Welcome to the
2015 Kenai Classic Roundtable on National Recreational Fishing
August 19, 2015
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Joe Balash
Chief of Staff, Senator Dan Sullivan’s Office
Former Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Roundtable Panel

• Kara Moriarty
  Executive Director, Alaska Oil and Gas Association
  KRSA Board Member

• Bob Hayes
  Center for Coastal Conservation Board of Directors
  Former CCA General Council
  TRCP Board of Directors

• Pat Murray
  President, Coastal Conservation Association
Roundtable Panel

• Jeffrey Gabriel
  National Marine Manufactures Association Legislative Counsel
  Recreational Fishing Alliance Board Member

• Mike Leonard
  Ocean Resource Policy Director, American Sportfishing Association

• Geoff Mullins
  Chief Operating and Communication Officer, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

• Moderator: Martin Peters
  Government and Public Relations Manager, Yamaha Marine
Economic Impact of Recreational Fishing

- 11 million saltwater anglers
- Spend $26.5 billion annually
- Supports 455,000 American jobs
- Generates $20.5 billion in annual income
- Contributes $70 billion to the American economy in total economic impact
The Future of Recreational Fishing

- How did we get here?
- What challenges will we face in the next 20 years?
- How will we address the challenges of the next 20 years?
- How will we be sure that the contribution of recreational fishing to our economy continues to grow?
Senator Lisa Murkowski
Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Chair, Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Joe Balash
Chief of Staff, Senator Dan Sullivan’s Office
Former Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources
The Issues Recreational Anglers Face

1. An inadequate federal management system
2. Environmental threats
3. Public misunderstanding about the role of recreational fishing in our economy and culture
History of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

• Primary law governing marine fisheries in U.S. federal waters
• Named after former US Senator Warren G. Magnuson and former US Senator Ted Stevens
• Originally enacted in 1976
• Major amendments came in 1996 and 2006
Managing Recreational Fishing

• NOAA is charged with the oversight of MSA

• Values of recreational fishing not currently addressed by the current management model include:
  – Socioeconomic impacts
  – Cultural value
  – Conservation value

• Current laws and policies have not kept pace with the evolution of recreational fishing, its growing popularity, or its economic impact
Economic impacts of recreational fishing and saltwater fishing

• Rec fishing should be treated with equal priority to that of commercial fishing
• Rec fishing actually supports more jobs and has greater economic impact
• However, rec anglers only take 2% of the total finfish biomass
History of Rec Fishing Technology

What hasn’t changed:

– Rec anglers catch their fish one at a time, with a hook

What has changed:

– Recreational fishing boats are getting bigger, better, and more technologically advanced
– Operating larger boats is becoming easier with new technology
– Motors now feature greater power, can support more boat electronics, and are more user friendly
– Motors have become significantly more reliable, and anglers are no longer afraid of being stranded at sea
– GPS and sonar have revolutionized the sport
The Current Reality of Rec Fishing

• The great recession resulted in a 40-45% setback in the boating industry
• Since then, the industry has only gained back 20-25% of its former volume
• Recreational fishing participation grew 13% since 2006
• There are now 46 million anglers, 11 million of which fish in saltwater
Current Reality of Fisheries Management

• Fishery management hasn’t adjusted to the new realities of recreational fishing

• NOAA’s transition from a commercial-fishing-focused institution has been similarly slow

• The time-intensive nature of the management process is highly unfavorable to recreational fishing

• The voices of rec anglers on the management councils have been diminished

• Councils are setting new precedents that will have long-lasting impacts throughout the country

• **Result for the future:** More closures; more species-specific action
Recreational Anglers as Conservationists

• Rec fishing economics and conservation are interconnected: they drive one another.
• Rec anglers know that investing in the environment keeps our sport and the economy strong
• However, there are several conservation challenges that could impact the future of our sport.
Environmental Challenges for Sportfishing

1. Habitat loss
   - If we lose the habitat, we lose the fish
   - It takes a holistic approach to conserve fish habitat

2. Water quality
   - What happens on land can impact rivers, oceans, and coastal resources
   - Dead zones are already affecting America’s oceans

3. Climate change
   - We must monitor the impacts climate change could have on fish populations and the issues above
   - Sportsmen will be the first to notice these changes
The Mischaracterization of Recreational Anglers and Boaters

• Many Americans have limited knowledge of sportfishing and boating, which warps the way they view the sport
  – Media recently characterized Senator Rubio’s boat as a “luxury speedboat.”
  – In reality, this was a relatively averaged-priced fishing boat with a standard amount of horsepower.
  – It is a problem when the public can’t tell the difference in a middle-class, family fishing boat and a toy for the rich and famous
Confusion on Conservation

