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More on the Future of Recreational Angling



American humorist, political satirist and author, Mark Twain, is credited for having said, "If you don't read the newspaper you are uninformed, if you do read the newspaper you are misinformed."

Lately, recreational anglers are barraged by media, and I for one am having difficulty deciding who and what to believe.

The following is from a Policy Alert issued last week by the American Sportfishing Association:

In the next 30 to 60 days, the Obama Administration is planning to issue a final report, and possibly other management guidance, intended to govern the management of the nation's oceans, coastal areas and Great Lakes. The plan originated in June 2009, when President Obama created the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force. The Task Force, led by the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), was charged with developing a national policy for conserving and managing the United States ocean territory and the Great Lakes. The policy will govern ocean and Great Lakes resource management and coordinate efforts among the many federal, state and local agencies that oversee a significant portion of our nation's waters.

The White House is in the final stages of developing the final report, which must balance sustainable uses with ocean and Great Lakes conservation. It is important that the administration recognizes and promotes the economic and conservation contributions of outdoor recreation, including recreational fishing and boating. Without such recognition, decisions made under this national oceans and Great Lakes policy could be used to close saltwater and freshwater recreational fishing areas.

Right off the bat, given this administration's record of involvement in the banking, mortgage lending, automobile, and health care industries, my hackles go up. And while I believe wholly in careful research to formulate opinion, this is instantly frightening.

Much is being said in newspapers, on outdoor television, and even talk radio. Some sources would have us believe the Obama administration will seek to sweep us off the water and do away with or severely restrict recreational angling.

Depending the statistics you reference, recreational saltwater and freshwater anglers currently number in the 60-million range nationally and we have been great stewards of the resources. To put it succinctly; we have helped build the fisheries we seek to enjoy.

Already we have seen the National Marine Fisheries Service enacting what seem arbitrary and perhaps even capricious emergency regulations and closures of ocean fisheries. Might these portend even bolder plans? Will future policy favor commercial fishing interests against rec anglers with even greater prejudice, even though we have contributed far more to the fisheries?

I am concerned and fail to understand how 30 or 60 days might constitute a sufficient timeframe during which the administration could hope to undertake careful science-based management of our nation's fisheries. Will we get a fish czar who never worked in fisheries management like the car czar who never worked in an automobile factory?

We will have to wait for the Task Force report, but if you share my concern that somehow recreational angling might be in jeopardy, write your congressman and senators, today. Politely request their assistance to insure the future of recreational angling in America. ➤

Everett Johnson
Editor

Please use our Texas spotted seatrout resource wisely!

AmericanBank Presents

The Fourth Annual



Texas International Boat Show

Corpus Christi, Texas, April 22-25, 2010



Featuring the first ever Pro Fishing Tournament to be held in Downtown Corpus Christi

When the West Division of the **2010 HT Redfish Cup Tour** kicks off in Corpus Christi it will do so as part of the Texas International Boat Show.

Anglers will enjoy a fabulous weekend of fun along with the exciting events that the Boat Show has to offer, including a Powerboat Derby and Wakeboard Tournament.

The weigh in will take place Friday and Saturday, April 23-24, at the People's Street T-Head, 3.00 pm daily. The top prize will be \$20,000 for first place on the full field of 60 teams competing.

SEE YOU THERE!!

For more details on the Boat Show, and the events listed above, please contact info@TxIntlBoatShow.com or telephone 561.842.8808 • www.TexasInternationalBoatShow.com