

**FISHERIES EXTENSION ENHANCEMENT:
SUMMIT FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE
GULF OF MEXICO SHRIMP INDUSTRY**

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Abstract

The Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery has traditionally been the most valuable fishery in the United States and has been a major source of foreign commerce for Mexico. Over the past 25 years, the offshore Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery and its accompanying industry have experienced considerable changes in management regime, market, and regulatory measures taken in response to concerns for shrimp stocks, endangered species and fisheries habitat. The U.S. and Mexican shrimp fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico have long been intertwined by commonality of shrimp stocks, markets, research and regulatory regimes. As interests and issues become more entrenched, it is critical to consider the elements that will ensure sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry along with the communities and social fabric that it supports.

The *Summit for the Sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Industry* will provide a venue for industry, regulators, researchers and conservation interest from both the United States and the Republic of Mexico to meet in a non-regulatory forum, discuss issues of concern, and attempt to provide solutions that will satisfy the needs of the managers, the health of the ecosystem, the economics of the industry and the well-being of local communities and consumers.

Background and Purpose

In May 2000, when congressional interest was directed towards the opportunity for the resources of Sea Grant Extension to be harmonized with the management mandates of the National Marine Fisheries Service, it bespoke an effort to relieve the pressure and litigious environment in which management of the nation's fishery resources has been conducted.

The Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery is certainly one of the more challenging of the fisheries with its associated industry. Its complexity is compounded by the economic impact of the harvest, the relationships with global trade, relationships to developing countries' economies and its relatively non-resource specific harvest methodologies. Over the past 25 years the U.S. and Mexico shrimp industry have each attempted to maintain a sustainable shrimp industry within the realities of new regulatory frameworks, world markets, and environmental awareness. While both nations extended their jurisdiction over fisheries to 200 nautical miles offshore, the impact to the U.S. distant water shrimp industry was significant. The action moved fishing effort away from traditional shrimp fishing grounds off the coast of Mexico and concentrated the American flag vessels off the U.S. Coast. A phase-out was negotiated by the U.S. and Mexican governments to allow a reduction in vessels over a three and half-year period; however, the result was still a concentration of the domestic fleet into U.S. waters. While political boundaries separate stocks, it is generally recognized that the shrimp stocks on the southern Texas coast are trans-boundary in nature. Research shows shrimp movements from north to south and sometimes south to north across the international border extending into the Gulf of Mexico. These factors have contributed to an estrangement between the two countries on shrimp issues.

In the shrimp marketing arena, the Mexican and U.S. shrimp industries have also been linked, with the U.S. traditionally being the major market for shrimp harvested by Mexican flag shrimp vessels. A close tie was formalized from 1950 to 1980 in the Shrimp Association of the Americas, a trade association supported by the shrimp industry of Mexico, Texas, and Florida. As the tourist economy of Mexico has continued to improve and other world shrimp markets have grown, the importance of the U.S. market to Mexico may have lessened; however, close connections both through geography and culture between the two countries create an opportunity for reconciliation of differences and constructive dialogue.

In the management arena, there are considerable differences in objectives among jurisdictions. For example, the two principal shrimp producing states in the U.S., Louisiana and Texas, developed a diametrically opposite management philosophy because of cultural and technological conditions. In addition, the coastal states and the federal government share management jurisdiction over the three principal commercial species of shrimp. In Mexico, issues have been long standing between the private industry sector and the cooperatives with each group vying for the government's recognition and support.

Being a short lived organism with a high fecundity, it was generally acknowledged that the shrimp stocks had little jeopardy of recruitment overfishing, a critical management concern. The state of Texas; however, made significant modifications to its shrimp management regulations in 2000 based on data indicating that the stock was "in imminent danger of recruitment overfishing." While not endorsed by fishery managers in other states or at the federal level, such a declaration from a major shrimp producing state merits a thorough investigation in the context of industry sustainability.

The goal of this project is to reinvigorate the synergy between the U.S. and Mexico shrimp industry (including other intra-national interests) and find a focus among stakeholders on the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry. To accomplish this purpose, a summit process will be established. This process will consist of a stakeholder delegation from both Mexico and the United States representing industry, managers, regulators, researchers, and conservationists being assembled. This assembly will then consider the elements and issues relevant to industry's sustainability. Helped by the building of shared understandings, knowledge and interpersonal relations in the process, participants will work towards developing a coordinated sustainable strategy for the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry. Following the summit, the Sustainable Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Industry Strategy Report will be formalized to contain: (a) the issues identified, (b) strategic goals to guide future development of action plans, (c) areas of conflict to be addressed at a later date, and (d) a plan for following up on the strategic goals, issues and conflicts identified during the summit.

Objectives

- To identify and convene in a summit process with a total of 50 delegates from the United States and Mexico having standing on issues related to the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.
- To identify areas of common agreement, as well as issues, concerns and specific conflict areas that the delegates consider "limiting factors" in the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.
- To construct an agenda for the summit, including presenters and topics, that is based on findings from the pre-summit survey of delegates and other parties on expectations, concerns and issues considered critical for the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.
- To conduct a summit that will facilitate improved communication, relationships and understandings among delegates, as well as constructive dialogue identifying elements required for a sustainable shrimp industry and therein creating a focused and cooperative initiative and direction for a sustainable Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.
- To facilitate the development of a collaborative strategy plan for the sustainability of the Gulf shrimp industry, along with a commitment to pursue further actions to implement the plan's goals and address issues that require further joint dialogue, decision making and/or conflict resolution.
- To maintain contact with delegates following the summit and to facilitate the follow-up plan proposed for addressing the issues, conflicts and strategic goals contained in the Sustainable Gulf of Mexico Strategy Report.

Plan of Work

To accomplish the objectives of this project, the principal investigator, with the assistance of project partners, intends to use his contacts and knowledge of both the U.S. and Mexico Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery to bring the leaders of industry, government, research, and the environmental community together outside a regulatory venue. Initial contacts have been made with key U.S. shrimp industry leaders, state fisheries managers, regional managers and scientists in the National Marine Fisheries Service, as well as representatives of conservation and environmental organizations active in Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry issues. In addition, the Director of the Instituto de Ciencias del Mar Y Limnología at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, who also serves on the Technical Council for the National Institute of Fisheries, has been engaged in this initiative. Through these contacts in both the shrimp

industry and Mexican government, it is expected that approximately 15 delegates from Mexico will be available for the summit.

In addition to the partners listed within this proposal, each of the Sea Grant Extension Programs in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean will be cooperators on this project with their share of funding achieved through the regional fisheries extension project initiatives. These cooperators along with other selected partners in this project will form a Sustainable Shrimp Summit Team. This team will be trained and coached in basic alternative dispute resolution processes by the co-principal investigator and staff from the Public Issue and Conflict Management Section of the National Ocean Service's Coastal Service Center.

The co-principal investigator's expertise in multi-stakeholder collaborative processes will also be used in the pre-summit survey of participants, to obtain relevant information that will assist in setting the summit agenda and procedures for issue identification and decision making, as well as topics for presenters to address during the summit.

Prospective delegates to the summit will be solicited from a diverse group of constituents identified by the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant extension programs, industry trade associations, conservation community, research community, the regional fishery management council, government entities, regional marine fisheries commission and other sources that may have an interest in this process. As a minimum, the U.S. delegation should include a representative of the National Marine Fisheries Service at both the national and regional level, a senior representative of the National Marine Fisheries Service research center in the Southeast as well as leadership of the regional lab focused on the shrimp industry. In addition, the Executive Director of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the chief coastal fishery manager in each state, and the Executive Director of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission will be invited to be delegates. Other potential participants will be screened and invited based on area of interest, geography, activity or role and standing related to the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry. As noted in the coordination section of this proposal, many of the potential government delegates and some industry and conservationists have been contacted to determine interest in this activity. To date these contacts have received a positive response. Also it can be noted in the budget section of this proposal that a portion of the non-government delegates' expenses for participation in this summit will be subsidized by the project.

Once selected, the delegates will be surveyed extensively to determine which elements they consider to be critical to the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry, the relative risks they see attached to each of the elements and the way these elements affect their own particular interests. The pre-summit survey findings will be compared to a post-summit survey to determine attitude changes, knowledge gained and effectiveness of specific and overall process aspects. The Institute for Science, Technology and Public Policy (ISTPP) in the George Bush School of Government and Public Service (GBS) will assist in development, and analysis of the pre-summit and post-summit survey instruments and will serve in an advisory capacity for the administration of the surveys.

