

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

JOINT SHRIMP ADVISORY PANEL, CORAL ADVISORY PANEL, AND CORAL SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

Gulf Council Office Tampa, Florida

AUGUST 3-4, 2016

**SHRIMP ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS**

- Corky Perret.....
- Steve Bosarge.....
- Kimberly Chauvin.....
- Julius Collins.....
- Glen Delaney.....
- Julie Falgout.....
- Gary Graham.....
- Frank Helies.....
- Dennis Henderson.....
- Harris Lasseigne.....
- Thomas Schultz, Jr.....
- John Williams.....

**CORAL ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS**

- Shelly Krueger.....
- Joseph Weatherby.....
- J.P. Brooker.....
- Steve Ross.....
- Portia Sapp.....
- John Talbott.....

**CORAL SSC MEMBERS**

- Walter Jaap.....
- George Schmahl.....
- Sandra Brooke.....
- Judith Lang.....
- Rob Ruzicka.....
- Paul Sammarco.....

**STAFF**

- Doug Gregory.....Executive Director
- Morgan Kilgour.....Fishery Biologist
- Jessica Matos.....Administrative Assistant
- Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- Bryan Schoonard.....GIS Analyst
- Camilla Shireman.....Administrative Assistant
- Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Executive Director

1	<b><u>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</u></b>	
2	Leann Bosarge.....	MS
3	Eric Cordes.....	
4	Scott Daggett.....	
5	Dale Diaz.....	MS
6	Chad Hanson.....	Pew Charitable Trusts
7	Tom Frazer.....	
8	Jay Lucas.....	
9	Sharon McBreen.....	Pew Charitable Trusts
10	Johnny Nelson.....	
11	Mrs. Nelson.....	
12	G.P. Schmahl.....	FGBNMS
13	Robert Spaeth.....	FL
14	Steve Werndli.....	Florida Keys NMS
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PAGE 85: Motion that the Shrimp AP, the Coral AP, and the Coral SSC request that the discussion and comments made pertaining to the Flower Gardens Banks boundary expansions be included in the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council letter to the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. The motion carried on page 86.

PAGE 108: Motion that the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and the Shrimp AP recommends to redraw the boundaries to accommodate the commercial fishery in the bank on the Viosca Knoll 862/906. The motion carried on page 110.

PAGE 123: Motion by the Coral SSC and the Coral AP that the Pulley Ridge proposed expansion for HAPC be placed on the priority list and convene a working group of Walter Jaap, Sandra Brooke, Rob Ruzicka, Robert Spaeth, Jay Lucas, Scott Daggett, J.P. Brooker or Joseph Weatherby. The motion carried on page 128.

PAGE 128: Motion by the Coral SSC to postpone any work on the recommended HAPCs that are the same as those proposed in Alternative 3 in the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary expansion DEIS. The motion carried on page 132.

PAGE 136: Motion by the Coral AP that the three existing sites of Long Mound, North Reed, and Many Mounds be made priorities. The motion carried on page 148.

PAGE 150: Motion by the Coral SSC to support the Coral AP motion that the three existing sites of Long Mound, North Reed, and Many Mounds be made priorities. The motion carried on page 152.

PAGE 152: Motion by the Shrimp AP to support the Coral AP motion that the three existing sites of Long Mound, North Reed, and Many Mounds be made priorities. The motion carried on page 152.

PAGE 157: Motion by the Coral AP, the Coral SSC, and the Shrimp AP to set aside the Alabama Alps as an area for priority using the staff-recommended boundary. The motion carried on page 158.

PAGE 158: Motion by the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and the Shrimp AP to make Viosca Knoll 826 a priority area. The motion carried on page 159.

1 PAGE 159: Motion by the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and the Shrimp AP  
2 to make Rough Tongue Reef a priority area. The motion carried  
3 on page 159.

4  
5 PAGE 168: Motion by the Coral SSC that if the FGBNMS expansion  
6 DEIS Preferred Alternative 3 does not result in sanctuary  
7 expansion, the HAPCs currently in that alternative be  
8 reconsidered as priority areas in the upcoming HAPC document, to  
9 include adjustment of boundaries to Bouma Bank, Sonnier Bank,  
10 and MacNeil Bank. The motion carried on page 169.

11  
12 PAGE 174: Motion by the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and Shrimp AP to  
13 adjust the boundaries of L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef to the  
14 proposed boundary in the FGBNMS DEIS Alternative 5 and that this  
15 site be a priority area. The motion carried on page 174.

16  
17 PAGE 185: Motion by the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and Shrimp AP to  
18 make AT 047, AT 357, GC 852, and Mississippi Canyon 118 priority  
19 areas. The motion carried on page 189.

20  
21 PAGE 208: Motion by the Shrimp AP, Coral AP, and Coral SSC that  
22 any action moving forward should utilize the council staff's  
23 realigned green boxes. The motion carried on page 209.

24  
25 PAGE 200: Motion by the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and Shrimp AP to  
26 make Harte Bank a priority area for HAPC status. The motion  
27 carried on page 212.

28  
29 PAGE 214: Motion by the Coral SSC and the Coral AP to include  
30 Southern Bank as a high-priority area for an HAPC in the western  
31 Gulf. The motion carried on page 214.

32  
33 PAGE 215: Motion by the Coral SSC and the Coral AP to make GB  
34 535, GB 299, GC 354, GC 140 and 272, GC 234, MC 751 and 885  
35 priority areas for HAPC status with no fishing regulations. The  
36 motion carried on page 220.

37  
38 PAGE 220: Motion by the Coral AP, Coral SSC, and Shrimp AP to  
39 make Viosca Knoll 862/906 with input for boundary revisions from  
40 Steve Ross, Erik Cordes, and John Nelson be made a priority area  
41 for HAPC status. The motion carried on page 221.

42  
43 PAGE 222: Motion by the Coral SSC and the Coral AP to make  
44 South Reed Site a mid-priority area for HAPC status with no  
45 fishing regulations. The motion carried on page 222.

46

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1 The Joint Shrimp Advisory Panel, Coral Advisory Panel, and Coral  
2 Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Gulf of Mexico  
3 Fishery Management Council convened at the Gulf Council Office,  
4 Tampa, Florida, Wednesday morning, August 3, 2016, and was  
5 called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Corky Perret.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN CORKY PERRET:** I am Corky Perret, Chair of the Shrimp  
8 Advisory Panel, and I think the agenda is up on the board.  
9 Morgan, Dr. Kilgour, is going to be the person who is going to  
10 hopefully lead us through this stuff today and tomorrow.  
11 Unfortunately, I've got to get on an airplane early tomorrow  
12 morning, or fortunately for some of you, to get rid of me, but  
13 we've got quite an agenda.

14  
15 I am really happy to see that we're able to bring the two  
16 advisory panels as well as the Coral SSC members together. Our  
17 charge is to try and get through these coral areas and try and  
18 prioritize the list of areas of importance and that sort of  
19 thing, keeping in mind that we have other activities, shrimping  
20 and longlining. Morgan, are the longline people here today?  
21 Are they here yet?

22  
23 **DR. MORGAN KILGOUR:** I believe they will be here shortly.

24  
25 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. With that, let me just say this. I  
28 don't know how best we will handle the protocol if motions come  
29 up, if we vote as a whole or if we take it Shrimp AP, Coral AP,  
30 Coral SSC, but hopefully we will get that worked out, as to what  
31 may be the best thing when we all agree on what we do with what  
32 we want to do with this issue.

33  
34 With that, you've got the agenda in front of you, and the first  
35 item of business is Adoption of the Agenda. I think we've got  
36 something that we want to modify or change an item around. Is  
37 that right, Morgan, and what is it, please?

38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** If could just flip the discussion of the Florida  
40 Keys National Marine Sanctuary to after the Flower Gardens  
41 National Marine Sanctuary discussion, that would be ideal. The  
42 Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary people will be here at  
43 eleven, and we will have one on a conference call from 11:00 to  
44 11:30, and then we will have Steve Werndli, who will be here for  
45 in-person questions.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** So current Item IX you suggest goes to VIII  
48 and current Item VIII goes to IX? Okay. Any objections to

1 that? Hearing none, any other modifications or anything to add  
2 or delete? With that, I will say, with no objection, we will  
3 adopt the agenda as modified.

4  
5 Before we go any further, let's everybody identify themselves  
6 and which panel you're on. Again, my hearing is not great, and  
7 my eyes are not a hell of a lot better either, and so if I don't  
8 see your hand, keep it up and I will try an identify you when  
9 you want to speak. I am Corky Perret, again, with the Shrimp  
10 Advisory Panel, and we will go around the room, starting on my  
11 left.

### 12 13 INTRODUCTION

14  
15 **MR. GEORGE SCHMAHL:** Hi, and I'm G.P. Schmahl from the Flower  
16 Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, and I'm on the Coral  
17 SSC.

18  
19 **MR. JULIUS COLLINS:** Julian Collins, Shrimp Advisory Panel.

20  
21 **MR. DENNIS HENDERSON:** Dennis Henderson, Shrimp Advisory Panel,  
22 Fort Myers, Florida, and Freeport, Texas.

23  
24 **MR. GLEN DELANEY:** Glen Delaney, and I'm here on behalf of the  
25 Southern Shrimp Alliance, part of the Shrimp AP.

26  
27 **MR. JOHN WILLIAMS:** John Williams, Southern Shrimp Alliance and  
28 Shrimp AP.

29  
30 **MR. FRANK HELIES:** Frank Helies, Program Director at the Gulf  
31 and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Shrimp AP.

32  
33 **MR. THOMAS SCHULTZ:** Tom Schultz, Shrimp Advisory Committee.

34  
35 **MR. GARY GRAHAM:** Gary Graham, Texas Sea Grant, Shrimp Advisory  
36 Committee.

37  
38 **MR. BRYAN SCHOONARD:** Bryan Schoonard, Gulf Council staff, GIS  
39 Analyst.

40  
41 **DR. KILGOUR:** Morgan Kilgour, Gulf Council staff.

42  
43 **DR. PAUL SAMMARCO:** Paul Sammarco, Coral SSC.

44  
45 **DR. ERIC CORDES:** Eric Cordes, and I'm a coral biologist from  
46 Temple University in Philadelphia.

47  
48 **DR. STEVE ROSS:** Steve Ross with the University of North

1 Carolina in Wilmington, and I'm on the Gulf Coral AP as well as  
2 the South Atlantic Coral AP.  
3  
4 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Dale Diaz, and I'm a member of the Gulf Council.  
5 I'm Chair of the Habitat Committee, and I'm an at-large member  
6 from Mississippi.  
7  
8 **MR. JOHN TALBOTT:** John Talbott, Coral AP.  
9  
10 **MR. HARRIS LASSEIGNE:** Harris Lasseigne, AP, Texas.  
11  
12 **MS. PORTIA SAPP:** Portia Sapp, Coral AP.  
13  
14 **DR. JUDITH LANG:** Judy Lang, Coral SSC.  
15  
16 **MR. WALTER JAPP:** Walt Japp, and I'm the Coral SSC Chair.  
17  
18 **MS. SHELLY KRUEGER:** Shelly Krueger, Florida Sea Grant and the  
19 Coral AP Chair.  
20  
21 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Leann Bosarge, Gulf Council, and I'm the  
22 Chair of the Shrimp Committee.  
23  
24 **MR. STEVE BOSARGE:** Steve Bosarge, Shrimp AP, Pascagoula,  
25 Mississippi.  
26  
27 **MR. JOSEPH WEATHERBY:** My name is Joe Weatherby, and I'm from  
28 Key West, Florida. I am the Vice Chair of the Coral AP.  
29  
30 **MR. J.P. BROOKER:** J.P. Brooker, Ocean Conservancy, Coral AP.  
31  
32 **MS. JULIE FALGOUT:** Julie Falgout, Louisiana Sea Grant, Shrimp  
33 AP.  
34  
35 **MS. KIMBERLY CHAUVIN:** Kimberly Chauvin, Shrimp AP, from  
36 Chauvin, Louisiana.  
37  
38 **MR. CHAD HANSON:** Chad Hanson, Pew Charitable Trusts.  
39  
40 **MS. SHARON MCBREEN:** Sharon McBreen, Pew Charitable Trusts.  
41  
42 **MR. JOHNNY NELSON:** Johnny Nelson, royal red shrimper.  
43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Did we miss anyone? There's someone  
45 coming in the room. Could you identify yourself, please?  
46  
47 **MR. ROB RUZICKA:** Rob Ruzicka, Coral SSC.  
48



1           **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 3, 2016 SHRIMP AP MEETING**

2  
3   **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. The next item, Item II, on the agenda  
4 is Approval of the Minutes of the March 3, 2016 Shrimp Advisory  
5 Panel Meeting. The Shrimp AP members have had a chance to  
6 review the minutes, and are there any comments on the proposed  
7 minutes or corrections or modifications? I don't see any hands.  
8 Do we have a motion for approval of those minutes, please?

9  
10 **MR. BOSARGE:** So moved, Mr. Chair.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** It's moved by Mr. Bosarge and seconded by Mr.  
13 Graham. Is there discussion? Any opposition? Then they are  
14 approved. Next is approval of the minutes of -- Mr. Japp, do  
15 you want to handle that, please?

16  
17           **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 27, 2015 CORAL SSC/AP MEETING**

18  
19 **MR. JAPP:** The Coral SSC and AP, do you have any comments to  
20 make on the minutes from the last meeting? Do we have a motion  
21 to approve? Do we have a second? All in favor. All right.  
22 They're passed.

23  
24           **COUNCIL CHARGE AND PLAN OF WORK**

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Item IV is Council Charge. To request  
27 at the August 2016 meeting of the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and  
28 Shrimp AP that the group identify and rank the most important  
29 coral areas and provide the information to the council in a  
30 report. Morgan, can you tell us a little bit now? Do you want  
31 to handle that and tell us just how you want to approach this,  
32 please?

33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** Sure. That's that this whole meeting is about, is  
35 we're going to review some recommended HAPC areas. The Shrimp  
36 AP and Coral SSC and Coral AP need to make recommendations on  
37 those areas and prioritize areas that they think are important  
38 for HAPCs and prioritize areas that they think are important for  
39 shrimp, and so this is going to be an ongoing discussion  
40 throughout the meeting, and we will hopefully have some  
41 recommendation by the end of it, but that's why we're here.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, and the plan of work, how do you want to  
44 approach it, Morgan?

45  
46 **DR. KILGOUR:** I will keep us on track.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. You're going to keep us on track. Any

1 comments? Walter, have you got a comment?

2  
3 **MR. JAPP:** Just to mention that the plan of work has a sort of  
4 outline of what we're going to go through, and probably people  
5 should take a look at that.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Good suggestion. Morgan, I'm going to  
8 let you handle things.

9  
10 **DR. KILGOUR:** Okay. Like I said, I will keep us on track with  
11 the plan of work, as we get to each agenda item. If there's  
12 something that we're not doing, I will remind everybody, but  
13 it's basically you're going to be presented with some  
14 information, and you will need to comment on -- I guess we're  
15 going to do the Flower Garden Banks if -- I was just told that  
16 the Coral Data Portal that is Item IV is not currently working.

17  
18 Our Amazon server has crashed, and so we might need to move that  
19 as well, so that we can give you an update on what the coral  
20 portal looks like and where you can access the information that  
21 we have on coral presence and the HAPCs. We are also using it  
22 to house some decision support tools, and eventually we'll have  
23 more information everything and not just coral, I'm guessing, or  
24 that's the grand plan.

25  
26 The next item, if we can skip that coral portal, Corky, until  
27 the Amazon server comes back up, would that be all right with  
28 you?

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Yes, go ahead.

31  
32 **BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS AP MEETINGS SUMMARIES**

33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** The next item is to kind of go over the background  
35 and the AP meetings that have been previous. In 2014, a working  
36 group was convened of coral biologists and Coral SSC members to  
37 try to look at areas in the Gulf that have documented coral  
38 presence, and they came up with a list of forty-seven areas that  
39 they know of documented coral presence, and that some of these  
40 areas are coral gardens and have extensive corals.

41  
42 They came up with some areas that were then presented to the  
43 Coral SSC and Coral AP in May of 2015. The Coral AP and Coral  
44 SSC made recommendations, and we also had Mr. Bosarge and Mr.  
45 Nelson at that meeting, to kind of give some shrimp input on  
46 what areas may be hot shrimping grounds and are currently used.

47  
48 The Coral SSC and AP made some recommendations that some areas

1 needed further consideration, based on the boundaries, because  
2 they were -- The shrimp ELB data show that right on the edges  
3 were historic shrimping grounds. I have that for you today. I  
4 will be presenting that for you today when we get to that  
5 discussion, but that's just -- I have come prepared.

6  
7 Anyway, this was presented to the council. The council asked  
8 that other stakeholders be notified and given a chance to  
9 provide input. Pretty much everybody, the Reef Fish AP, the  
10 Spiny Lobster AP, and the Law Enforcement Technical Committee  
11 were all presented with these forty-seven areas.

12  
13 The Spiny Lobster AP did not see any areas that they thought  
14 were contentious. The Law Enforcement Technical Committee just  
15 requested that the boundaries be straight lines that are easy to  
16 input, and the Shrimp AP wanted to have a discussion, and so we  
17 are having a discussion, because a lot of these areas,  
18 especially on the south Texas banks, and there's a few in the  
19 northeastern Gulf, and a couple in the northwestern Gulf, that  
20 are shrimping grounds, right on the edges.

21  
22 We're having a discussion on how to best adjust the boundaries,  
23 if necessary, and so all of this has happened, and, while this  
24 is all happening, the Flower Gardens National Marine Sanctuary  
25 has come up with draft environmental impact statement to expand  
26 the sanctuary, and so a lot of the areas that were recommended  
27 by the Coral SSC and AP overlap with areas that the sanctuary is  
28 recommending to expand into, and so we're going to have the  
29 discussion first, so that everyone knows what's in the draft EIS  
30 and can see the boundaries that the sanctuary has proposed.

31  
32 All of that happened, and, since there were forty-seven areas  
33 recommended, it seemed like a lot, and so the council would like  
34 us to prioritize areas that are really in need of protection, so  
35 we can focus efforts on those areas. Forty-seven is a lot to  
36 handle in one document, and a little overwhelming for the  
37 council to go through.

38  
39 It would probably be a full council day, and I don't know if  
40 Reef Fish can move aside for a full council day on coral  
41 discussion. I'm just kidding. We will do what we need to do,  
42 but, anyway, the council asked us to prioritize areas that  
43 really are needing special HAPC consideration. That's the long-  
44 winded version of why we're here today and the background and  
45 the AP summaries. Are there any questions?

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Just a comment. It might be a good time to  
48 throw it in. I just, and I'm sure we all did, especially the

1 coral people -- Just recently, there were some news releases out  
2 about some area of the Flower Gardens that they seemed to be  
3 having some problems with something in the area there. Paul, do  
4 you want to volunteer and tell the group a little bit about what  
5 has just recently been discovered or whoever is --

6

7 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I think G.P. is probably better versed.

8

9 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Can you just give us a quick synopsis  
10 of what's been found?

11

12 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, I can do that. This is a very recent event.  
13 A week ago, we were out, and I was out on the vessel at the  
14 time, doing our annual long-term monitoring activities at the  
15 East Flower Garden Bank. As you may know, we have a long-term  
16 monitoring program that has actually been in place since 1989.  
17 It's one of the longest coral reef monitoring programs in the  
18 world.

19

20 A dive charter boat that goes out there with recreational divers  
21 reported a very strange event that was happening at another part  
22 of the East Flower Garden Bank. When we went over there to  
23 check it out, it's a -- It's a very disturbing event. It  
24 appears that there is probably 50 percent or more coral  
25 mortality in a relatively isolated part of the reef, or we don't  
26 know the full extent of it yet, but, those of you who are  
27 familiar with the Flower Garden Banks, it's a coral reef on top  
28 of a salt dome, a mount, an underwater seamount.

29

30 It's interspersed with a number of sand channels. It appeared  
31 that the concentration of this mortality event was associated  
32 with one of those sand channels, one of the bigger sand channels  
33 that runs through that portion of the reef.

34

35 The divers that first observed it described it as a white, milky  
36 haze that seemed to be emanating from the seafloor and hanging  
37 over a portion of the reef. Things that were in that portion  
38 and in that hazy area appear, to be a great extent, to be  
39 affected by it and killed, and it was not just a -- It wasn't  
40 just the coral, but sponges and pretty much everything.

41

42 Longspine sea urchins that were making a recovery there, they  
43 were dying. There were hundreds of brittle stars and there were  
44 crustaceans of other sorts. There were bivalves of various  
45 species that had fallen down from the overhangs and the  
46 undercuts of this portion of the reef. Like I mentioned, the  
47 coral mortality in that area ranged from 50 percent to 100  
48 percent mortality.

1  
2 We have not been able to do a full characterization of this area  
3 yet. We were actually asked to stand down by our dive program,  
4 because, in the beginning, there was a concern that there might  
5 be some sort of toxic or disease event that may affect human  
6 health, and so we weren't able to do a complete characterization  
7 yet, but it appears to be localized, thankfully, to a certain  
8 portion of the reef.

9  
10 We don't know what the cause is yet. We did have a cruise over  
11 the last several days, led by Texas A&M University and Dr. Steve  
12 Demarco, to characterize the water quality around the area.  
13 There is a freshwater runoff event that is occurring in the  
14 northern Gulf of Mexico right now. You can see it on satellite  
15 imagery. That does go as far out as the Flower Garden Banks,  
16 which is a hundred miles offshore, but we don't know if that  
17 runoff event is the source of the problem or not.

18  
19 Unfortunately, I don't know -- I can't really say what the cause  
20 is, but it is a disturbing event. The coral reef at the Flower  
21 Garden Banks was pointed to as one of the standouts and  
22 healthiest coral reefs in this entire region, with over 50  
23 percent living coral cover that has not degraded in recent  
24 decades, like many or most of the other coral reefs in the  
25 Caribbean and western Atlantic region, and so we're watching it  
26 closely. We will be conducting further research on it, and  
27 hopefully we will have an answer sometime soon.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you very much.

30  
31 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I've got a question. G.P., any observations  
32 about invertebrates or fish?

33  
34 **MR. SCHMAHL:** We did not observe any dead fish associated with  
35 this event, although we did -- When we were doing our  
36 characterization of the extent of it, we did both a fish count  
37 and a benthic survey. It was very interesting that the fish  
38 were in very low numbers in the area that was affected by this  
39 event. I sooner believe they just left the area. It was  
40 obviously and statistically very much lower in those areas, but,  
41 like I said, we did not observe dead fish floating on the  
42 surface or any signs in the immediate vicinity.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** One more from Dale.

45  
46 **MR. DIAZ:** G.P., I might have missed it, but do you have any  
47 estimates of how big the area is that's affected?  
48

1 **MR. SCHMAHL:** We don't have a full extent yet. We know that it  
2 covers an area of at least about 300 to 400 meters in length and  
3 probably -- Like I said, it's kind of associated with this sand  
4 flat, and so probably by a hundred meters or so. At this point,  
5 that's kind of what I'm going on.

6

7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** One more.

8

9 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Is it top to bottom in that area of the water or  
10 is it just a layer that's --

11

12 **MR. SCHMAHL:** The depth of the reef at this area is about  
13 seventy feet in depth, and it's definitely associated with the  
14 bottom several meters of the reef. In some areas, there is a  
15 very distinct line, where you can see the coral mortality below  
16 that area is very high. Above it, it looks okay.

17

18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I know you guys will be monitoring it pretty  
19 closely, and hopefully we'll get some good news the next time  
20 you're able to give us a report. It's troubling. One of the  
21 articles I read, I was happy to read, in that article, that  
22 Steve Giddings, Chief Scientist for the Office of National  
23 Marine Sanctuaries, made the statement -- Now, I'm sure he  
24 wasn't misquoted. The press never misquotes people, but, unlike  
25 other areas of the world, the coral in the Gulf of Mexico, and I  
26 quote, is healthy and stable. To me, that was very encouraging  
27 to hear, other than, of course, this area that we just talked  
28 about. Okay, Morgan, where do we go from here? What's next?

29

30 **DR. KILGOUR:** Next is to put G.P. on the hot spot, and he can go  
31 over the Flower Gardens expansion document. I would suggest  
32 that we let G.P. give his presentation and then follow it up  
33 with questions, unless he wants to take questions while he's  
34 presenting.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Which way do you prefer?

37

38 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I'm open to either one. It might be -- It's fine  
39 to take questions while I'm going through it, as far as I'm  
40 concerned.

41

42 **DR. KILGOUR:** I have one question. You asked for me to have --  
43 Do you want me to make you the presenter, so you can show slides  
44 from your computer, or would you like me to just have the  
45 alternatives available and I can show them as people want to  
46 discuss them, or how would you like to do that part, when you  
47 wanted to talk about the boundaries?

48

1 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Can you make my computer the presenter? You have  
2 already loaded the presentation, and that was the presentation  
3 that I gave to the full council? Is that correct?

4  
5 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes.

6  
7 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** I have a comment on these maps. I had requested  
8 that they put down the depth, and also, looking at these maps, I  
9 don't know if Amerigo Vespucci did them or what, but it would be  
10 very --

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Harris, I assume you're talking about the maps  
13 in the handout?

14  
15 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** Yes.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Go ahead.

18  
19 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** It would have been easy to put the depths and  
20 all. To a fisherman, that pinpoints it right there. These  
21 little squares don't tell you how big they are in miles or  
22 meters or whatever, and it wouldn't have hurt to put the cities  
23 along the coast. I thought that could have been done. If you  
24 give this to a fisherman, it makes it much easier when you see  
25 the depths and the cities. You can kind of guesstimate where  
26 the cities are, but they're just incomplete. It really doesn't  
27 tell anything, just looking at the map.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, Mr. Lasseigne. Would anybody else  
30 like to comment? Are we getting close for you to be able to  
31 make your presentation?

32  
33 **REVIEW OF FGBNMS PROPOSED EXPANSION**

34  
35 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I will go ahead and start. Again, I'm G.P.  
36 Schmahl at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary,  
37 and this is the presentation that I gave to the full council at  
38 their meeting in June in Clearwater.

39  
40 The Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary has released a  
41 proposal to expand the Flower Garden Banks National Marine  
42 Sanctuary. We released a draft environmental impact statement  
43 on June 10, and that started a public comment period that runs  
44 through August 19.

45  
46 That's essentially what this is about, and I will back up just a  
47 moment, just to make sure that everyone remembers that the  
48 Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is part of a

1 system of National Marine Sanctuaries around the waters of the  
2 United States, including territories and associated entities.

3  
4 There is fourteen National Marine Sanctuaries and one Marine  
5 National Monument in the system. It's administered by the  
6 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under the  
7 National Ocean Service.

8  
9 All of these areas were designated to protect and conserve  
10 certain marine resources of national significance, ranging from  
11 kelp forests off of California and whale habitat off of  
12 Massachusetts and Hawaii and coral reefs in various locations,  
13 including the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, and  
14 the Flower Garden Banks is the only National Marine Sanctuary in  
15 the Gulf of Mexico.

16  
17 The Flower Garden Banks, on this map, is in the left-hand side.  
18 It's indicated by the area shown in red. It currently comprises  
19 three separate areas, the East Flower Garden Bank, West Flower  
20 Garden Bank, and Stetson Bank. The sanctuary was designated in  
21 1992 as the East and West Flower Garden Banks, and Stetson Bank  
22 was added by congressional action in 1996.

23  
24 What this map is pointing out is that those banks that currently  
25 comprise the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary are  
26 only three of dozens of reefs and banks and other features that  
27 lie along the edge of the continental shelf in the northern Gulf  
28 of Mexico. There is a question.

29  
30 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

31  
32 **MR. SCHMAHL:** The East Flower Garden Bank is where the event is  
33 happening. The West Flower Garden Bank is only twelve miles  
34 away, and we went over there as well, and there is no sign of  
35 that mortality event occurring at West Flower Garden Bank at  
36 this time.

37  
38 You are probably familiar with the geography of the northern  
39 Gulf, because of what everyone does here, but the seafloor  
40 gradually slopes off from the coastline at various distances  
41 out, sort of gradually out to a cutoff point near the edge of  
42 the continental shelf, and where it drops off very quickly into  
43 the deep part of the Gulf of Mexico.

44  
45 Right along that shelf edge break is where the series of reefs,  
46 banks, and other features, most of which were formed by  
47 underlying salt domes, are located. In the case of the Flower  
48 Garden Banks, it's approximately a hundred miles offshore.



1 Stetson Bank is about seventy miles offshore.

2  
3 The existing regulations that occur in the Flower Garden Banks,  
4 in general, and this is a very generalized description, but,  
5 essentially, they're there to protect the seafloor features, the  
6 natural features associated with these bank areas, and some of  
7 the primary ones is that anchoring is prohibited.

8  
9 Any kind of disturbance of the seafloor in general is generally  
10 prohibited. The taking of any coral or invertebrates or other  
11 coral features, even rocks or anything essentially, is  
12 prohibited, with the exception of fishing is allowed by hook and  
13 line only, and so other types of gear are prohibited within the  
14 sanctuary. Spearfishing is prohibited and any kind of bottom-  
15 tending gear or bottom impact gear is also prohibited.

16  
17 The regulations, as they are written now, also prohibit the  
18 possession of those types of gears, prohibited gears, unless you  
19 are passing through the area uninterrupted.

20  
21 Discharges are also prohibited, with certain exceptions. One of  
22 the big exceptions relate to oil and gas development. The  
23 Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary regulations  
24 actually allow for certain types of oil and gas development to  
25 occur outside of previously designated no-activity zones, which  
26 were established by what is now the Bureau of Ocean Energy  
27 Management, previously the Minerals Management Service. The  
28 proposal, in this expansion, would be to apply the existing  
29 regulations to the expanded areas, and I will get to those areas  
30 in a moment. Yes, Dale.

31  
32 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, G.P. I just want to ask you about  
33 anchoring a little bit while you're talking about it. I did  
34 read in the DEIS recently that -- There's not a lot of comments  
35 in there about small-boat anchoring, but it does say that  
36 there's some areas that's been identified that's been damaged by  
37 small-boat anchors, and I did try to do some searches online,  
38 just to see if there was any research on damage to reefs on  
39 anchoring, and everything I could find was basically talking  
40 about ships doing damage to reefs, but I couldn't find a whole  
41 lot of research on small boats.

42  
43 Can you talk a little bit about what damage you all have seen  
44 from the type of boats that we're going to see out there and  
45 what impacts that's having, just so I can get maybe a little bit  
46 better understanding of what damage is actually done by them?

47  
48 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, and obviously the major concern is related to

1 large vessel anchoring. This area just south of this whole  
2 region is the safety fairway for vessel traffic in the Gulf of  
3 Mexico, going in and out of the ports of Houston and New Orleans  
4 and others. These are huge ships with huge anchors.

5  
6 There have been instances in the past, including at the Flower  
7 Garden Banks, before it was designated as a sanctuary, of large  
8 ships coming in and anchoring. These are shallow spots that are  
9 convenient anchoring points. Those anchors can be devastating,  
10 especially to coral reefs and coral communities. That's  
11 obvious.

12  
13 There has also been a number of instances of anchor events at  
14 the Flower Garden Banks and other areas of smaller vessels,  
15 mostly in the -- This, again, was right prior to the designation  
16 of the sanctuary, but related to oil and gas support vessels.  
17 These are crew boats, supply vessels, from the 100 to 200-foot  
18 range, and some of those anchoring incidents were specifically  
19 documented and also caused serious coral injury.

20  
21 The smaller vessels, in terms of recreational vessels, fishing  
22 boats, both commercial and recreational vessels, have much  
23 smaller anchors. Their impact is much less, but injury related  
24 to those kinds of anchoring events also occur routinely.

25  
26 Before I was at the Flower Garden Banks, I spent eleven years in  
27 the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. We routinely  
28 observed anchor damage from small vessels, as small as john  
29 boats, and all up to any kind of vessels, anchoring in coral  
30 areas. These are a little bit harder to document, because they  
31 are the type that are fairly minimal for each incident, but the  
32 number of incidences are extremely large, and so you have a  
33 small bit of injury here and a small bit of injury here and  
34 multiply that by thousands, or tens of thousands, or hundreds of  
35 thousands, and you have a problem.

36  
37 We have seen that, but you're right that there's not a lot of  
38 good, hard data on those small anchoring incidences that I know  
39 about, other than what I've seen personally over decades of  
40 being on the reefs in the Florida Keys and other areas.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Are oil and gas supply vessels allowed to  
43 anchor in the areas?

44  
45 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Of course, not in the Flower Garden Banks. All  
46 anchoring is prohibited. Right now, for these other areas  
47 though, vessels are allowed to anchor in any of these other  
48 banks.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** The council can only address fishing issues,  
3 and so if the damage is coming from other sources, what is your  
4 plans to do something about that? If the designation is put in,  
5 then that would prohibit anchoring by any vessels?  
6

7 **MR. SCHMAHL:** If the regulations were adopted, as they are  
8 written right now, it would prohibit anchoring by any vessels.  
9

10 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
11

12 **MR. SCHMAHL:** That's correct. Yes, we have mooring buoys, and I  
13 forgot to mention that. We do have mooring buoys at the reef  
14 tops all three of the banks. It's a very different situation  
15 than the Florida Keys, in that the number of vessel and demand  
16 for the mooring buoys is quite a bit lower, but only on rare  
17 occasions are all the mooring buoys filled or there's the demand  
18 for additional ones, at this point.  
19

20 **UNIDENTIFIED:** How is enforcement enforcing this presently?  
21

22 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Enforcement is always an issue. As you can  
23 imagine, a hundred miles offshore, it's a difficult thing. We  
24 rely primarily on the U.S. Coast Guard. We work regularly with  
25 them. They do patrol out there, both by air and by sea, but, as  
26 I'm sure you're well aware, those patrols are relatively  
27 infrequently. We have our own, of course, Office of Law  
28 Enforcement in the fisheries that also do enforcement throughout  
29 NOAA, and the special agents in the region work both for fishing  
30 regulations and for sanctuary regulations.  
31

32 We have made cases using VMS data, anchoring cases, for example.  
33 You can tell if a vessel is not moving for a long period of  
34 time, and you can assume it's anchored and then go out and check  
35 it, and there's been a couple of instances where we've made that  
36 kind of case. We do not have certified law enforcement officers  
37 on our staff, and so we do rely on other law enforcement  
38 entities to do our enforcement at this time.  
39

40 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Transport of oil is done by a lot of foreign  
41 vessels. Are they aware of the Flower Gardens?  
42

43 **MR. G.P. SCHMAHL:** Yes, and that was a big concern in the early  
44 days. In 2000, we worked with the International Maritime  
45 Organization to have the Flower Garden Banks designated as an  
46 international no-anchor zone, and so it is now and was adopted  
47 at that time as a no-anchor zone, and so it is on international  
48 charts. It is on the insurance maps, basically.

1  
2 Most of the foreign vessels, as you kind of referred to here, do  
3 not use domestic, U.S., charts. They use charts that are  
4 provided primarily through the insurance companies, but, yes,  
5 they are recognized internationally as no-anchor zones. In  
6 fact, it was the first no-anchor zone established by the  
7 International Maritime Organization, the IMO, for environmental  
8 reasons.

9  
10 Part of the reason that I came to the council in June was there  
11 is a provision in the National Marine Sanctuary Act that says  
12 that anytime we designate or expand a National Marine Sanctuary  
13 that we must work with the appropriate regional fishery  
14 management council and provide an opportunity to that council to  
15 give input and recommendations to the sanctuary about fishing  
16 regulations, as they would apply to the sanctuary designation.

17  
18 The purpose of me presenting at the June meeting was to start  
19 that formal consultation, and we have requested the council  
20 provide input back to the Sanctuary Program within 180 days, and  
21 that would be around the December timeframe, and I know that the  
22 council has it on their agenda for this month, later this month,  
23 to discuss fishing regulations in the proposed sanctuary.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Delaney.

26  
27 **MR. DELANEY:** -- then it indicates that there is one exception,  
28 and that's the use of conventional hook and line gear. I'm  
29 wondering if that's interpreted to also apply to pelagic  
30 longline gear. The reason I bring this up also is because the  
31 council charge for developing fishing regulations does not apply  
32 -- Let me reverse that.

33  
34 The council doesn't have authority to manage the pelagic  
35 longline fishery. That's a fishery that's managed directly by  
36 the Secretary of Commerce through the Highly Migratory Species  
37 Division, and I'm not here to speak on their behalf, but I just  
38 bring that to everybody's attention. There's a pretty active  
39 pelagic longline fishery for yellowfin tuna and swordfish in the  
40 Gulf of Mexico. It probably operates in some of the deeper  
41 areas of these areas that we're discussing, and so I'm just  
42 curious how the regulations apply and whether the HMS Division  
43 of NMFS has even been involved in considering fishery  
44 regulations for this area.

45  
46 **MR. SCHMAHL:** First, we are also required to consult with a  
47 variety of entities during this DEIS, and we are consulting with  
48 the Highly Migratory Species Group within NOAA, as well as the

1 Endangered Species and Marine Mammal Protection Act and all of  
2 those relevant laws.

3  
4 The way that the -- I don't have the exact language in front of  
5 me, but conventional hook and line fishing gear does -- The way  
6 it's written, it talks about a single line that is terminated by  
7 one or more hooks. That has been interpreted to include things  
8 like multi-hook vertical line gear like the bandit rigs that the  
9 snapper grouper fishery uses, and so that type of gear is  
10 considered conventional hook and line, because it's talked about  
11 whether it can be electrically or hand wound.

12  
13 If it is a line that has hooks all the way along the line, it is  
14 not conventional hook and line, and so that would apply to both  
15 bottom longline and pelagic longline gear. I guess the gear  
16 term is "terminated by one or more hooks" and so that  
17 termination can be a period of the length of the line, but, in  
18 general, longlines, whether they are pelagic or bottom  
19 longlines, are prohibited.

20  
21 **MR. DELANEY:** Just as a comment, and not to belabor this, but  
22 probably the fishing gear that would have the least possibility  
23 of interaction with the benthic environment would be a pelagic  
24 longline fish gear. Conventional gear is intended to interact  
25 with the bottom, and so I just bring that to your attention.

26  
27 Probably the average depth of the bait and the gear of a pelagic  
28 longline would be twenty-five to fifty meters in depth, and so  
29 they certainly aren't interacting with the bottom, and so just  
30 something to -- I'm sure the HMS people will provide you with  
31 the data.

32  
33 **MR. SCHMAHL:** This action actually did not just come out of the  
34 blue. It has been considered and in the works for quite some  
35 time, and it directly arose from a revision that we did to our  
36 management plan. All National Marine Sanctuaries are required  
37 to have a management plan and are required to review and revise  
38 them as necessary, periodically.

39  
40 In 2007, we started a process to do that, to review and revise  
41 our management plan. As always, it took a few years, but it was  
42 finalized in 2012. During that period, the issue of sanctuary  
43 expansion actually rose to the top as being one of the primary  
44 issues that was considered both by the public, by our advisory  
45 council, and within our agency as being important and something  
46 that we wanted to pursue, and so we included it as, in fact, a  
47 separate action plan in our management plan in 2012.

48

1 The actual language in that action plan was to evaluate and  
2 expand, as appropriate, the network of protected areas within  
3 the sanctuary and to develop a draft environmental impact  
4 statement and evaluate alternatives for incorporating additional  
5 reefs and banks in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico and to the  
6 Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, and so that is  
7 what we are doing now with this action and the release of the  
8 draft environmental impact statement in June.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Excuse me. Can you back up? As appropriate,  
11 will be determined by a wide array of groups and individuals and  
12 so on, like this. In other words, this group on this side may  
13 say, rather than five to twelve additional reefs and banks, you  
14 only need three. This group might say you need twelve, and so  
15 your agency will evaluate all of the input from various sources  
16 and then make your determination? Is that the process you're  
17 going through now?

18  
19 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, it is the process. However, in this draft  
20 environmental impact statement, we have sort of made the first  
21 step of that process, and we have considered a range of  
22 alternatives. You will see that it does range from doing  
23 nothing, and I will go into that in a moment, to alternatives  
24 that include a much larger number than the five to twelve  
25 additional reefs and banks that were identified in our  
26 management plan.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I guess that's where I'm going. You started  
29 out at fifty, and you're down to five to twelve now, or you  
30 started out at some number higher than the five to twelve, I  
31 would assume.

32  
33 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, and I will show you that in a moment. We  
34 were up in the forty to forty-nine banks or something like that.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Five to twelve is a pretty specific number,  
37 and I'm just --

38  
39 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, and I will show you where that came from.  
40 That came from a recommendation that we received from our  
41 Sanctuary Advisory Council in 2007, and this just describes what  
42 that council is. We have two representatives from each of these  
43 eight constituent groups of recreational diving, diving  
44 operators, oil and gas, recreational fishing, commercial  
45 fishing, education and research, and conservation, as well as  
46 some non-voting agency representatives.

47  
48 They did make a recommendation in 2007 that we referenced in our

1 management plan in 2012 that would add nine additional reefs and  
2 banks to the sanctuary. In that process, some of their  
3 alternatives included several other banks. That's where that  
4 five to twelve banks recommendation came from.

5  
6 This process actually formally began in February of 2015. In  
7 February of 2015, we issued what's called a Notice of Intent, an  
8 NOI, that we as the agency were intending to move forward with  
9 the expansion process, as recommended in our management plan and  
10 to develop an environmental impact statement.

11  
12 We took public comments through April of that year. Then,  
13 between April of 2015 and June of 2016, we analyzed the  
14 information that we got during public scoping and public  
15 comment. We worked with other agencies, with subject matter  
16 experts and with our advisory council, and we prepared the draft  
17 environmental impact statement that is out for public comment  
18 now, and so that's what happened on June 10 of this year.

19  
20 Just, in general, the public comment on the Notice of Intent was  
21 relatively -- We had about 200 specific comments, plus a couple  
22 of petitions. At that point, of course, we did not have a  
23 specific proposal on the table. Most of those comments were  
24 overwhelmingly in favor of expansion. In fact, we only, at that  
25 time, received one comment that was in total opposition to  
26 expansion. However, there was a number of comments that were  
27 conditional, of course, that they were in favor of expansion if  
28 certain issues were addressed or if certain issues were explored  
29 during the process.

30  
31 **MS. BOSARGE:** G.P., you went out to public comment in 2015 to  
32 the public to get comments and then you just went back out, and  
33 you said then that it was very vague, your plans, and then you  
34 came up with some alternatives and some possible boxes for  
35 closures, and you went back out in June of 2016, just recently.  
36 Is that the last time that you will go out for public comment  
37 before the final rule is published?

38  
39 **MR. SCHMAHL:** It could be or, depending on the type of comments  
40 we get and depending on the issues that are raised, we may have  
41 to do a supplemental DEIS or something that would require an  
42 additional round of public input, but, as far as the  
43 requirements, no, we do not have to go out to public comment  
44 again. The public comment period that we're in right now could  
45 suffice, and we could go directly to the final environmental  
46 impact statement and regulations package directly from that.

47  
48 **MS. BOSARGE:** I ask that to fall back on what Harris said

1 earlier, and you've heard me say this before, but not in this  
2 room with this crowd, that when you go out to get public  
3 comment, especially if you're trying to garner feedback from the  
4 fishermen, if they had coordinates for these sites in that DEIS  
5 and in what's presented to them or at least fathom lines on the  
6 maps that they're given -- It's hard for them to say -- Yes,  
7 generally speaking, they know where that box is in the Gulf of  
8 Mexico, but a hair this side or the other for these borders for  
9 these boxes may mean a lot to the different types of fishermen  
10 that are out there working these areas.

11  
12 I hope that that's not the last time that you will go out to the  
13 public. I hope that at some point the document that's given for  
14 review will have additional information, so these people could  
15 truly evaluate it and tell you how it's going to impact them.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Delaney.

18  
19 **MR. DELANEY:** The comment period is open right now, correct,  
20 through August 19<sup>th</sup>? I apologize if you mentioned it.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Can you tell us a little bit about the  
23 comments and how they come in? You know the easiest thing in  
24 the world, with my experience on the Gulf Council, is if a group  
25 is for or against a proposal, a form letter is put out and a  
26 computer button is pressed, and all of a sudden we've got 2,000  
27 for or against. 177 individual comments in general support and  
28 one in opposition, was it form type of support or do you recall?

29  
30 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Obviously this is just the very gross level of the  
31 analysis. We have some detailed analysis of the comments that  
32 came in, and you're right that it ranges. We had some that,  
33 like you described, that were just general comments that may  
34 have been promulgated by an alert from an environmental  
35 organization and they say, yes, I'm in favor expansion and  
36 that's all it says. Others were very detailed and got into very  
37 specific information.

38  
39 The primary constituent groups that are affected by some of  
40 these actions are the oil and gas industry, and so I guarantee  
41 you that the letter from the American Petroleum Institute was  
42 quite detailed. It does range. It's not a numbers game. It's  
43 not just let's take a vote and whoever comes out in front, but  
44 it does gauge the level of support that's out there.

45  
46 What is the most valuable comments though are the comments that  
47 come in that provide specific concerns and specific areas that  
48 we need to address and we are required at this stage, at the NOI



1 stage, the Notice of Intent Stage, we're only required to  
2 address the comments generally, but the comments that are coming  
3 in right now, as we go to the final EIS, we are required to  
4 address all of those comments specifically, and that could -- It  
5 doesn't mean -- A lot of these comments can be grouped.

6  
7 For example, our main comment portal is regulations.gov, and you  
8 can go on regulations.gov and make comments right now. We have  
9 about 1,200 comments that have come in already. I will say, at  
10 this point, they're overwhelmingly supportive of the most  
11 restrictive alternative, but a lot of those are, like you  
12 mentioned, probably generated from general interest without much  
13 detail, and so it just depends.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Lasseigne.

16  
17 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** Were these comments that were written or brought  
18 in or did they go to specific cities? I read the paper a lot,  
19 and I never did read anything about any comments or proposals in  
20 our area. Maybe the newspapers didn't carry it, but I want to  
21 point out again, and I don't know if we should make this into a  
22 recommendation later on, but, again, there is no fathoms on  
23 these maps right here.

24  
25 They don't tell you -- When you put down the fathoms, it gives  
26 the fisherman or the person an idea of exactly where these banks  
27 are at. The little red squares, it doesn't tell you how big  
28 they are, and I thought when we came into this meeting that we  
29 would have this done, and also the buffers.

30  
31 You all haven't proposed the buffers of how close you can get to  
32 these banks, and the other thing that needs to be done is,  
33 before you make comments, you've got to know what you're  
34 commenting on and be specific, because I look at this and I  
35 don't know what depth it is and I don't know how big these  
36 little red squares are. I don't know where the buffer zone is.  
37 Sometimes these proposals are passed after the fact, before the  
38 fact is known.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, Harris. Julie.

41  
42 **MS. FALGOUT:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

43  
44 **MR. SCHMAHL:** These numbers I'm showing are the public comments  
45 that were received from the Notice of Intent, which was in  
46 February of 2015, and so the public comment period we're in  
47 right now, we have not -- It's still open, and so we haven't  
48 don't any analysis of those comments yet, because they're still

1 coming in. I will get to that, too.

2  
3 We just finished holding a series of five public meetings in  
4 Galveston; Houston; Mobile, Alabama; New Orleans; and Lafayette,  
5 Louisiana. Those were just a week or so ago, and so none of  
6 those comments are reflected in these numbers here.

7  
8 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

9  
10 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, and that's a whole different thing, because  
11 now we have a proposal on the table. At this time, we did not  
12 have a proposal. We just said, hey, do you think we ought to  
13 expand, and that's what people were commenting on. Now we're  
14 saying, hey, we want to expand like this, and that has generated  
15 a lot more interest.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** What kind of turnout did you have at those  
18 public hearings?

19  
20 **MR. SCHMAHL:** We had a total of 165 people come out to all of  
21 the public meetings. They generally ranged on the order from  
22 twenty to forty people per meeting.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Delaney.

25  
26 **MR. DELANEY:** Harris is raising some important questions that  
27 you would expect the shrimp industry to raise. It's very  
28 difficult for them to evaluate, in any precise manner, how the  
29 proposed expansions impact their traditional activity. They are  
30 certainly not out there to trawl on coral bottom. That would be  
31 the last thing they would probably want to do. What we've  
32 found, in working in other councils -- John and I and probably  
33 others here, worked together with the coral community in the  
34 South Atlantic Council, for example, on a couple of big projects  
35 involving deep-sea coral.

36  
37 The only way that we were able to really come to any meaningful  
38 resolution was to be able to look at the plots of shrimp fishing  
39 effort, precise plots of that, using some technology. There, we  
40 used a different one than perhaps we can use in the Gulf, but  
41 that's the only possible way for us to evaluate, as an industry,  
42 whether your proposed boundaries have any impact on our  
43 activity.

44  
45 Harris is absolutely right. Those charts without shrimp effort  
46 overlaid on it is meaningless to them, because they may be able  
47 to fish up to 100 yards or some distance close to that boundary  
48 and can continue to conduct their traditional activities with no

1 impact whatsoever, and there may be areas where there is some  
2 overlap, and that overlap, certainly in previous experiences,  
3 always called into question whether there was actually a  
4 presence of coral there, because, again, shrimp fishermen don't  
5 go out of their way to trawl on coral bottom.

6  
7 One of the documents that Morgan distributed to us as part of  
8 the background documents is the Flower Garden Bank National  
9 Marine Sanctuary expansion comparison. It's the PDF document  
10 and not the Excel spreadsheet document, but it only addressed --  
11 Let me make sure I'm looking at the right one here.

12  
13 It does have visuals or graphics that show the boundaries, the  
14 proposed boundaries, and it has overlaid on it the electronic  
15 logbook data. I'm not sure what year that --

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Hold up, Glen, just a second. Morgan, do you  
18 want to add to that?

19  
20 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes.

21  
22 **MR. DELANEY:** Anyway, I call everybody's attention that, because  
23 you can very easily see the distinction between the boundary and  
24 where shrimp fishing effort is. Frankly, to be this to be a  
25 productive exercise, that's the only way we're going to come to  
26 any kind of reasonable resolution.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** From the shrimper's standpoint.

29  
30 **MR. DELANEY:** The sooner you get to that and start showing  
31 charts with boundaries and shrimp effort, the quicker we're  
32 going to come to a resolution. That's the whole core of the  
33 discussion, and so we need to clarify what data is involved  
34 there, and I'm sorry to jump ahead, but these questions are  
35 legitimate, but they can be answered.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead, Morgan.

38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** I didn't want to staunch the discussion, but I do  
40 have all of that. I didn't print it, because it's fifteen  
41 pages, but I'm going to print it now, because it seems that we  
42 all need to see that in front of us, but I would recommend that  
43 we let G.P go through the different alternatives while I'm  
44 printing that, and then I will have those documents with the  
45 shrimp ELB data plotted on there, so you can see where the  
46 boundaries are in regards to where you've been shrimping, if  
47 that's acceptable to everybody else.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Yes, that's the direction I think we need to  
2 go in, but I would like for the presentation to be completed  
3 before we get to that, but we had a hand from Paul.

4  
5 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I have three points that I would like to comment  
6 on, please. The first is that we've done a tremendous number of  
7 ROV videos on at least thirteen or fourteen of these banks in  
8 the north central region of the Gulf of Mexico, an inordinate  
9 number of these videos, and they have been assessed in great  
10 detail back in the lab, taking virtually years to get through.

11  
12 What we've looked at, in addition to that, is the relief of the  
13 area. The relief of the area is how much relief there is from  
14 the bottom. Is it a half a meter or is it two meters is it ten  
15 meters that's going to catch your nets? There are data on these  
16 banks, very succinct data, statistical data, on these banks that  
17 will give you that information, and I think we're going to try  
18 to make that available to all of you.

19  
20 The other thing we've found is these communities, benthic  
21 communities, that we're looking at -- Not so much the fish, but  
22 the benthic communities are old. The substrate is old. In  
23 other words, if you snag a net on something, it's probably a  
24 piece of calcium carbonate that's been around for hundreds or  
25 thousands of years, and the community on it isn't that old, but  
26 the calcium carbonate is, and they are very fragile. They break  
27 easily.

28  
29 The other thing is about buffer zones. I think when we were  
30 doing this exercise last time around, I think we drew the boxes  
31 bigger than the actual reefs themselves, and so they may already  
32 be built in. We would have to check on that, but the other  
33 thing is, if they aren't, maybe what we could do is add some  
34 standard amount, and I don't know whether it's a mile or a half  
35 a mile or something like that, as a buffer zone around the  
36 boxes. I seem to remember that the boxes are drawn larger than  
37 the banks themselves, and, if anybody's memory serves better  
38 than mine, that's great.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

41  
42 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I want to try to get through this quick, because  
43 the meat of this meeting is what you are referring to, and  
44 getting into the details of the individual units, and obviously  
45 looking at the maps and the broad scale, little tiny boxes, are  
46 not very informative. I will direct your attention to the  
47 appendix. We do have -- The second volume of our draft EIS goes  
48 through each of the units that is proposed, and showing in quite

1 more detail where those locations are in relation to boundaries,  
2 to other existing boundaries, to oil and gas infrastructure, and  
3 to other management concerns.

4  
5 You are correct that we do not have the actual latitude and  
6 longitude of all the polygons published in this document, but  
7 they are certainly available from our office and the shape  
8 files, if you do GIS, are readily available from our office as  
9 well, and the couple of support documents that we have show the  
10 individual banks, especially for the preferred alternative,  
11 again, in quite some detail that you can refer to as well, and  
12 so I think the information is there and is readily available for  
13 those who are interested.

14  
15 When we looked at our charge, and that was to identify and  
16 recommend areas in the Flower Garden Banks National Marine  
17 Sanctuary region that deserve additional protection, we did step  
18 back and considered a big larger area than was originally  
19 considered by our Sanctuary Advisory Council and their  
20 recommendation of five to twelve banks.

21  
22 When we looked at biogeographic regions in the northern Gulf of  
23 Mexico, we decided, and, saying we, this is within our agency,  
24 in consultation with our experts and other scientists in the  
25 region, of an area basically between the 87<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> longitude  
26 parallel, basically from Pensacola, Florida over to Galveston,  
27 Texas, and looking at the region in offshore areas of the  
28 continental shelf edge and slope of the northern Gulf of Mexico,  
29 and so that's what we considered our region to be as we put  
30 together a range of alternatives we thought would be appropriate  
31 for expansion of the sanctuary.

32  
33 We came up with a series of five alternatives. The first  
34 alternative essentially is the no action alternative. That's  
35 basically we would leave the sanctuary boundaries as they are.  
36 I apologize for this graphic. We did change the colors of the  
37 boundaries, but, the version I used at the Gulf Council, we were  
38 using these blue lines on a blue background, and so they don't  
39 show up very well, but the three banks, the East and West Flower  
40 Garden Bank and Stetson Bank, three banks, three polygons, the  
41 existing areas of fifty-six square miles in size.

42  
43 The second alternative is basically that one that was  
44 recommended by our advisory council in 2007. It would adjust  
45 the current boundaries of the existing sanctuary to incorporate  
46 features that we have discovered since the sanctuary was  
47 designated in 1992 and to add nine additional banks in six  
48 polygons, for a total of twelve banks and a net increase of 224

1 square miles, for a total of 281 square miles in size.

2  
3 The third alternative, which is what we have identified as our  
4 preferred alternative, builds on the Sanctuary Advisory Council  
5 recommendation of 2007, but adds several other features that we  
6 have discovered since 2007, and Paul Sammarco just mentioned one  
7 of the studies that was key to providing information of that.  
8 He was the principal investigator on that study, and it was to  
9 look at a number of reefs and banks throughout this whole  
10 region. That was funded by BOEM for work that they were  
11 concerned with, and so we had information on additional reefs  
12 and banks that we did not have in 2007.

13  
14 We analyzed those in the same way that we analyzed the areas  
15 that were considered in the Sanctuary Advisory Council  
16 recommendation. They fill out to be as important as diverse  
17 biological communities as the other ones, and so we added those,  
18 for a total of eighteen banks and eleven polygons, which would  
19 be a total of 383 square miles, or an increase of 326 square  
20 miles.

21  
22 Then, again, and you will see on these that all of these  
23 boundaries, we have taken the approach of trying to draw the  
24 boundaries as close as possible around the topographic features  
25 themselves without unduly incorporating areas. A lot of this  
26 area around these features are mud bottoms that do not have the  
27 types of biological communities that we are primarily interested  
28 in. We tried to draw these boundaries closely around these  
29 topographic features, while, at the same time, trying to make  
30 them as square as possible for purposes of enforcement and ease  
31 of the public to understand where they were.

32  
33 You can see that our -- I will just back up to the previous one.  
34 The advisory council recommendations in Alternative 2 were a bit  
35 more irregular in shape around these features, and comments that  
36 we got from our enforcement people, as well as others, were that  
37 we needed to try to -- They actually like square boxes, but we  
38 felt that square boxes were not appropriate for this exercise,  
39 and so we squared off those boundaries, in those cases, and we  
40 added, as you can see here, about six additional banks from the  
41 2007 recommendation.

42  
43 Our Alternative 4, we did step back and look at that bigger  
44 region that I spoke of before, and so this does, of course, look  
45 at a larger geographic area, and it includes a number of other  
46 reefs and banks, some of which are very similar types of  
47 biological communities in the eastern area of this region of  
48 interest, including the areas off of Mississippi and Alabama

1 known as the Pinnacles, or the Pinnacle Trend.

2  
3 Some of those features are very similar depths, very similar  
4 biological communities, that occur in the northwestern Gulf of  
5 Mexico. In addition to that, we included a number of deeper  
6 water coral communities on the shelf slope, and these are deep-  
7 water coral communities provided by the coral lophelia that  
8 forms big, large mounds and a variety of important habitat for  
9 fishery species of recreational and commercial importance.

10  
11 In this scenario, these are forty additional banks and twenty-  
12 six polygons, for an increase in size of 577 square miles, for a  
13 total of 633 square miles in size, and the final alternative in  
14 this range are Alternative 5. It's the same geographic area,  
15 but it adds additional reefs and banks, both up on the shelf and  
16 on the continental slope, and it also includes nine historic  
17 shipwrecks.

18  
19 Now, the National Marine Sanctuary Program also, throughout  
20 their program, does provide protection to cultural resources in  
21 addition to natural resources. From public comment, there was a  
22 number of submerged cultural resources, primarily shipwrecks,  
23 that were identified as important to be considered in the part  
24 of the expansion, and so this alternative, Alternative 5,  
25 includes the nine historic shipwrecks, including the USS  
26 Hatteras, a Civil War ship, Union vessel, that was sunk by a  
27 Confederate blockade runner in 1863, during the Battle of  
28 Galveston, and the German U-boat submarine that sunk a number of  
29 American merchant ships during World War II, as well as some of  
30 its victims, as well as other historic shipwrecks on the  
31 continental slope, some of which are extremely significant.

32  
33 This alternative would increase the current size of the  
34 sanctuary by 878 square miles, for a total of 935 square miles,  
35 and so that range of alternatives run from three banks, which is  
36 the existing, at fifty-six square miles, to fifty-four  
37 additional banks and nine shipwrecks, which is in Alternative 5,  
38 for 935 square miles.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We've got a couple of questions, I think.  
41 First off, shipwrecks, is that part of the Sanctuary program to  
42 be including -- That is?

43  
44 **MR. JAAP:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

45  
46 **MR. SCHMAHL:** As Walt mentioned, the very first National Marine  
47 Sanctuary was the wreck of the USS Monitor, the Civil War  
48 ironclad.

1  
2 **MS. BOSARGE:** You said earlier that most of the public comments  
3 you had were in favor of expansion, and you said that, of those  
4 comments, that most of them were for this, for Alternative 5?  
5 They have been in favor of Alternative 5? Is that what you  
6 said, G.P.?

7  
8 **MR. SCHMAHL:** This is the current -- The public comment period  
9 is right now. If you look on regulations.gov, and anyone can go  
10 on that site and look at the comments that have been received,  
11 we have -- If you're just scanning numbers, and, again, it's not  
12 a numbers game, but we have had a large number of comments  
13 received from the public in favor of the largest expansion  
14 alternative that we have proposed. That is correct.

15  
16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Paul first.

17  
18 **DR. SAMMARCO:** G.P., you mentioned that Alternative Number 3 was  
19 your office's preference. Is that because, if you go to  
20 Alternative 4 or 5, that you sort of run out of resources to  
21 monitor and regulate the area and enforce it?

22  
23 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, that's absolutely right. We identify in the  
24 DEIS that -- We actually identify Alternative 5 as the  
25 environmentally-preferred alternative, but, in terms of our  
26 actual preferred alternative, it's essentially resource-based.  
27 When I say resources here, I'm talking about money.

28  
29 The probability of large increases in budget is very low, and so  
30 the area that we have identified in Alternative 3 is the area  
31 that we believe that we can provide at least a minimal level of  
32 management oversight and protection with existing or modest  
33 amounts of budget increases, and it actually takes into  
34 consideration -- For example, we have a vessel, the R/V Manta,  
35 which is our research vessel. If you look at the farthest east  
36 bank, and in this case it's Alderdice Bank, that's essentially  
37 the edge of the range of our vessel, and so we took those kinds  
38 of considerations into account when we came up with our  
39 preferred alternative.

40  
41 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

42  
43 **MR. SCHMAHL:** At this time, they are only in Alternative 5.

44  
45 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

46  
47 **MR. SCHMAHL:** That's a good point. Right now, of course, none  
48 of these are -- These are only proposed, and so they're not in



1 existence, but, for the existing Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary,  
2 we do not have boundary markers at the Flower Garden Banks. It  
3 is a little bit different situation in the Florida Keys. It's  
4 much deeper and much farther offshore, and it would be very  
5 difficult to install and maintain those kinds of markers. We do  
6 have mooring buoys on the shallow parts of the reefs, but there  
7 essentially are no specific lighted navigation aids to mark the  
8 boundaries of the sanctuary, and they would not be proposed in  
9 this scenario as well.

10  
11 What's not shown on this map, of course, and I think everyone is  
12 well aware that this is a very intense area of oil and gas  
13 development. There are literally thousands of oil and gas  
14 platforms in this region, all of which are well marked, and so  
15 vessels in that area have to take appropriate care to navigate  
16 in among the gauntlet of things that are out there.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We have a couple of questions. Mr. Delaney is  
19 first.

20  
21 **MR. DELANEY:** Thank you. In the -- Well, let's say all of the  
22 alternatives. I was going to ask just about Alternative 3, your  
23 preferred, but, in previous exercises to address this issue, the  
24 regions, one of the more contentious issues that evolved or came  
25 from those discussions was whether or not the coral habitat had  
26 actually been observed, as opposed to predicted to exist or  
27 occur at a particular place, based on, in some cases, some very  
28 sophisticated analyses and, in some cases, some not so  
29 sophisticated analyses, but, again, not observed versus  
30 predicated, and how would you characterize these alternatives in  
31 that context? Are these areas that have been actually observed  
32 habitat or do they also include areas that are predicted to have  
33 the same type of habitat, based on some analysis?

34  
35 **MR. SCHMAHL:** All of these areas are based on actual  
36 observations. especially when it comes to this alternative, all  
37 of the areas that are identified in the preferred alternative  
38 have been extensively studied with remotely-operated vehicles,  
39 and we have specific data.

40  
41 Again, as Paul mentioned, for most of these banks, there's very  
42 precise quantitative data, where we have done surveys and  
43 captured downward-looking photographs at intervals throughout  
44 those surveys and analyzed those, both for percent cover, number  
45 of colonies per square meter, and we have all of that data that  
46 we can show you, that they're based on actual observations and  
47 counts of biological communities in these areas.

1 When you get to some of the deeper sites, we don't have as  
2 thorough observations, but there is specific observations. Eric  
3 Cordes has worked extensively out there and others, but they're  
4 all based on direct observations.

5  
6 When you come to drawing the boundaries, since you don't have  
7 full coverage of those observations, you do have to make some  
8 assumptions about the types of bottom features and what you know  
9 about the communities that are associated with those kinds of  
10 bottom features, and so there's a little bit of prediction and  
11 modeling going into that aspect of it, but all of these areas  
12 have been documented as containing coral communities.

13  
14 **MR. DELANEY:** That's really helpful. Thank you.

15  
16 **UNIDENTIFIED:** G.P., I'm curious. For nine shipwrecks, how much  
17 area is designated for those?

18  
19 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I don't have a specific number off the top of my  
20 head. I can get that information for you, for sure. That is a  
21 little bit of an interesting aspect of this, because a lot of  
22 the information on the shipwrecks came from BOEM, the underwater  
23 archeologists there, and they recommended that we -- For  
24 shipwrecks, you designate a larger area than the specific  
25 shipwreck itself, primarily because of the concern about giving  
26 out the precise location of a very sensitive cultural resource.

27  
28 That is an issue that we would have to work out. In a lot of  
29 cases, we used lease blocks, the BOEM lease blocks, and  
30 designated the entire lease block that contained the shipwreck  
31 of interest.

32  
33 **UNIDENTIFIED:** You might indicate to those people that were  
34 concern about that that, for example, the Hatteras, the  
35 shrimpers gave the professors -- I gave them the coordinates, so  
36 they could find it, in the 1970s, and that disconcerts me a  
37 little bit, because we have such great navigation now, and, yes,  
38 I think it's important to preserve those sites, but I think the  
39 devil is in the details.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Mr. Diaz.

42  
43 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Perret. I am just trying to think  
44 about this, how we can protect this area with having the least  
45 amount of impact on user groups and not necessarily prohibit  
46 activities that are not going to harm the resource.

47  
48 I did read the law enforcement comments about liking straight

1 lines, and I used to be in law enforcement and I like straight  
2 lines too, but technology has changed so much. I mean if I was  
3 out there trying to enforce something in this area, I'm going to  
4 have to go by my GPS and my plotter to figure out if people are  
5 inside or outside the boundaries, and I think fishermen using  
6 this area is going to have to use plotters and detailed  
7 information too to figure this out, and so I don't know that  
8 straight lines is that helpful out here.

9  
10 I am thinking if we had some standard boundary that -- Is there  
11 a standard boundary, G.P., that when you all drew these lines  
12 here -- Did you stay a certain distance off of the perimeter of  
13 the reef, and what is that, if there's such a thing?

14  
15 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Actually, I'm not sure if it's this presentation  
16 on or not, but we had actually an algorithm of how we identified  
17 boundaries for these areas, and it was -- First off, on the  
18 topography of the feature itself, using a GIS computer mapping  
19 system, looking at relief of a certain amount and then grouping  
20 those features together into what we identify, from what we knew  
21 from our biological surveys that contained biological  
22 communities. Basically, these are live-bottom areas or rocky  
23 outcrops with attached biological communities.

24  
25 Then we added a 500-meter zone to what we called the core  
26 biological zone, and then we started drawing boundaries to  
27 incorporate those areas as closely as possible while trying to  
28 do that in such a way that it would be a polygon. As you can  
29 see, these boundaries, they are not square, except in some  
30 cases, but you still have to -- If you're a fisherman, you still  
31 have to put in a series of points, in order to establish a  
32 boundary.

33  
34 It is extremely difficult, and we've been told almost  
35 impossible, from the enforcement side, to base a boundary, for  
36 example, on a depth contour. It's not enforceable, and to try  
37 to describe that on your GPS unit is impossible, because you  
38 would have to have thousands of points in order to describe a  
39 circle.

40  
41 So you have to make some assumptions there and draw a polygon  
42 around it as tightly as possible, and that's what we tried to  
43 do, but we also tried to use existing lines where they exist,  
44 and that includes lease block lines, when that made sense, and  
45 it included existing habitat areas of particular concern zones,  
46 which already exist in this particular area, and sometimes the  
47 ones that are square boxes are actually the existing HAPC  
48 boundaries for those sites, like Sonnier Bank and Alderdice Bank

1 and Stetson Bank.

2  
3 It was a variety of considerations that we did in drawing these  
4 boundaries, but it was done. What we tried to do is do it in an  
5 objective way and not just sit down with a Sharpie on a chart  
6 and just kind of draw it out. It was an algorithm that we  
7 developed that we could replicate and defend.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We've got a couple more. Dennis.

10  
11 **MR. HENDERSON:** She gave us these papers with all these readings  
12 and stuff on there, and where can I get a Gulf chart with these  
13 things, an actual Gulf chart, where you've got readings and  
14 stuff on it where all that is? Do you all have that? I know  
15 you put the readings down on here, but --

16  
17 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

18  
19 **MR. HENDERSON:** Yes, but I would like to see it on a Gulf chart.

20  
21 **MR. SCHMAHL:** We don't have that in that form. I mean we  
22 certainly have that as a GIS layer and they could be put on a  
23 navigational chart.

24  
25 **MR. HENDERSON:** Do you think it will ever be on a navigational  
26 chart? Are they going to make it like that, or are they just  
27 going to give you these readings and -- The fishermen are not  
28 going to know. They look at this here, and they would have to  
29 put all of these readings in.

30  
31 **MR. SCHMAHL:** If I was established as a National Marine  
32 Sanctuary, it absolutely would be on a navigational chart, just  
33 like the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is on the  
34 navigational chart now, and it's clearly on the charts. Of  
35 course, it would be on the charts, but I think the important  
36 point now is that people need to know where these things are  
37 before they get established, so they can provide appropriate and  
38 informed input to us, and I think that's the point you're trying  
39 to make.

40  
41 **MR. HENDERSON:** You're expanding this 200 to 800 more square  
42 miles, and that's an awful lot of area.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Dennis is finished. Paul, you were next.  
45 I've got several on the list.

46  
47 **DR. SAMMARCO:** This is just to address a question that Mr.  
48 Delaney asked before about predicting whether a bank will have a

1 lot of biodiversity or a little bit. One of the things that we  
2 did for each of the banks that we have out there -- We looked at  
3 thirteen or fourteen banks, and we have very, very detailed data  
4 on relief, how much relief there is off of the bottom. The  
5 other thing we have for those same banks is measures, very fine  
6 measures, of biodiversity of benthic critters.

7  
8 There is a paper I have now, which it's under review and  
9 hopefully it will be published very soon, which puts those two  
10 together and then statistically analyzes it and allows one to  
11 predict the amount of bottom biodiversity there is based on just  
12 the relief. If you know how bumpy the bottom is, you can be  
13 able to pretty much predict how biodiverse it is, and there's a  
14 positive relationship between the two. The more bumpy it is,  
15 the more biodiverse it is, the more critters there are, and  
16 that's not just because you have more area. It's per area, and  
17 so I just thought I would let you know.

18  
19 **MR. DELANEY:** If I could just clarify on that. Are you  
20 referring to the areas that are in the alternatives, because  
21 your answer seemed to be that we've observed this habitat, and  
22 your answer is we have predicted this habitat.

23  
24  
25 **DR. SAMMARCO:** It's taking the thirteen to fourteen banks that  
26 we looked at in detail in that north/central region, and I guess  
27 it's not the western region. It's the north/central region, but  
28 there's a lot of observations on video, which have then been  
29 turned into quantitative data. There's a lot of pinging,  
30 basically, that an ROV does as it goes over the bottom. There's  
31 something like 190,000 points, and then we correlate the two, to  
32 see is there any relationship between the two, and the answer is  
33 yes, there is. It's strong. There's a lot of variance, but  
34 it's there.

35  
36 **MR. DELANEY:** So it is predicted then?

37  
38 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Yes, it's predicted, and I can give you an  
39 equation.

40  
41 **MR. DELANEY:** Based on the correlation?

42  
43 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Yes.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Harris, you were next.

46  
47 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** I have a problem with the enforcement idea. It  
48 seems like you want to make it easy for the enforcement, but not

1 for the fisheries, and it's the management of fisheries, and I  
2 am not against enforcement, but just to draw a line square and  
3 make us lose fishing bottom doesn't make sense. We lose fishing  
4 bottom every year. As we speak, there are boats that are  
5 sinking. When those boats sink, we can't fish there.

6  
7 There are airplanes that crash into the Gulf of Mexico. I saw  
8 it personally. I picked up the tail of an airplane, and I had  
9 another captain who picked up a helicopter, and so we are losing  
10 -- In a way, we're losing fishing ground, and you're killing the  
11 fishing industry, the U.S. fishing industry, and then what do we  
12 have? We have all these imports from other countries, and we  
13 all know where that stuff comes from. In our fisheries, we  
14 regulate our seafood, and we know that 99 percent of the seafood  
15 that we eat here in the United States is safe.

16  
17 We also regulate it under the Rigs to Reef. There is a  
18 committee on that, on sunken boats, where they try to make these  
19 reefs. They take these big Liberty ships and they sink them and  
20 they make reefs, and so we've got the coral reef that we have to  
21 go by regulations and the Rigs to Reef, and now you all are  
22 talking about having vessels as coral reefs.

23  
24 A fisherman will not go into a coral reef, because it's like a  
25 razor blade. It cuts up your nets, and nets are expensive.  
26 That's the last thing you want to do. You don't want to go into  
27 a coral reef or an area where it's like a razor blade.

28  
29 Getting back to the GPS, these things are so accurate that you  
30 can get within a sunken rock or a sunken ship in fifty feet or  
31 less. That's not very far. That's a little bit bigger than  
32 this room here. They have missiles they shoot from the  
33 Mediterranean, from the sea to land, and they hit their targets.  
34 We have the GPS, and the fishermen use the GPS. The technology,  
35 a lot of them have computers and they have plotting maps. We  
36 didn't have that in the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s.

37  
38 The fishermen can plot the direction they went and turn around  
39 and follow the same line. In the old days, you went ten fathoms  
40 and you would turn around, and you were still in ten fathoms,  
41 but you weren't coming in the same direction that you were  
42 going, and so to kind of discredit technology is a weak  
43 response. Thank you.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. There is no question that we've  
46 all got technology today that certainly wasn't available years  
47 ago. Gary, did you have your hand up?

1 **MR. GRAHAM:** I just wanted to indicate that I did take nautical  
2 charts and plot the areas from west of the Mississippi. Mr.  
3 Nelson, I'm sorry, but I just didn't have time to get after the  
4 other stuff, but if anybody is interested, any of the shrimpers  
5 here, I know the charts are what you identify with, and I  
6 plotted that, and I would be glad to share that with you. I was  
7 more precise, Steve, down in south Texas. It looks like that's  
8 going to be a little bit more controversial, but I would be glad  
9 to -- Harris, it's right here, if that would help you.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Julie has been waiting. She's had her  
12 hand up for a long time.

13  
14 **MS. FALGOUT:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
15

16 **DR. KILGOUR:** Can we all make sure that we use the mics? Yes, I  
17 have all of that for discussion, but just, like I said, I wanted  
18 G.P. to have the opportunity to finish the presentation so we  
19 could --

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Yes, and we're going to have that after this  
22 presentation. Steve, you had your hand up?

23  
24 **DR. ROSS:** Just a quick comment. It's pretty clear, from a lot  
25 of comments, that we are lacking some important information  
26 that's fairly easy to put on these GIS-type charts, and it may  
27 be too late for this meeting, but, Corky, I would like to make a  
28 recommendation that for all future AP meetings involving any  
29 exercise with maps that we have, at minimal, the depth contours  
30 put on the maps and any other information that might be useful.

31  
32 That's something that I've had a problem identifying some of the  
33 sites that I know very well here in relation to what's proposed  
34 as an HAPC, versus where I have actually worked, and we will get  
35 to that, I think, in a little more detail later on, but I think  
36 that would be a good recommendation for all of our future work.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. I agree. Morgan, you've noted  
39 that, I'm sure.

40  
41 **DR. KILGOUR:** Just in a little defense here though, these are  
42 small. We all have all of that that we can talk about, and I  
43 have it all here, but, when you put that much stuff on a map,  
44 you can't see it all, when you're talking about these large  
45 areas, which is why I didn't put the depth contours. Instead, I  
46 provided the coordinates for a lot of the HAPCs that we're going  
47 to discuss, so people could put them in their plotter. I have  
48 it on a nautical chart, and I have the depth contours. We're

1 ready to go, but I just -- When I'm sending you all this  
2 information for forty-seven areas, it starts to look pretty  
3 clunky, and so I just wanted to let you know that I have that  
4 information.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** As much information as is available for the  
7 group to deliberate on would certainly be helpful.

8  
9 **DR. ROSS:** Corky, I would like to respond to that again. Just,  
10 real quickly, we're not necessarily talking about all the  
11 detailed contours that would define a reef, but even the 200-  
12 meter contour or every hundred-meter contour would be useful.  
13 Also, in terms of the text descriptions, a depth range must be  
14 helpful, at least to identify the extremes within these  
15 boundaries.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. So noted. Mr. Bosarge.

18  
19 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve, to your comment, when you say meters, there  
20 is no fisherman working meters. Even, Morgan, if you do  
21 contours, I mean, for fishermen, we love to see fathom contours,  
22 the ten, twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty, but the meters, we're  
23 in the wrong country for meters. I know you guys are used to  
24 working with that, and, in looking at some of your stuff, I see  
25 kilometers, and I'm like, what is a kilometer?

26  
27 Anyhow it's just not something we're familiar with, but, just to  
28 echo a lot of the concerns here, myself and Mr. Nelson were  
29 invited to the last Coral Advisory Panel meeting, where went  
30 over a lot of this information, and Morgan has it, and we looked  
31 at -- She actually put some depth contours in the information  
32 that was presented, and we were able to look at what ones of  
33 these sites actually affected my industry, and that would be the  
34 shrimping industry, and it took a lot of the pressure off of us,  
35 in that a lot of these areas are outside of that sixty, seventy,  
36 eighty fathoms.

37  
38 These aren't really going to bottom us too much, except for like  
39 Mr. Nelson, that does the royal reds, where he's out there in  
40 that 1,000 to 1,200 feet or so. Anyhow, as we go on and  
41 hopefully get into this a little bit more, we will see that a  
42 lot of these areas won't affect my industry that much, but there  
43 are some, in working with the boundaries -- We do endangered  
44 species relocation work, which we call turtle trawling, where a  
45 lot of times, if it's a beach replenishment job, we're in a  
46 borrow site, and so it's almost the same thing.

47  
48 At times, we have a beautiful, rectangular box that we get to



1 trawl in, but then, at times, this thing may be horseshoe-shaped  
2 with a little thing in it, and so fishermen are used to that,  
3 and it's an enforceable regulation as long as there are corners  
4 to plot out. I would love to see though some of these,  
5 especially that East and West Flower Garden Banks -- It would  
6 really be nice if those corners were marked, because there are  
7 those folks maybe that are a little bit -- Not much anymore, but  
8 they didn't have the navigation equipment.

9  
10 When I'm saying that, I'm talking about maybe recreational  
11 fishermen or those guys that just go out every now and then.  
12 They don't have a clue where they're at. They just know they're  
13 close, and so, anyhow --

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That's why some of them don't catch any fish.  
16 They're not in the right spot. Where were we? I didn't see any  
17 hands. Go ahead, G.P.

18  
19 **MR. SCHMAHL:** This was -- Actually, I skipped ahead a couple.  
20 This kind of describes how we identified areas and how our  
21 boundaries were drawn. If you kind of look on the left-hand  
22 side of the screen, that series of maps, that one on top -- This  
23 is actually the West Flower Garden Bank, just to show an  
24 example. The first thing we did was to identify the features,  
25 and those were identified in yellow here, and we just used an  
26 algorithm based on both the -- It's basically the relief, a  
27 certain amount of relief over the seafloor.

28  
29 We checked that, basically using what's called the backscatter  
30 data from multibeam mapping. That's shown on the bottom  
31 actually, that gray and black and white image, because that will  
32 show you whether or not the reflection that you get from the  
33 seafloor is soft bottom or hard bottom, and so hard-bottom  
34 areas, exposed hard-bottom areas, of course, is where the  
35 attached biological communities are.

36  
37 We aggregated the area shown in yellow. On the top, it's shown  
38 in red. You can see in the middle image on the left-hand side,  
39 that's the aggregated core sensitivity zones and how we  
40 determined them, and then we added the 500-meter buffer, which  
41 is shown as the white line around the red in that middle image.  
42 Then we came in, using that white outlined image, which is  
43 essentially the area that we wanted to protect, and identify a  
44 boundary. In this case, it's shown in green.

45  
46 You can see that we tried to follow those areas and incorporate  
47 those areas while keeping those lines as straight as possible,  
48 and so, in some cases, it included a little bit more area than

1 was identified by the core sensitivity zone, and some of those  
2 times it was shown as less area, but that was our standardized  
3 way of identifying the boundaries there, and I think you can  
4 see, at least in this case, that these boundaries are drawn  
5 pretty tight to these exposed rocky features.

6  
7 If in fact the shrimpers are avoiding the exposed, rocky  
8 features, then these boundaries should not be a problem, and  
9 that is the purpose of this meeting today, is to go through  
10 these individual maps, to make sure that's the case. If it's  
11 not the case, they can be revised. We are not trying to  
12 incorporate large areas of mud bottom, because that is not the  
13 purpose of this action.

14  
15 I just wanted to -- This is kind of a rough diagram showing  
16 where the existing habitat areas of particular concern are.  
17 Those are shown in the cross-hatched areas, and, as they relate  
18 to the Alternative 3 boundaries that we have described in the  
19 DEIS, there is a few cases that there are not previous existing  
20 HAPCs, in the case of Elvers Bank and Parker Bank, for example,  
21 and Horseshoe Bank, but most of these areas have already been  
22 identified by the Gulf Council as habitat areas of particular  
23 concern, although I will point out that, and this was done back,  
24 I think, in 2006, that most of these areas do not have any  
25 regulations that are associated with them, except for the ones  
26 that have been designated as coral HAPCs, and that includes the  
27 East and West Flower Garden Banks, Stetson Bank, and McGrail  
28 Bank. The other HAPCs were designated, but there are no  
29 specific regulations that go with them at this time.

30  
31 This is just kind of describing -- There was a matrix and a  
32 process that we did to identify the priorities of these banks.  
33 We talked about the resource significance, and that was based on  
34 the biological data, the percent cover and colonies, individuals  
35 per meter squared, that type of data, for the diversity of coral  
36 communities, in this case.

37  
38 Connectivity was important. A lot of these features, if you  
39 look at them in detail, they are not isolated topographic  
40 features, but they are connected by ridges, scarps, and a series  
41 of outcrops, and those provide habitat corridors between  
42 features, and we tried to incorporate those, where appropriate.

43  
44 There was basically a criteria that related to the potential or  
45 the existing or perceived threat to these areas from a variety  
46 of activities, including fishing and oil and gas and other  
47 activities, and then there was a general category of scientific  
48 or public interest.

1  
2 You know some areas, for example, which are high-value diving  
3 sites, were ranked higher sometimes, even though some of the  
4 biological communities were not as high as some of the other  
5 sites, and so there was sort of a matrix that was developed and  
6 scores were given, and then the ones that ranked the highest  
7 were the ones that were incorporated into the various  
8 alternatives.

9  
10 I already told you about the public meetings that we had. We  
11 have conducted all of those at this time, and we are still in  
12 the public comment period until August the 19<sup>th</sup>. Then this is  
13 just an example. This document that I am holding up now, which  
14 is the proposed action site descriptions, and this is for  
15 Alternative 3, does go into more detail for each of the units in  
16 the alternative, giving a little bit of background, giving a  
17 more detailed map for each of the areas, some photographs of the  
18 types of biological communities that are associated with each.  
19 I am trying to find one that's kind of a good example.

20  
21 This is what is called the Bright Bank Complex. It's actually  
22 Bright Bank, Rankin Bank, and 28 Fathom Bank. You can see we  
23 tried to show the existing HAPC boundary, for example, is the  
24 line in blue. You can see our proposed boundary, which is in  
25 purple, is actually less -- It incorporates less area than the  
26 HAPC boundary, because we felt that the HAPC boundary, in this  
27 particular case, incorporated some soft bottom that was not the  
28 purpose of this action, and so you can see, while we tried to  
29 follow the contours of this feature, in some cases, just for  
30 purposes of keeping straight lines, some of those areas are  
31 incorporated, and so I think that is the issue that we're trying  
32 to talk about today, whether those areas are critical for  
33 fishing or other activities or not.

34  
35 I believe that is essentially, without going through in detail  
36 for each of these individual maps, but this -- But if you are  
37 interested, of course, this is -- This information is available  
38 both in one form in the appendix of Volume II of the DEIS and in  
39 the support documents that we have on our website and available  
40 here. I think that's pretty much it. I think that's the basics  
41 of the proposal, of the range of alternatives.

42  
43 I would like to show at least one example, because it's come up  
44 several times, in terms of the fishing, specifically in terms of  
45 contour lines for the various depths and that kind of thing. We  
46 have created those maps for all of the units, at least in the  
47 preferred alternative, and I can show you an example of that,  
48 and this is available from us.

1  
2 This, for example, is a portion of the Bright Bank Complex.  
3 This is Bright Bank here, and I think you can see my cursor, but  
4 this crosshatched area that's on the top of Bright Bank is what  
5 has been designated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as  
6 the no-activity zone, and so that's specific to oil and gas  
7 operations, but that is a designation that typically follows the  
8 eighty-five-meter depth line.

9  
10 We have also identified on here though -- If you look over to  
11 the right, there is both the thirty, forty, fifty, and hundred-  
12 fathom lines on this particular map, and we have these maps for  
13 all of the units. You can see the thirty-fathom line is the  
14 purple lines that are inside the no-activity zone, in this case.  
15 The yellow line, which pretty much follows the contour of the  
16 no-activity zone is shown in kind of a yellow-orange color, and  
17 so, if you kind of look at that cross-hatched area, which is a  
18 no-activity zone, there is a yellow line there that you can see.  
19 That's the forty-fathom line. The fifty-fathom line is slightly  
20 larger, in red here, and that will give you an idea of the kind  
21 of depth contours we're talking about.

22  
23 The areas shown in yellow, which goes outside of the no-activity  
24 zone, in this case, this is our interpretation of the Bureau of  
25 Ocean Energy Management live bottom features. They have a  
26 stipulation for companies that are operating in this area to  
27 avoid low-relief live bottoms, and those are identified in that  
28 yellow pattern.

29  
30 You can look at this area, and this area is described by the  
31 yellow area. Interior to that are essentially what we consider  
32 to be the core biological zones. This is where the  
33 concentration of sensitive biological communities are located,  
34 and so, again, we have this information for all of the maps.  
35 This is one for McGrail Bank. There is a coral HAPC.

36  
37 There already is restrictions on bottom-tending gear and  
38 anchoring at McGrail Bank, because it does contain a true  
39 hermatypic coral reef community on the top feature of McGrail,  
40 which, again, is the crosshatched area in the upper left-hand  
41 part of this map, and so I just wanted to show you that we've  
42 gone through that exercise, to identify these areas and putting  
43 the fathom contours on there as a result of the requests and  
44 comments that we've gotten from some of the fishing interests.  
45 That's pretty much all I have at this point, unless there is  
46 additional questions.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, G.P. I appreciate that. I think

1 I've got a hand over here from Mr. Bosarge.  
2  
3 **MR. BOSARGE:** I was just going to make one comment. When we  
4 talk about the fathom curves, we were talking more or less not  
5 so much as the structure that makes up the reef, but more the  
6 fathom curves of where this reef is actually located. In other  
7 words, the depth contours of the bottom, so the fishermen can  
8 see, okay, well, let's see, this thing is outside of fifty  
9 fathoms or this one is in thirty-five fathoms. Then that tells  
10 you how it affects the industry.  
11  
12 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I will say that all of these areas, every single  
13 one of them, are outside of the designated fifty-fathom  
14 regulatory zone that has been established by the Gulf Council  
15 for the longline fishery, if that's what you mean.  
16  
17 **MR. BOSARGE:** If I remember correctly, there were two that were  
18 inside of that. One of them was the -- I will have to go back  
19 and look.  
20  
21 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I'm sorry. You are right. Both Stetson and  
22 Sonnier Bank are inside the fifty. I'm sorry. You're correct.  
23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Again, thanks for that presentation. Any  
25 other questions at this time? Go ahead.  
26  
27 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The question is not audible on the recording.)  
28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Any other questions or  
30 comments at this time? Mr. Lasseigne.  
31  
32 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** Did I understand you to say that they were all  
33 outside of the fifty-fathom curve? I think in Texas, Gary,  
34 that's not the case. A lot of them are inside the fifty-fathom  
35 curve.  
36  
37 **MR. GRAHAM:** This is the Flower Garden Banks now. These are two  
38 different --  
39  
40 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** Now, to explain the fifty-fathom curve, the  
41 fifty-fathom curve, if you looked at it on a chart, after you  
42 get outside of fifty fathoms, you drop real quick. You drop  
43 like sometimes 500 feet or a thousand feet, and so most  
44 fishermen will not go outside of the fifty-fathom curve.  
45  
46 **MR. GRAHAM:** Harris, I hate disagreeing with you, old boy, but  
47 we're starting to get out a little deeper now, and we're  
48 dragging out off of Matagorda and some areas there in sixty-four

1 fathoms. It's really interesting, and, now, I don't want to use  
2 much time, but that's the old bombing range from World War II  
3 training, and that's presented kind of a problem with some of  
4 the things we're catching out there, but, Harris, we're starting  
5 to get out.

6  
7 The thing is, and I'm not going to spend a lot of time right  
8 now, but the landscape of shrimping is changing a little bit,  
9 and I brought a price sheet, and I don't like showing price  
10 sheets, but there's a big difference now between a medium-sized  
11 shrimp and a large-sized shrimp, and people are starting to go  
12 out and, instead of going out and catching 900 or 1,000 pounds  
13 of medium-sized shrimp, it's more profitable to catch 400 pounds  
14 of large shrimp, and you find those large shrimp in deeper  
15 water, and so there's been new bottom opening up a little bit.  
16 Thank you.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I could argue with you on that one, but I'm  
19 not going to go there.

20  
21 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I just want to point out that this is a map  
22 showing the fifty-fathom line, which is this kind of straight  
23 line that runs across, and most of these areas, as you can see,  
24 are south of the designated fifty-fathom line. Even though they  
25 rise, individual banks rise, to depths less than fifty fathoms,  
26 you have to make sure that, when we're talking about fifty  
27 fathoms, are we talking about the actual depths or are you  
28 talking about the fifty-fathom line as the regulatory feature  
29 that has been established by the Gulf Council, and so make sure  
30 you keep that clear.

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Nelson, did you have your hand up?

33  
34 **MR. NELSON:** I would like to agree with him. It's been about  
35 eight or ten years since I've been in Texas, but I've drug out  
36 to sixty-five fathoms myself. There's plenty of dragging down  
37 there at sixty-five fathom.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. All right, Morgan, is it time  
40 to put those charts up of the shrimping effort? Is that where  
41 you suggest we go next?

42  
43 **DR. KILGOUR:** Sure. That's perfectly fine.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Some of the people in the room, like Mr.  
46 Lasseigne, and you know he's getting older, may need a bathroom  
47 break. Would the group like to take a ten-minute break so  
48 Morgan can get organized? Okay. Ten minutes, please. Let's be

1 back at twenty after, please. Thank you.

2

3 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

4

5 **DR. KILGOUR:** I have all the information that I want to show you  
6 on one graph or on one chart. All these black dots, the sea of  
7 black, that's the Shrimp ELB effort. Now, it takes a while to  
8 draw. That's two-gigabytes of data, and so, when I turn it off,  
9 it will go away really quickly, but to put it back on is going  
10 to take a while, and so you will have to be, hopefully, a little  
11 patient with me.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, that's ten years of information?

14

15 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, that's 2004 to 2013.

16

17 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Also, Morgan, to clarify, those are just points  
18 now. These aren't tracks. These are point.

19

20 **DR. KILGOUR:** They are just points, but you can see the tracks  
21 very easily. It's every ten minutes there is a ping and you can  
22 see the lines. If I zoom in, which I am going to do right now,  
23 I also put the nautical chart underneath all of this. You can  
24 see where very clearly it's a line, and so, the way that this  
25 populates is -- I have the nautical chart underneath.

26

27 Me, I have a hard time reading this, because that's a lot of  
28 information on one little screen, and so, if you want the  
29 nautical chart up there, I am just going to leave it up there  
30 for discussion. If you want me to change the colors of the  
31 boundaries so you can see them a little bit better, I can do  
32 that as well.

33

34 This whole thing is the East and West Flower Garden Banks  
35 Alternative -- I have Alternative 3, 4, and 5 highlighted, but I  
36 think, for purposes of discussion, we should focus on  
37 Alternative 3, since that's the Flower Garden's preferred  
38 alternative, is that's all right with the group, because it  
39 seems that they're not really truly going to be able to do  
40 Alternative 4 or 5, and, in the DEIS, they say many times that  
41 it's really outside the scope of the current capabilities, but I  
42 will leave it up to the group on whether or not that's  
43 acceptable, if we can just focus our efforts on commenting on  
44 Alternative 3. Is that all right? Are there any objections?

45

46 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I think so.

47

48 **DR. KILGOUR:** Okay. You can see this is the East and West

1 Flower Garden Banks. This is Rankin Bank, 28 Fathom Bank, and  
2 Bright Bank. Those are also areas that were recommended as an  
3 HAPC with regulations. MacNeil Bank is up here. Is there any  
4 discussion or comments specifically on these three, or do you  
5 want me to move to a different section of the goals?

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Ms. Bosarge.

8  
9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Before we get too far into it, tell me -- On that  
10 screen, it looks like a green line. On this screen, it kind of  
11 looks like a yellow line, but those yellow outlines are what is  
12 being proposed as the new boundaries as the Flower Garden  
13 Sanctuary? That's what we're looking at, and we want to compare  
14 that to our black dotted line of shrimp effort?

15  
16 **DR. KILGOUR:** Right, and I can change this to look a little  
17 different, if you would like. I will change it to red, since I  
18 have two competing greens on there, and the ten-fathom line  
19 isn't going to show up on this. Like I said, this is a lot of  
20 data that has to draw, and so it takes a while. These red  
21 boundaries are the Alternative 3 proposed in the Flower Gardens  
22 expansion, and this is just for a couple of the areas.

23  
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** One more question. What you handed out to us --  
25 You came by and handed us a stack of paperwork. We can kind of  
26 see a very zoomed-in image of that same thing, but just it won't  
27 have all the bottom contour information.

28  
29 **DR. KILGOUR:** Exactly, but hopefully you guys understand now why  
30 I didn't put the nautical chart underneath the four boundaries  
31 that are on that little, tiny map. It's pretty confusing.

32  
33 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Morgan, so we understand, the difference between  
34 the expansion of the East and West Flower Gardens, right now,  
35 because the East and West Flower Gardens have regulations on  
36 them -- When we expand them, everything that you have in red now  
37 would create a zone where there are no fishing regulations?

38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, that's correct, but this was brought to the  
40 APs and the Coral SSC to inform you about the draft  
41 environmental impact statement that was produced by the Flower  
42 Gardens National Marine Sanctuary. This is something we can  
43 comment on, but we can't, as a fishery management council, we  
44 can't change the boundaries. They can comment on the boundaries  
45 and they can use your recommendations and comment on this, just  
46 like the public comment period, but there is nothing we can do  
47 as the Gulf Council to change anything that's being proposed.  
48 We can just make a statement on whether you agree or disagree



1 with what's being proposed by the Flower Gardens.  
2  
3 Later this afternoon, when we talk about the HAPCs that have  
4 been proposed, those are specific areas where we can say that  
5 boundary doesn't make sense and we need to modify that boundary.  
6 This is a different body that is producing this than the Gulf  
7 Council is what I'm trying to say, and so this is basically for  
8 your information and so that if there are specific areas that  
9 the shrimping industry has an issue with that the Flower Gardens  
10 is proposing, we can address that in the Gulf Council's  
11 comments, if that makes sense.

12  
13 **UNIDENTIFIED:** It does. I guess what I was trying to see, in my  
14 mind, was not so much shrimping, but all fishing, whether it be  
15 longline or bandit or whatever, and how it's going to change  
16 what they may do.

17  
18 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's a really good point, and I do have the VMS  
19 data. It's not quite the same as the shrimp ELB data. The  
20 shrimp data, I know these are tows. Every point that I have on  
21 this map is where the shrimping industry has towed. The VMS  
22 data isn't filtered that way. I just have every ping on a VMS,  
23 and so it looks a lot different. In fact, if you were to do a  
24 heat map, the hottest spots would be the ports, because that's  
25 where the most points are, and so it's not quite as informative  
26 as your shrimp ELB data, because we don't have the algorithm yet  
27 to, and we're working on it, to discriminate between fishing and  
28 non-fishing activity.

29  
30 I do have the VMS data. I can turn it on, just so you can see.  
31 It's very helpful. These are in grids, and so red is hot, which  
32 means that there is a lot of effort, and purple and blue is  
33 cold, and so we have somewhere between 172 pings with this dark  
34 blue and the green is 800. It's not very useful as far as --  
35 But you can see there is medium effort if you -- This is  
36 probably pretty good effort, if you look at it, because, again,  
37 these areas that are going to be red are the ports, which kind  
38 of skew the data. If you like my abstract art here, there's a  
39 lot going on.

40  
41 Again, the green areas would be what I would consider -- It's  
42 probably a pretty good bet that there's a lot of VMS -- This is  
43 all VMS data, and so that's reef fish -- Let's see. We have  
44 reef fish, snapper, lobster, and shrimp permits. I am going to  
45 turn that off so we can get our vision back. If it's all right,  
46 I can move to a different area.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Unless anyone has questions, I guess you can

1 just proceed. Leann has a question.  
2  
3 **MS. BOSARGE:** Morgan, as we go through them, can we zoom in? I  
4 mean start off big, but, if we're really going to take a good,  
5 hard look at it, let's zoom in and really look and see what we  
6 have.  
7  
8 **DR. KILGOUR:** Sure. Why don't we start with the west and head  
9 east? This is Stetson, and I'm going to zoom in really well to  
10 that and turn on the fishing effort. You can see in the red box  
11 is the proposed Alternative 3, and you can see there is a couple  
12 of dots on the corners, but, for the most part --  
13  
14 **UNIDENTIFIED:** What is that?  
15  
16 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's Stetson Bank. Again, the black dots are  
17 the shrimping effort. Are there any comments specifically on  
18 Stetson Bank?  
19  
20 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
21  
22 **DR. KILGOUR:** Off Texas. This is all the Flower Gardens.  
23  
24 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Just the expansion?  
25  
26 **DR. KILGOUR:** Just the expansion, right.  
27  
28 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Help me with this. What is the broken purple?  
29  
30 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's a nav chart. Let me try and find out what  
31 that means. I don't know. That's the nav chart that's  
32 underlain.  
33  
34 **UNIDENTIFIED:** No, that's all right. The red is what we're  
35 worried about or concerned about, right?  
36  
37 **DR. KILGOUR:** Right. That's that prohibited area. Like I said,  
38 this is two-gigabytes of data, and so it just takes a while for  
39 me to get there.  
40  
41 **MS. BOSARGE:** On that Stetson Bank, can we look at that bottom  
42 right-hand corner? When you zoomed out, I can see where we're  
43 trawling across and cutting that corner, but let's zoom in and  
44 make sure that we don't have any dots inside the corner that we  
45 might need to address that bottom boundary right there.  
46  
47 **DR. KILGOUR:** All right. I'm as zoomed in as -- I can zoom into  
48 the corner a little bit more, if you would like. It looks like

1 there is three points.  
2  
3 **MS. BOSARGE:** So that Alternative 2 that the Flower Garden Banks  
4 Sanctuary is considering would not take in that corner?  
5  
6 **DR. KILGOUR:** No, that's correct. In the Alternative 2 though,  
7 that's the blue line that you can see.  
8  
9 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
10  
11 **DR. KILGOUR:** The Alternative 2 is the blue line. That's this  
12 kind of circular shape. The current boundary is the light blue,  
13 or this is the current boundary. I apologize.  
14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I've got several that have got their hands up.  
16 In the back.  
17  
18 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I'm good. I just wanted to understand what the  
19 current boundary was compared to what was proposed.  
20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We've got one here.  
22  
23 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Is that an indication that someone has actually  
24 stopped at that area or is it just the VMS ten minutes? Even  
25 though there are dots there, it could be transit or it could be  
26 fishing?  
27  
28 **DR. KILGOUR:** Let me be clear. The dots are shrimping effort  
29 from 2003 to 2014, all of the shrimping ELB -- The shrimp  
30 electronic logbook pings every ten minutes. It's then filtered  
31 by NMFS for us through an algorithm that gives us only the  
32 actively shrimping pings, and so all of those dots are from a  
33 ten-minute ping of actively towing for shrimp, and so these are  
34 active fishing dots. Like I said, you can draw a line very  
35 easily through the dots to see the tracks, once you zoom out.  
36  
37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Delaney.  
38  
39 **MR. DELANEY:** One thing, in previous exercises, that was helpful  
40 to put it into context was to indicate what the total universe  
41 of shrimp trawl effort is on the chart. I mean when we're  
42 looking at three dots, it's three dots out of --  
43  
44 **DR. KILGOUR:** Out of twenty-million.  
45  
46 **UNIDENTIFIED:** What is the spatial extent of the twenty-million?  
47  
48 **DR. KILGOUR:** The whole Gulf of Mexico up to -- It's anyone who

1 has an electronic logbook, wherever they go. It even goes up  
2 the east coast of Florida.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Ms. Bosarge.

5

6 **MS. BOSARGE:** When you say it's not that significant, you also  
7 have to understand though that the whole fleet does not have an  
8 electronic logbook. Everybody is not outfitted with it, and so  
9 you only have a portion that's outfitted, and that's what you're  
10 seeing, but then that has to be extrapolated to the entire  
11 fleet. Although you may only see a few pings right there, when  
12 you extrapolate it to the entire fleet, it is significant,  
13 possibly, but when you look at the zoomed-out version of this,  
14 you can see that that corner is probably going to be an issue at  
15 some point.

16

17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** G.P.

18

19 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I do want to point out, and correct me if I'm  
20 wrong, Morgan, but, in this particular case, that red line is  
21 also the same line as the existing coral HAPC that already, to  
22 my knowledge, prohibits bottom impact gear, and so I think  
23 shrimping is already prohibited in this area, and so I don't  
24 think we need to spend much time on this one.

25

26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. I don't see any more hands, but the  
27 Chair is going to take a moment. I want to introduce somebody.  
28 We've got somebody who is getting on the Gulf Council, a new  
29 member, Dr. Tom Frazer. He's at the University of Florida. He  
30 is Director of the School of Natural Resources and Environment.  
31 As a former council member, I wish you luck. That's all I can  
32 tell you.

33

34 The first vote I made in 1979, one of my fellow council members  
35 from my state disagreed, and I caught a lot of heck about it,  
36 and, over the years, I caught a lot of heck on a lot of votes,  
37 and best of luck to you, and I know you will do a good job. Dr.  
38 Frazer is a new council member. I guess you will make your  
39 first meeting at the New Orleans meeting, and is that right?  
40 Good luck. Thank you, Morgan. I am sorry to interrupt you, but  
41 go ahead.

42

43 **DR. KILGOUR:** Not a problem. I moved on to the Flower Garden  
44 Banks. Are there any specific comments that you would like me  
45 to make here?

46

47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Any specific comments anyone would like to  
48 make at this time? Proceed, Morgan.

1  
2 **DR. KILGOUR:** Excellent.  
3  
4 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Morgan, could you expand the scale on that again?  
5  
6 **DR. KILGOUR:** There is the entire Gulf of Mexico.  
7  
8 **UNIDENTIFIED:** No, in the opposite direction. Sorry. So we  
9 could really see the boundaries.  
10  
11 **DR. KILGOUR:** No problem. We can get about this close without  
12 having part of it leave the screen. I am not trying to rush  
13 you, but I am trying to rush you. At eleven o'clock, we have  
14 the Florida Keys. They're going to give their presentation, and  
15 we're on a tight window for that.  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead, Morgan.  
18  
19 **DR. KILGOUR:** Here we have MacNeil Bank, and I can zoom in on  
20 that one. Then we have Rankin, 28 Fathom, and Bright Bank.  
21 Again, these are -- I should reiterate these are areas that were  
22 recommended as HAPCs by the working group and the Coral SSC and  
23 AP.  
24  
25 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I'm sorry, but I want to understand this very  
26 clearly, and pardon me. What I'm seeing is that we're outside  
27 of that fifty-fathom curve and there is no real shrimping effort  
28 going on around this, and is that correct?  
29  
30 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's correct.  
31  
32 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Does your chart disagree?  
33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** You don't believe me?  
35  
36 **MR. GRAHAM:** I need some help with that, because this is a very  
37 important area for shrimping, that inshore side of this, and I  
38 looked at this, and I plotted it on a chart too and got a little  
39 concerned, because I know that bottom a little bit.  
40  
41 I looked at what you handed out, and the inshore portion of it  
42 is showing some effort. That's good shrimping in there, and  
43 you're not seeing a lot of dots, because, quite frankly, you've  
44 got to be careful about this. There are certain people that  
45 don't know how to fish that bottom, and there are people that  
46 know how to fish that bottom, and right now -- It's really  
47 interesting to me. This AIS, I just pulled it off, pulled it  
48 up, and Robbie Woodward is a mile-and-a-half from there right

1 now anchored up. He is fishing that bottom, that inshore piece  
2 of bottom.  
3  
4 I would like to ask some people that have the knowledge of coral  
5 how important that is that that particular piece, that little  
6 strip in there --  
7  
8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That northern --  
9  
10 **MR. GRAHAM:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
11  
12 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Does anybody want to attempt to respond to  
13 that that's familiar with that particular area?  
14  
15 **MR. SCHMAHL:** We do have data from MacNeil Bank, and I will have  
16 to say, in relative importance to some of the other banks,  
17 MacNeil Bank does not have quite the diversity and the density  
18 of coral communities as a lot of the other banks, and so it's  
19 kind of all a matter of -- It's all sort of relative, but there  
20 are coral communities there. We have documented it, but at  
21 least, in my opinion, it's not as dense and sensitive as some of  
22 the other areas.  
23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Anything else, Gary?  
25  
26 **MR. GRAHAM:** Well, I would just like to state that I don't want  
27 to damage any habitat here, but it might be worth considering  
28 moving that a little bit further offshore, that line, just a  
29 little bit.  
30  
31 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. I'm sure we'll have some more  
32 discussion on that when we get to the prioritizing and ranking  
33 and so on. Go ahead, Morgan.  
34  
35 **UNIDENTIFIED:** If you overlay the topographic complexity of that  
36 or from the bathymetric maps, and not necessarily from the  
37 nautical charts, but actually so that we could all see, in the  
38 future, where that hard bottom actually lies in relation to the  
39 boundary markers. You have that for some of the other areas,  
40 but I think that would be really useful for everybody.  
41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** When it's time to rank and so on and so forth,  
43 Morgan, all of that is available, and I'm sure that would be  
44 helpful.  
45  
46 **DR. KILGOUR:** I just turned on the bathymetric map, where you  
47 can kind of see the relief. I believe that there's some better  
48 -- It just takes a long time to draw, and so I'm trying to make

1 it so that we can quickly go through these, but you can see the  
2 relief of the feature, but, like I said, it's a lot of data for  
3 my poor little computer to try and show you all at once, and you  
4 can see all these dots here are coral points, and I turned off  
5 the fishing, because it didn't show up in this feature anyway.  
6  
7 I have a note that will be in the summary that there was some  
8 concern about the inshore boundary of this feature. Is it okay  
9 to move along?  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead and move on.  
12  
13 **DR. KILGOUR:** All right. We were just at Rankin and Bright, and  
14 was it okay for me to move along from that one? Moving along,  
15 this is Geyer and Elvers. Let me turn off the coral points.  
16 Again, I can turn on the bathymetry, but it just slows things  
17 down. It's up to the group what they would like to see.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** What's your pleasure? Do you want to see the  
20 bathymetry?  
21  
22 **DR. KILGOUR:** Or move along.  
23  
24 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
25  
26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Any comments on these? Go ahead, Morgan. I  
27 think those are further out, in deeper water.  
28  
29 **DR. KILGOUR:** maybe I should just zoom into Sonnier Bank,  
30 because I'm not sure that you're going to -- I think that that's  
31 probably going to be. Here we have McGrail, which is currently  
32 an HAPC. Again, the striped is the current HAPC and the red is  
33 the proposed sanctuary expansion. Let me turn on fishing, so  
34 that you can see. Are there any questions or concerns?  
35  
36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** No shrimping effort?  
37  
38 **DR. KILGOUR:** No.  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead. I don't see any hands.  
41  
42 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Is there any other fishing effort?  
43  
44 **DR. KILGOUR:** I can put on the VMS data, absolutely.  
45  
46 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Only because it is expanding.  
47  
48 **DR. KILGOUR:** It would be shrinking.

1  
2 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Then that's fine.  
3  
4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, it looks like some of our longline  
5 fishermen have moved on. Mr. Spaeth, I see three or four of you  
6 guys have come in. I don't know how long you've been here. I  
7 just noticed you in the back, but, as we're proceeding through  
8 these areas, there may be some comments you or some of the  
9 members of the longline group may want to raise your hand if you  
10 have a question. Don't hesitate, and I would be glad to address  
11 you, since it could impact you guys.  
12  
13 **MR. ROBERT SPAETH:** I brought them here because they extensively  
14 use Pulley Ridge, and they were here to answer any questions  
15 that you might have.  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. I just wanted you to know that we want  
18 as much information as we can get from as many people as we can  
19 get, and so go ahead, Morgan.  
20  
21 **DR. KILGOUR:** I took it upon myself to move us along to Sonnier  
22 Bank, and this is -- Again, this one is upwards of the fifty-  
23 fathom line, and you can see there is shrimping effort right  
24 along the edges and the corners. The blue is Alternative 2.  
25 That was the advisory council's recommended areas, and the red  
26 is Alternative 3.  
27  
28 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Any questions or comments?  
29  
30 **UNIDENTIFIED:** This might be a good one to pull up the  
31 bathymetry.  
32  
33 **DR. KILGOUR:** All right. To do that, I'm going to have to get  
34 rid of something. There we go. You can see the feature pretty  
35 well.  
36  
37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead, Mr. Bosarge.  
38  
39 **MR. BOSARGE:** In just looking at it, Morgan, it looks like the  
40 biggest impact to our industry is that top boundary. If we have  
41 maybe some recommendations, it would be to lower that boundary,  
42 just so that it -- It looks like there is still plenty of room  
43 there. If we could bring that boundary down just a little bit  
44 to keep those guys from being right on the line.  
45  
46 **DR. KILGOUR:** What about that green boundary? Do you like that  
47 green boundary better?  
48



1 **MR. BOSARGE:** Your green boundary. Okay. I was going to say  
2 that on here it's the same.  
3  
4 **DR. KILGOUR:** This was one that was recommended as an HAPC with  
5 regulations. The current boundary for the Alternative 3 aligns  
6 with the current HAPC, but it was recommended to look at the  
7 data, and so I have moved the boundary to try and eliminate a  
8 lot of the shrimping effort from there.  
9  
10 **MR. BOSARGE:** I mean your south boundary I don't think needs to  
11 be there. Just the north boundary is the one that needs to  
12 change.  
13  
14 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Any other comments? Steve, you're going to  
15 have an opportunity when we get to ranking and all that sort of  
16 stuff, but I think you made a good point there. Go ahead,  
17 Morgan. You told me that you wanted to get through by eleven,  
18 and so I'm trying to push.  
19  
20 **DR. KILGOUR:** Thank you. I appreciate it. Let me turn off some  
21 stuff that's making it slow down, so we can get to the next one.  
22 All right. I think we have -- We are just to the last four, and  
23 so let me turn this off, because that's a different discussion.  
24  
25 We already did McGrail Bank, and so we can just focus on Bouma.  
26 I'm going to turn on the fishing effort. If it's all right, I  
27 will just zoom into the northern portion, because that looks  
28 like the only area that there is some shrimping points, and you  
29 can see that there's three inside the boundary, probably along  
30 this tow line.  
31  
32 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Gary, have you got comment about that?  
33 Anybody else? Steve.  
34  
35 **MR. BOSARGE:** Which bank are you on?  
36  
37 **DR. KILGOUR:** Bouma, Rezak, and Sidner. Okay?  
38  
39 **MR. BOSARGE:** Just that one top corner, again. It must be on  
40 the Bouma Bank?  
41  
42 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes.  
43  
44 **MR. BOSARGE:** If there was an option of just changing the angle  
45 of that line, instead of a square.  
46  
47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Graham.  
48

1 **MR. GRAHAM:** I made the same note when I was reviewing this as  
2 you just commented, and so I just wanted you to know that I had  
3 the same note there.  
4

5 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I think you summed it up pretty good a while  
6 ago. We certainly don't want to destroy any habitat, but if  
7 indeed there is some fishing activity that would not impact the  
8 area, we can suggest modifying lines that would accommodate the  
9 habitat and the particular user group, and I think we all want  
10 to try and do that, and so good. Okay, Morgan.  
11

12 **DR. KILGOUR:** Just so you can see the features right in here.  
13 Then we have one last bank, I think, or Parker and Alderdice.  
14 Are there any comments on either of these?  
15

16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, what's the blue line?  
17

18 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's the fifty-fathom line.  
19

20 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Any specific comments on this one?  
21

22 **DR. KILGOUR:** I am making the assumption that Parker is not  
23 going to have comments, and so I will focus in on Alderdice,  
24 since that's --  
25

26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Paul.  
27

28 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Just a note, a recommendation, for the trawl men  
29 that work this area or anybody else, but Alderdice is a really,  
30 really good one to avoid. It's full of basalt pinnacles in  
31 there that reach up to fifty or a hundred feet or something like  
32 that. They will just tear you up. We went in there with an  
33 ROV, and I couldn't believe it. It looked like something out of  
34 the first Superman movie, and so that's a good area to avoid.  
35

36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I guess they found that out years ago. Any  
37 comments on this one? Morgan.  
38

39 **DR. KILGOUR:** I think that that completes Alternative 3, and so  
40 we're right on time to start on the Florida Keys. I have, in my  
41 notes, just to make sure that I have them, that MacNeil might  
42 need some other information, although Gary tells me that he was  
43 looking at the proposed HAPC line that was concerning him and  
44 not necessarily the proposed Alternative 3. Now that I have  
45 that information, if there are no other comments on that --  
46

47 **MR. GRAHAM:** I still -- In looking at it, there is a few tracks  
48 right at the tip. G.P., I would appreciate it, if it's not

1 going to create a major problem to the habitat, if you might  
2 consider moving that line a mile or two offshore.  
3  
4 **MR. SCHMAHL:** We're talking about MacNeil Bank here?  
5  
6 **MR. GRAHAM:** Yes.  
7  
8 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Okay. We will take a look at that.  
9  
10 **DR. KILGOUR:** Then there was a recommendation to look at the  
11 northern portion of the Bouma Bank boundary, just that one  
12 corner, to maybe angle it to the top of the line. That's the  
13 summary for this? Perfect. Also Sonnier Bank and moving the  
14 northern portion of the boundary of Sonnier Bank.  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, Morgan. We're on time, eleven o'clock,  
17 and so does anybody have any comments or questions on what we've  
18 just gone through at this time? Okay.  
19  
20 **MR. DELANEY:** Morgan, I think Leann had raised a slight concern,  
21 and maybe not registered as strongly as we did subsequently on  
22 that -- Was it the very first area that it was the bottom right  
23 corner had three or four dots in it? I forget the name of it.  
24  
25 **DR. KILGOUR:** Right, and that was Stetson. G.P. clarified that  
26 that's currently already an HAPC with regulations.  
27  
28 **MR. DELANEY:** So it can't be moved.  
29  
30 **DR. KILGOUR:** The council can modify that, and so would you like  
31 me to include that in the --  
32  
33 **MS. BOSARGE:** As we move into our HAPC discussion later, we can  
34 take a good, hard look at that, because it's not a one-way  
35 street. It's not always closing more bottom. If we do see that  
36 there is an area that at some point we closed, and maybe it  
37 should not have been -- Maybe that corner down there, maybe that  
38 border needs to be adjusted at some point in the future on that  
39 Coral HAPC, and so we can always take a look at it both ways.  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Now I think we've got a  
42 presentation coming up that -- The people that are going to be  
43 making the presentation, we have to do it now, because they have  
44 to get out of here today.  
45  
46 **DR. KILGOUR:** I think Steve is going to be available for  
47 questions, but Beth Dieveney, who is going to -- I am calling  
48 her right now, but she is only available until 11:30.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Go ahead.

3  
4 **FLORIDA KEYS NMS PROPOSED EXPANSION UPDATE**

5  
6 **MR. STEVE WERNDLI:** Good morning. My name is Steve Werndli, and  
7 I work with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary down in  
8 the Florida Keys. I'm actually based out of the St. Pete  
9 National Marine Fisheries Service Office now.

10  
11 My role at the sanctuary, I coordinate our damage assessment and  
12 enforcement program, and so I work a lot with NOAA's Office of  
13 Law Enforcement, NOAA's Office of General Counsel out of the St.  
14 Pete Office, as well as the Offices of Protected Resources and  
15 Habitat Conservation. I sit over there now to make sure that  
16 we're better liaising with the other offices in NOAA that also  
17 have a role in the Sanctuary.

18  
19 What I'm going to give you guys a talk on today is a real quick  
20 brief on a process that we're going through that's very similar  
21 to what you just went through in looking at the Flower Garden  
22 Banks expansion. We've been going through a process to look at  
23 our zoning, the individual zones themselves, as well as the  
24 larger boundary and individual regulations within those zones  
25 and within the overall boundary of the sanctuary as well.

26  
27 The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary was established in  
28 1990. Our first management plan went into place in 1997. The  
29 Tortugas Ecological Reserves were added in 2001. We had another  
30 update to our management plan in 2007, and we are currently  
31 going through another process to update that plan as we speak.

32  
33 It's about a 2,900-square-nautical-mile area that runs from  
34 offshore of Miami all the way down and around the Dry Tortugas.  
35 We are adjacent to Biscayne National Park, Everglades National  
36 Park. The Dry Tortugas National Park is within our boundaries,  
37 but our boundaries don't overlap the National Park boundaries in  
38 that area.

39  
40 We have four National Wildlife Refuges within our boundaries,  
41 Crocodile Lake up in the Upper Keys, off of Key Largo, the Key  
42 Deer National Wildlife Refuge, the Great White Heron National  
43 Wildlife Refuge, and then Key West National Wildlife Refuge,  
44 going east to west. Our regulations do overlap their  
45 boundaries, and so our regulations apply, as do the wildlife  
46 refuge's.

47  
48 In addition to that, you've got a number of state park

1 jurisdictions that are within the Keys as well as areas covered  
2 by both the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Fishery  
3 Management Council, and so there's a lot of jurisdictional  
4 things going on in the Keys, and so it's a very complicated  
5 place.

6  
7 Why the sanctuary is there, our first priority is protection of  
8 the resources of the Florida Keys, and so we're looking at  
9 everything from basically the high-tide mark out to the 300-foot  
10 isobath on the Atlantic side, and then I'm not sure the distance  
11 on the Gulf side, but we basically look at protecting every  
12 single ecosystem from the shoreline out to the deeper reefs, and  
13 so mangroves, hard-bottom habitat, seagrass beds, the corals  
14 reefs, everything that's out there, including the cultural  
15 resources.

16  
17 There are hundreds, if not thousands, of shipwrecks throughout  
18 the Florida Keys. Those are protected under various laws of the  
19 state and the feds as historical resources, and so we manage  
20 those as well, and we manage all of that with a second priority  
21 of being able to utilize those resources, and so having those  
22 resources available to the public, and so we try to balance that  
23 protection of the resource while also allowing access to use  
24 those resources that don't cause impacts or that minimize  
25 impacts to those resources.

26  
27 To do that, we've got regulations that apply throughout the  
28 entire sanctuary, and so, everywhere you go within the  
29 sanctuary, there are general regulations that apply. Then,  
30 within individual zones of the sanctuary, those same general  
31 regulations apply, but then there are zone-specific regulations  
32 in some areas, and so some of our general regulations cover  
33 things like discharges. You can't dump oil in the sanctuary and  
34 you can't dump human waste into the sanctuary. You can't dump  
35 construction debris into the sanctuary.

36  
37 We have a couple of areas that regulate spearfishing. We have  
38 some no-fishing zones. We have zones that are primarily there  
39 to target protection of shallow-water habitat, and so we might  
40 regulate vessel speed, so that your vessel is going at a slow  
41 speed in shallow areas, so that you're not hitting the bottom.

42  
43 We have areas that address and restrict personal watercraft use.  
44 We have construction and dredging regulations that prohibit  
45 those activities, and so near-shore construction projects, dock  
46 building, large construction projects like bridge repairs and  
47 things like that, we actually have regulations that give us  
48 authority over.

1  
2 We prohibit oil and gas drilling throughout the sanctuary, and  
3 so these are just kind of some of the things that our  
4 regulations cover and prohibit inside the sanctuary as a whole.

5  
6 Within the sanctuary, I mentioned that we have smaller zones  
7 that are within the larger boundary. We have the sanctuary  
8 regulations that cover the entire thing and we have a few  
9 existing management areas, which are federally-managed areas  
10 that existed prior to the sanctuary coming into effect, and so  
11 those are things like the National Wildlife Refuges that are in  
12 the Keys as well as two previous National Marine Sanctuaries,  
13 the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary off the Upper Keys and  
14 the Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary off the Lower Keys, and  
15 so those existing managed areas, the regulations that were in  
16 place within those areas when the sanctuary came about are still  
17 in effect today.

18  
19 We also have what are called Sanctuary Preservation Areas.  
20 Those are areas along the reef line that the primary purpose is  
21 to address user conflicts between fishermen and divers, and so  
22 these areas give a place for divers to go where they don't have  
23 to worry about somebody dragging lines on top of them and  
24 impacting them while they're diving.

25  
26 Some of those areas -- Those areas are primarily no fishing. We  
27 do have some exemptions in our regulations. In four areas, you  
28 can troll and catch and release fish. In some other areas, you  
29 can get a permit to go in and collect baitfish, because there's  
30 areas in there where the reef and the habitat is such that it  
31 attracts ballyhoo, and so we wanted to kind of -- That use is  
32 not going to be such a conflict with the divers, because they  
33 are not hook-and-lining on the bottom or things like that, and  
34 so we had a process to allow baitfish permits to go in and  
35 collect bait in some of those areas.

36  
37 We have two ecological reserves, which are also no fishing. The  
38 one most folks are familiar with are the north and the south  
39 reserves in the Tortugas, and then we also have a Western Sambo  
40 Ecological Reserve, which is off the Lower Keys as well, and so  
41 those are larger areas designed to protect habitat, basically,  
42 from the shoreline to the outer reef and get all of that habitat  
43 in between, rather than doing smaller pieces of areas throughout  
44 the Keys.

45  
46 We also have wildlife management areas. We have twenty-seven of  
47 those that are primarily in the Lower Keys. We do have a few in  
48 the Upper Keys, but those areas are designed to protect shallow-

1 water seagrass habitat, hard-bottom habitat, and then also bird  
2 rookeries and nesting areas on some of the mangrove islands.

3  
4 Most of those areas, about eighteen of them, fall within the  
5 National Wildlife Refuges, and so we manage those. We kind of  
6 do that in partnership with the Wildlife Management Area. The  
7 access restrictions in those are typically idle speed, no wake,  
8 or no access to -- They are closed to any kind of entry at all.  
9 Like I said, they're primarily focused on their shallow-water  
10 habitat areas.

11  
12 We also have four special use areas. We can designate a couple  
13 of different types of these, ranging from the research area to  
14 restoration areas to completely closed areas, depending on the  
15 purpose. The only types that we have designated right now are  
16 research-only areas, and these areas designed to -- You can only  
17 transit through them. You can't stop, and so it's basically  
18 designed to give us sort of a baseline comparison to the other  
19 zones, to be able to see if things are working, and so we've got  
20 four of those. They're in basically each region of the Keys,  
21 going Upper Keys, Middle Keys, Lower Keys, and Key West.

22  
23 We also have areas to be avoided. The areas to be avoided are  
24 generally offshore areas that actually extend outside of the  
25 general sanctuary boundary, and these areas were designed to  
26 keep large ships and tank vessels away from the coral reef, and  
27 so all of these areas -- It's ships that are larger than fifty  
28 meters or any kind of tank vessel is not allowed to go inside  
29 that boundary.

30  
31 Since those have been in place, knock on wood, we haven't really  
32 had any large ship vessel groundings, and part of my job in  
33 dealing with emergency response at the sanctuary, dealing with  
34 the amount of shipping traffic that goes past the Keys, there  
35 are numerous instances every year where ships have an issue  
36 where they run out of power for some reason, their power shuts  
37 off, or they have maneuverability restrictions and things like  
38 that, and I think, because of this area, those ships are far  
39 enough offshore that, by the time tugs are able to get to them  
40 or another vessel is able to get to them to assist, that  
41 prevents those vessels from lining up on top of the coral reef  
42 when they're out there without power or maneuverability, and so  
43 that's a pretty effective zone.

44  
45 Now we're starting to get into our current review of the zones  
46 and regulations. In 2011, we published a condition report that  
47 basically took all of the science up to that date to look at the  
48 conditions of the sanctuary and all of the different ecosystems

1 and the uses and impacts that were not occurring prior to 2011  
2 that had started to occur in recent times and look at those  
3 impacts on the sanctuary.

4  
5 Basically, it was to kind of give ourselves a checkup on how  
6 things are going within the sanctuary. Over forty scientists  
7 provided input, and this document did undergo peer review. It  
8 just kind of gave the overall history of the sanctuary from the  
9 beginning up through 2011 and what it looked like at that time,  
10 and so it looked at impacts, it looked at uses, and, long story  
11 short, it basically said that there are some improvements that  
12 can be made in the management of the sanctuary, due to a number  
13 of factors of impacts, ranging from water quality to individual  
14 human impacts from boating.

15  
16 We took that document and basically took that as an awakening  
17 that said we need to look at what we're doing with the  
18 sanctuary, and so that's one of the reasons that we needed to  
19 conduct this review. We also had community interest that said,  
20 hey, maybe things have changed, and we want you guys to look at  
21 your regulations and look at your zoning and see if you can make  
22 some improvements. Have you missed stuff?

23  
24 Like one of the things you guys said earlier about maybe the  
25 zone was established and it was big and the activity is such  
26 that it's not protecting a certain area and that you can  
27 actually shrink it, and so do we need to make our zones smaller  
28 or actually get rid of some?

29  
30 It's always good to look at what you've got and be adaptive  
31 about the management scheme that you have. The science that's  
32 available nowadays is much better than it was twenty years ago,  
33 and so we think we can make some improved management decisions  
34 based on that science.

35  
36 We have new threats that weren't present back when the sanctuary  
37 first came around that maybe our current zoning scheme and  
38 regulations don't address, and then there is always the legal  
39 requirement that we have to do this under federal law, that we  
40 have to evaluate our management plan every so often.

41  
42 Sort of leading off with this effort was our Sanctuary Advisory  
43 Council, and the advisory council is made up of representatives  
44 of all of these different parts of the communities of the  
45 Florida Keys, and so we got pretty good representation, I think,  
46 of what the communities are made up of in the Florida Keys.

47  
48 Going forward with the things that came out of that condition



1 report and with all of the other reasons that we needed to have  
2 a review of our current status, we looked to the advisory  
3 council to sort of give us some advice on where we needed to go  
4 with this review and what did they, they the council, but also  
5 representing the members of the community, the Keys, what did  
6 they think that we needed to focus on during our process and  
7 where would we need to look and focus our analysis on to find  
8 out what needs to change, what needs to stay the same. Do we  
9 need to add things? Do we need to take away things?

10  
11 The timeline, we started this back in 2012. I actually think it  
12 started in 2011. We went through a series of public scoping  
13 meetings that were held in Key West, Marathon, Key Largo, Miami,  
14 and I think Fort Myers was the other location, and so we took  
15 public scoping comments to kind of give us additional guidance  
16 on where to focus our analysis through this process.

17  
18 After that scoping process, we went into advisory council  
19 meetings in 2012 to establish goals and objectives and basically  
20 tighten in and identify the specific things that the advisory  
21 council wanted us to look at, based on their interaction with  
22 the public, based on the results of that condition survey, and  
23 based on the results of that scoping.

24  
25 From there, we went into a series of public meetings in 2013.  
26 The advisory council set up, based on those goals and  
27 objectives, three different workgroups to focus on specific  
28 areas of the sanctuary. We had a group that would focus on  
29 coral reef ecosystem restoration, we had a group that would  
30 focus on shallow-water habitat and wildlife and habitat  
31 protection, and another group that would focus on coral reef  
32 ecosystem zones and issues in a whole, and so we had one group  
33 that specifically looked at coral reef restoration, another  
34 group that specifically looked at shallow-water habitats with  
35 seagrasses and hard bottoms, and another group that would focus  
36 on the entire ecosystem of the Florida Keys.

37  
38 We had a couple other working groups to look at artificial reefs  
39 and also look at our permitting process, to see if there were  
40 ways that we could improve and streamline the permits. With  
41 that process, we went through about seventy different public  
42 meetings over a couple of years. There was lots of engagement  
43 with the public, with the working groups. The folks that were  
44 on those groups gave up a lot of their time. Joe, I know you  
45 were heavily involved in that, but those were mainly two-day  
46 meetings that folks volunteered their time to come to and give  
47 us advice on what they felt we should do with the zones and the  
48 regulations in the Keys.

1  
2 After that process, those working groups made their  
3 recommendations to the advisory council. The advisory council  
4 reviewed those recommendations over a period of time and then  
5 came back to a final meeting and made a final set of  
6 recommendations to the sanctuary on the specific tasks and  
7 specific items that they wanted us to analyze through an  
8 environmental impact statement.

9  
10 Then, going on through the process, this has been very flexible  
11 the entire time, and so we're a little bit behind schedule. We  
12 were hoping to have things out in a draft environmental impact  
13 statement in the fall of this year, but that's probably looking  
14 like it's going to be early to mid next year at this point, and  
15 so that's sort of our general timeline of where we've been and  
16 where we're headed to.

17  
18 These are the priorities that were identified by the advisory  
19 council for us to address through this process, and a couple  
20 that I will focus on today are in bold there, and so the  
21 shallow-water, wildlife, and habitat protection, the ecosystem  
22 protection, dealing with the ecological reserves and looking at  
23 a larger ecosystem-focused preservation and conservation  
24 measures, and then also a little bit on the study area and the  
25 boundary modifications that we have proposed.

26  
27 All of this information, the recommendations from the working  
28 groups, the recommendations from the advisory council, are all  
29 on our website, which will be at the end of the presentation,  
30 and so, if you would like to look at any of those documents,  
31 it's all there for folks to look at.

32  
33 These are the makeup of the working groups, and so it was sort  
34 of like we had little mini advisory councils. We had the same  
35 makeup. We tried to get to the same makeup, to look at a very  
36 large cross-section of the communities of the Florida Keys to  
37 have represented on each one of these workgroups, so that  
38 everyone could have a voice to be heard.

39  
40 The two groups that I will focus on are the ecosystem protection  
41 and the shallow-water habitat group. The charge that was given  
42 to the ecosystem protection group was to review the zones that  
43 addressed ecosystem-level protection, and so looking primarily  
44 at large ecological reserve type of areas that would cover that  
45 contiguous habitat from the shoreline to the deep reef, if that  
46 was possible, if that's appropriate.

47  
48 We had the shallow-water wildlife habitat group looking at zones

1 that would protect the shallow-water seagrass areas, hard-bottom  
2 areas, the mangrove areas, sort of like the wildlife management  
3 area type of zones that I mentioned earlier. They also looked  
4 at identifying concentrated uses in those areas that may be  
5 causing impacts to the habitat that could be possibly addressed,  
6 and we also looked at evaluating marine salvage issues.

7  
8 We have a very high number of vessel groundings in the Florida  
9 Keys, and so you have impacts to the habitat, not only from the  
10 grounding itself when it happens, but also during the removal  
11 process, when you're going to tow those boats off of the reef or  
12 out of the seagrass. That action causes some impacts as well,  
13 and so we were working with the local towing and salvage  
14 community to kind of identify some best management practices  
15 that we might be able to implement, to make sure that you're not  
16 having more impacts from responding to an incident.

17  
18 Some of the ways that we looked at data, we looked at both  
19 natural resource data and we also looked at human use data, and  
20 so the working groups, in the very beginning of their process,  
21 has basically set out and had discussions about what habitat  
22 data did they want to have to look at, so that we could provide  
23 them that scientific data, so that they could make better  
24 decisions.

25  
26 Were there areas of coral reef habitat that they wanted to focus  
27 on more than others, so looking at resilient reefs versus just  
28 all of the reef itself, looking at reefs that had high relief,  
29 and so the working groups identified all of these different sets  
30 of data that they wanted us to provide to them, so that it would  
31 help them with their analysis. There were hundreds and hundreds  
32 of datasets that we had available through this whole process,  
33 and we would look at sort of analyzing our current zone and then  
34 through, as the process went, some of the zones that were being  
35 recommended by the groups.

36  
37 You could take that data and overlay the zones and see the  
38 difference in the coverage, and so, if you expanded it, did you  
39 increase your cover of resilient reefs or did you lose coverage  
40 of resilient reefs or, if you had a zone that you put this line  
41 here because there were resilient reefs right there, but there  
42 was a number of stands of endangered species of coral that were  
43 right outside of that, where you recommended a line be, could  
44 you shift that to cover and put some more protection on those  
45 endangered species, shift the whole zone and make it bigger, and  
46 so it was a long process to expand and contract, looking at how  
47 we could better do things in the sanctuary.

48

1 Looking at human use, we had data on commercial fishing,  
2 recreational fishing, recreational diving, marine debris, the  
3 areas where we had vessel groundings.

4  
5 As we were looking at different areas with that goal of  
6 protecting natural resources and protecting the habitat in the  
7 Florida Keys, we could take into account the use of those areas  
8 and, if there were areas of high fishing or high use, maybe we  
9 need to shift that around a little bit, just like you were  
10 talking with the zones in the Flower Gardens, to continue to  
11 allow those uses, or could we leave that boundary the same way,  
12 but also change the access restriction to it?

13  
14 For instance, you might have an area that is getting heavily  
15 impacted by boating that's a seagrass area, and you might have  
16 one option that could be just a no-motor zone, which would then  
17 restrict everyone from going in there without having a trolling  
18 motor or paddling or poling their boat, or you could just make  
19 it an idle-speed zone, which would still let you go through with  
20 the motor, but it would slow the boat down, and so looking at  
21 all of the different ways that the regulations, the zones, and  
22 the human use interact, to make sure we're getting the best bang  
23 for our buck protection-wise, but still allowing the public to  
24 use the resources.

25  
26 The outcomes of those groups, the ecosystem protection group  
27 recommended modifications to eleven of our existing zones. They  
28 recommended modifications to the overall sanctuary boundary and  
29 to the areas to be avoided boundary, which is different, because  
30 that one actually goes outside of our existing sanctuary  
31 boundary.

32  
33 They proposed seven new marine zones. They removed certain  
34 exceptions or exemptions in four marine zones, and so those were  
35 the sanctuary preservation areas, where we had an exemption to  
36 the prohibition on fishing that allowed catch-and-release  
37 fishing by trolling. In talking with some of the fishermen and  
38 the other user groups, they were accepting of taking those  
39 exceptions out of those regulations, because they can stay  
40 outside of the existing zone, or potentially expanded zone, and  
41 still maintain their fishing effort.

42  
43 Also, having that exemption makes it very confusing for the  
44 public and difficult for law enforcement, because you have an  
45 area that's designated as no fishing, but, under certain  
46 conditions or with a permit, you can fish. If a visitor comes  
47 down and gets a ticket for fishing in the sanctuary preservation  
48 area and then the officer leaves and ten minutes later somebody

1 drives through there catch-and-release fishing in one of the  
2 areas that they're allowed, you can see where that can cause  
3 some problems, and so that was one of the things that the group  
4 looked at as far as taking away from existing regulations.

5  
6 In the recommendations, like I said, we looked at not only the  
7 spatial component of it, but what the access and the use  
8 restriction would be, and so they considered regulations that  
9 would basically limit your access for things like anchoring all  
10 the way up to completely closing an area to research only and  
11 not letting anyone into those areas.

12  
13 The shallow-water group, sort of similar to that, had a range of  
14 access restrictions that they looked at. Two of the zones, they  
15 recommended that we remove. Both of those areas were impacted  
16 by hurricanes over the last few years, and so actually the areas  
17 that were zoned are no longer there, and so there's a good  
18 reason to get rid of them. If you don't need to have them  
19 closed, because there is nothing there, take them off the books.

20  
21 They looked at modifying nineteen zones, and they proposed  
22 twenty-four new zones that were mainly looking at idle speed or  
23 no-motor type of zones in shallow-water habitats.

24  
25 In some instances, they looked at actually having a temporal  
26 zoning or temporal restrictions to areas, and so, in places  
27 where we were looking at zoning around mangrove islands that was  
28 focused on bird nesting and bird roosting areas, that they would  
29 only recommend that those restrictions be in place when those  
30 species of concern were present in the area, and so that was  
31 another creative way they looked at maintaining that access to  
32 areas while also offering the protection.

33  
34 The ecosystem group looked at some boundary modifications, and  
35 so, in addition to looking at the existing sanctuary  
36 regulations, the advisory council recommended, and the working  
37 group recommended as well, that we look at areas adjacent to the  
38 current boundary, to see if there were areas of high ecological  
39 importance that would need to be included within the sanctuary  
40 and either offer just the general regulations or make it a  
41 special zone on its own.

42  
43 Looking at that, as we will with everything, we will have to  
44 evaluate the impacts, both environmentally and economically, to  
45 the communities of applying those general regulations in those  
46 areas outside of the existing boundary.

47  
48 Should those new boundaries be adopted, they would most likely

1 have just that suite of general regulations in place and not  
2 much in the way of specific zoning for like sanctuary  
3 preservation areas or ecological reserves or things like that.

4  
5 One of the areas that we are considering for boundary expansion  
6 is the Pulley Ridge area. Right now, there is an existing  
7 habitat area of particular concern in place out there, and some  
8 of the science has shown that there are areas outside of that  
9 existing area that are very significant deepwater coral reef  
10 habitat that aren't covered by existing protections, and so,  
11 with our goal to look, from the advisory council, to look  
12 outside of our existing boundaries at significant ecologically-  
13 important areas, this is one of the places that they wanted to  
14 focus on.

15  
16 This area, if we were to expand to it, would include the general  
17 sanctuary regulations, and I think we also have alternatives or  
18 different alternatives proposed in that area that would also  
19 regulate anchoring of specific sized vessels or of any vessel,  
20 going with the intent that the protection in that area would be  
21 to the deepwater coral habitats, and so you would only really  
22 need to restrict those activities that would impact that habitat  
23 type.

24  
25 Back to the timeline. Where are at now is -- Well, we just  
26 started the fall of 2016, and we are still in the process of  
27 taking all of the recommendations from the advisory council and  
28 from the working group and bending those into a suite of  
29 alternatives that we can then do the economic and ecological  
30 analysis on, through the process of developing that  
31 environmental impact statement.

32  
33 We hope to have a draft environmental impact statement out  
34 probably early to middle of next year, and it will go through  
35 another round of public comment at that time. It will go  
36 through agency review. The councils will look at it, and then  
37 we will basically take those comments back and incorporate those  
38 into the EIS and then publish a final EIS. Then, at some point,  
39 a year or so after that, the final regulations and rules will be  
40 published in the Federal Register.

41  
42 Sort of, again, where we're at, we're in the process, again, of  
43 developing and putting together those alternatives. Like I just  
44 said, we will release a draft environmental impact statement and  
45 there will be another round of public comment, as well as agency  
46 comments. We will release the final environmental impact  
47 stamen, and then we will revise and basically put in place the  
48 new and changed rules and marine zones.

1  
2 There is our website. Like I said, everything that came out of  
3 that working group process and the advisory council process, all  
4 of the reports and recommendations from that process, are  
5 available on the website. There is my phone number. Please  
6 feel free to email me or call me if you've got questions, and I  
7 will take some questions now, if you've got them.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you very much, Steve. We appreciate  
10 that. I see one hand, and so go ahead, Paul.

11  
12 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Steve, you mentioned early on all of the  
13 different jurisdictions that you have that sort of regulate the  
14 Florida Keys. You said that some of them are historical, before  
15 FKNMS was around, and some of them are new or whatever.

16  
17 This is very common in coastal marine waters around the world,  
18 actually, but has there been any move by the National Marine  
19 Sanctuary to say, hey, why don't we just combine these under one  
20 umbrella and why don't you let us look after this, rather than  
21 having all of these enforcement groups trying to look after one  
22 poor guy spinning around in a boat that throws a beer can over  
23 and gets shot by three different officers or something?

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Do you want to answer that?

26  
27 **MR. WERNDLI:** I will try to answer that to the best of my  
28 ability. I do know that there has been discussion between both  
29 the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Council with respect to  
30 fishing regulations, that they entertained the possibility of  
31 combining the Keys into one additional council or sub-council or  
32 committee of those, but I'm not sure where that is at.

33  
34 The rest of all of the alphabet soup that's in the Keys, there  
35 is different entities that have different goals and objectives  
36 into their management and what they're doing, and so, even  
37 though you've got that complex jurisdiction that's there, the  
38 law enforcement that's down there has the tools and the ability  
39 to pick and piece the best tools from the laws that are in place  
40 to address certain violations.

41  
42 Part of what we've been doing through this process is making  
43 sure that, if we are going to propose something, that we  
44 consider other regulations that are already in place, and so we  
45 looked at the lobster exclusion zones, the areas that are  
46 prohibited to lobster by one of the fishery management plans,  
47 and so, if we could -- If we had a zone that needed to go in a  
48 certain place that would overlap that area, that we put in

1 regulations that are the same, if we want to have those  
2 regulations under ours, or if we just want to make a zone there  
3 with specific different regulations, but it would mirror that  
4 existing zone, so that we're not taking up additional space.

5  
6 We just might, through our process, have identified additional  
7 layers of protection that are needed there and overlapped that  
8 way, and so that's -- Looking at Pulley Ridge, specifically, we  
9 were looking at the area that's already designated as the HAPC  
10 to focus on, but, with the new science that's out there, it  
11 shows that that might need to be expanded a little bit, and so  
12 we're taking into account other layers of management as well  
13 into the process.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Walter.

16  
17 **MR. JAAP:** Steve, just for your information, and you're probably  
18 aware of this, but the group from our Coral SSC has recommended  
19 expanding Pulley to accommodate pretty much all of that  
20 sensitive habitat that's down there, and so we'll be probably  
21 talking about that later, but the other thing about the -- I  
22 will use the word that's forbidden, but "turf wars" down there  
23 in the Keys, and a colleague, a friend of mine, Geologist Gene  
24 Shinn, has actually published a paper years ago about --

25  
26 He put up the matrix of all the possibilities of county through  
27 federal agencies that you would have to deal with to get a  
28 permit to do some form of research down there, and it gets  
29 pretty complicated for a person coming from outside to take care  
30 of that kind of thing, when they have a limited budget and a  
31 limited timeframe to get the work done.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Go ahead, Judy.

34  
35 **DR. LANG:** Steve, operationally, I would like to ask you how you  
36 define "resilient reefs", and specifically if any of them are  
37 affected by the current outbreak of white plague that's rampant  
38 in the Upper Keys.

39  
40 **MR. WERNDLI:** For the purposes of this, the resilient reefs, if  
41 I remember correctly, was defined by the -- I think it was the  
42 Nature Conservancy's surveys that were -- It was their ongoing  
43 monitoring of the coral reefs, and so their definition of  
44 "resilient reefs" is that we used, and their datasets is what we  
45 used to identify those areas throughout the Keys. There has  
46 been the bleaching. I don't know so much about the disease, but  
47 the bleaching this year has been pretty significant all  
48 throughout the Keys.



1  
2 **DR. LANG:** There's also a very significant outbreak of white  
3 plague in the mass of corals and brain corals.  
4  
5 **MR. WERNDLI:** I don't think that's the one that is in Flower  
6 Gardens. I don't think we've seen that in the Keys yet.  
7  
8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Leann.  
9  
10 **MS. BOSARGE:** Steve, thank you for coming. I'm Leann Bosarge  
11 from the Gulf Council. Morgan is going to -- I was hoping that  
12 your presentation might have a little more detail. I know  
13 that's kind of hard to do at this phase of the game, but we've  
14 seen some presentations that did give us some detail on things  
15 you're considering.  
16  
17 I would make one suggestion. On your website, I did try and go  
18 through it, to try and figure out what the management  
19 recommendations were, and I spent numerous hours, and the only  
20 way to figure it out is to essentially read the minutes of every  
21 meeting that you've had over the last five years or so. If  
22 there is some way to like summarize that this is what we're  
23 looking at going towards and give some bullets and some  
24 pictures, that would be real helpful.  
25  
26 **MR. WERNDLI:** I can send Morgan links to the individual reports,  
27 so that you don't have to wade through the website to get to  
28 them, so that you can go directly to the reports themselves, and  
29 so I will give her individual links to pass out to everybody.  
30  
31 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. That would be great. What I asked Morgan  
32 to put up on the screen, and I hope Beth is still on the phone,  
33 maybe, but this was something that your group was considering  
34 for closures in the past.  
35  
36 From what I could gather, looking at your website, it's not  
37 completely off the table at this point, and so I am anticipating  
38 this being in your scope of alternatives when your DEIS comes  
39 out, and we've got all the main people in the room right now to  
40 give input on this, and so a couple of questions.  
41  
42 I guess it would be kind of like that gray-colored area to the  
43 top and then the little sliver of gray-colored area to the  
44 bottom. Those are areas that were suggested as being closed,  
45 I'm assuming to everything, as study areas. Number one, why is  
46 it that if you want to study an area that you have to shut every  
47 user group out of it and have no use in it just to study it?  
48 That's a little frustrating, to me.

1  
2 Number two is I would like to get some feedback from hopefully  
3 the shrimpers in the room as to is this going to affect you? Is  
4 this trawlable bottom for royal red, because we do have a royal  
5 red representative, and regular shrimping, if you want to refer  
6 it as such, and get some feedback from that, and the longliners  
7 as well, if you have any use in this area.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, go ahead.

10  
11 **DR. KILGOUR:** I just want to make sure that this is still under  
12 consideration, because, when I talked to Beth, I had questions  
13 about this, and I think she had told me that some of this was  
14 removed, but if you could comment on that as well, that would be  
15 really helpful.

16  
17 **MR. WERNDLI:** I was only going to mention -- I was under the  
18 impression that they were proposed areas for expansion of the  
19 sanctuary, but that they would apply some of the same existing  
20 rules that are in place now, where there are fishing activities  
21 that are going on within the sanctuary, and that it would not be  
22 entirely closed to fishing.

23  
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** Typically, in a sanctuary, bottom trawling is not  
25 allowed, and you're looking at a group of bottom trawlers, and  
26 so it's definitely going to have an effect on us.

27  
28 **UNIDENTIFIED:** If you close that area you have marked off, you  
29 basically have ended shrimping in Key West.

30  
31 **MR. WERNDLI:** Before we go any further, because there have been  
32 some things that have changed on this map, and this represents  
33 the areas that were recommended from the advisory council to the  
34 sanctuary to consider for boundary expansion, the areas inside  
35 and outside of the sanctuary. The lighter shaded areas at the  
36 top and the bottom were considered, but have been rejected.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** So that is out now?

39  
40 **MR. WERNDLI:** Those are out of consideration, and so we're  
41 looking at that area of the darker blue area that goes up into  
42 Florida Bay, adjacent to Everglades National Park, and then, on  
43 the outside boundary, on the ocean side --

44  
45 So the dark blue boundary is the existing sanctuary boundary and  
46 this line out here is the current areas to be avoided boundary,  
47 and so we would be looking to expand our general regulations  
48 into those areas outside of the existing boundary. It would go

1 back up to the existing boundary along the south end. South of  
2 that would be about southwest of the Marquesas, and then down  
3 and then expand it out to the southern boundary of the Southern  
4 Tortugas Ecological Reserve and then straight to the north from  
5 there, to the existing boundary on the northern side that's  
6 below that lighter-colored square. It's only the darker-blue  
7 areas that are being considered at this time.

8  
9 **MS. BOSARGE:** In your presentation, you said you were  
10 considering modifications to the actual sanctuary boundaries,  
11 which would be extending the sanctuary boundaries, but that you  
12 were also proposing these research-only zones in addition.  
13 That's what I'm asking. Are those gray boxes still being  
14 proposed as research zones, aka study zones?

15  
16 **MR. WERNDLI:** These areas that are on this map were never  
17 proposed as closed research-only areas. These were only  
18 proposed to give us a larger area to look at, areas adjacent to  
19 the sanctuary, to identify other areas of ecological importance  
20 that could need additional layers of protection.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Did you have another question?

23  
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, and I don't want to get into a boxing match  
25 with you, but I have it on the record that it was proposed. It  
26 was a presentation by the Florida Keys National Marine  
27 Sanctuary, and so that's where that comes from, is your own  
28 sanctuary group that did present it, and so it has been on the  
29 table. It's hard to get all of us in a room together, and  
30 that's why, if it's even possible that you may do that, while  
31 we're in the room, we want to talk to you about it.

32  
33 **MR. WERNDLI:** Those two lightly-shaded areas have been  
34 considered but rejected within this larger outline here with the  
35 light blue, to there and then up to the Everglades along this  
36 angle here. That is the area that's being proposed for  
37 sanctuary boundary expansion. Within that area, there could be  
38 smaller zones that would be closed for research only or idle  
39 speed or whatnot, and so --

40  
41 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Just quickly, why -- I can't understand. I mean  
42 you're looking at a sliver of bottom that couldn't be maybe half  
43 a mile wide there, and what possible -- I don't understand.  
44 It's all shrimping ground, and it's basically, for the most  
45 part, flat bottom. Why would you want to expand? It's almost  
46 like you're trying to draw a line around it. I don't understand  
47 the need and the purpose. Can you go into a little detail of  
48 why you would actually want to close a little --

1  
2 **MR. WERNDLI:** I think that that is a relic of the GIS, where the  
3 two different layers are not matching up. I don't believe there  
4 is any expansion proposed on that north side. I think that's  
5 just a relic of two different shape files. The polygons that  
6 are drawn, one is not matching up exactly to the other.  
7  
8 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I would have to defer to Mr. Nelson on the south  
9 side expansion for royal red.  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I've got two hands. Paul, since we're on the  
12 shrimp thing, can Mr. Nelson go and then you're next?  
13  
14 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Sure.  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Thank you. Mr. Nelson.  
17  
18 **MR. NELSON:** Just how far in that box, where it goes up and down  
19 -- You've got a little farther over to the west and down at the  
20 corner, the bottom corner, how far is that? Is that a mile or  
21 two miles over or three miles over?  
22  
23 **MR. WERNDLI:** I think it's about a mile. There's been some  
24 science that shows that that area of Riley's Hump is a little  
25 bit more towards the west than was known back when the initial  
26 boundaries for that ecological reserve were shown, and so it's  
27 an extension of that boundary of about a mile to the west, to  
28 give a little bit more buffer to the edge of that significant  
29 habitat.  
30  
31 **MR. NELSON:** We drag right up to it, and not way in, but right  
32 on the outside edge of that box.  
33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Are we talking about the dark blue line now?  
35 Is that what you're saying?  
36  
37 **MR. NELSON:** The blue box, yes, the dark one. We drag right up  
38 to it down toward the bottom. I call it the southwest corner of  
39 that box. Both sides of it, we drag right up to it, but not way  
40 inshore. Just right out toward the edge of it, that way and the  
41 other way. You know how that yellow line kind of tapers down to  
42 a point at the southeast corner to, why couldn't that go  
43 straight over instead of taper down?  
44  
45 **UNIDENTIFIED:** In other words, you get into some of this bottom  
46 that he's talking about proposing?  
47  
48 **MR. NELSON:** Not way up there, but I mean it does come down to a

1 point, to where it will take some of it on both sides of that  
2 box.  
3  
4 **MS. BOSARGE:** So you would rather see this line go like that is  
5 what you're saying?  
6  
7 **MR. NELSON:** Well, it could go straight to the west, more like  
8 that, and the west side not even be there, especially if you got  
9 off a ways.  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Dennis.  
12  
13 **MR. HENDERSON:** Can we do the same thing we did to the other,  
14 put a chart up there and she could put the electronic logbook  
15 tracking on there?  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Can you do that?  
18  
19 **DR. KILGOUR:** I don't have those coordinates for those files to  
20 be able to do that.  
21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** So that's not unavailable, unfortunately.  
23  
24 **MR. HENDERSON:** Well, can we get it?  
25  
26 **DR. KILGOUR:** The National Marine Sanctuary would have to  
27 provide it.  
28  
29 **MR. HENDERSON:** If they provided the coordinates and we put it  
30 on a chart and then we did the electronic tracking on there.  
31  
32 **DR. KILGOUR:** I understand what you're asking, but they would  
33 have to provide the coordinates. I don't have them.  
34  
35 **MR. HENDERSON:** I thought I saw some of that data when you  
36 overload the whole Gulf of Mexico.  
37  
38 **MS. BOSARGE:** She has the shrimp tracks. She doesn't have the  
39 box.  
40  
41 **MR. HENDERSON:** But he's saying that it changed. What you  
42 changed, do you have that and the coordinates?  
43  
44 **MR. WERNDLI:** We haven't changed anything at this point. We are  
45 still discussing it.  
46  
47 **MR. HENDERSON:** So that's still --  
48

1 **MR. WERNDLI:** It's still on the table, yes.  
2  
3 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, is there any way to have that for  
4 later this afternoon, if the two of you work and get together  
5 and maybe you could --  
6  
7 **DR. KILGOUR:** Steve?  
8  
9 **MR. WERNDLI:** We can try.  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Dennis, good point. If we can get  
12 that, hopefully we can get that available. Paul has been very  
13 patient. He had his hand up.  
14  
15 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Two things. The first thing is we're not seeing,  
16 from this -- Rightfully so, we're not seeing from this picture  
17 where the reefs are, the reef tracks, which probably run right  
18 up to the edge of the blue area, but who knows? We don't have  
19 that information, and maybe we'll have it later or something.  
20  
21 The second thing is, with respect to the Florida Keys reef  
22 tract, we're sort of talking about a patient that's been in the  
23 ICU for ten years. The Florida reef tract has really taken a  
24 hit from disease and from bleaching, more so than I think some  
25 other areas of the Caribbean, which is probably, I would  
26 imagine, some of the rationale for wanting to protect some more  
27 of it.  
28  
29 It's not in good shape. If memory serves, the percent cover has  
30 gone, over a decade or fifteen years, from something like 40 or  
31 50 percent to 5 percent coverage, and is that right? It's  
32 pretty low cover now.  
33  
34 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
35  
36 **DR. SAMMARCO:** It's down pretty low now, and so I think that's  
37 one of the reasons that there's been a lot of movement to try to  
38 protect it. It's in pretty bad shape, and that's all.  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I am glad that you brought that up. I am  
41 puzzled that I was just reading, within the last week or two,  
42 which contradicts what you just said. By the Chief Scientist at  
43 the Office of the National Marine Sanctuaries, Steve Giddings,  
44 that the coral in the Gulf is in pretty darned good shape and  
45 stable and so on, and so now I'm puzzled. We've got a problem  
46 in this area and we've got the problem with the milky, white  
47 substance on the East Flower Gardens.  
48

1 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I think what he's talking about, and he has  
2 published that, is the Flower Garden Banks.  
3  
4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** So he was only talking about the Flower  
5 Gardens?  
6  
7 **DR. SAMMARCO:** They are sort of the gem of the Gulf of Mexico,  
8 because they are so far offshore, and they're really in almost  
9 pristine shape, until last week.  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** But he did say Gulf, and so I took that as the  
12 entire Gulf of Mexico.  
13  
14 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We had a legal fight over the boundary years  
17 ago. That's a whole different issue.  
18  
19 **UNIDENTIFIED:** As we did in the meeting that we attended with  
20 your group, where we overlaid the LGL tracks, the same thing  
21 needs to happen down here, where you can actually see just what  
22 the bottom actually looks like, in other words, where this coral  
23 is and where it isn't and what maybe needs to be protected and  
24 what doesn't, because I think, once you overlay the tracks, you  
25 will look at it and say, okay, I see, simply because you're  
26 going to be amazed at, like I say, how much of that bottom is  
27 flat bottom with no coral. Where the coral is, we don't go.  
28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Steve tells me that he's going to do his best  
30 to work with Morgan to try and have something for the group to  
31 take a look at today. I think that would help all of us  
32 tremendously. Mr. Gregory.  
33  
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUGLAS GREGORY:** Good morning. That was a  
35 good presentation. One of the things we did want to learn was  
36 the time schedule for when the Draft EIS was coming out. It's  
37 been five years now since the condition report came out. I  
38 think you said it was 2011.  
39  
40 When I read it back then, one thing that struck me was there was  
41 a lot of reliance on some publications that were put out during  
42 the 1990s on the condition of some of the reef fish species.  
43 Since then, those conclusions have been found in the literature  
44 and through the NMFS stock assessments to be incorrect, and I  
45 didn't see, if my memory is right, any reference to the National  
46 Marine Fisheries Service stock assessments on the species that  
47 are in the sanctuary, and particularly black grouper.  
48

1 If you haven't don't it already, I would suggest going back and  
2 looking at the condition report and updating it to include the  
3 status of species, as indicated by stock assessments, rather  
4 than a twenty-year-old publication. We've had a number of stock  
5 assessments since that was done out of the University of Miami,  
6 and I think that would be worth looking at.

7  
8 One observation that has just kind of perplexed me about the  
9 Keys is most of our fished populations are healthy. The coral  
10 has gone to heck, but lobster is productive and yellowtail and  
11 gray snapper and mutton snapper. Even black grouper, which the  
12 condition report concludes is grossly overfished, the stock  
13 assessment says it's relatively healthy.

14  
15 Now, I am eager to see an updated stock assessment to see if  
16 that's changed, and so it seems to me that a lot of the  
17 productivity of the Florida Keys -- Clearly you can look at the  
18 Everglades, and you've got a lot of nutrients coming in, and the  
19 seagrass communities and the mangrove communities are  
20 flourishing in the Florida Keys.

21  
22 Our fish populations seem to be as much dependent on the  
23 seagrasses and mangroves for their productivity as they are the  
24 corals, and it has kind of perplexed me, because a lot of people  
25 relate overfishing to coral death, and vice versa, and you would  
26 expect, with the reef being in as bad shape as it is, that the  
27 fish wouldn't be there either, and I think, if you look at  
28 tropicals and moray eels, you will see that they have been  
29 decimated along with the corals, but those aren't species that  
30 we fish and harvest.

31  
32 It's just an interesting observation, that we have these  
33 productive fisheries at the same time we've got this  
34 dramatically declining coral, and I agree with you that some  
35 places it's like swimming through a graveyard, with these big,  
36 monster boulder corals that are completely dead. It's  
37 depressing, and so thank you very much.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I had two hands. Who was first? Leann.

40  
41 **MS. BOSARGE:** I just wanted to say that I know you weren't here  
42 earlier for the conversation that we had with G.P. with the  
43 Flower Garden expansion that's going on, but G.P. has been  
44 really good about working with the fishermen and coming to these  
45 types of meetings and showing us what he anticipates doing, and  
46 I think we made some good progress earlier.

47  
48 There were just a few boxes that we had issues with, and G.P. is



1 going to take a look at it and see if there is any way to come  
2 to a common ground on it, and I would encourage you to do that  
3 as well with the shrimping community. I was a little concerned,  
4 because all your meetings are taking place in the Keys, and even  
5 your at-large members, some of it is specified that they have to  
6 be from a certain area in the Keys, Upper Keys or Lower Keys or  
7 this or that.

8  
9 The shrimp fleet that's shrimping down there is not necessarily  
10 ported and/or the gentlemen and women that work on the boat  
11 living in the Keys. In fact, most of them are not, simply  
12 because of the environment down there. That's a tourism  
13 environment. The shrimp boats that used to be there are no  
14 longer there. They moved elsewhere. Tourism kind of took over  
15 that waterfront.

16  
17 When you take this out to public hearings, all of your meetings  
18 have been centered down there, but you're going to have to take  
19 this throughout the Gulf of Mexico, because there are shrimpers  
20 that are ported out of Texas and Louisiana and Mississippi and  
21 Alabama that every year we go down there, and so would you just  
22 keep that in mind?

23  
24 You only have two commercial fishermen on your group, and I'm  
25 sure neither one of those are shrimpers, I would venture to  
26 guess, and I did reach out and ask your group to please at least  
27 let the Gulf Council maybe sit in, have a staff member sit in,  
28 on being a member on your committee, and we haven't gotten any  
29 feedback, and maybe you haven't gotten much input from  
30 shrimpers, but that's because everything you've been doing is in  
31 the Keys. We don't live in the Keys, and so just please keep us  
32 in mind, and if you will work with us on the frontend, I think  
33 it will be a lot smoother process.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you.

36  
37 **MR. JAAP:** Steve, if you can clarify, I think, really for us  
38 what that polygon that was showing up there is and make sure  
39 that everybody gets a good answer that it is or it is not going  
40 to be an area that's going to be shut down, because I think it's  
41 important, for two reasons.

42  
43 One is that area up there, as the people have said, is an area  
44 that actively gets shrimped, and I think that position between  
45 Riley's Hump and the Dry Tortugas National Park and west of  
46 there, there's a lot of coral in there. There is, because I  
47 have worked down there. I've run submarines through there, and  
48 I would say that you should document it pretty well, but, if you

1 are going to expand into that area, that you do have a resource  
2 that needs protection, and I think we'll all benefit from that.

3  
4 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
5

6 **MR. WERNDLI:** This is the area that you're talking about? This  
7 light yellow, pale yellow, cream-colored, whatever color area  
8 you want to call that, and then this other area at the bottom  
9 that's the same color was considered to be part of the study  
10 area, but, since it was considered, it has now been rejected,  
11 and so we are not looking at anything in these two areas.

12  
13 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
14

15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Did we have any other hands?  
16

17 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
18

19 **MR. WERNDLI:** Again, our focus is not just on coral. It's  
20 protection of the entire ecosystem, and so hard-bottom  
21 communities, seagrass communities, coral communities, that's  
22 what we're looking at, in general.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** In the back, go ahead.  
25

26 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I sat on that committee, and none of the  
27 decisions were made, and what Steve is saying is true about the  
28 -- They have considered that and rejected it, but I sat on that  
29 committee, and the space that you're seeing, the extension  
30 between Riley's Hump, which is below Tortugas Bank there in the  
31 southwest, and that line that's drawn up to the edge of the  
32 current sanctuary, one of the issues driving consideration of  
33 that space was that there is a lot of hard coral bottom in  
34 there, and there's been a problem with freighters anchoring in  
35 there, because it's real shallow, and there is some pretty  
36 graphic video of the big anchor chains scooping up all the live  
37 coral. A lot of that was part of the consideration.

38  
39 It was a coral consideration, and they looked at fisheries, and  
40 it was mentioned in the group that the commercial fishermen that  
41 are in there, mostly yellow-tailers out of Stock Island. They  
42 sat on the committee, but there were no shrimpers in the group,  
43 and I think the input is appropriate.  
44

45 The big consideration there was it's real shallow, and the dead-  
46 heading freighters heading up into the Gulf or people waiting  
47 for a load were dropping their hooks there was the problem.  
48

1 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Harris.  
2  
3 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** I'm a little confused how come this area right  
4 here wasn't explained like the other areas. What's the reason  
5 and when is all of this going to come to a head? Is it going to  
6 be all done together or is it going to be done separate? I am  
7 kind of confused on the process.  
8  
9 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** When did you start this process? What was the  
10 timeline?  
11  
12 **MR. WERNDLI:** We started with public scoping in 2011, and this  
13 is a process that's separate from the Flower Gardens process  
14 that you guys discussed this morning.  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Nelson.  
17  
18 **MR. NELSON:** I can't quite understand that data looking at where  
19 we drag. The boat I've got now, I don't go down there very  
20 much, but I do know -- Years ago, I had my other boat, and we  
21 drove right up to the box. We didn't have no tracking devices  
22 or nothing on us, but I do know that you can drag right up to  
23 that box on both sides and catch good shrimp. I've got it shown  
24 on my plotter to where they dragged straight on through that  
25 corner, and so I know it's good shrimping there, because that's  
26 where I was talking about that point coming down to it. You can  
27 drag right up to that box.  
28  
29 I mean it's showing no data, giving them that information, but  
30 there is -- We've had old paper plotters and stuff like that.  
31 We didn't have no tracking devices, and I know you can do it. I  
32 ain't been down there in a long time to work it.  
33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Any other hands at this time?  
35 Morgan, I don't see any hands. It's twelve o'clock. Do we want  
36 to do anything now? I think they delivered the food, and so  
37 what do we need to do now, prior to having lunch?  
38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** I guess now is the time to ask Steve any more  
40 questions that you may have for him, so that he can have lunch  
41 and go back.  
42  
43 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Steve, are you going to be around the rest of  
44 the day?  
45  
46 **MR. WERNDLI:** I can be if you want me to.  
47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Any questions for Steve at this time?

1 I am going to ask you, if your schedule allows, if you wouldn't  
2 mind sticking around, please. I don't see any hands for  
3 questions.

4  
5 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I would just like to follow up on that last  
6 comment and ask Morgan, can you put up the bathymetry coincident  
7 with your chart showing -- Your GIS showing the location of the  
8 Tortugas south? Then we can find out where it really is  
9 shallow.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Can you do that, Morgan? Are we working on  
12 it?

13  
14 **DR. KILGOUR:** I'm working on it. Could I do it after lunch?  
15 Okay. I will have it ready to go right after lunch.

16  
17 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I think that just would help add some perspective  
18 to the conversation we've just been having.

19  
20 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, and I think I might be able to finagle some  
21 shape files to get that expanded box, potentially. I might not  
22 be, but that will be my goal.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We've got Leann now.

25  
26 **MS. BOSARGE:** I just wanted to make sure that Steve is going to  
27 be around, because I know we do have the longliners. Are you  
28 staying until after lunch?

29  
30 **MR. WERNDLI:** Yes, ma'am.

31  
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** Then I'm good.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Steve has committed that he's going to be with  
35 us most of the day, I guess.

36  
37 **MR. WERNDLI:** Until you let me go, I guess.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. I am going to call a thirty-minute  
40 lunch break. It's five after twelve, and so twenty-five of. I  
41 understand there is sandwiches and soft drinks over in the  
42 corner. With that, Harris will be first.

43  
44 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on August 3, 2016.)

45  
46 - - -

47  
48 August 3, 2016

1  
2 WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION  
3  
4  
5

- - -

6 The Joint Shrimp Advisory Panel, Coral Advisory Panel, and Coral  
7 Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Gulf of Mexico  
8 Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Gulf Council  
9 Office, Tampa, Florida, Wednesday afternoon, August 3, 2016, and  
10 was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Vice Chairman Steve  
11 Bosarge.  
12

13 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I would like to make a motion. The Shrimp AP  
14 requests that the discussion and comments made pertaining to the  
15 Flower Gardens Banks boundary expansions be included in the Gulf  
16 of Mexico Fishery Management Council letter to the Flower Garden  
17 Banks National Marine Sanctuary.  
18

19 **MR. BOSARGE:** Let's make sure that she gets it. This will be a  
20 Shrimp AP motion. Now that Corky is gone, if you remember, we  
21 had this conversation on how this was supposed to go, without  
22 answering the question. We have a motion. Is there any  
23 discussion? We have a motion and we have a second.  
24

25 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I would like to offer that the Coral SSC would  
26 join in that motion.  
27

28 **MR. BOSARGE:** That sounds pretty good. I haven't a clue as to  
29 how this is supposed to work, especially now that we have the  
30 Coral SSC -- Go ahead, Morgan.  
31

32 **DR. KILGOUR:** We can do this two ways. If it's just the Coral  
33 SSC and the Shrimp AP, then we will just make two different  
34 motions and the two groups will individually vote, or, if all  
35 three groups wanted to make this motion, then it could be a  
36 motion of the committee as a whole and, therefore, everybody  
37 would vote. That would have to go through the Coral AP as well.  
38

39 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Can I make the motion that the Coral AP is  
40 involved in the motion?  
41

42 **DR. KILGOUR:** To make it really complicated, it needs a second  
43 from each individual group.  
44

45 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's what I'm -- Do we have a second on the  
46 Shrimp AP's motion? Okay. Johnny seconds the motion. Now, do  
47 we have a second from the Coral AP?  
48

1 **MS. SAPP:** I second the AP.  
2  
3 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. Portia seconds the AP. Now, any discussion  
4 on the Shrimp AP's motion? All right. Go ahead.  
5  
6 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Why don't we do all of them?  
7  
8 **MR. BOSARGE:** All of --  
9  
10 **UNIDENTIFIED:** The Florida Banks and the South Texas Banks.  
11  
12 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Because it's specific to the sanctuary expansion.  
13  
14 **MR. BOSARGE:** We're going to get to that. Right now, I think --  
15  
16 **MS. BOSARGE:** It's really critical that the Flower Garden  
17 discussion be submitted formally to the sanctuary, because,  
18 right now, that's in a regulatory public comment phase, and so  
19 we've got to get that into them if we want it to be seen by that  
20 sanctuary group officially, and so that is why this particular  
21 motion is important. Then, as we continue later on through the  
22 other discussions, if there is a formal comment period that is  
23 open that we can submit those comments to, we can definitely do  
24 that there, too.  
25  
26 **DR. KILGOUR:** As your shrimp staff member, I will make it a  
27 priority that, when the Florida Keys DEIS comes out, that the  
28 Shrimp AP be made aware of it, and, at the next meeting, be able  
29 to comment on it, if that's what the timeline looks like it's  
30 going to be, which it sounds to me like it is, but, if the  
31 timeline is shorter than the next Shrimp AP meeting, then I will  
32 make sure that those comments are included in the letter.  
33  
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay, but we're going to continue on with our  
35 motion. We're going to vote on the AP motion first. **All in**  
36 **favor aye; opposed like sign. The motion carries.**  
37  
38 **MR. JAPP:** Any discussion from the Coral SSC on this motion?  
39 **All in favor. It carried.**  
40  
41 **MR. BOSARGE:** The motion carries. Good. Now we will give it  
42 back to Corky.  
43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Why isn't the Coral AP in that --  
45  
46 **MR. BOSARGE:** Hold on. We're getting there, but you can take  
47 over.  
48

1 **MS. KRUEGER:** Any discussion for the Coral AP? I will call for  
2 a vote. **Coral AP, all in favor; any opposed. The motion**  
3 **carries.**

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you very much, and I apologize for being  
6 late, but I am going to apologize to you all again. I am so  
7 frustrated. I am dealing with the IRS, not for me, but I am  
8 handling an estate for a friend, and you know the government  
9 gets a bad rap, but, in some cases, you understand why, when you  
10 deal with these people. I have been on hold and -- We passed a  
11 motion. Thank you, all. I appreciate your patience with me.  
12 Where are, we Morgan? The motion carried with no opposition.  
13 Then go ahead and tell me where we are, please.

14  
15 **DR. KILGOUR:** I think we finished. We're done, right?

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** See how when you've got a good Vice Chair how  
18 things can get done?

19  
20 **DR. KILGOUR:** The Flower Garden Banks is taken care of. I have  
21 got official notification that I will not be able to have access  
22 to the boundaries of that region that we saw for the Florida  
23 Keys until the draft environmental impact statement comes out,  
24 and this is not -- This happened with the Flower Garden Banks  
25 too, and so it's just across-the-board this is how that goes.

26  
27 I can just keep it on my radar and make sure that I update the  
28 Shrimp AP and the Coral AP and the Coral SSC as soon as that  
29 comes out, if that's acceptable to the group.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** So this motion that passed, the comment period  
32 ends on August 19, and so this will go out prior to August 19,  
33 at least this motion?

34  
35 **DR. KILGOUR:** There is a draft letter being presented to the  
36 council at the next meeting, and it will go out before that  
37 council meeting is over.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Then we will proceed.

40  
41 **DR. KILGOUR:** Okay. I guess now we're into Agenda Item X, where  
42 we're actually going to talk about -- Now we're talking about  
43 the Coral SSC and Coral AP recommended HAPCs that are going to  
44 be included in a scoping document that will be presented to the  
45 council in October.

46  
47 This is where I think the bulk of the next day is going to --  
48 This is it. This is where we need to talk about boundaries and

1 what areas need to be prioritized and go area-by-area. Dr.  
2 Cordes is here to give us some scientific --

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Did I miss Item VI?

5  
6 **DR. KILGOUR:** No, you didn't. The portal will happen, but this  
7 is priority right now, because Mr. Nelson and Dr. Cordes are  
8 both going to need to leave this afternoon, and so, Dr. Cordes,  
9 if you're ready to give us the scientific information about the  
10 northeastern Gulf of Mexico or are you doing the whole entire  
11 Gulf?

12  
13 **DISCUSS RECOMMENDED HAPC AREAS WITH AND WITHOUT MODIFICATIONS**  
14 **DEEPWATER CORAL PRESENTATION**

15  
16 **DR. CORDES:** Hi, everybody. I am going to mostly focus on the  
17 northern Gulf of Mexico, because that's mostly where I worked.  
18 I am going to kind of just give you a quick overview and show  
19 you what some of these habitats look like. I think the deep sea  
20 has sort of been out of sight and out of mind in a lot of cases,  
21 and so I thought -- We're going to step through these, but,  
22 rather than taking the time to do that right now, I just want to  
23 kind of give you an overview and a sense for how we find these  
24 habitats and what they look like, and I will be happy to answer  
25 any questions.

26  
27 These are some of the sites that we've worked on over the last  
28 fifteen years or so across the northern Gulf. Much of this is  
29 funded by MMS and NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research,  
30 and we were basically looking to validate some of the  
31 predictions that MMS was making from some of the 3D seismic  
32 data, which show high reflectivity on the seafloor, and, Mr.  
33 Delaney, to some of your points before, as to predicting coral  
34 distribution.

35  
36 We certainly can't lay eyes on all of the seafloor, and so we  
37 use some of these predictive models, qualitative models, and  
38 some quantitative models that I will show you to help guide us  
39 when we're down there. This, of course, is of relevance to this  
40 group, just to give you an idea of some of the different types  
41 of species.

42  
43 I don't know if you guys can read all of that, and I will show  
44 you some images of these, but these are roughly broken into some  
45 depths between about 230 and 300 meters, which is shallow for  
46 us, and so that's about 150 fathoms. Then mid depth ranges are  
47 in 300 to 400 meters, and that's where we get into some of the  
48 big lophelia reefs that I will show you, and then deeper waters



1 of 450 to 500 meters, we have sort of a different group of fish  
2 species.

3  
4 I am a coral person. I don't know my fish particularly well,  
5 and I'm sorry to disappoint all of you. Steve, I hope, will  
6 step in and pinch-hit and ID some of these fish for you if you  
7 have any questions as we go through.

8  
9 These are the shallower sites. These are some of the, just to  
10 give you an idea, some of the data that exists for the Pinnacles  
11 sites. These are at Alabama Alps and Rough-Tongue Reef, which  
12 we will get to a discussion of in a little bit, but these are  
13 just some of the surveys that have been done over the years on  
14 some of the high-resolution bathymetry, the maps, that we have  
15 of some of these pinnacle sites.

16  
17 This is deeper waters. This is actually one of the sites that  
18 is under discussion today. You can see the squares on here are  
19 the BOEM lease blocks, and so this is square right here is  
20 Viosca Knoll 906, and that's Viosca Knoll 826 right above it,  
21 and so that's Viosca Knoll 826 on the northern part and Viosca  
22 Knoll 906 on the bottom.

23  
24 This is the industry-generated seismic reflectivity of the  
25 seafloor that's housed at BOEM, and we have gotten access, been  
26 granted access, to all of these data, and we can see where there  
27 are reflective surfaces on the seafloor. This mostly  
28 corresponds to authigenic carbonates that are related to oil and  
29 gas seepage, and, as Paul remarked before, these are very old.  
30 A lot of these have been dated to about 15,000 years, and so  
31 they've been around for a long time.

32  
33 Some of them are still forming in areas of active seepage, but  
34 we don't see a whole lot of active seepage in this particular  
35 area, and so this will help us find the hard grounds that the  
36 corals like and a lot of the fish like, and then we can come in  
37 with some other tools.

38  
39 This is some multibeam bathymetry that was shot with the Nancy  
40 Foster. That's the first time that I met Morgan, actually, was  
41 on this cruise, back almost ten years ago now. Anyway, we can  
42 get a better look at the seafloor here. You can see some of the  
43 mounds in the southern part, which I will show you some more  
44 video from in just a minute. The mound up at the top, which is  
45 up here, is Viosca Knoll 862. I will also show you some images  
46 from -- It's these areas that we're particularly concerned  
47 about, although there is some interesting stuff over on this  
48 side too, which, again, we can get into a little bit later.

1  
2 When we see something of particular interest, like that mound in  
3 the bottom, we can take an ROV down, and this is multibeam  
4 bathymetry that's shot from the ROV, about twenty meters above  
5 the seafloor, and this has a fifty-centimeter resolution, and so  
6 this is incredibly high resolution, and the texture that you're  
7 looking at in there are actual individual coral heads down on  
8 the deep-sea floor.

9  
10 This is the Viosca Knoll 826 site, which is probably the best  
11 studied of these lophelia reefs, at least in the northern Gulf  
12 of Mexico. It's a very large site. This is just an example of  
13 three dives, but there have been dozens, over a hundred,  
14 probably, dives on this site over the last twenty years, and  
15 we've seen a substantial portion of the seafloor here, but these  
16 are just some of the observations of corals at some of the  
17 individual points along the ROV track.

18  
19 We can take a lot of that information and feed it into some of  
20 the quantitative models that can help us predict coral  
21 distribution. When you do that at a large scale, my personal  
22 opinion is these are somewhat less informative. As you can see  
23 on the left there, this model is basically predicting that the  
24 entire shelf break of the Gulf of Mexico is good coral habitat,  
25 which doesn't really tell us a whole hell of a lot, but the  
26 individual models for specific sites, and these are models that  
27 -- These sites are a lot of the sites that we have a lot of  
28 information, and these are under consideration today, some of  
29 the sites we'll be discussing.

30  
31 This is Viosca Knoll 826, 906, Mississippi Canyon 751,  
32 Mississippi Canyon 885, Garden Banks, a couple of Garden Banks  
33 sites. Anyway, we do have finer-scale predictive habitat models  
34 that allow us to make some better informed conclusions about  
35 what the seafloor is going to look like if we haven't been over  
36 every square foot of the bottom.

37  
38 Let me just give you -- This is a very large black coral,  
39 Antipatharia coral. This is about five or six feet across, and  
40 these have been aged at about 4,000 years old. These are  
41 incredibly long-lived corals. This is right at about -- This is  
42 the northern part of that Viosca Knoll 862 site, and this is at  
43 about 300 meters, about 900 feet, and it provides really good  
44 habitat for a bunch of fish that are later in this video that  
45 you're not watching right now.

46  
47 This is just another example. These are some barrelfish and  
48 just a broader habitat scale view of what that looks like, these

1 large, rocky outcrops with those very large -- They are white,  
2 but the skeleton is black. It's black corals growing in a lot  
3 of these areas. This one is actually from Green Canyon 140,  
4 which is quite a ways further to the west. This is just another  
5 example of that kind of habitat type that we're looking at.

6  
7 This is also a tilefish. This is from about that same depth  
8 range, about 250 or 300 meters, and so about 900 feet. There's  
9 a little coral in the background, but this is sort of  
10 interspersed. Even though some of this looks like flat bottom,  
11 it would be interspersed with a lot of those rocky outcrops all  
12 around in this type of area.

13  
14 There's a lot of sea fans and gorgonian corals that are living  
15 here and creating and adding a lot of complexity to the  
16 habitats. Some of these species -- These sea fans are on the  
17 order of a hundred to 200 years old, at these depths. Then,  
18 when you get deeper, the same genus, but a different species,  
19 has been aged to over 600 years, and so these are very long-  
20 lived colonies. This is just another example of the habitat and  
21 the diversity of these gorgonian corals that we run into in a  
22 lot of these places.

23  
24 We will try playing this video. This is one of the lophelia  
25 reefs in the Viosca Knolls area. This is a survey that we did  
26 just a couple of years ago with the Nautilus and the Hercules  
27 ROV, and so this is a healthy coral reef. I know it looks --  
28 Most of the framework is made up of dead lophelia. They grow  
29 very slowly.

30  
31 This mound, which is in the bottom of Viosca Knoll 906, we took  
32 a piston core through it, and this is 300,000 years old, and so  
33 the piston core was sixteen meters deep at the base of that, and  
34 so sixteen meters down, whatever that is, fifty feet or so, is  
35 300,000 years old, and so this has been growing for an extremely  
36 long time. It grows very slowly, and you get these bits of live  
37 corals. The sort of puff-ball things you're looking at are  
38 small black corals, and then the framework that's in the  
39 background there is lophelia. It's the hard coral that's  
40 growing these reefs.

41  
42 This is just going to -- I don't know what to say here, but it's  
43 just to give you another idea of some of the habitat and the  
44 type of fish habitat that we're looking at. We see these large  
45 aggregations pretty frequently, and a lot of different types of  
46 species.

47  
48 **UNIDENTIFIED:** This is Viosca?

1  
2 **DR. CORDES:** This is Viosca Knoll, yes.  
3  
4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** This is prior to Deepwater Horizon?  
5  
6 **DR. CORDES:** This is post-Deepwater Horizon. This is 2013.  
7  
8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** How far is Viosca from the actual --  
9  
10 **DR. CORDES:** That's approximately twenty nautical miles due  
11 north of where the Deepwater Horizon was. This was under the  
12 oil slick. We did not see any clear visual evidence that there  
13 was exposure here, although traces of oil were measured in some  
14 of the sediments, and we didn't see impacts here. We saw a lot  
15 of impacts deeper down, at about 1,300 to about 1,900 meters,  
16 with a lot of the sea fans.  
17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is that when they used the dispersants?  
19  
20 **DR. CORDES:** That is one of the possible pathways of exposure.  
21 What we think that a lot of the deep corals were exposed to oil  
22 marine snow, and so it probably went up to the surface and you  
23 had dispersant applications. It got all stirred up and made  
24 this emulsification and hit the marine snow, and these big,  
25 flocculent particles rained back down.  
26  
27 **UNIDENTIFIED:** They also were using dispersants at the wellhead.  
28  
29 **DR. CORDES:** That's correct. They were also applying  
30 dispersants at depth. There are varied opinions on how  
31 effective that was, but there was a sub-surface plume of  
32 microdroplets of oil as well that was centered around about  
33 1,100 meters of depth. That went primarily to the southwest,  
34 and may have also -- It likely interacted with some of the sites  
35 where we saw impacts, but it's not clear that that was the  
36 ultimate cause or the direct cause, of the impacts that we  
37 found. Just to give you an idea of some of the terrain -- This  
38 one may not play either, but this was --  
39  
40 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Erik, this is a species that's fished  
41 commercially in other parts of the world, but we don't fish it  
42 in the U.S. We see these around these reefs a lot, but that's a  
43 big difference between the U.S. fisheries and some of the other  
44 parts of the world. We do have potentially commercially-  
45 exploitable species on these reefs.  
46  
47 **DR. CORDES:** This is a school that followed us around for -- We  
48 couldn't get them out of our way. It was actually pretty hard

1 to work. We ended up chumming some of them in the thrusters of  
2 the ROV, and they sacrificed themselves for science, but they  
3 followed us around for about sixteen hours on the seafloor in  
4 our ROV. That's also from the Viosca Knoll site.

5  
6 **UNIDENTIFIED:** In your experience, in that last video you showed  
7 with the lophelia, how would you categorize or classify that?  
8 Do you see other reefs that are just completely white and have a  
9 lot more living lophelia or do most of them commonly look like  
10 that?

11  
12 **DR. CORDES:** That appearance -- I don't know if you guys heard  
13 that, but he was asking if there were other reefs that had more  
14 of the living coral on it, and, in this image, you can see that  
15 some areas have a much higher cover, but that appearance is  
16 pretty typical for the lophelia reefs in the northern Gulf of  
17 Mexico. I would say there's probably higher live coral cover on  
18 the West Florida Slope. Would you agree with that, Steve, in  
19 some of those mounds?

20  
21 **DR. ROSS:** Yes, I think there's a lot more live coral on the  
22 West Florida Slope.

23  
24 **DR. CORDES:** Again, as you wrap around into the Atlantic, there  
25 is higher coral cover on the coral mounds that's out there, but  
26 that appearance is pretty typical, like this. This is in the  
27 western Gulf. You generally have a lower percent cover of live  
28 coral as you go out west. This is, I believe, Green Canyon 354,  
29 or it may be one of our Garden Banks sites, but this is the  
30 typical appearance.

31  
32 This is another chain catshark, and we see these -- This is a  
33 little bit deeper down, but those are the eggs of the chain  
34 catshark that are being laid on some of these sea fans. This is  
35 at about 650 meters, and this is a site, Mississippi Canyon 885,  
36 that's also on your list, and every time that I've been to this  
37 site over the past fifteen years, we have seen this high density  
38 of egg cases here, and so this is a recurring spawning ground  
39 and nursery for this species. You occasionally see these egg  
40 cases at other sites, but never in this density. There is  
41 something special about this one site that they return to year  
42 after year.

43  
44 This is even deeper. This is a little over 1,000 meters, and,  
45 if you look closely, this is another hard coral. This is a  
46 madrepora, and you can see the high densities of red crabs that  
47 are all over them. This is another potential fishery that is  
48 not open now, that is currently not being fished, to my

1 knowledge, in the Gulf of Mexico, although we have some evidence  
2 that there has been some trapping for golden crab over on the  
3 West Florida Slope. We have direct observations of it impacting  
4 some of the lophelia sites over there, but you can see just the  
5 really high densities, and some of these crabs are carrying eggs  
6 underneath there. This is the Mississippi Canyon 118 site that  
7 is also on your list.

8  
9 Just a couple more observations. This is one of the sites that  
10 we were looking at for potential impacts for the Deepwater  
11 Horizon, and it was sort of on our -- We saw some evidence for  
12 some impact of the corals, but we couldn't actually tell exactly  
13 what it was, because we found pretty high abundance of fishing  
14 line wrapped around a lot of the coral colonies, and so we  
15 weren't sure exactly what the cause of the impacts at this site  
16 were. This is at about 1,300 meters depth.

17  
18 There's some more trash covering one of the colonies down at  
19 those depths. Could you play this one, please? This is at the  
20 Viosca Knoll sites. This is at about 500 meters depth. On the  
21 periphery of the site, which looks, from the bathymetry to be  
22 flat, mud bottom, but it actually has a lot of these individual  
23 boulders and gorgonians.

24  
25 Hiding in there is a lost fishing net. You can see that sort of  
26 stripe on the seafloor. I think we zoom in in just a second and  
27 you can see it hung up in there. This is, again, in the Viosca  
28 Knolls 826 site. Even though these aren't -- Well, I will let  
29 you make your own conclusions. I will leave that alone.

30  
31 That's it. That was just to give you a quick tour of some of  
32 these places. If you have any other questions, I would be happy  
33 to answer them, or otherwise we can talk about some of the  
34 individual sites as we go through.

35  
36 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

37  
38 **DR. CORDES:** Which site? That was this one, this Viosca Knoll  
39 826. It's about -- That location was at about 525 meters.

40  
41 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Can you say it in fathoms?

42  
43 **DR. CORDES:** That's about 250 or 270, something like that.

44  
45 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Do you have it in feet?

46  
47 **DR. CORDES:** Come on. It's about 1,700 feet. If you go back,  
48 or I can do it, I think, I can show you pretty much exactly

1 where that was on the map. It was down here. It wasn't this  
2 dive, and so I don't know if it was right along that track, but  
3 it was definitely that type of area down here. This is the  
4 really high concentration. This is all coral cover, and up  
5 around here and up there and sparser at the top of the mound.  
6 Then this whole ridge over here has a lot of live lophelia, and  
7 then there is two more big patches that are just up north of  
8 this, and this is about -- Well, this is 320 meters. That's not  
9 very helpful, is it? This is about 1,000 feet, to give you an  
10 idea of how big that area is.

11  
12 **MR. JAY LUCAS:** Back in the 1990s, I used to fish that area all  
13 the time, and one of the things I didn't see on it is I didn't  
14 see one grouper or one tilefish on it, there were you were  
15 showing the post-BP thing there, and it used to be just covered  
16 with them.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Other questions or comments? Thank you very  
19 much. Go ahead.

20  
21 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I would just like to say where the webbing was,  
22 we don't drag out that deep. Somebody years ago -- They done it  
23 thirty years before me. There was boats that tried, and they  
24 might have done that, but the boats -- Because, like I said,  
25 there ain't but about six or seven that drags that, but we don't  
26 drag right in there.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is there any other deepwater crab fishing  
29 still going on? There was very little effort years ago, but I  
30 know a couple of times they tried it, but basically it's --

31  
32 **UNIDENTIFIED:** They don't care for the crabs, because they  
33 consider them dirty crabs. They don't turn red like the king  
34 crab and opilio and stuff like that, those up north there. They  
35 just stay the same color, and they kind of look -- The market is  
36 not so good for them.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Thank you. We've got one more from  
39 Lance.

40  
41 **MR. NACIO:** I had a question for him. When he said something  
42 about the sea snow, I worked on the Deepwater Horizon spill. We  
43 were part of the burn unit, and they sent us back out when they  
44 did the final kill, and there was something different going on.  
45 The water had -- The whole water column, as far as you could  
46 see, had little bitty droplets of oil in it, and it was like  
47 dispersed oil, and we hadn't seen that the whole time of the  
48 spill. It was just like at the final kill, when they were

1 getting rid of the oil, and I don't know what they did to make  
2 it do that, but I mean it looked like Johnson grass seeds or  
3 something. It was little bitty droplets of oil throughout the  
4 water column.

5  
6 **DR. CORDES:** Yes, and a lot of that was probably -- That can be  
7 caused by some of the flyovers and the dispersant that they were  
8 applying on the surface. That will cause that. It will get re-  
9 suspended.

10  
11 **MR. NACIO:** When we first went out there, we were able to burn  
12 oil like crazy. I mean it burned all the -- I mean we burned it  
13 all, but, the further we went into this operation, it was harder  
14 and harder to burn the oil, and the oil became like a tea on the  
15 water. It was like diesel. I mean it was just really, really  
16 thin, and I think it was just the progressive use of dispersants  
17 is what did it.

18  
19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Can you mention your name when you  
20 talk, because we're going to have verbatim minutes of this  
21 meeting, and it would help the transcriptionist to know who is  
22 talking.

23  
24 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I would just like to say, when you was talking  
25 about that oil and BP, we caught -- We set out right at the  
26 Viosca Knoll 862. We set out right on top of it and dragged  
27 west, and we had nets fill up, and so I know some of it, or a  
28 lot of it, had to get in it, too.

29  
30 **DR. CORDES:** It was definitely on the surface. You could see it  
31 on the bottom too? We didn't -- Because you can see the low  
32 percentage of live coral, but it was really hard to tell if  
33 there had been any damage in a lot of those sites. There was  
34 damage deeper and to the south, and there was damage in some of  
35 the mesophotic reefs shallower and to the north, and this is  
36 right in between.

37  
38 There was oil on the surface all the time, and you're saying you  
39 saw oil at depth. I mean I think there was exposure. It was  
40 just very difficult, using just visual tools, for us to see if  
41 there was any kind of impact to lophelia.

42  
43 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes, we saw it. As a matter of a fact, a trip  
44 for this one, I caught a big old chunk of it, and that's what it  
45 was, just big old chunks.

46  
47 **DR. CORDES:** Yes, it's still down there.

48



1 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes, it's still there.  
2  
3 **DR. ROSS:** Yes, and I was just going to add to Erik's  
4 observations. We had surveys out there on the West Florida  
5 Slope and Viosca Knoll, just a couple of months after the well  
6 spill shut down, and we had no visual observations of damage in  
7 those depths, and there still aren't any, as far as I know.  
8 Now, of course, some of the concern is more subtle, long-term  
9 impacts like to the water column and the trophic food web chain,  
10 but we didn't see any overt sort of damage there.  
11  
12 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Paul.  
13  
14 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Just on that same note, one of the things that  
15 happens with the oil, and it's not just the BP oil spill, but  
16 it's pretty much any in the marine environment, but the oil  
17 comes up and you lose the very, very light petroleum  
18 hydrocarbons to the atmosphere. They vaporize. That's the  
19 really valuable stuff, the stuff that makes gasoline and stuff,  
20 but the medium PAHs and the heavier stuff goes down into the  
21 water column, and, after a while, the heavy stuff, the big  
22 molecules, sink to the bottom.  
23  
24 That's the stuff that gets into the sediment. That's probably  
25 what we're seeing here and dragging up. That lasts a long time,  
26 and it will actually retain its toxicity for a long time,  
27 because it gets weathered on the outside, like a tar ball, but  
28 not so much on the inside.  
29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Any other hands? Okay. Morgan, do you have  
31 your portal up?  
32  
33 **DR. KILGOUR:** Not yet. We're going to work on these areas  
34 first, if that's okay.  
35  
36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Do you have a certain procedure you  
37 suggest we use?  
38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** I would recommend that we start off with Viosca  
40 Knoll 862, because that's what Mr. Nelson is here to discuss.  
41 That's the prime royal red shrimping grounds, and it's also  
42 something that Dr. Cordes has just presented a lot of  
43 information on. We can start talking about that.  
44  
45 This afternoon's discussion is based on the recommendations of  
46 the HAPCs from the Coral SSC and AP back in May of 2015. There  
47 were several that need more data. Designations on those were  
48 basically, based on the discussion, something that was to let me

1 know that I needed to look at the shrimping data and the coral  
2 data and potentially revise the boundary, as appropriate, and so  
3 I have done that in the meantime, but 862 was not one of those.  
4 However, I think it is going to be one that we really need to  
5 discuss here, because we have the people that need to talk about  
6 it in the same room, and they will not be here tomorrow.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Well, we certainly appreciate Mr. Nelson and  
9 the others being here, and so get it up and we will have some  
10 discussion.

11  
12 **DR. KILGOUR:** Right here, this is the Viosca Knoll 862/906. It  
13 overlaps two different lease blocks. The orange is the proposed  
14 boundary, based on the lease blocks and the Coral SSC/AP. As  
15 you can see, we have a lot of shrimping that goes right up to it  
16 and right on the other side of it, and so if we could start off  
17 the discussion with this one and then we can move on to other  
18 things.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Viosca Knoll 862/906, shrimping  
21 affected. Who put this together, Morgan? Did the council staff  
22 do this?

23  
24 **DR. KILGOUR:** I did that. Staff did that just as a comparison  
25 between the Flower Garden Banks and the proposed HAPCs. It's  
26 not all-inclusive of all the proposed HAPCs, but that was just  
27 to compare the Flower Garden Banks expansion.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, and is this the one with Alternative 3  
30 as the preferred alternative?

31  
32 **UNIDENTIFIED:** No, this is one of the HAPCs.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, because I am looking at the Xs of that  
35 Alternative 3, but, on Alternative 4, the amount of shrimping  
36 area impacted or affected is 15.9 square miles, and so that's  
37 what we're dealing with. Anyway, and so --

38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** That information is correct. This Viosca Knoll  
40 862/906 was in -- Is that Alternative 4 or Alternative 5 or  
41 both?

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That's Alternative 4.

44  
45 **DR. KILGOUR:** And 5. The information on the recommended area,  
46 that 15.9 square miles, that is what was recommended by the  
47 Coral AP/SSC, but I was just comparing that to what was  
48 presented in the Flower Garden Banks, and so, if you look at

1 just the first two columns, that will help.  
2  
3 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Just the first two columns, okay.  
4  
5 **DR. KILGOUR:** The first five columns.  
6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** The first five, all right. I think we all  
8 have the handout, and so this was a recommendation that came  
9 through the Coral AP and SSC and now the Shrimp AP is having an  
10 opportunity to comment. Morgan has got it up on the board.  
11 We've got shrimping effort up there.  
12  
13 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Morgan, is the Flower Garden Banks alternative  
14 boundary the same as the HAPC boundary for this one?  
15  
16 **DR. KILGOUR:** The purple is what was in the Flower Garden Banks.  
17 It's a smaller boundary.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, Shrimp AP or anybody, any questions or  
20 comments? Mr. Bosarge.  
21  
22 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think Mr. Nelson can probably address this  
23 better, but his concern with the royal red is, if you look at  
24 the points, those are points from the position of the vessel,  
25 and, over the years, they have figured out and learned how to  
26 avoid this spot, and we discussed this, if you recall.  
27  
28 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
29  
30 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, and when it becomes an HAPC, is there  
31 regulations put on it at that point, Morgan?  
32  
33 **DR. KILGOUR:** Not necessarily. The regulations are only put on  
34 it if the council chooses to do so. Right now, we have a  
35 handful of HAPCs, and I can't remember the number off the top of  
36 my head, that have no regulations. They just have that HAPC  
37 designation, but there is no regulations associated with them.  
38  
39 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. Mr. Nelson gave a presentation at the  
40 meeting that I was invited to with the Coral AP, and he showed  
41 his tracks and explained how they have a line on each side of  
42 it, what they call their pick-up line and their set-out line.  
43 When they drag up to it, to a certain point, that's when they  
44 stop and start lining back.  
45  
46 Of course, retrieving that gear is about a thirty-minute  
47 process, and so they know when to get their gear up, and then  
48 they know when -- It's what we call dump his bags. In other

1 words, get his catch out and swing around and set back out, and  
2 he knows, when he gets to a certain point, he can start setting  
3 his gear again, and they basically jump that bottom.

4  
5 I thought we had a pretty good understanding with the Coral AP  
6 that, by all the trips that they've made down there and looked  
7 at this coral, there has been no damage that they could see, or  
8 very little damage done, by what would be considered a shrimper,  
9 and that all of these boats -- I say all these boats, but  
10 there's only about six or seven or eight or ten of them left  
11 now, but know where this spot is at and they know how to --

12  
13 Anyhow, we came to the conclusion that, at least I thought at  
14 that last meeting, that this area was pretty much taken care of,  
15 but I guess Mr. Nelson's concern probably would be that, if we  
16 do this HAPC designation, will there be restrictions put on it?

17  
18 What happens is, now that they've also put an offshore pipeline  
19 from those ultra-deep rigs right up across through the bottom of  
20 it, and so now, when he sets overboard what used to be a -- I am  
21 telling a story, but what used to be a four-hour tow or so --  
22 You tell them what you're up against.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead, Mr. Nelson. We appreciate you being  
25 here, sir.

26  
27 **MR. NELSON:** We pull 3,600 foot of cable. We can't turn around  
28 or nothing. We have to drag straight, and even the people that  
29 comes out there that does come, they've all got my stuff. Like  
30 I say, I've done it for thirty years, doing the same thing.

31  
32 Like I say, we start picking up and we've got them coming up,  
33 and they come off the bottom and you can see -- Well, I don't  
34 know. I have a picture here, which I don't know if you all can  
35 see, but we have them up, and we right there -- It's almost to  
36 where get over the top of that, or close to it, but when we turn  
37 around, we start setting, and by the time we get through  
38 setting, we're a ways away from the coral, because your nets  
39 just don't hit the bottom. You might be dragging, by the time  
40 your thirty minutes is up, you still might be ten or fifteen  
41 minutes before your rigs ever settle down on the bottom.

42  
43 **MR. BOSARGE:** If I'm not mistaken, a normal towing time in that  
44 deep water is about six hours would be your --

45  
46 **MR. NELSON:** We used to drag ten hours, until the pipeline.

47  
48 **MR. BOSARGE:** If they close this box and tell him, okay, you

1 can't get within these boundaries, by the time he starts at that  
2 boundary and starts setting his gear, now that two-hour-and-  
3 forty-five-minute tow is --

4

5 **MR. NELSON:** It would be about an hour-and-forty-five minutes.

6

7 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, it would be about an hour-and-forty-five  
8 minutes, and he gets to where it's not practical to be able to  
9 only make an hour-and-forty-five-minute tow and it takes thirty  
10 minutes to retrieve your gear.

11

12 **MR. NELSON:** That's one of my best bottoms in royal reds there.  
13 On both sides of that coral is the best, where I do most of my  
14 royal red shrimping.

15

16 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think my suggestion would be a motion from the  
17 Coral AP to --

18

19 **MR. JAAP:** My recollection is that, when we discussed this  
20 before, as you said, that this was talked about and we made a  
21 decision, because there was no practical way to put a line into  
22 that area and still allow the shrimping activity to occur, and  
23 so it was language that was made that said that it was  
24 satisfactory for shrimpers, as long as they recalled their gear  
25 before they got into the high topographic relief. I don't know  
26 if you have that language back there, Morgan, but --

27

28 **DR. KILGOUR:** I am going straight to the motion, so that we're  
29 all clear on what the motion was.

30

31 **DR. CORDES:** While she looks at that, that was going to be my  
32 question. Was there no -- There is no boundary that you could  
33 draw in that area that you could avoid and still be able to  
34 trawl through there?

35

36 **MR. NELSON:** No. You see this right here? You see this blue  
37 line right here? This red line is our pick-up line. That's the  
38 box right there. We're picking up -- We come and we start  
39 picking up, and they come off the bottom right in here. There  
40 is no coral there. We never hang up. We wind the bags in and  
41 turn around and start setting out at that same line. If you all  
42 put that box there, I would have to start picking up way down  
43 here.

44

45 **DR. CORDES:** I guess what I was asking, if we could look at the  
46 map, the areas that we know, that we've worked at, are pretty  
47 well defined. I mean I could draw a much smaller box around  
48 that that maybe would be mutually agreeable, and I'm wondering

1 if that -- This is not my area, and so I'm definitely open to  
2 hearing what everybody else has to say, but it seems like we're  
3 setting a precedent here that we might not want to set, and I'm  
4 just wondering if we could draw a mutually-agreeable box rather  
5 than putting these kinds of exemptions in.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** What did the council do with that SSC/AP coral  
8 recommendation on that motion? Have they addressed that yet?

9  
10 **DR. KILGOUR:** They addressed it by saying that I need to convene  
11 the Shrimp AP and the Coral AP and Coral SSC.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, and so they bounced the ball back. With  
14 everything the Coral SSC and AP has heard thus far, is that  
15 still the position of the two committees?

16  
17 **MR. JAAP:** I would like to ask the rest of the committee or the  
18 SSC if you have any other ideas right now or if you're still  
19 satisfied with that particular result. Paul.

20  
21 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I would like to support Dr. Cordes's suggestion  
22 that we consider redrawing those lines so that it accommodates  
23 both protection of the bank and doesn't interfere tremendously  
24 with the commercial activities in the area.

25  
26 **DR. LANG:** I would like to second that motion, because I trust  
27 Mr. Nelson. That's not my concern. My concern is what might  
28 happen in five or ten years from now, when you have retired and  
29 some boy comes down from Minnesota or Alberta or somewhere and  
30 doesn't have your experience.

31  
32 **MR. NELSON:** Everybody has got this -- This ain't like regular  
33 shrimping. I help people out if they come out there. This  
34 stuff goes down to whoever comes out there. They've got this,  
35 but, if you box this, that's the problem right now. You've got  
36 a box, and that box ain't no good. If you went at an angle like  
37 we did, that's -- I don't know if you can see, but this is a  
38 box. This paper is a box. That coral would be more in there at  
39 an angle.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Can we get it back up on the board here? Mr.  
42 Nelson, do you want to come up here and point things out for us,  
43 please? Some of us are a little slow, like me.

44  
45 **DR. CORDES:** If you can put that back up, let me show the two  
46 areas that I am really concerned about. They're pretty small  
47 and pretty well defined, and I think we might be able to draw  
48 you an agreeable box. This is almost entirely live coral. This

1 is not and this is not. They look very similar, but this is the  
2 piece that I am really nervous about and this on the top.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** And you can see they're not in there.

5  
6 **DR. CORDES:** Right, and so what I'm suggesting is -- I have been  
7 all over here. This is sparse, and they're boulders. They are  
8 little sea fans, and they're sort of scattered around. It's not  
9 as valuable, and I'm talking to me, as some of these other  
10 areas, but I can draw a box right here and a box right here and  
11 I would be pretty satisfied.

12  
13 **MR. NELSON:** Just looking at it, I can't really tell where them  
14 boxes are unless I had it on that plot. Just looking up at  
15 that, I could say, yes, but it might be where it's not good. Do  
16 you understand what I'm trying to say? I can't tell exactly  
17 where that's at.

18  
19 **DR. CORDES:** I do. I think the plot that you were showing was  
20 mostly looking at the northeast corner of the box that is drawn,  
21 the purple box, I believe, that's drawn on here. Basing it on  
22 the points here, I think the two smaller boxes that I was  
23 suggesting don't have any of these points inside of them.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead.

26  
27 **DR. ROSS:** I would like to add to that. I agree, Erik, that I  
28 think we can draw smaller boxes, but I have some concern. There  
29 are some topographic highs, like you said, that may not, right  
30 now, have live coral on them, but they are certainly candidates  
31 for potential settlement areas, and so we're looking at a really  
32 long-term view of these things.

33  
34 A lot of those places would fall into the same ecosystem, and,  
35 even though there's not live coral there, there are reef  
36 communities using those topographic highs, but I think, even so,  
37 we could still draw much smaller boxes that would satisfy  
38 habitat community protection and we wouldn't totally eliminate  
39 the problem of setting trawls, because I do the same thing with  
40 research trawls. Where we set them in the water column is not  
41 where they hit the bottom, but there is no way around that, but  
42 I think we can reduce this problem significantly.

43  
44 I would draw a rectangular strip that goes from that top box,  
45 which is a snowy grouper habitat, to that bottom area, which you  
46 call Robert's Reef, I think, and that would include most of the  
47 area and significantly reduce the overlap.

1 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Mr. Bosarge.  
2  
3 **MR. BOSARGE:** Morgan, could you look and see if you have -- I am  
4 pretty sure that I saw some of those LGL tracks also that you  
5 could overlay on that, and we could look at where the effort is,  
6 because that's a very steep edge, and it's not a wide piece of  
7 bottom they are working.  
8  
9 **DR. KILGOUR:** The difference is that I have a scan of one  
10 picture and the map document is different, and I would have to  
11 georeference, and I don't have that ability right this second.  
12 Here are all the tracks, and I feel like I should make these  
13 bigger.  
14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I have hands up, but obviously everybody is  
16 trying to work something out and accommodate habitat, but Mr.  
17 Delaney has got a question for Morgan when she is -- Are we  
18 getting anywhere, Morgan?  
19  
20 **DR. KILGOUR:** We're getting there. It's just a long process.  
21 If you look, here is the proposed box. The purple one is the  
22 Flower Garden Banks, and so I'm going to turn that off. The  
23 proposed box is this blue box. I have tried to make the  
24 shrimping points a little bit bigger, so you can see them  
25 easier. Here is the corner of that box.  
26  
27 **DR. CORDES:** I mean it looks to me like that's not -- The areas  
28 that I was suggesting, and I like Steve Ross's suggestion of  
29 just a north/south sort of rectangle over there. It looks like  
30 those are not conflicting with the lines that Mr. Nelson was  
31 showing, but, without them drawn on there, it's hard to know.  
32  
33 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Where is this on that?  
34  
35 **DR. KILGOUR:** From what I understand, and Mr. Nelson can tell  
36 me, but --  
37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Carrie wants to offer something.  
39  
40 **DR. CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just  
41 wondering if it was possible to make two separate boxes, the  
42 northern area and the southern area, so, when they pull across,  
43 they are potentially not in a box when their nets are up,  
44 because that was the -- The way the corals are set up in that  
45 rectangle -- No matter how small you get, it seems like their  
46 nets are going to be over it at some point, unless you make two  
47 separate boxes, potentially.  
48



1 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We've got a couple of conversations going.  
2 Mr. Nelson is going to supply his information to Morgan, and  
3 Morgan is going to work with Erik and others to see what we can  
4 come up with, whether it's one rectangular box or two  
5 rectangular boxes or whatever, to try and accommodate all  
6 concerns. Yes, ma'am, Ms. Nelson.

7  
8 **MS. NELSON:** Corky, I think that was why they made the whole  
9 motion the last time, is the fact that Johnny is trying to get  
10 over to them that wherever they put that box, his boat has to be  
11 inside of that box in order to get our gear up, and I think, no  
12 matter where you -- If you make it into a triangle or whatever,  
13 and I think that was the only reason why made the  
14 recommendation, that just for the royal reds, because he's the  
15 only one out there. If they still put the lines in there, it  
16 still -- It's going to cost us.

17  
18 **MR. NELSON:** What if I go over into that? Is this box going to  
19 be one of them like down at Key West, that long one down there,  
20 that you're not allowed to -- If you've got shrimp trawls on,  
21 you're not allowed to run across it, and is this box going to be  
22 that way? If we put them lines like we talked about with  
23 Morgan, we would be fine.

24  
25 **MR. WERNDLI:** I believe the box that you're talking about to the  
26 south is the Tortugas Ecological Reserve to the south, and, yes,  
27 that has prohibited entry for just about everyone, unless you  
28 have a specialized permit.

29  
30 These habitat areas of particular concern, there is a lot more  
31 flexibility, in terms of the rules and regulations that are in  
32 it, and, like Morgan said, in some of those, there is no  
33 restrictions at all with them and they are just an area of  
34 special designation, in which anybody can transit and other  
35 activities can go on, but this is not like an ecological reserve  
36 in the Tortugas, and so you would still have plenty of access.

37  
38 **MR. NELSON:** I believe that would be the best thing, if we could  
39 just give her the readings and taper it across it.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Thank you. Yes, Paul.

42  
43 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Steve Ross had mentioned about being concerned  
44 about some relief between the two areas of concern, that he is  
45 aware of some other things. I just wanted to show you, if  
46 Morgan has got it ready, a graph, which is to show you why --  
47 Even though I think those areas have not been surveyed, and is  
48 that correct?

1  
2 **DR. ROSS:** No, they've been surveyed. Pretty much that whole  
3 area has.  
4  
5 **DR. SAMMARCO:** This shows the relationship between relief on the  
6 bottom, the lumps and bumps, and the size of the lumps and bumps  
7 versus the number of species. Each of those dots represents a  
8 bank, and so this is a -- That's a bank level of resolution, and  
9 it's not centimeters or anything like that. It's just whole  
10 banks. If you're aware of a lot of relief, there is a high  
11 probability that there is high biodiversity of benthic species  
12 there, and I presume that's what you are concerned about.  
13  
14 **DR. ROSS:** Yes, and we're concerned about two things. We're  
15 concerned about that, the biodiversity, but also those spots  
16 represent potential additional expansion areas for the coral,  
17 which don't expand very rapidly. There is a limit to settlement  
18 substrate, and so that's additional settlement substrate that we  
19 would want to protect, and so there is the two issues involved.  
20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Delaney.  
22  
23 **MR. DELANEY:** This is just a general comment on this whole HAPC  
24 process, to Morgan and others on the council and council staff.  
25 As I recall and understand it, HAPCs are a subset of essential  
26 fish habitat designations, and essential fish habitat is  
27 something that the councils are supposed to identify and  
28 designate for the purposes of enhancing fisheries conservation,  
29 really, and HAPCs are in the regulations that implement  
30 essential fish habitat as areas of special concern and  
31 ecological significance. You may have to designate EFH first,  
32 and maybe you've already done that. I don't know.  
33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** Coral is tricky, in that, wherever coral exists,  
35 it's considered coral EFH. That's how it's written now, and so  
36 the fact that corals are here, this is automatically EFH.  
37  
38 **UNIDENTIFIED:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
39  
40 **MR. DELANEY:** Right, but HAPCs are codified in the regulation  
41 under EFH.  
42  
43 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I don't see any other hands up at this time.  
44 Are there comments? Morgan, go ahead.  
45  
46 **DR. KILGOUR:** I am still -- I'm confused. I was trying to do  
47 twenty-five things at once, and so I'm a little behind, I think.  
48 Am I supposed to be doing this behind the scenes or are you, as

1 a group, going to tell me where to draw these boundaries or is  
2 the recommendation to have this be, from the previous meeting,  
3 to be exempt from the proposed boundaries? I was trying to do  
4 too many things at once, and I am sorry.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I have heard nothing to change the previous  
7 motion, but I also heard that Mr. Nelson is going to provide you  
8 with his information, and I think you're going to work with Erik  
9 and others to see what you can come up with one or two or  
10 whatever it takes to draw -- If it can be done. It's extremely  
11 difficult to, of course, accommodate all interests, but we're  
12 going to do the best we can. Go ahead, Steve.

13  
14 **DR. ROSS:** Corky, we were just talking that it may be  
15 appropriate to change that motion. One suggestion I could make  
16 is that Erik and I could take a stab at drawing a box and then  
17 pass that to Mr. Nelson, or work through the council with Mr.  
18 Nelson, to then adjust the box to some final proposal for  
19 consideration.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Absolutely, but please work with Morgan also.

22  
23 **DR. ROSS:** That's what I meant. We could start that process  
24 very quickly and then pass it on to Morgan and Mr. Nelson.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I know Mr. Nelson is going to be anxious to  
27 get his information to the appropriate people. I guess Morgan  
28 would be the contact person.

29  
30 **DR. ROSS:** Procedurally, I guess there needs to be a motion to  
31 dismiss whatever motion is now on the table and replace it with  
32 a new motion, correct?

33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** We didn't actually get the first motion on the  
35 board. Everyone talked so quickly that we never made it  
36 officially. It was seconded, but it never made it to the board,  
37 and it was never voted on.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is that when Steve and I changed chairs?

40  
41 **DR. KILGOUR:** Sure.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** It must be my fault then. I thought it  
44 passed.

45  
46 **UNIDENTIFIED:** It passed, but not that one.

47  
48 **DR. KILGOUR:** There was one quickly said and somebody said they

1 wanted to second that motion, and we never made it onto the  
2 board, and so if we could get a true motion this time.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** What was the motion?

5

6 **UNIDENTIFIED:** It was Paul's motion.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Paul had a motion? Do you recall your motion?

9

10 **DR. SAMMARCO:** It was that we change the boxes or whatever to  
11 accommodate both protection of the bank and also to accommodate  
12 the commercial fishing needs. That's all it was. There were no  
13 names or anything.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Consider redrawing the boundaries to  
16 accommodate commercial fishing and the --

17

18 **DR. SAMMARCO:** And protection of the bank.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We've got a motion. Do we have a  
21 second?

22

23 **DR. LANG:** I originally seconded that motion.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. I don't know where I was when all of  
26 that was going on. Now, Morgan, do I handle the coral motions  
27 or I am handling all motions or does the coral -- We've got a  
28 motion on the floor. Is there any discussion?

29

30 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I am just a little bit concerned. I think this  
31 area that we're talking about is one of the most significant  
32 deep coral sites in the Gulf of Mexico, and so it is one of the  
33 most sensitive areas. The purpose of the HAPC is to protect  
34 these kinds of areas, this area probably more than almost any  
35 other area, and so a blanket statement that would exempt a  
36 fishery, I do have a concern with.

37

38 I think that, as Judy mentioned, the existing fishery has dealt  
39 with this for many years and seems to be successful in avoiding  
40 it, but is there a -- I guess is there other ways we could  
41 address this? Could we grandfather existing fisheries, but look  
42 to the future to restrict this area, because it only takes one  
43 mistake to wipe out an area that has taken thousands of years to  
44 grow, and so that's my concern. I think we should think about  
45 that before we just exempt a fishery in general.

46

47 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** It only takes one motion to ruin a person's  
48 business and his income.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is there discussion on the motion? Mr.  
3 Delaney.  
4  
5 **MR. DELANEY:** Is there a basis, and I apologize if I missed some  
6 of the discussion, for specifying the royal red shrimp fishery  
7 or is that addressed by --  
8  
9 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I guess I was kind of going back to the original  
10 motion that our committee made that specifically would exempt  
11 the royal red fishery. This motion obviously does not do that.  
12 All this motion does is consider redrawing the lines, but to  
13 accommodate the fishing, and we've basically been told that  
14 there's no way to accommodate it, because the boat has to be in  
15 whatever box you draw. I think this is a great motion, but I'm  
16 not sure how it's going to be resolved.  
17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is there other discussion? Steve.  
19  
20 **DR. ROSS:** I guess a point to that or two points. If  
21 potentially we can adjust these boxes that are of concern to the  
22 royal red fishery, that exemption language doesn't have to be  
23 there, which would be good.  
24  
25 I am not too concerned, if we draw these boundaries correctly,  
26 that we will not be protecting habitat. I think we can.  
27 They're not as expansive as -- Sanctuary boundary issues are a  
28 whole other thing. You may come up, if you get the expansion at  
29 Viosca Knoll, with a different system entirely. The second  
30 point I wanted to ask about is semantics. Are we going to  
31 consider redrawing the boundary or are we going to redraw it?  
32  
33 If we're going to redraw it, then just change the language then  
34 to say we're going to redraw that boundary to consider other  
35 interests and hopefully come up with a compromise that works,  
36 because if we're considering it, as it reads now, I'm not sure  
37 what that means and who is going to consider it when.  
38  
39 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I will accept the amended motion like that.  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Paul has agreed for editorial license on his  
42 motion to take "consider" out. Does that do it? I see heads  
43 shaking.  
44  
45 **UNIDENTIFIED:** One question I would have is do we want to  
46 specifically say the royal red shrimp fishery or do we want to  
47 have it more open with the commercial fishery?  
48

1 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** What's your pleasure? Paul.  
2  
3 **DR. SAMMARCO:** My feeling is to keep it general. I don't think  
4 getting specific to any one fishery is a help.  
5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Is there other discussion? Are we  
7 ready to vote? The motion is the Coral SSC --  
8  
9 **DR. KILGOUR:** Just to keep us on the up and up, is this just the  
10 Coral SSC making this motion or is this all three groups making  
11 the motion?  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Paul is a member of the SSC. Who is chair of  
14 the AP? Does your group want to -- Are we going to do three  
15 separate motions or does the chair of the AP poll your group and  
16 do you all want to be part of the motion?  
17  
18 **MS. KRUEGER:** Does the Coral AP want to be part of this motion?  
19  
20 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes, let's be part of the motion.  
21  
22 **MS. KRUEGER:** Yes.  
23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you very much. What does the Shrimp AP  
25 want to do?  
26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, let's be part of the motion.  
28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, and so the motion is the Coral SSC,  
30 Coral AP, and the Shrimp AP motion is to redraw the boundaries  
31 to accommodate the commercial fishery in the bank on the Viosca  
32 Knoll 862/906. **All in favor, signify by saying aye; opposition.**  
33 **The motion passes.** Thank you very much. Morgan, it's yours.  
34  
35 **DR. KILGOUR:** All right. I think that was the only bank that  
36 was a royal red shrimp issue. Is that correct, Mr. Nelson?  
37 Okay. So now I guess we should start where the longliners might  
38 have some issues, and that's on the West Florida Shelf. Is that  
39 correct? Okay. Is that all right with you, Mr. Perret?  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I am with you. You give us which one on the  
42 list and on the map, please.  
43  
44 **DR. KILGOUR:** I might need a little guidance, but I believe it's  
45 Pulley Ridge that we should start with and work our way north,  
46 if that's correct.  
47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Work our way west?

1  
2 **UNIDENTIFIED:** North and west.

3  
4 **DR. KILGOUR:** The other direction. We're going east. Work our  
5 west, that's correct. I need more coffee.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead, Morgan.

8  
9 **DR. KILGOUR:** I am ready to do whatever you guys tell me to do,  
10 but I have some reiterations that we needed to prioritize the  
11 areas for HAPC status, make sure that we're working together  
12 well, and look at some areas, and so I am starting in Pulley  
13 Ridge, unless somebody has a priority area somewhere else, and,  
14 also, to keep in mind that just because we're considering these  
15 for HAPC status, it does not mean that all fishing is going to  
16 go away. There is different management options for each one of  
17 these, and so if there's a particular recommendation for a  
18 particular area, this would be an opportune time to make those  
19 recommendations.

20  
21 **MR. JAAP:** As a strawman, I put out a document the other day at  
22 a number of sites, and I will say, just to kind of prime people,  
23 for the Florida region, we have suggested South Reed, Pulley,  
24 and Many. These are straw. They are not written in blood or in  
25 granite, but they were just something to get something started,  
26 and we used some sophisticated multivariate statistical analysis  
27 of species presence and absence to come up with these things,  
28 and I can go over that if you want, but it may not be very  
29 valuable right now, and so just to make you aware.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Let's hold up on that. Since these gentlemen  
32 with the demersal longline fishery came in, let's go through  
33 this area. I assume that's one of your chief areas that you're  
34 interested in, and, while you're here, I think it would proper  
35 for us to take this one up now. Morgan, do you have anything to  
36 say before we get some comments? Okay. Go ahead, sir, and  
37 identify yourself. Thank you.

38  
39 **MR. LUCAS:** We have an issue with basically each and every one  
40 of these. We are kicked basically offshore, from 120 feet out  
41 to 230 feet there, every year in June, July, and August. What  
42 it does is the areas that you have listed right here are areas  
43 that we have to use to go offshore to catch the yellowedge  
44 grouper, tilefish, et cetera.

45  
46 It's basically the -- We call it the Big Break. It runs all the  
47 way up the coast there, and, if you take that away from us or  
48 kick us out of these areas in any way, what it's going to do is

1 it's going to send all the boats inshore, into the forty  
2 fathoms, and it's going to put undue stress on the forty break,  
3 and not to mention -- I mean you've got these areas classified  
4 as coral, but, from sixty to seventy fathoms is the biggest  
5 coral head, and it basically runs all the way up the coast of  
6 Florida. You've got thirty-foot coral heads. I don't see them  
7 listed on here anywhere as a protected area. You can't fish  
8 them.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Anybody else want to say  
11 anything?

12  
13 **MR. SCOTT DAGGETT:** My name is Scott Daggett, and I'm a longline  
14 fisherman out of Madeira Beach. I see that Pulley Ridge that  
15 you want to do is three-hundred-and-thirteen-and-a-half square  
16 miles. Is that correct?

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is that right, Morgan?

19  
20 **UNIDENTIFIED:** 313.57, yes.

21  
22 **MR. DAGGETT:** That's square miles, right?

23  
24 **UNIDENTIFIED:** That's correct.

25  
26 **MR. DAGGETT:** Okay, and so, really, our main thing is, like Jay  
27 said, is this time of year, we're crushed into such a small  
28 area, because we've given up so much bottom before, because most  
29 of our bottom really lies from forty fathoms in or twenty  
30 fathoms in.

31  
32 We've already given up from twenty fathoms in, and now, this  
33 time of year, we're thirty-five fathoms out, and so it's -- With  
34 computers these days and with the technology we have, we all go  
35 in the same areas and we keep hitting the same stuff over and  
36 over and over again, and like I won't go to forty fathoms until  
37 at least January, because it gets so stressed from the boats  
38 staying in one area and hitting the same bottom over and over  
39 again.

40  
41 Now you close these things on the big break out here, and that's  
42 predominantly where we fish for the larger yellowedge. You go  
43 inshore, you get the juveniles. On that break right there, it  
44 holds all the bigger fish. In June, July, and August, we all  
45 sit out there in that same spot. If you close that, now we move  
46 in again, and, really, from there to about twenty-five miles  
47 inshore, what Jay was talking about, if you get to seventy  
48 fathoms, you can't fish it. Sixty fathoms, you can't fish. You



1 don't get your gear back. There's huge coral heads. It looks  
2 good and there is plenty of fish there, but you can't get it  
3 back.

4  
5 Part of the reason we are out there is because of the turtles,  
6 to keep us away from the turtles. That's what originally  
7 happened. They pushed us offshore in the summer so the turtles  
8 could come in and spawn, so we don't catch them, and that's why  
9 we're out there. Thank you.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Any questions of these  
12 gentlemen? Okay. Walter, have you got something?

13  
14 **MR. JAAP:** I would just say that I appreciate your concerns and  
15 your interests. A number of us have worked Pulley, from the  
16 research side, and I've done submersible work out there, and  
17 there's a lot of fragile, fragile resources out there that are -  
18 - If you can imagine a plate that's about as thin as a piece of  
19 tin, and that's the typical kinds of coral you see down there,  
20 they're really living at the extent of their light.

21  
22 They're living at less than 1 percent of surface light, and they  
23 are actually what we call reef corals, because they have the  
24 zooxanthellae or the symbionts in them, and so it's a real  
25 important area to -- It's south of most of the other parts of  
26 Pulley Ridge.

27  
28 The rest of Pulley Ridge, as you say, has got lots of big ridge  
29 and a lot of drops and a lot of fish, and it's an important area  
30 for the fisheries, and I think we need to work on this area and  
31 make it best possible for both sides, if it's possible, and so  
32 that's my comment on it, and I think we respect the fishermen  
33 who have to go out there and make a living, and it's important  
34 that we work with them rather than work against them.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you for those comments, Walter. Okay,  
37 Morgan. Pulley Ridge.

38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** Are there any boundary modifications that the  
40 group would like to make to Pulley Ridge, any recommendations  
41 about Pulley Ridge? We have gotten some information from the  
42 longliners that go out there.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, has the council's whatever the  
45 appropriate committee or advisory panel that would be  
46 represented by this fishery, have they been involved in this  
47 exercise?

48

1 **MR. SPAETH:** There is no longliners on the reef fish panel.  
2

3 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and that's the reason that they're here  
4 today, is because, when this is being presented to the Reef Fish  
5 Committee and AP and things of that nature, from this area down  
6 in Florida, we don't have a lot of representation from that  
7 group right there. In fact, we don't have any representation  
8 from that group on that AP, and that's why they're in the  
9 audience listening in today and giving us some comments.  
10

11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Well, I would hope you important council  
12 people would put at least one member on that panel. Go ahead,  
13 Mr. Bosarge.  
14

15 **MR. BOSARGE:** I know you guys are here to try to come to some  
16 kind of a compromise. Morgan, can we put this up on the  
17 overhead and let one of these guys come up and say, okay, this  
18 is where we fish and -- Let's get some minds together here.  
19

20 **DR. KILGOUR:** Absolutely. I should have gone over what we're  
21 looking at here. Pulley Ridge is currently an HAPC with  
22 regulations, and that's this striped area. The area that's in  
23 the red-dashed line, that's the proposed expansion of Pulley  
24 Ridge from the Coral SSC and AP, based on a bunch of work that  
25 was done by John Reed, where he found lots of -- I think it was  
26 Agaricia and red grouper pits that were being invaded by  
27 lionfish, actually, but also provide opportunities for Agaricia  
28 to expand into those hard pits.  
29

30 This is another site that John Reed found that had a lot of  
31 coral that was recommended by the SSC and AP, and so these are  
32 two areas that were recommended for HAPCs, and I guess they need  
33 to be prioritized by this group for the council to consider in  
34 its scoping document of HAPCs. The giant green box is the  
35 current Pulley Ridge HAPC that doesn't have regulations, and so  
36 just this small striped portion has regulations associated with  
37 it.  
38

39 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Yes, sir, go ahead.  
40

41 **MR. DAGGETT:** Where you see the stripes now, that's our closed  
42 area now. Now, literally, you just come a couple of miles off  
43 of that closed area and it's literally -- It just rolls down.  
44 We call it the corner, because that's as far as we can go. It's  
45 pretty much the end of the Earth for us. If you drop off of  
46 that, I mean it drops quick. You will go from 240 feet to 800  
47 or 1,000 feet within a quarter or a half of a mile. It just  
48 drops.

1  
2 If you cut that out there, we usually come down from the north  
3 and work our way around that, around the box, and then go back  
4 up inshore and then fish for mutton snappers. There's a lot of  
5 species down there that we fish for that we've been regulated so  
6 much with the IFQs. I know you guys don't know about IFQs, but  
7 that's what we fish under.

8  
9 We go down there and catch species that we don't have to lease  
10 from other people. There's a lot of species down there that we  
11 catch right on that ridge, like ball bats and porgies and all  
12 kinds of stuff that we don't have to pay for, that we don't have  
13 to lease IFQs from.

14  
15 As you come up, if you cut it off right there, it's really going  
16 to be just nothing left down there, and that's a big area. If  
17 you've got guys coming out of the Keys, they have really no  
18 place to fish out there.

19  
20 **MR. LUCAS:** What it's going to do is it's going to drive all  
21 those people that fish down south out of the Keys, out of Fort  
22 Myers and whatever, that come down there, it's going to push  
23 them all further south and put more stress on the northern Gulf.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, gentlemen. Ms. Bosarge.

26  
27 **MS. BOSARGE:** While we're on this particular slide here, when we  
28 had the coral meeting, where we had Mr. Johnny Nelson was there  
29 and Mr. Steve was there as an invited guest, the John Reed site,  
30 and I think the royal red community will have to do a little  
31 more research on their computer plotters and see where their  
32 tracks are, but they had some concern that that could be somehow  
33 -- A corner of it or something may be some royal red activity,  
34 and so I think they're going to take a look at that and get back  
35 with you.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Morgan.

38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** They already did, and I was told that this was no  
40 longer a concern for the royal red, that these boxes were not  
41 being used for royal red shrimping, and so I followed up on  
42 that.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Go ahead.

45  
46 **MR. DAGGETT:** I just wanted to make one suggestion with you  
47 guy's charts and stuff. If you could put the latitude in the  
48 future, it would probably go a lot smoother, especially when you

1 have fishermen here. If you could put latitude and longitude up  
2 there, to where you know where you have it closed and your  
3 proposed places, because I could just look at it and tell you if  
4 it's going to affect us barely or a lot. You make these boxes,  
5 and I can't tell how far that goes to the west. I don't know if  
6 that's ten miles or sixty miles.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Yes, we've heard that concern.

9

10 **MR. DAGGETT:** Okay. I just wanted to throw that at you. Thank  
11 you.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you for that. That reiterates what some  
14 people said earlier, I guess. Yes, Walter.

15

16 **MR. JAAP:** We do have a sheet here with all the coordinates if  
17 you want them, but I understand the fact.

18

19 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Mr. Delaney.

20

21 **MR. DELANEY:** It seems like the premise of this discussion is  
22 that this HAPC designation would close it to fishing, and I  
23 don't know what the basis of that is. Is there some  
24 documentation that this fishing activity is degrading this  
25 habitat? I mean essential fish habitat is all about fisheries  
26 and fish resources.

27

28 I understand the coral aspect of it, but is this a threat to the  
29 coral habitat there? Why is it a presumption that they're going  
30 to be closed? HAPCs don't necessarily close the area to  
31 fishing, or is the fear that down the road, once you establish a  
32 HAPC, that the next thing is a fishery closure or a National  
33 Marine Sanctuary?

34

35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Steve, did you want to address that? You had  
36 your hand up.

37

38 **DR. ROSS:** What I was going to say is that it's really difficult  
39 -- We're getting some good information from the fishing  
40 community, but it's really difficult for me to evaluate these  
41 boxes without the equivalent habitat or community data. I don't  
42 know what is that proposed expansion in the red box, whether  
43 there were five days there or one transect, whether that area is  
44 completely filled with good habitat. It's really difficult to  
45 comment and discuss these.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Walter.

48

1 **MR. JAAP:** The data processing so far has shown about sixty-six  
2 species, mostly corals and octocorals and black corals. There  
3 is a lot more data. USGS has worked the area. John Reed has  
4 done work down there. There has been quite a bit of science  
5 accommodating Pulley Ridge, and I would say that certainly the  
6 HAPC could be sanctioned off, like sanctuaries are, for some  
7 areas open to fishing and some areas that are really sensitive  
8 and at risk for habitat injuries could be closed. I think  
9 that's part of the process of going through this HAPC exercise.

10  
11 **DR. SAMMARCO:** It seems to me like, on this one, we probably  
12 need, once again, sort of a little mini subcommittee of people  
13 who are familiar with the community aspects of that area and the  
14 geomorphology of that area and fishermen that work that area to  
15 redraw those lines so that they're realistic and they can work  
16 for both protection of the bank, deriving an HAPC, and then also  
17 allowing the fishermen to get in there and do what they have to  
18 do.

19  
20 Boxes are boxes. They can tend to not be very helpful at times,  
21 and I also seem to recall that it was John Reed and Sandra  
22 Brooke who were doing a lot of work in this area. Didn't they  
23 do Pulley Ridge work, Walter?

24  
25 **MR. JAAP:** There was a whole crew of people who were working  
26 down there. The University of Miami has got cruises going on  
27 down there and you've got the USGS group doing work down there.  
28 Sandra, I think, and John are doing work down there, and so  
29 there is quite a bit of published work already out there.  
30 Perhaps it doesn't have quite the resolution we would like, but  
31 it's good enough, I think, to probably work something up.

32  
33 **DR. SAMMARCO:** It seems as though that's the sort of -- The  
34 information is there. I think the information is there from  
35 both the fisher persons and also from the scientific community  
36 to be able to work that out, but it's just that this might be  
37 first rough-cut, and maybe it's not working that well.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I think that's an excellent suggestion, and  
40 hopefully we can get that in the process, even though we're at  
41 this stage now where the council bounced it back to this group  
42 to try and do something. I've got a number of hands up. Leann,  
43 you're up.

44  
45 **MS. BOSARGE:** Just to answer Glen's question, I have to say that  
46 the coral scientists were very upfront with us in the last  
47 meeting that they had as a group, and they said that ultimately  
48 they would like to see not just the HAPC designation, but some

1 regulations that complement that designation at some point, that  
2 that would be their ultimate goal, and so they were very upfront  
3 with us about that, and that's why we're kind of all sitting  
4 around this table today to have a better understanding of how  
5 each stakeholder uses these areas, these boxes, to see if we can  
6 come to sort of agreement and make some tweaks, where we can.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. In the back.

9

10 **MR. LUCAS:** On your designations that you have there, one thing  
11 that the panel needs to keep in mind is that we primarily fish  
12 from 120 feet to 170 feet, nine months out of the year. Three  
13 months out of the year, we might move offshore and target these  
14 areas. There is minimal pressure on those areas there.

15

16 If there is a good, healthy coral population out there right  
17 now, what's going to change? I see boxes, but then the boxes  
18 get bigger and then there's more boxes. When do the boxes stop?  
19 I mean, nine months out of the year, and only three months  
20 targeting that area right there, it's not going to make that big  
21 of an impact on it.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Go ahead, Joe.

24

25 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I have worked out in the Tortugas and out by  
26 Pulley Ridge on and off for years and years as well, and I  
27 recognize that it's a sensitive area, but I'm still kind of  
28 struggling with -- There is data there, but I can't see the  
29 data, and I can't see where the box is relative to the  
30 topographic map and then see Erik's video as to what's out there  
31 that could inform a decision.

32

33 I struggle with it a little bit, and, again, I am with the  
34 preserving of the habitat, but I've been a longliner. I have  
35 longlined that area out there, although it was years ago, and so  
36 I would find it a little more helpful for me to have these  
37 decisions made against a backdrop of how big is that area? What  
38 does it look like relative to the topographic? What are the  
39 species there?

40

41 If there is a way to do it temporally or close it at certain  
42 times of the year or -- I don't even know what the fishing  
43 pressure is or how many boats are even working out there, and so  
44 I mean I have an appetite for setting aside sensitive areas,  
45 especially in regard to coral, having watched it disappear in  
46 the Florida Keys, but I would like a little more meat on the  
47 bone for the evaluation process, I guess, and I'm still  
48 struggling with that. Pardon me for saying it that way.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Gregory.

3  
4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Morgan, correct me if I misspeak,  
5 but the purpose of this meeting is to identify ten priority  
6 areas for us to work on to compile that information to put into  
7 a draft document for the APs to look at with the data, with the  
8 analyses, and for the council to look at, for us to take to  
9 scoping meetings and public hearings, to determine what the  
10 specifics are for each of the areas.

11  
12 There is no way we can do that today, and so today is really  
13 just to identify what are the top priority areas for us to look  
14 at and analyze, because we have forty areas, and we certainly  
15 can't do them all, and so, if we can not worry too much about  
16 specifics at this point, we might make more progress.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I agree with you in part, but I think these  
19 first two areas that we've taken up is because we have input  
20 from other user groups that we may not have had in the past, and  
21 so I think -- These gentlemen said that they fish in a lot of  
22 these areas, in their operations, but I think these are some of  
23 the more difficult ones that we kind of need to discuss and see  
24 what we can do with.

25  
26 I think everyone is certainly willing to accommodate the others'  
27 desires and wishes as best we can. We are never going to get  
28 everybody to agree, because there is too many different  
29 factions, but I think it's good to have these sorts of  
30 discussions, because we're going to come out with a better  
31 product in the long run. In the back, Kim.

32  
33 **MS. CHAUVIN:** I think that we need to realize that the gentleman  
34 on those royal reds came in after five days running twelve hours  
35 to get to this meeting. Then you have these other fishermen  
36 that are here, and it's important, while they're here, to get  
37 the information, glean all that information, that we can from  
38 them, because they can't make these meetings. They have to be  
39 out there on that water.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Walter, did you have your hand up?

42  
43 **MR. JAAP:** I just think that we ought to entertain a motion to  
44 say that we need to do more work here, and I think I agree that  
45 this is the point where we're trying to identify some sites for  
46 consideration and they're not being written in granite right  
47 now, but there is a good chance that we could get some of these  
48 into the bag, and that would be a good thing.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** How did you outsmart me and I get to chair  
3 this thing and not you? Go ahead, Judith.  
4  
5 **DR. LANG:** Thanks, Corky. I would just like to ask the longline  
6 fishermen where exactly in the Pulley Ridge area you are fishing  
7 relative to our boxes and polygons up there, and does your gear  
8 ever touch the bottom? We're concerned about those plate  
9 corals. That's what we're trying to conserve, and I don't think  
10 you want to destroy them either.  
11  
12 **MR. LUCAS:** No, we don't. As far as where our gear goes, I mean  
13 it's hard for us to tell right now, because, like Scott said,  
14 you don't have any latitude and longitude up there, and,  
15 basically, that's how our brain works when we look at something  
16 like that.  
17  
18 We know exactly where we fish. We can look at the latitude and  
19 longitude and tell exactly what depth it is, but I mean we don't  
20 fish past 150 or 160 fathoms. That's about as deep as we go,  
21 and, going the other way, we fish up as close to that boundary  
22 as we can get. A lot of guys -- I mean, if you get on the west  
23 side of that boundary, and for some reason we always get a call  
24 telling us that we're in a closed area, when our boundaries tell  
25 us that we're not, but I mean we try to get as close to the  
26 boundary as we can, because that's where all the fish are at.  
27  
28 I mean we've had guys that don't know what they're doing and  
29 have screwed up and strung a line through Pulley Ridge, and I  
30 mean it's like virgin territory now. It's unbelievable the  
31 amount of fish that are in there, and the fish migrate out all  
32 around the edge there, and that's where our guys work, all  
33 around the edge.  
34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Shelly.  
36  
37 **MS. KRUEGER:** Morgan, if you could pull up page 3 of the Coral  
38 AP and SSC Summary, it does have some latitude and longitude and  
39 some depth, if that would be helpful.  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Does that help you out any?  
42  
43 **DR. KILGOUR:** It's between twenty-seven and fifty-five fathoms.  
44 This is the twenty-seven fathom and this is the fifty-five-  
45 fathom line.  
46  
47 **MR. LUCAS:** That's pretty much the gist of where we fish. We  
48 fish from basically out to where it rolls off. Some guys fish



1 out there to where it rolls off, like Scott was talking about  
2 how it rolls off to -- You can go 200 feet in just a little way  
3 there, but, for the most part, we all try to stay up on top.  
4 There's a few guys that fish that edge, but not too often,  
5 because that's where all the black coral is. It's pretty hangy  
6 right in there, and so not a lot of people try to fish off that  
7 edge.

8  
9 **DR. KILGOUR:** Just for reference, these blue lines are the  
10 fifty-fathom lines right there that are running through.

11  
12 **MR. LUCAS:** Basically, the blue lines takes almost that whole  
13 box that you guys put in there.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** All right. What's your pleasure? Frank.

16  
17 **MR. HELIES:** Just a question. Can we overlay VMS onto these  
18 maps, because all those guys are hooked up to VMS, aren't they?

19  
20 **DR. KILGOUR:** It's done. I did it already. Here is our  
21 beautiful picture again, and, again, remember that, just because  
22 it's not red, it doesn't mean it's not hot, but you can see  
23 these green areas are where the -- I am not allowed to show you  
24 the individual points. I had to pretty much swear on my kids'  
25 lives not to show you guys points, but I can show you grids.

26  
27 These are the hot spot areas. These aqua areas are anywhere  
28 between 173 and 900 points, and this is for the same time period  
29 as the shrimp ELB data that was available. I think the VMS was  
30 a little bit later. I think it started in 2005 or 2006, and I  
31 might be wrong on that, on when they were actually able to give  
32 it to me. I should clarify that.

33  
34 **MR. LUCAS:** You say the green areas are the hot spots? That's  
35 where most of the traffic has been. That's right on that break  
36 there, right before it rolls off to fifty fathoms.

37  
38 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, exactly. This is that fifty-fathom line  
39 right there.

40  
41 **MS. BOSARGE:** I have a question for the longliners. Are you  
42 only doing IFQ species off of there? I'm trying to make sure  
43 that the VMS data is encompassing all the fishing effort out  
44 there.

45  
46 **MR. DAGGETT:** We do IFQs, but the point is about the Dry  
47 Tortugas -- Like, for a boat like mine -- I own two boats, one  
48 with IFQs and one that doesn't. The boat that doesn't have

1 IFQs, I fish down there more, because there is a bunch of  
2 species down there, like ball bats and yellowtail and yelloweye.  
3 That green, where you see that green, that's the roll. That's  
4 where it breaks off. Really, past that, you're either going to  
5 lose your gear or the tide runs so hard that you're never going  
6 to get it back.

7  
8 You stay up on top and you will catch yelloweye and ball bats.  
9 As you work your way further, it's going to get deeper and  
10 deeper, and that's why we fish down there, because there is non-  
11 IFQ species down there, where we don't have to pay to catch  
12 fish. They are free fish. Instead of having to pay a guy a  
13 dollar lease to go catch his fish for him, I can go down there  
14 and catch them for free, which makes it a more profitable trip.

15  
16 **MS. BOSARGE:** The reason I ask that is because IFQ species,  
17 you've got to have the VMS onboard the boat.

18  
19 **MR. DAGGETT:** If you have a reef permit in our fishery, you have  
20 VMS.

21  
22 **MS. BOSARGE:** Right, and so, if there's boats out there that are  
23 not doing IFQ species, then their effort and their hot spots are  
24 not going to show up on this map. I just kind of wanted to get  
25 a mindset that there may be a little bit missing from the map.

26  
27 **MR. DAGGETT:** I don't think a commercial boat in the Gulf  
28 doesn't have a VMS anymore. I think we all have VMS.

29  
30 **MR. LUCAS:** But there's a lot of recreational people that target  
31 that area out of there too, out of south Florida. That's a big  
32 area.

33  
34 **MR. DAGGETT:** You will see a lot of guys come from the Keys  
35 trolling that whole area out there, a lot of guys, a lot of  
36 recreational guys.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Are there questions or  
39 comments or motions or suggestions?

40  
41 **DR. LANG:** Morgan, can you remind us what those circles  
42 represent?

43  
44 **DR. KILGOUR:** Those circles are known coral locations, and so  
45 coral has either been collected there or observed there by ROV.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Frank.

48

1 **MR. HELIES:** Just to move this along, I'm not sure if I'm even  
2 allowed to second the motion that Walter may or may not have  
3 presented, but this obviously should be a high-priority area to  
4 reevaluate, for everyone involved.  
5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Walter, do you want to make that motion again?  
7  
8 **MR. JAAP:** I make a motion that the Pulley Ridge proposed  
9 expansion for HAPC be given a place on the priority list and  
10 that it will be considered and various regulations -- I don't  
11 need to put that in there.  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Can you get that up on the board, please?  
14  
15 **DR. KILGOUR:** One moment, please. We're working on that.  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. You may have to make it again.  
18  
19 **DR. KILGOUR:** Our computers aren't as fast as we want them to  
20 be.  
21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Lord help us if the power ever goes out during  
23 a meeting.  
24  
25 **DR. LANG:** While you're pulling that data up, I don't know if  
26 Pulley Ridge has been recently reexamined by the state, but I  
27 was told last night that some of the oil remediation money has  
28 gone into a huge amount of multibeam sonar and ROV work on the  
29 mounds in the southwestern Gulf and that information should be  
30 available within the next year or so, but there is potentially a  
31 lot more data that can be made to bear on this allocation  
32 problem.  
33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** Thank you very much. I will look for it.  
35  
36 **DR. LANG:** I can give you some names later.  
37  
38 **DR. KILGOUR:** Perfect.  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Walter, is that your motion?  
41  
42 **MR. JAAP:** If somebody would like to amend it, it's fine, but  
43 that's the general gist, yes.  
44  
45 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** A clarification. What do you mean by just  
46 giving priority? The first issue we took up, we didn't put any  
47 priority on it, I don't recall. This is fine, but I'm just  
48 wondering, on the priority list, high on the priority list or --

1  
2 **MR. JAAP:** For the Florida area, among the six sites that were  
3 proposed, I proposed, in this little report I did, that three of  
4 them be considered, based on their diversity as well as the  
5 experience of working those areas and seeing what's there, and I  
6 would say that this is -- I think, of the three areas in Florida  
7 that are on my list that don't necessarily make the final list,  
8 this would be one of the highest.  
9

10 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Thank you. We have a motion. Does  
11 somebody want to second it within the Coral SSC? The motion has  
12 been made. Is there a second?  
13

14 **MR. RUZICKA:** I second that motion. Walt, should we add to that  
15 that we develop a working group, in terms of trying to redefine  
16 or define what priority means, that we actually form a working  
17 group, in conjunction with a longline representative or longline  
18 representatives, to better define potential HAPC areas for  
19 expansion at Pulley Ridge? Would that be a possibility?  
20

21 **MR. JAAP:** I would like some advice from Morgan here. Do you  
22 think at this point in time that it's reasonable to go there, or  
23 do you think the list of priorities is -- Then we would move to  
24 that direction or not?  
25

26 **DR. KILGOUR:** Is Doug Gregory here? I am uncomfortable with  
27 giving a recommendation one way or the other on this. I know  
28 that the council has been cautioned against doing working groups  
29 at their last council meeting that aren't appointed by the  
30 council. Am I wrong, Leann? I think we were kind of chastised  
31 for having working groups that weren't specifically appointed by  
32 the council, and so if you could make this motion specific on  
33 who the working group should be, so that it could go to the  
34 council, so that they might make that recommendation, instead of  
35 having it this general, I would appreciate that.  
36

37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** This is no different than what we did  
38 previously with the -- It's just for the royal red guy to get  
39 involved with Eric and you to come up with a suggested  
40 modification. I assume what you're saying is for the longline  
41 guys to get with Morgan and appropriate people involved with  
42 Pulley Ridge to see if you can come up with a better suggestion.  
43 Shelley.  
44

45 **MS. KRUEGER:** I would like to remind people that this area is  
46 also under consideration by the Florida Keys National Marine  
47 Sanctuary to be included and added into their new management  
48 plan.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Okay. Walter.  
3  
4 **MR. JAAP:** Just to answer Rob's question, then I would recommend  
5 that we probably should have a panel of maybe John Reed and from  
6 USGS, probably one of those people, yourself if you want, and  
7 the longline representatives to help work out the details.  
8  
9 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** With Morgan.  
10  
11 **MR. JAAP:** Yes, with Morgan.  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, do you have a comment?  
14  
15 **DR. KILGOUR:** Like I mentioned earlier, we were chastised by GC  
16 about not having specific names mentioned in our working group,  
17 and so that's my only request, is, if you would like to make  
18 that motion, to please put specific names in the working group  
19 instead of generalities.  
20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Leann.  
22  
23 **MS. BOSARGE:** I think we're going to get verbatim minutes on  
24 this, Morgan, and so I don't know that it necessarily has to be  
25 in the motion itself. As the council takes it up, we'll have  
26 the verbatim minutes, right, of who Walt wants in the, or that  
27 the group in general was thinking about putting in the working  
28 group, and I think the council can then convene that group,  
29 right?  
30  
31 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay.  
32  
33 **DR. KILGOUR:** I will just add it to the report, Leann, so that  
34 there is a list there.  
35  
36 **MR. JAAP:** We would include Sandra in the group.  
37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We've got a motion on the floor by the  
39 Coral SSC. Does the Coral AP want to be part of this motion?  
40  
41 **MS. KRUEGER:** Does the Coral AP want to -- Yes, Mr. Chairman,  
42 they do.  
43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That's a yes.  
45  
46 **MS. KRUEGER:** Correct, yes.  
47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. So we add the Coral AP. I don't think

1 it's appropriate for the shrimp guys and ladies to be involved  
2 in this one, but -- This one would be just a Coral SSC and Coral  
3 AP motion. The motion is that the Pulley Ridge proposed  
4 expansion for HAPC be placed on the priority list and convene a  
5 working group, and it's understood that that working group would  
6 be made up of the appropriate longline gentlemen that were here,  
7 Morgan, USGS, Sandra. That's the motion. Is there discussion  
8 on the motion?

9  
10 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I second it.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I think we had a second from Judith. It's  
13 moved and seconded. Did you need to speak on this motion, Jay?  
14 You had your hand up.

15  
16 **MR. LUCAS:** No, and you just said the longline gentlemen that  
17 were here, but sometimes there might come a point where he and I  
18 are offshore, and we might have somebody come and fill in for  
19 us. Would that be appropriate there?

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Don't send Spaeth. All right, Morgan.

22  
23 **DR. KILGOUR:** I am kind of going to be a thorn again. I have  
24 been advised once more that we need a specific list, and so the  
25 folks on the working group are not interchangeable. Whoever is  
26 designated on the working group -- Corky, we needed you on the  
27 council at the last June meeting, so you could have told us, but  
28 that's just how we've been directed now.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Let's see if we can get that list then.

31  
32 **MR. JAAP:** The working group, you can put my name down there,  
33 Sandra Brooke's name down there, Rob's name down there, Morgan's  
34 name down there.

35  
36 **DR. KILGOUR:** No.

37  
38 **MR. JAAP:** You don't qualify. All right. Then a representative  
39 of the longline fishing community.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Who should that be?

42  
43 **MR. SPAETH:** Let me ask you a question. I could be the name,  
44 but, a lot of times, I like to bring somebody to that working  
45 group along with me for advice. Is that allowable?

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** It's public meetings. I don't think we can --  
48

1 **MR. JAAP:** Right now, I would say there's no problem.  
2

3 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Doug Gregory is going to tell me something.  
4 Go ahead, Mr. Gregory.  
5

6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Anybody can come to the meeting.  
7 Like I invited these guys here, but we can't pay their way or  
8 pay them a per diem unless the council preapproves them. We  
9 were told by General Counsel that we've been pushing the  
10 envelope a little bit in this regard, and so, forming ad hoc  
11 working groups up and down, for whatever purpose, is not  
12 something we can do anymore. That's why we're asking for a  
13 specific list of names of people, but anybody can come to a  
14 meeting and participate as a member of the public. It's the  
15 question of paying people we invite to come.  
16

17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Leann.  
18

19 **MS. BOSARGE:** Doug, can we put maybe the two longliners names  
20 down that are here today and put their name and then a hyphen  
21 and say or their designee or their designated -- In case they're  
22 offshore fishing. Can we do that, and they would have to tell  
23 us who that would be?  
24

25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** We need to ask General Counsel.  
26

27 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is it only for the purpose of per diem that  
28 you're worried about?  
29

30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** The purpose is we were told that  
31 the council, under the Magnuson Act, has to approve its advisory  
32 panels, and a working group is another kind of advisory panel,  
33 even though we don't call it an advisory panel. It's not  
34 something that can just do on an ad hoc basis.  
35

36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Let's put Bob Spaeth down and Jay down  
37 and Scott Daggett. One of them would come as the official  
38 member of the group. Does that work? Morgan.  
39

40 **DR. KILGOUR:** Thank you for entertaining me, but I have maybe a  
41 solution to this problem. What if we do this via webinar, so  
42 that nobody has to travel all this way? Would that be  
43 acceptable? I could schedule the webinar so that you would -- I  
44 am just trying to alleviate some fears here. Would a webinar be  
45 acceptable as a way of convening this working group?  
46

47 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Chairman, the money is not the  
48 question. The question is people giving specific advice to the

1 council. That's the hang-up. Those people need to be appointed  
2 by the council.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I understand, and this is no different than  
5 what we approved earlier with the royal red thing. We put  
6 names, and that's what we're doing now, with the understanding  
7 that one of the longline representatives would be the official  
8 member. If he can't come, we will go down the line to whoever  
9 can make the meeting. