Rhode Island and a total of \$338-million once imported fish were added. Massachusetts’ situation is similar. Recreational sales were at \$986-million and commercial sales at \$861-million with sales of \$1,129-million once imports are added.

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But what most people do not realize is that according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), that although recreational fishing accounts for only 2% of the landings nationwide it has a far reaching and sustainable impact on our society. Nationally recreational fishing represents over \$89.5-billion in sales and value added to the economy and 439,242 jobs.

With this economic impact it is vitally important that the nation and Southern New England manage this resource to abundance so recreational fishing can continue to thrive in a highly sustainable way and continue to serve as a primary economic engine of growth. To continue economic growth in the recreational fishing sector our national fishing law, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, needs to better address recreational fishing.

The economic impact of recreational fishing was the theme of the 2013 RISAA Symposium and growing fish to abundance through ecosystem-based management was the theme of the 2015 RISAA Symposium. Building on these symposia, the 2018 Southern New England Recreational Fishing Symposium theme was the Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization and how to make it work better for recreational fishing. Our national fishing law needs to be improved to better recognize the needs of recreational fishing, so commercial and recreational fishing can continue to thrive together.

The Symposium brought together local, regional and national anglers, fish managers and scientists to discuss the drivers that impact recreational fishing, the ecosystem, and parts of MSA that should remain as they are and those that should be improved to better accommodate recreational fishing.

Speakers and panelists (see attached speaker guide and agenda) first addressed participants and then had an open panel discussion with questions from other panelists, the facilitator, as well as participants attending the Symposium.

Participants then broke into eight work groups of 6 to 8 people in each group and were asked for their input on what they might recommend to enhance the Magnuson-Stevens Act for recreational anglers.

The three top recommendations from each work group were posted in the front of the room, each one was read with duplicates deleted and then each participant was given four 'voting' dots. Attendees could put all four on one recommendation or vote for four different recommendations or anything in-between. 55 attendees voted on issues.

Key points from panelists

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Key points from speaker presentations appear on page 9. Full presentations will appear at www.risaa.org once the 2018 Symposium section of the website is completed. Ten highlights from panelist presentations:

1. MSA is working because Number 1, it's rooted in best available science; Number 2, it requires accountability for everyone who fishes to stay within sustainable quotas; and Number 3, it drives recovery of depleted stocks in a timely manner.
2. Before the MSA state and regional managers would often set catch levels above sustainable levels to address short-term economics, or they would exceed sustainable quotas, but there was no accountability for those overages (such was the case of cod fish in New England).
3. The Morris-Deal report suggested the nation develop a national recreational fishing policy and that we revise our recreational fishing management approach to change stock rebuilding timelines and allocation of marine fishery resources for the greatest benefit of the nation.
4. Recreational and commercial fishing are fundamentally different activities that require different management approaches, however federal laws and policies have attempted to shove recreational fishing into management approaches designed just for commercial fishing.
5. The ten national standards of MSA serve as the guiding principles for managing fishing under MSA. In the past nine years the percentage of stocks not overfished increased from about 83% to 91%... and fish stocks not subject to overfishing increased from about 76% to 84%.
6. MSA has successfully managed stocks with annual catch limits so overfishing does not occur. However, MSA is not perfect: some challenges include the quality of data from the recreational sector, regulatory stability, access and opportunity.
7. Some believe recreational and commercial fishing are essentially different (experiential vs pounds of fish), however species caught for consumption (or meat vs catch & release) that are dominated by recreational fishers could be easily damaged if overfishing is allowed with no allowable catch limits (ACL). Species dominated by the

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recreational sector include 74% of black sea bass, 90% of south Atlantic dolphin, 74% of bluefish, 70% of red snapper in the Gulf, etc.

8. The ability of regional councils to use recreational management measures other than catch limits are already permitted by MSA. MSA currently allows alternative management measures allowing numbers of fish rather than pounds. It is just a mathematical calculation so this ability already exists in Magnuson.
9. The aim of MSA was precautionary management to grow fish to abundance and provide for Maximum Sustainable Yield or more recently Optimum Yield. MSA=Precautionary Management=Abundance=Angler Opportunity.
10. Over 40 recreationally and commercially important species have been rebuilt under MSA. It has been good for the fish, as well as those of us who depend on healthy and abundant fish stocks. It's important that we preserve and enhance conservation measures in our national fishing law. We need regulations that aim to grow fish to abundance for all rather than taking more fish to fulfill short term economic gains of a few.



Top scoring directions from group work

Six directions offered by participants floated to the top for future action plan developed including:

1. **Improving recreational stock assessment data as well as catch and effort harvest data** were top scoring recommendations. Participants wanted the quality of existing data enhanced and wanted improved new

data sources, creating avenues to accommodate electronic reporting in the recreational sector. Some participants wanted to both enhance existing data sources with more funding and surveying as well as explore electronic recording of catch and effort.

The key in both cases was development of federal criteria and standards for reporting, not state or regional criteria for reporting. The aim of 'better data' recommendations was to accommodate the collection and reporting of data in a timely manner to impact regulation.

Verbatim comments from groups:

"Improve quality of recreational harvest & socio-economic data"

"Timely and accurate data on assessments and fishermen fishing results"

"Add 'best available science' to standard SEC.301 (6) of the MSA"

"Develop Federal criteria and standards for reporting electronically in recreational sector"

"Create a timeframe for data innovation"

"Implement 200 person Rhode Island study using cellphone app."

"Science based funding for data collection, incentivize and educate anglers"

2. **Protect forage fish and promote ecosystem-based management** was another top recommendation with a total of 35 votes. 12 participants felt that the forage fish complex should be defined and managed separately from non-forage species exempt from optimal yield. Many participants (23 votes) felt that forage fish and ecosystem-based management were linked and should be addressed at the same time.

Verbatim comments from groups:

"Forage and non-forage fish should be managed separately"

"Forage fish should be exempt from optimal yield"

"Ecosystem based management with focus on forage species to support recreational fishing"

3. **Ending the redistribution of quota** from the recreational to commercial sector received 20 participant votes. Many felt that leaving unused quota in the recreational sector was a good conservation practice. Additionally, participants felt the regulation should put a value on 'the fish left in the water' from catch & release. In regard to gear conflicts between trawl and rod & reel fishing, many felt buffer zones should be

established or explore restructuring commercial vessel traffic in-shore where feasible to reduce large vessels from operating close to the shore or in estuaries.

Verbatim comments from groups:

“Consider underutilization of allocation <should be seen> as a conservation benefit”

“Avoid transfer of recreational underage to commercial quota.”

“End the redistribution of unused quota from recreational to commercial sector”

“Put a value on fish left in water via catch & release”

“Restructure commercial vessel traffic in-shore where feasible to avoid gear conflicts”

“Better understanding of recreational fishing discard mortality.”

4. **Redistribution of fish quotas due to biomass movement and climate change** (14 votes). Participants felt a redistribution of fish harvest quotas based on current distribution, catch and value (both recreational and commercial) is necessary.

Verbatim comments from groups:

“Recalculate specie allocation on distribution, catch and value.”

“Change law to shift management to where fish are”

“Require special distribution based on new data.”

5. **Add council seats in neighboring regions** to accommodate fish movement as well as recreational seats (19 votes). Require recreational representation on all Regional Councils possibly a minimum of one private recreational angler representative with no commercial fishing interests and a second from the party and charter sector.

Verbatim comments from groups:

“Require private recreational anglers on all Councils”

“Private angler should not have any commercial fishing interests.”

“Add council seats on neighboring regions to facilitate fish movement changes”

“Add two Rhode Island seats to the Mid-Atlantic Council”

6. **Add transiting provision to MSA to accommodate a Block Island to Mainland corridor** (12 votes). Other transient provisions occur in New England and throughout the county. Due to a mile or two state water gap between Block Island and mainland Rhode Island, a transit provision should be added to MSA.

Verbatim comments from groups:

“Add a transiting provision between BI and mainland RI.”



Speaker highlights. Visit www.risaa.org for full speaker/panelist presentations.

Ben Bulis, President, America Fly Fishing Trade Association. “MSA is working because Number 1, it’s rooted in best available science; Number 2, it requires accountability for everyone who fishes to stay within sustainable quotas; and Number 3, it drives recovery of depleted stocks in a timely manner.” said Bulis.

“The concepts of science-based management, putting an end to overfishing, and recovering stocks were established when the law was first passed back in 1976. However, we still saw declining fish populations and rampant overfishing well into the 2000s, and this was because managers, due to political pressure, would often set catch levels above sustainable levels to address short-term economics, or they would exceed sustainable quotas, but there was no accountability for those overages.”

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MSA, the fishing law of this nation, insulates our federal fisheries managers from the pressure to put short-term economics before conservation. We believe MSA is working, and we oppose any measures that would undermine those three core tenets of conservation.

Science must guide fishery management decisions, and data collection efforts must meet scientific integrity standards. Science-based annual catch limits and accountability measures that are responsible for the progress toward ending and preventing overfishing must be preserved.

‘The MSA isn’t perfect. It needs to do a better job protecting habitat. The health and abundance of forage fish – or bait fish – need to be managed appropriately.’ said Bulis. We also need to accommodate for climate change, rising ocean temperatures and fish movement I.e. dolphin and cobia as well as summer flounder and black sea bass in the north. We also need improved data collection methods and tools like smart phone apps that record catch in real-time, and that are subject to peer-review and science-based standards, are an important tool.

Janet Coit, Director, RI Department of Environmental Management, kicked off the conference with opening remarks relating how important MSA has been to rebuilding fish stocks in Rhode Island and the Nation.

Director Coit said, “The ease of access and reputation for good fishing lures both residents and tourists to our shores every year. The MSA has helped to fortify our fisheries by mandating a better understanding of our marine resources, rebuilding depleted fish stocks, and holding fishermen accountable for their catch. We look forward to working with RISAA and Rhode Island’s congressional delegation to ensure that our federal laws support recreational fishing as we pursue sustainable management of our incredible marine resources.”

Russel Dunn, NOAA National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fishing, gave an overview of the MSA, its challenges and opportunities and discussed the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy and Implementation Plans.

Highlights included a review of saltwater trips and catch. 57% of recreational fish are caught on the Atlantic coast with only 3% caught on the Pacific coast and 39% caught off the Gulf of Mexico Coast.

The MSA originally passed in 1976 establishing the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone and eight Regional Fishery Management Councils. The Act was reauthorized in 1996 adding sustainable fisheries provisions and reauthorized again in 2007 which ended overfishing immediately adding science-based annual catch limits and accountability measures to prevent overfishing from occurring.

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“The ten national standards (see attachments) of MSA serve as the guiding principles for managing fishing under MSA. Under MSA in the past nine years the percentage of stocks not overfished increased from about 83% to 91%... and fish stocks not subject to overfishing increased from about 76% to 84%.” said Dunn.

MSA has successfully managed stocks with recreational annual catch limits so overfishing does not occur. However, MSA is not perfect some challenges include data, regulatory stability, access and opportunity.

Rich Hittinger, 1st vice president of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association, welcomed participants and provided highlights of the 2013 and 2015 Southern New England Recreational Fishing Symposia. “The purpose of the symposia series is to highlight the importance of recreational fishing and discuss how to advance and improve recreational fishing for the future.” said Hittinger.

“The 2013 theme, the economic impact of recreational fishing and the 2015 theme, growing fish to abundance and ecosystem-based management identified concerns that should be addressed during MSA reauthorization.” Issues that were discussed at previous Symposia include access to fishing locations and access to fish that can be caught. Climate change and its impact on fish and fish movement are having an important impact on fish populations.

Key points from the 2013 and 2015 symposia that are relative to MSA reauthorization and recreational fishing include: the economic importance of recreational fishing and its need for better representation; access to fishing; population shifts and the need to account for them in ACL; management by estimating pounds of harvest is difficult; and enforcement needs to be strong.

Chris Macaluso, Director, Center for Marine Fisheries for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, shared the 2014 Marine vision “Morris-Deal” Report and its key tenets including the formation of a national policy for recreational fishing and a revised approach to management that aimed to change stock rebuilding timelines and the allocation of marine fishery resources for the greatest benefit of the nation as well as the managing of forage base and a process for cooperative management.

Mr. Macaluso relayed that most of his coalition’s concerns have been rolled into bill HR 200 including an examination of alternative management, reallocation in mixed use fisheries, and a process for cooperative management between states and NOAA.

“Recreational and commercial fishing are fundamentally different activities that require different management approaches, however federal laws and policies have attempted to shove recreational fishing into management approaches designed just for commercial fishing. Fishing laws in this nation need to be revised to better reflect the conservation goals and cultural needs as well as the economic benefits of recreational fishing.” said Macaluso.

John McMurray, charter fishing captain and guide, author and member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries

Commission. Putting conservation first was the title of John McMurray's presentation noting that the aim of the MSA was precautionary management to grow fish to abundance and angler opportunity to catch fish. He shared the equation: MSA=Precautionary Management=Abundance=Angler Opportunity.

"Conservation is paramount... you shouldn't throw out the good with the bad. While it hasn't been easy, MSA has done a good job rebuilding fish stocks. Over 40 recreationally and commercially important species have been rebuilt under this law. So MSA has been good for the fish, as well as those of us who depend on healthy and abundant fish stocks. It's important that we preserve and enhance conservation measures in our national fishing law." said Capt. John McMurray "We need regulations that aim to grow fish to abundance for all rather than taking more fish to fulfill short term economic gains of a few."

Jason McNamee, Chief, Marine Resources Management, RI Division of Marine Fisheries, spoke about Ecosystem management and the state of what is going on in jurisdictions that impact Southern New England fisheries. Examples of ecosystem-based management approaches in the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils as well as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission were reviewed.

Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) both aim to increase the information being used when making fisheries management decisions including predator-prey relationships, climate and habitat information.

Through comparing approaches now employed, McNamee came up with three conclusions. First, progress has been made on ecosystem management as set forth in the previous MSA reauthorizations. Second the different approaches being used all have the goal of doing a better job of synthesizing available information beyond the current single-species models. And third, as we successfully incorporate this information, management success and performance will likely be enhanced.

Charles Witek, Esq., fish advocate, writer and recreational fisherman. "Some say that recreational fishing is essentially different than commercial fishing, that the MSA was a law intended to manage commercial fisheries and this needs to be amended to accommodate the recreational fishing needs. I disagree with that underlying premise."

Both recreational and commercial fishing are activities that remove fish from wild populations and both can harm wild populations if not adequately controlled. "In some high-value fisheries that attract recreational fishermen, recreational landings can equal and sometimes far exceed those of commercial fishing." So, given recreational fishing's significant

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impact on the health of many fisheries, it is in appropriated to make recreational fishing exempt from the discipline imposed by annual catch limits and accountability measures while delaying the rebuilding of overfished stocks.

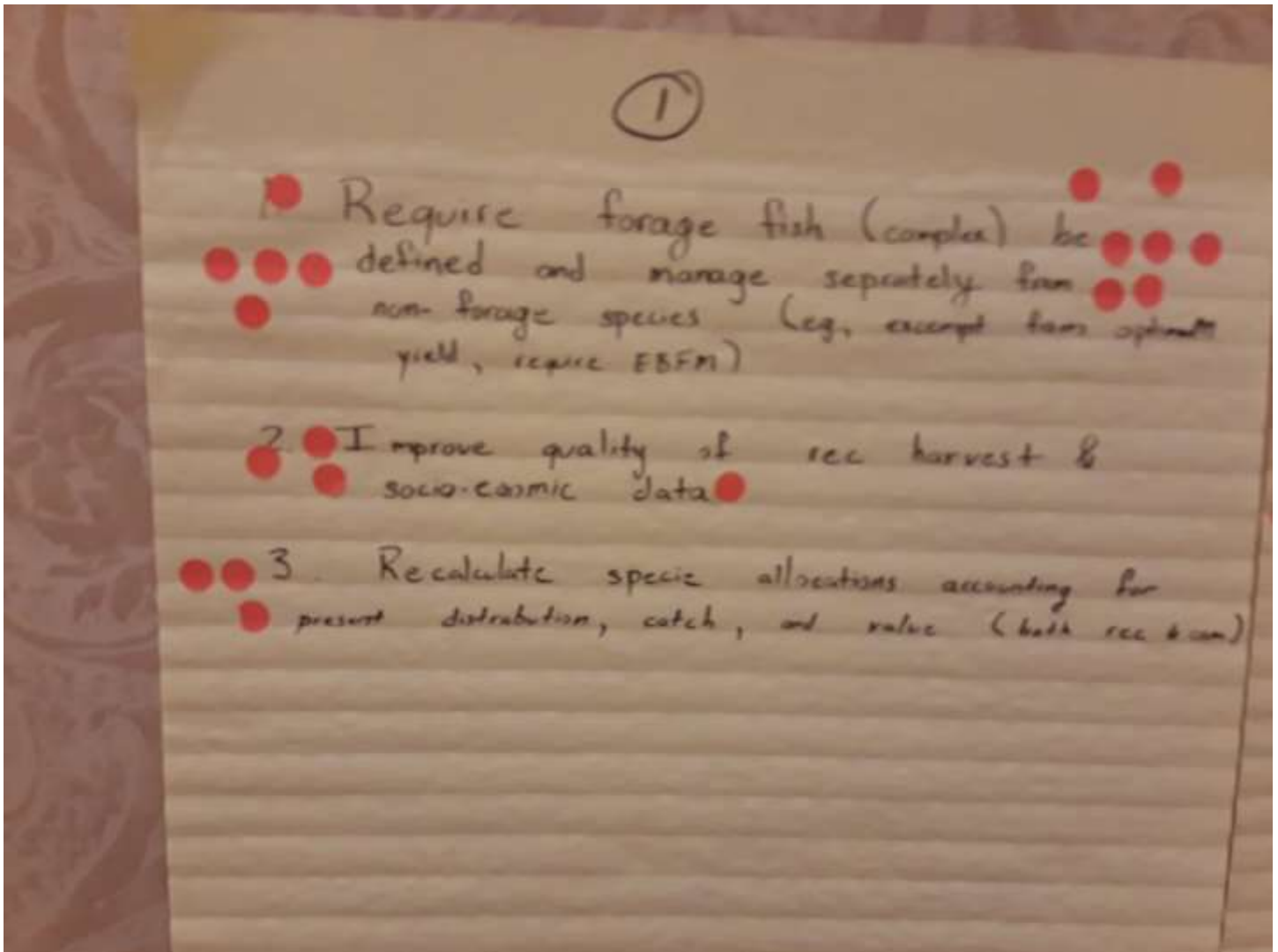
“The ability of regional councils to use recreational management measures other than catch limits are already permitted by MSA. MSA is more flexible than you think as national standard 1 guideline permit alternative management measures. MSA allows for regulations that use numbers of fish rather than pounds. It is just a mathematical calculation converting pounds to numbers of fish and fish to pounds. So this ability already exists in Magnuson.”

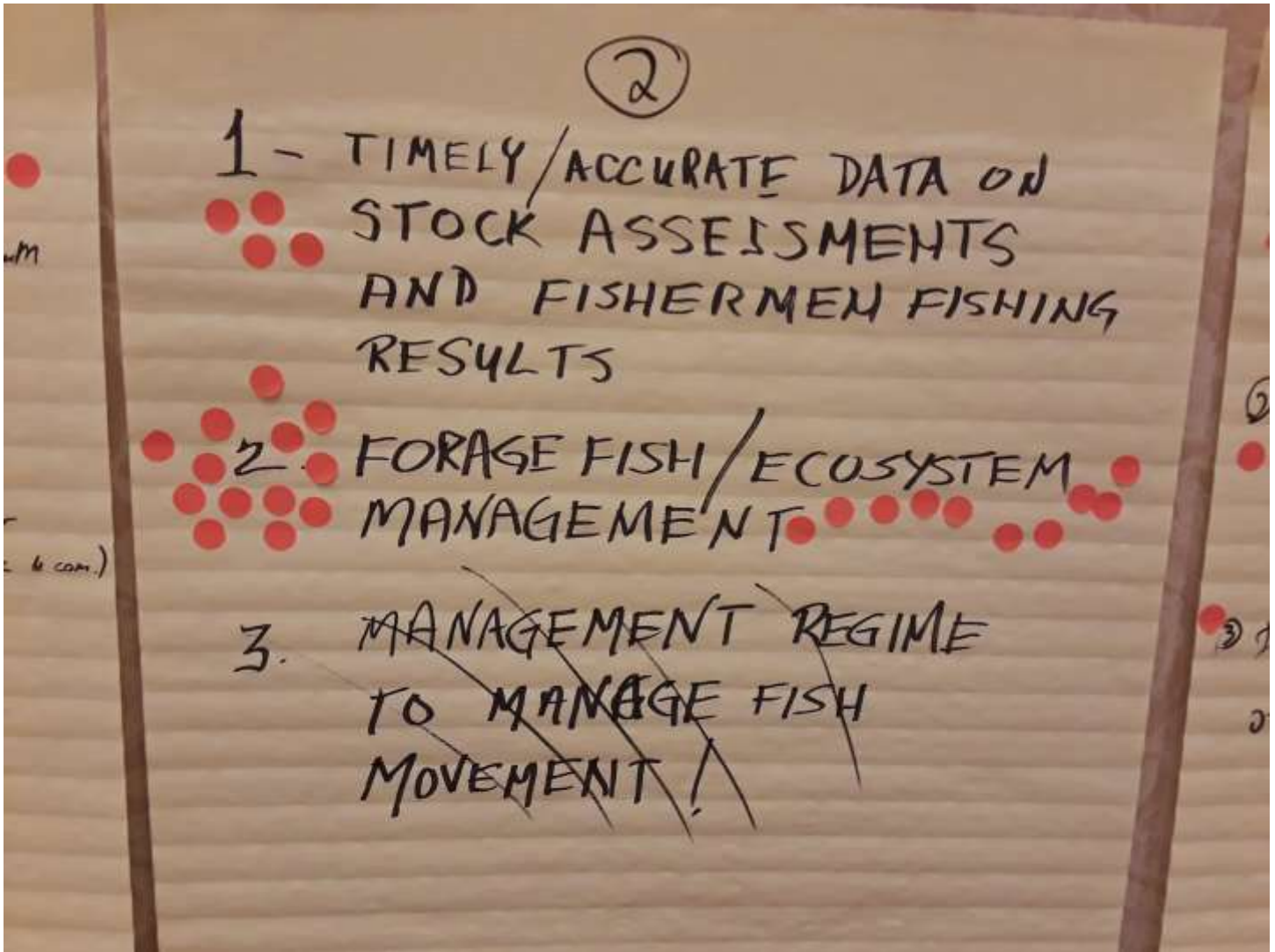
“In regard to catch... we need to account for the recreational fish we catch and release as they are just as valid as catch and kill.” said Witek.

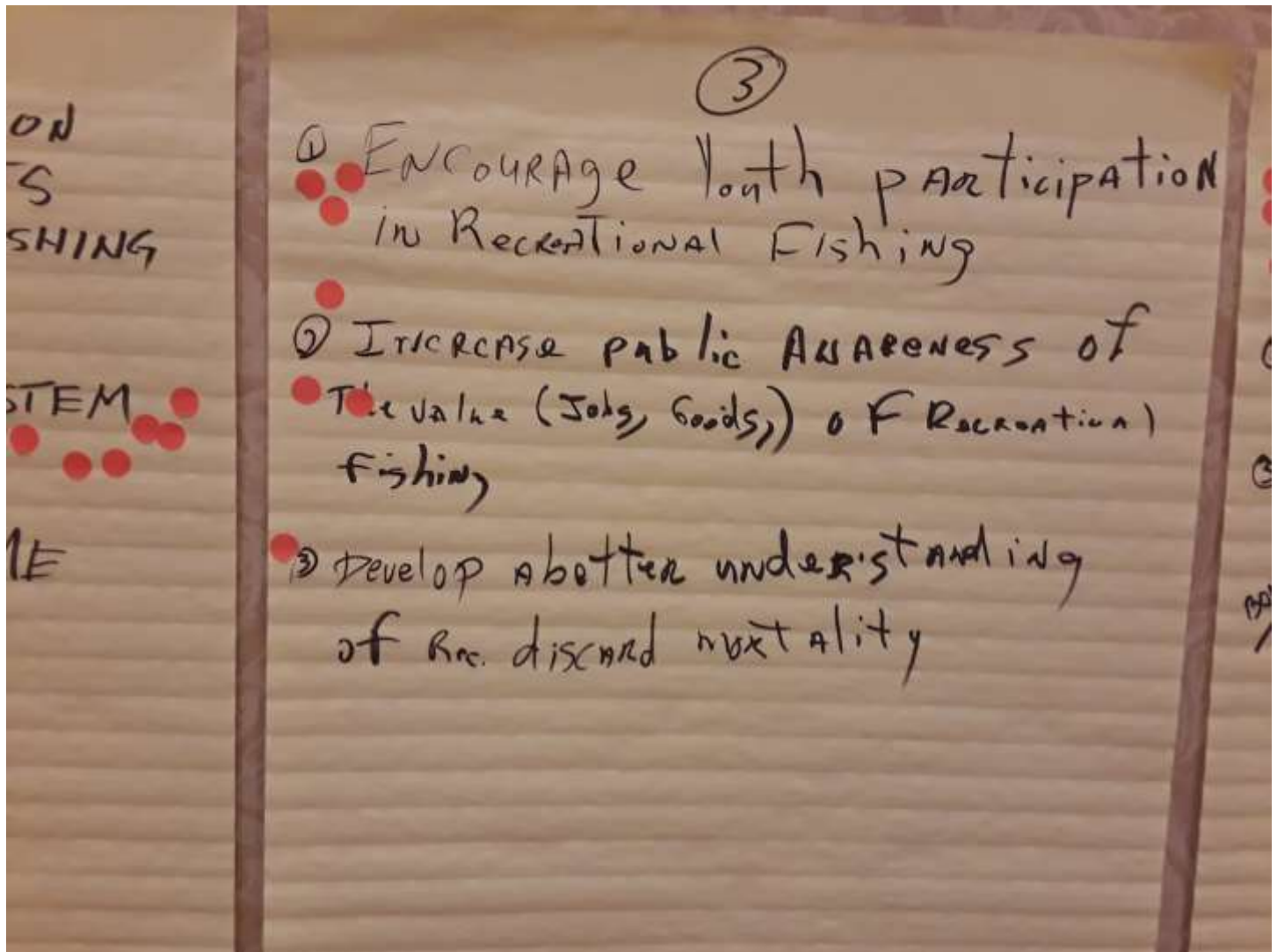
Next steps

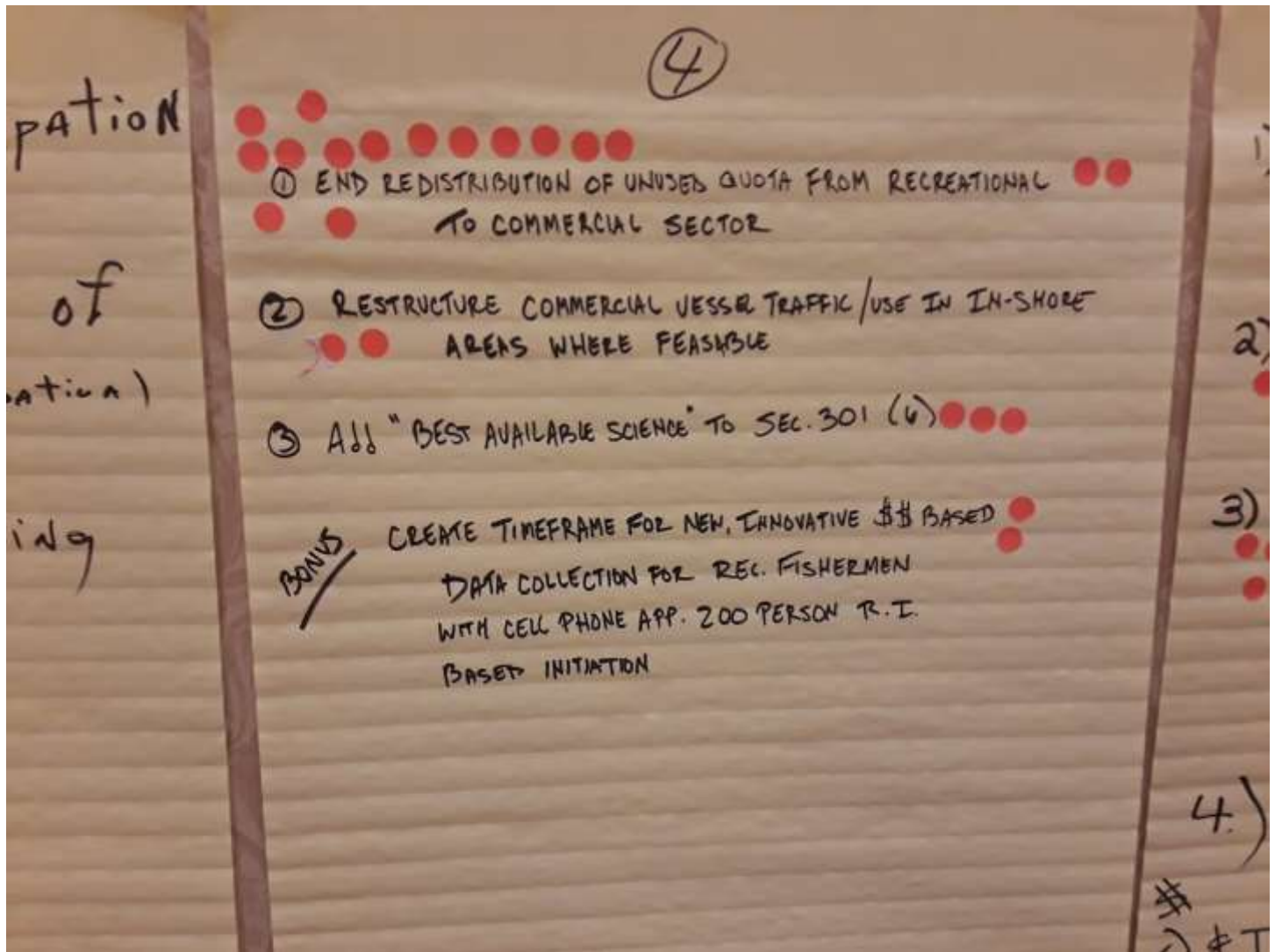
The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association will develop a public policy action agenda on the Magnuson-Stevens Act using input obtained from the Symposium along with Board input and approval in February, 2018. The MSA action agenda will be shared with RISSA members, political leaders, fish mangers and the community.

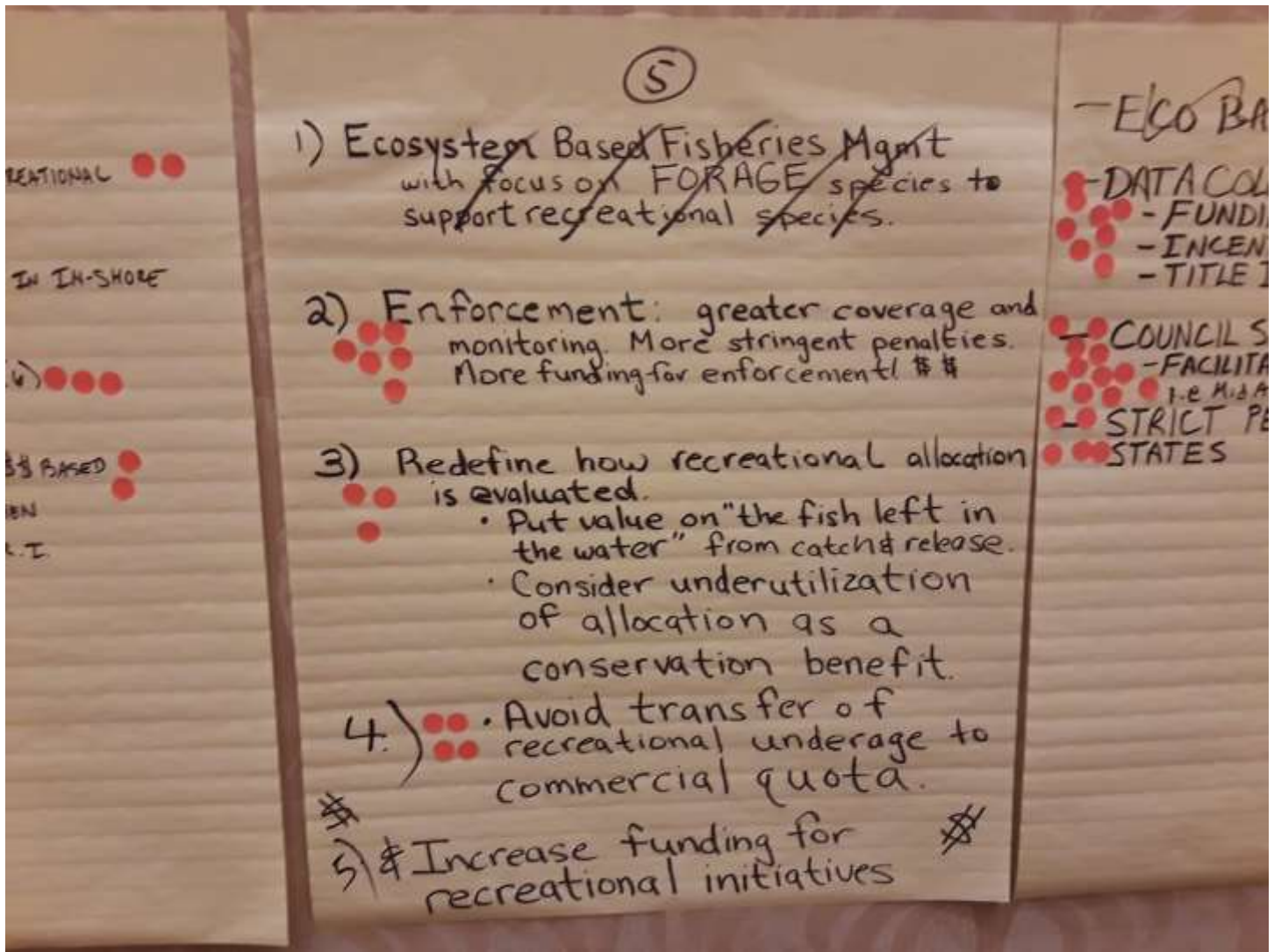
Photos of group work charts and issue voting

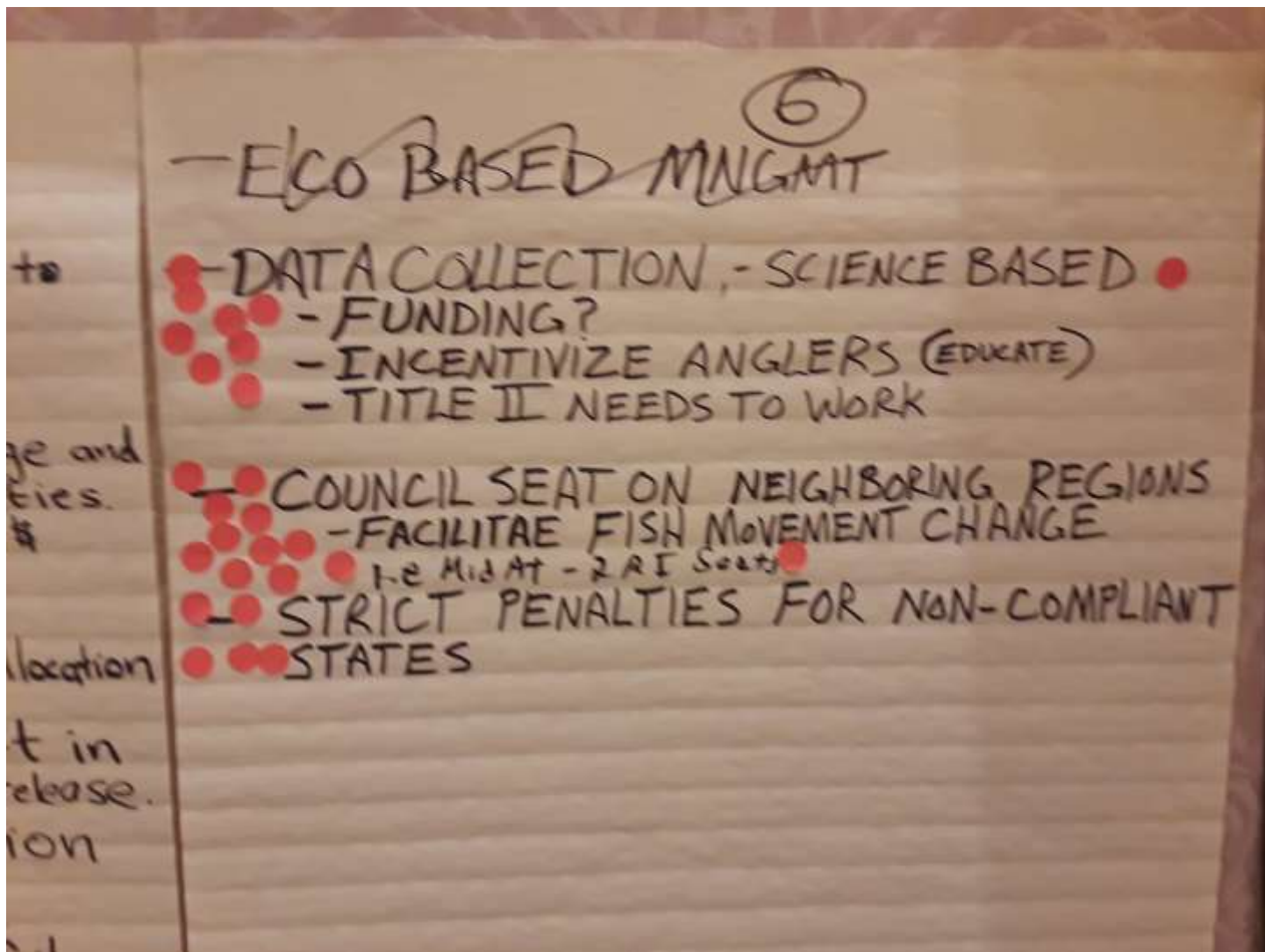


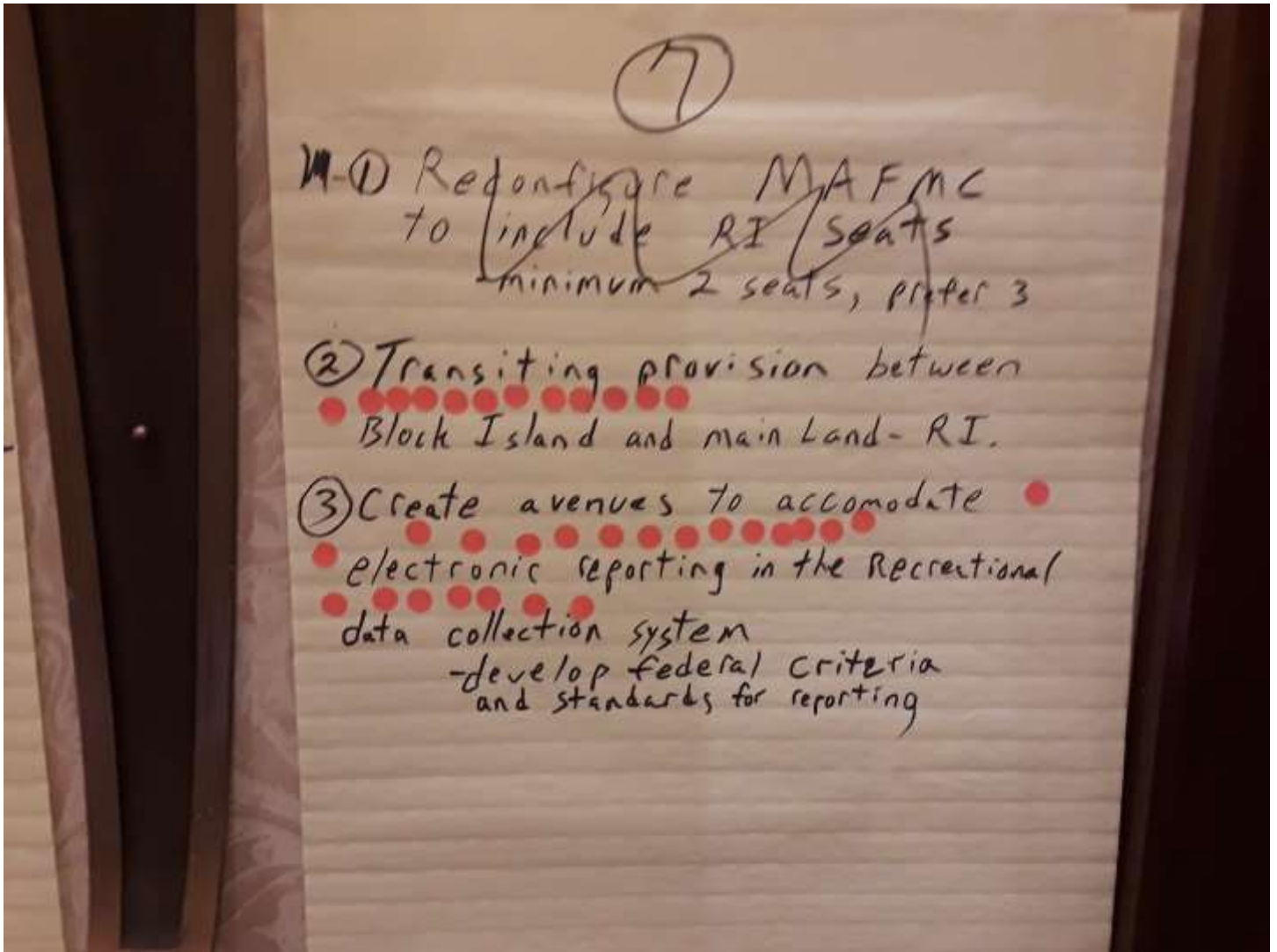


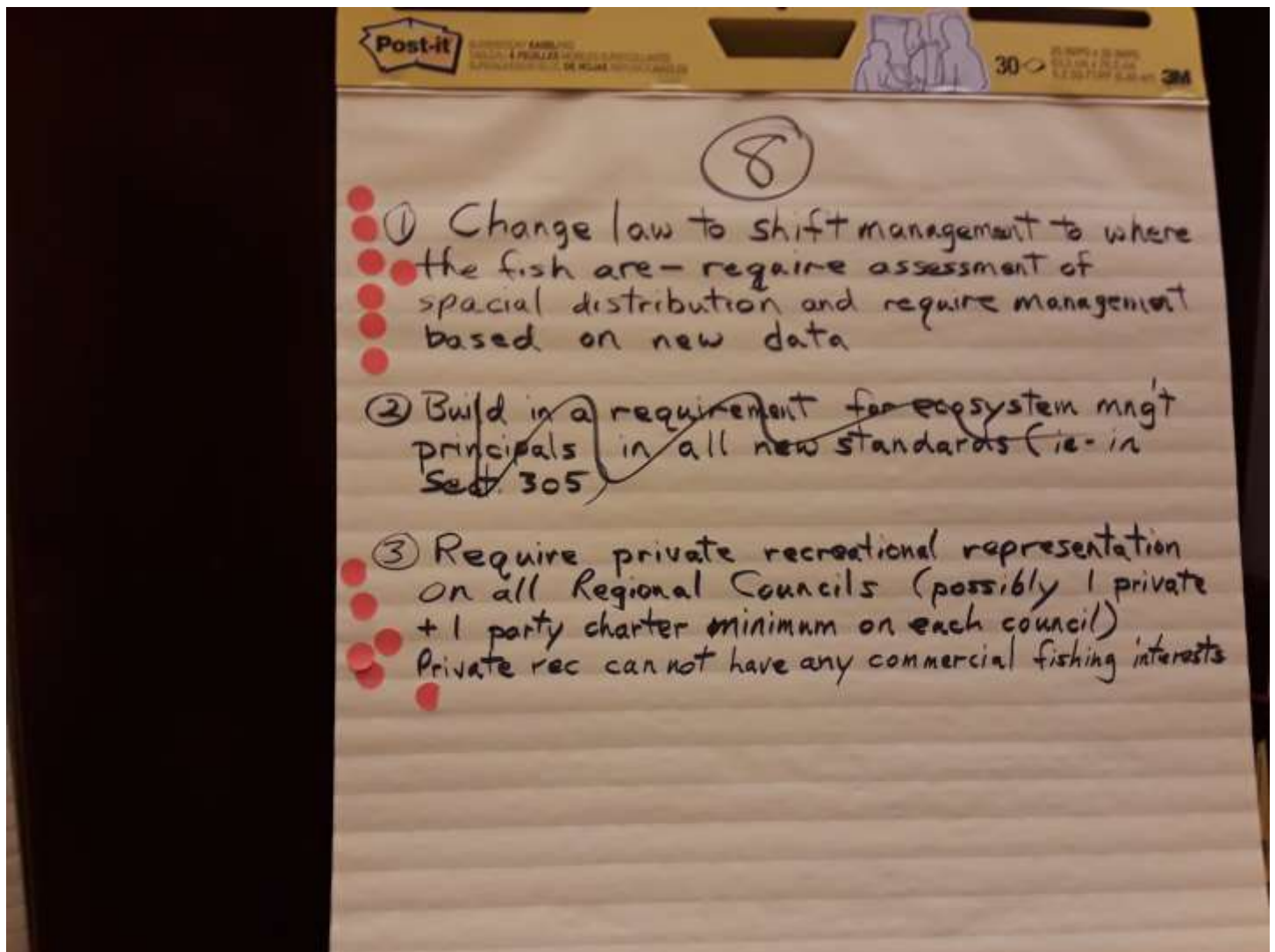












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AGENDA

- 7:00 **Registration / Meet other attendees/Continental breakfast**
- 8:00 **Welcome and Introductions**
Steve Medeiros, President, RI Saltwater Anglers Association

Janet Coit, Director, RI Department of Environmental Management

Richard Hittinger, *Symposium Director*
President, Alliance Environmental Group, Inc. and RISAA 1st Vice President
- 8:25 **Agenda Overview**
Dave Monti, Symposium Committee, 2nd Vice President, RI Saltwater Anglers
- 8:30 **Review of 2013 and 2015 Symposiums**
Richard Hittinger, Symposium Committee, 1st Vice President, RI Saltwater Anglers
2013 Financial impact of recreational fishing
2015 An Abundant Future for Recreational Fishing
 - Electronic recording of catch and effort as well as climate change and its impact on the fish
 - Ecosystem-based management... Jason McNamee, Chief of Marine Resource Management, RI Department of Environmental Management
 - Climate change and its impact on the fish and fishing
- 9:15 **Magnuson-Stevens Act**
Russel Dunn, NOAA Fisheries, National Policy Advisor on Recreational Fisheries
 - History/background
 - Strengths and weak areas today
 - National Recreational Fishing plans
- 10:00 **Break**

10:15 Panel Presentations and Discussion

Overview and introduction of panelists - **Dennis Nixon**

Ben Bulis, President, American Fly Fishing Trade Association

Russel Dunn, NOAA Fisheries, National Policy Advisor on Recreational Fisheries

Chris Macaluso, Director, Center for Marine Fisheries, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

John McMurray, Charter Captain, *One More Cast Charters*, Oceanside, NY, member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and author

Charles Witek, Esq., author/blogger and recreational fishermen, West Babylon

Questions from Dennis Nixon (40 min.)

Audience Questions (60 min.)

1:00 Working Lunch and Group Work

Table facilitator performs scribe function, group develops top three recommendations for MSA Reauthorization to better accommodate recreational fishing

2:25 Group Reports and Wrap-Up

- Groups report out (3 min. each)
- Reminder about electronic evaluation, issue prioritizing via voting with dots as they leave

3:00 Symposium closes

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Speakers/Panelists



Ben Bulis, President, American Fly Fishing Trade Association

Ben was the founding partner of Rocky Mountain Aviation which designed and developed executive class hangars for General Aviation aircraft. He has successfully owned and operated businesses in the construction and aviation industry. As a native of New Hampshire, Ben was introduced to fishing at a young age in the ocean, lakes and streams of New England. Ben studied Biology at Plymouth State University and Engineering at Montana State University. Ben has fished extensively around the world and as a guide in Montana. Ben is an FAA licensed Instrument Pilot and currently volunteers on the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers board, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership Policy Council and the American Sportfishing Associations Government Affairs and Trade Show Committees. Ben has been the President and CEO of AFFTA since 2012, he lives in Bozeman, MT.



Janet Coit, Director, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

DEM Director Janet L. Coit has worked in the environmental field for more than 25 years. As Director of DEM since 2011, she has focused on efforts to promote local agriculture and seafood, provide opportunities to connect families and tourists to nature, and improve customer service and business processes to support environmental and economic interests. This year, she was awarded an honorary degree from Roger Williams Law School. Also, she was recently inducted into the American College on Environmental Lawyers and received the Environmental Business Council Paul G. Keough Environmental-Energy Award for Government Service.

She received the "Mary Brennan Tourism Award" from the Rhode Island Hospitality Association for her role in attracting and executing the Volvo Ocean Race Newport Stopover event in 2015; the event was the most successful North American stopover in the race's history, drawing more than 130,000 fans and contributing some \$47 million to the local economy.

In 2015, Director Coit was honored with Sail Newport's President's Award and the Leadership Award from Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association. She was also recognized as one of Rhode Island's most powerful women by Rhode Island Monthly in 2014 and received the prestigious "John H. Chafee Conservation Leadership Award" from the Environment Council of Rhode Island.

A magna cum laude graduate of Dartmouth College, Coit holds a J.D. from Stanford Law School, where she was president of the Environmental Law Society and a member of the Environmental Law Journal.



Russell Dunn, National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fisheries, NOAA Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

As the national policy advisor, Russell works with the recreational fishing community to safeguard and enhance the significant benefits sustainable recreational fisheries afford coastal communities and the nation through improved dialogue, partnership, and action. As a member of NMFS' national leadership team, he focuses high-level institutional attention on key priorities and serves as the national point of contact for the saltwater recreational fishing community and other federal agencies. In recent years, this included Agency adoption of a national saltwater recreational fisheries policy, as well as national, and regional implementation plans. Russell has 21 years of public and private-sector experience in national and international marine fisheries policy.



Chris Macaluso, Director, Center for Marine Fisheries for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Chris works with a host of advocacy and conservation organizations to advance habitat restoration efforts across the Gulf and improve federal fisheries management law and policy.

He is an avid angler and duck hunter and a lifelong Louisiana resident who has worked in the outdoors communication field for more than 20 years, hosting hunting and fishing radio shows and working as a freelance outdoor and sports writer, radio and TV host.

Macaluso became the first-ever communications director for the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration

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Authority in 2006 and handled media relations for the Authority during the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

He left state-government in late 2010 to work as the Coastal Outreach Coordinator for the non-profit Louisiana Wildlife Federation helping to start the Vanishing Paradise Campaign that worked with outdoorsmen and the hunting and fishing industry to pass the RESTORE Act in 2012 before taking his current role at TRCP in 2013.

He and his wife Katie have a young son and daughter who both enjoy spending time in the swamps and marshes of Louisiana and the beaches along the Gulf Coast.



Capt. John McMurray is a full-time Captain/owner of "One More Cast" Charters in Oceanside, NY.

McMurray, served three terms (9-years) on Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council from 2008 to 2017, and is currently the Legislative Proxy at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission for Senator Phil Boyle.

McMurray is a well-published outdoor writer, specializing in fisheries conservation. He wrote the *Resource Column for Flyfishing in Saltwater* for close to a decade, and is a regular contributor to *Saltwater Sportsman*, *Sport Fishing Magazine*, and *On The Water*. He has had op-eds published in Newsday and the New York Times and wrote a weekly conservation blog for the *Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership*. He currently writes one for the *Marine Fish Conservation Network*.

McMurray sits on the Policy Board of the Marine Fish Conservation Network as well as being one of the administrators of *Fisques.org - "News & Opinion for Conservation Minded Anglers"*.

In prior years McMurray served in the Coast Guard as a small-boat coxswain and law-enforcement officer, and was first Executive Director of the Coastal Conservation Association NY. He was also the Director of Grants at the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, and was responsible for much of the equipment finding for marine conservation organizations.



Jason E. McNamee, Chief, Marine Resource Management, Rhode Island Division of Marine Fisheries

Chief of the RI Department Environmental Management's (RIDEM) Marine Fisheries Division, Jason E McNamee has worked for over 15 years on environmental and fisheries matters. Before working for the Marine Division, he worked for 2 years as an intern with RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife's Freshwater Section as well as 2 years in the RIDEM's Office of Water Resources. While with the Marine Division, Jason has served as the principle investigator for the Narragansett Bay Juvenile Finfish Seine Survey. He is also active in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's process on behalf of Rhode Island as a member of numerous technical committees and stock assessment sub committees. Jason was appointed in 2013 to the New England Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, and is currently serving as chair of that committee.

Jason graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 1996 with a Bachelor's of Science in Zoology. His graduate work was done at the University of Connecticut, where he graduated in 2006 with a Master's of Science in Biological Oceanography. He is currently enrolled at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography in their Oceanography Doctoral program.

As chief, he oversees the administration of DEM's marine fisheries science and management programs and staff, including its technical projects, scientific research, and outreach activities. He continues to work closely with other states, federal agencies, industry representatives, organizations and other stakeholders to develop interstate regional plans for the conservation and management of marine fisheries resources.



Dennis Nixon, Panel Moderator, Professor of Marine Affairs Dennis Nixon and Director of the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program

As Sea Grant Program Director since July 2013, Dennis leads a multi-million dollar research and education program devoted to using scientific knowledge to improve the management of Rhode Island's coastal waters. Prior to that, he served for four years as the Associate Dean for Research and Administration at the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island, where he was responsible for the administration of the 200+ acre campus, pier, and the 185' Research Vessel *Endeavor*.

He served the previous 8 years as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, also at the University of Rhode Island. He has been a faculty member at the University of Rhode Island for the past 39 years, teaching courses in the area of marine and coastal law. A marine lawyer by training, he is a member of the Maritime Law Association of the United States and the Rhode Island Bar.

He is the Secretary and General Counsel for the Point Club, a fishing vessel insurance cooperative he helped found over 20 years ago. He is one of the three founders of the International Marine Institute, which provides educational programs and certification for professionals in the marine industry around the world. Under a grant from the National Science Foundation, he is also the legal advisor and risk manager for the University National Oceanographic Laboratory System, and has been providing advice to all of the US academic research vessel fleet for the past 28 years.

He has lectured on marine law topics in 27 states and 26 countries on six continents. He is the author of over 50 articles and the casebook *Marine and Coastal Law*, first published in 1994 and released in a second edition in 2010. Professor Nixon earned his Bachelor's

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degree in history at Xavier University, his law degree at the University of Cincinnati, a Master of Marine Affairs at the University of Rhode Island, a Certificate on International Institutions at the University of Geneva, and a Certificate in Ocean Law from Harvard Law School.



Charles Witek, Esq., Fish Advocate and Writer

Charles Witek is a lifelong recreational angler, who lives on the South Shore of Long Island, New York. Although he most frequently fishes his local waters, he has fished on every coast of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, as well as in the Caribbean.

A chance conversation with the late Bob Pond, just as the striped bass stock began to collapse, opened his eyes to the need for the effective conservation of saltwater fisheries. Witek has been involved in saltwater fishery conservation issues ever since.

He has served as a bluefin tuna technical advisor to the U.S. ICCAT delegation, and has held a seat on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Today, he sits on New York's Marine Resources Advisory Council, and on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Winter Flounder and Coastal Sharks Advisory Panels.

Witek also combines his undergraduate education in English and his experience as an attorney to educate and advise the public on the legal and conservation aspects of fishery management. His "One Angler's Voyage" blog can be found at <http://oneanglersvoyage.blogspot.com>. He is also a regular contributor to the Marine Fish Conservation Network's blog, "From the Waterfront," which can be found at <http://conservefish.org/blog/>.

SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE



Stephen Medeiros, RISAA President and Symposium Committee

One of the founding members of the R.I. Saltwater Anglers Association, Steve is currently serving his 21st year as President. He is also the Executive Director. He is a past member of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council, having served for 12 years. He runs the New England Saltwater Fishing Show and serves on 14 committees.



Rich Hittinger, RISAA 1st Vice President and Symposium Committee

Rich has served in that position for more than 5 years. He is active in the RISAA Legislative Committee where he serves as Vice Chair. He also is a past member and Vice Chairman of the RI Marine Fisheries Council and is active in many fishing advocacy issues at a State, Regional, and National level. Rich has a Masters of Science degree in Chemical Oceanography from the University of RI Graduate School in Oceanography. He owns a 31' boat with his fishing partner Bob Murray and fishes regularly out of Point Judith, RI for everything from summer flounder to striped bass to cod and tautog. Rich is south of Point Judith every opportunity possible, including fishing the waters around Block Island. Rich has been on the organizing committee for all three RISAA Symposia and will give a summary of the past two symposia during the 2018 meeting.



Peter Jenkins, Symposium Committee, owner Saltwater Edge, Newport

Peter is forever grateful that his grandfather took him fishing at a young age and gave him a lifelong appreciation for striped bass. As a teenager, Peter caddied for a gentleman who taught him to fly cast, and another enduring gift was given. Today, he enjoys surfcasting and fly rodding as the situation dictates and in addition to stripers, his favorite species are false albacore, bonefish, and roosterfish.

He is the owner of the Saltwater Edge tackle shop in Middletown, Rhode Island and the Lead Instructor at the Orris Saltwater Fly Fishing Schools.

Peter Jenkins is a 17-year member of Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association and Chairman the Access Sub-Committee of Legislative Committee.



Dave Monti, RISAA 2nd Vice President, Symposium Committee

Dave grew up on the water and has been shell fishing and fin fishing all his life. Dave holds a masters captain's license and works as a charter fishing captain and guide. He is a communications consultant and semi-retired partner of the RDW Group marketing, public relations and digital marketing firm.

Dave is a fishing columnist for the Providence Journal, eleven other newspapers, On-the-Water magazine and blogs. He writes about the environment, fishing policy, regulations and ocean issues such as spatial planning, wind power, climate change as well as fishing tactics, strategy and conditions.

In 2011 Dave was appointed by the Governor of the State of RI to serve on the RI Marine Fisheries Council where he serves as vice chair. He understands ocean and fisheries management issues and polices as they relate to the environment, fishermen and fishing communities.

Dave serves as a vice president and chair of the legislation committee for the RI Saltwater Anglers Association and is an active member of the Rhode Island Party & Charter Boat Association participating in the "RI Fish for the Future" summer flounder pilot. He was twice appointed to the NOAA Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee's (MAFAC) Recreational Working Group as a New England representative. He also serves on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic menhaden Advisory Panel.