The delegates will meet in a summit for the equivalent of two days beginning in the afternoon of the first day and meeting through mid-day of the third day. During the summit, with provisions for simultaneous translation where necessary, the delegates will discuss issues related to the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry. Potential discussion issues include management, marketing, habitat conservation, scientific research coordination, fishery dependent data collection, environmental concerns and harvesting technology. It is intended that dialogue among the delegates will enhance understanding of issues among various interest groups, specify areas of common ground for focused efforts toward a sustainable Gulf shrimp industry, and identify contested issues that might lend themselves to a future alternative dispute resolution process. The sustainable strategy report developed in conjunction with the summit will contain these aspects as well as strategic goals and a follow-up plans. Significant elements of the summit process will also be compiled and evaluated for future applicability to other fisheries.

In light of the regional fishery management council process, state fishery advisory committees activities and the regional marine fisheries commission meetings, it may appear that U.S. groups interested in the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry have had ample opportunity to communicate with each other. However, it should be noted that most meetings have occurred within regulatory venues. The summit will provide an innovative approach and opportunity for the U.S. and Mexico shrimp industry as well as interest groups having issues with the industry, to gather in a non-litigious, non-regulatory forum. Such a setting should complement efforts to identify common issues and develop synergistic relationships that will enhance the potential for working jointly towards a sustainable industry. The collaborative approach that will be employed in the summit (interest-based and consensus-based) is particularly effective in this regard. The principal investigator intends to serve as moderator of the summit with assistance from regional Sea Grant Extension personnel, specialists in the alternative dispute resolution process and others as identified. In addition to the moderator, the co-principal investigator who is a steering committee member of the Program on Conflict and Dispute Resolution (PCDR), a program of the Institute for Science, Technology and Public Policy will assist in meeting facilitation and application of informal dispute resolution processes as necessary

to maintain the meeting focus.

Role of Project Personnel

The principal investigator served 12 years as the Executive Director of the Texas Shrimp Association from the period 1978 to 1990 and subsequent to that was Chief of Coastal Fisheries for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at which time he was a designee to the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council. In his representation of the industry, he was heavily involved in attempts to mediate the sea turtle–shrimp harvesting industry conflict, establish a joint venture between the shrimp cooperatives operating along the Mexican Gulf coast and Texas shrimp industry and to develop improved shrimp management and data collection processes. Though a number of these efforts encountered implementation challenges, considerable contacts were made within the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry, the state and federal fishery management agencies and the environmental and conservation community.

The principal investigator will serve as the primary coordinator of the summit as well as its principal moderator assisted by the co-principal investigator. Support will also be given by Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean regional Sea Grant extension personnel, an alternative dispute resolution group, an English to Spanish translator and various other personnel as needed. A key mission of the Sea Grant extension personnel will be assisting in the identification of candidates for selection as delegates, assisting with the logistics and agenda of the meeting, recording and reporting on significant discussions of the meeting, preparing handouts, identifying appropriate presenters for the topics identify in the agenda, and ensuring that delegates have an opportunity to enter into dialogue on issues.

The co-PI, and other identified members of the alternative dispute resolution group, will assist in creating the agenda and process structure for enabling issues identification, strategic goal setting, outlining a follow-up plan, surveying the delegation before the summit, recording issues during the course of the summit that might lend themselves to a formal dispute resolution process in the future, and then conducting a post-summit survey to evaluate the impact made by the summit.

Personnel from the Institute for Science, Technology, and Public Policy (ISTPP) will develop the pre-summit and post-summit survey instruments in collaboration with other members of the team and will advise on the process for implementing these surveys. ISTPP will also be responsible for analyzing and summarizing survey results.

In addition to these personnel, a translator will be contracted to do simultaneous translation during the course of the summit for those needing assistance with either Spanish or English.

During and following the summit, the Gulf of Mexico regional Sea Grant extension personnel will consider roles for Sea Grant in efforts to ensure a sustainable Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry and continue with regional cooperative efforts in that regard.

Description of Impacts

The summit is expected to have the following products and impacts:

- Development of a Sustainable Gulf of Mexico Strategy Report.
- Establishment of common understandings on issues and concerns by key stakeholders in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.
- Development of a joint direction for coordinated action.
- Improvement in relationships and identification of potential partnerships among participants.
- Reinvigoration of the traditional relationship between the U.S. and Mexico in consideration of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.
- Identification of contested issues and areas of conflict that may require alternative dispute resolution in the future.
- Evaluate the potential for fisheries management conflicts to be mitigated through the use of a collaborative process.

The results of this summit could have long-range impacts on the future of cooperative management of fisheries as well as on Sea Grant's role in fisheries extension. Initial success will be achieved by gaining the participation of the key policy leaders and stakeholders in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.

The opportunity for policy leaders and stakeholders from both Mexico and the United States to convene at this summit and jointly consider such issues as marketing, harvesting technology and harmonizing research requirements should greatly enhance the potential for a sustainable Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry. The value of this process lies

in its ability to create strategic direction for long-term coordinated action directed toward the sustainability of a complex industry involving a multiplicity of diverse stakeholders and jurisdictions as well as environmental and economic concerns considered within parameters of the public trust doctrine.

Coordination

Coordination has been achieved with the other Sea Grant Extension programs in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean regions and with Texas A&M University's Institute for Science, Technology and Public Policy (ISTPP) – a non-partisan, public policy research institute in the George Bush School of Government and Public Service (GBS). In addition, initial support has been given by the Acting Regional Administrator for the National Marine Fisheries Service in the Southeast Region, the National Marine Fisheries Service Galveston Lab Director and the senior shrimp scientist at that facility, the Executive Director of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf of Mexico Regional Fisheries Management Council, the Executive Director of the Texas Shrimp Association, the Executive Director of the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation and representatives of the Gulf Restoration Network and the Environmental Defense organizations. In addition, the Coastal Services Center of the National Ocean Services has agreed to assist in coaching the moderator and other summit team members on various items associated with the conduct of the summit.

Coordination has also been achieved with the Director of the Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, who will assist in identifying and soliciting support from shrimp managers, researchers as well as both private industry and cooperatives, in Mexico.

Initial contacts have also been made with leadership of the Southeastern Fisheries Association base in Florida and several fisheries directors of state conservation agencies in the Gulf states. Ongoing coordination subsequent to the summit should be greatly enhanced by the development and inclusion of a jointly formulated follow-up plan in the Strategy Report.

Budget Justification

The budget as given in the attached 90-4 form reflects several key funding considerations as follows:

- Salary for principal investigators
 - PI- Ralph Rayburn – Associate Director, Texas Sea Grant College Program
 - Co-PI – Dr. Tazim Jamal - steering committee member of the Program on Conflict and Dispute Resolution (PCDR), a program of the Institute for Science, Technology and Public Policy in the George Bush School of Government and Public Service. Dr. Jamal will serve as co-PI on the project.
- Salary for Associates –
 - Dr. Letitia T. Alston – Institute for Science, Technology and Public Policy in the George Bush School of Government and Public Service. Will conduct the survey of delegates both pre and post summit, and assist in focusing the issues and developing the agenda. Dr. Alston will develop the pre and post summit survey instruments assist in the identification of data from the survey.
 - Dr. Arnold Vedlitz – Director of the Institute for Science, Technology and Public Policy in the George Bush School of Government and Public Service. (Providing gratis service as portion of project match). Will assist in development of survey instrument, formulation of issues and development of agenda.
- Travel
 - The significant portion of the travel budget is to support the travel expenses of non-governmental delegates to the summit.
 - Contingency is made for one trip to Mexico City if required prior to the summit in order to coordinate participation from Mexico.
- Communication
 - Significant expense will be incurred in communicating with potential delegates and focusing issues identified during the course of the project.
- Conference Meeting Cost
 - A significant function of the summit will be to build positive relationships among both intra-national and international delegates. This will be accomplished through evening social functions on each of the two nights covered by the summit. A meeting room cost is levied if no meal functions are scheduled so such functions will be in lieu of direct payment for meeting facilities.
- Translation and equipment rental
 - To accommodate members of the delegation needing translation assistance either from English to Spanish or Spanish to English, a simultaneous translation service will be provide with necessary audio equipment to assist in meeting effectiveness.