• Anglers and boaters contribute about $1.5 billion toward fisheries conservation annually

• No other group comes close to this level of aquatic resource funding

• However, very few people are aware of this system of contribution, meaning it is often not taken into consideration

• If the economic, social, and conservation benefits of rec fishing were better understood, fisheries management would be a more successful process
Recreational Fishing in MSA

• MSA was originally a vehicle to exclude foreign fishing and manage commercial fishing
  – Rec fishing wasn’t thought of because the technology hadn’t made the sport viable yet
  – However, rec fishing is now the fastest growing sector

• MSA changed the relationship between federal authority and state management
  – In some cases this has been beneficial, but in the southeast it has been devastating for rec anglers
  – Current data collection methods are not viable for recreational anglers
States as Management Entities

- States have been appropriately managing recreational fisheries for decades
- States do not use recreational data for in season adjustments, but instead realize it is better suited for future indications of harvest
- States adjust bag, size, and season limits instead of focusing on annual quota systems
  - While allowable under MSA, NOAA has been very slow to adopt this method
  - This style of alternative management is a top priority for recreational anglers
States as Management Entities

• While federal management looks to maximize yield, state management look to maximize participation for greatest satisfaction and economic benefit

• For the average user, state management is easy to understand, consistent, and predictable

• State-based plans like the Five State Solution can solve the situation with Gulf Red Snapper
  – This plan ensures long term viability of both the commercial and recreational industries
  – These states already manage many federal water fisheries with less cost, greater user satisfaction, and greater sustained conservation than the federal government
Anglers are Conservationists

• Anglers and boaters contribute $1.5 billion for habitat creation and restoration projects annually through the “user pay, public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding (mandated by Congress)

• However, on top of these contributions, anglers have a rich history of volunteerism that support fish habitat and keep their “feet wet and hands dirty.”

• Additionally, on top of the contributions raised through angler’s license fees and excise taxes, anglers donate millions of dollars to conservation-minded charities annually

• Recreational anglers invest their **time**, **talent**, and **treasure** into conservation and fish habitats
Supporting Conservation Through Anglers

• Having more anglers on the water is good for the economy *and* good for conservation

• Therefore, we must recognize recreational anglers as part of MSA reauthorization and make sure fisheries policy reflects their contributions

• Make sure anglers are educated and engaged

• Continue to focus on access and opportunity

• Make sure anglers have certainty on when they can fish

• Saltwater anglers must continue to advocate for conservation and be involved with conservation groups
The Organization of Anglers

• Anglers have huge economic impacts, but have not been historically well organized
• By coming together to represent ALL sportfishing issues, anglers can have a huge impact
• The industries surrounding rec fishing need to become more involved
• As anglers become more unified, they must look to other sportsmen (hunters, shooters, hikers, etc.) for a stronger voice in overcoming common challenges
The Expanding Angler Coalition

• The most influential recreational fishing groups in the country have come together to speak with one voice. They include:
  – American Sportfishing Association
  – The Billfish Foundation
  – Center for Coastal Conservation
  – Coastal Conservation Association
  – Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation
  – International Game Fish Association
  – National Marine Manufactures Association
  – Recreational Fishing Alliance
  – Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
  – Yamaha
The Expanding Angler Coalition

• This new coalition successfully included several key provisions in the House MSA bill
  – This was only possible through unity
• The coalition will create new advocacy, communication, and lobbying efforts focused on protecting American anglers
• We will increase the importance of recreational fishing in the policy discussion and promote policy that supports the social, economic, and conservation benefits of rec fishing
What can anglers learn from other resource-oriented industries?

Kara Moriarty
Executive Director, Alaska Oil and Gas Association
How can we grow the economic impact of recreational fishing for the benefit of all?

Panel Discussion
In the Next 20 Years We Need to...

- Consider new management models
- Work harder to conserve the resource
- Better organize ourselves for a stronger coalition
Two Ways to Resolve Public Disputes

1. You can fight
   – Wage war against your enemy

2. You can pursue *mutual gains*
   – Acknowledge the concerns of all parties
   – Joint fact finding with adversaries
   – Accept responsibility for mistakes

• All fisheries stakeholders should pursue a *mutual gains approach*
The next 20 years of recreational fishing must begin with recreational leaders and commercial leaders sitting down together at the same table.
Thank you

We have a brief time remaining for Q&A with the panelists and moderator. Please feel free to raise any questions you have.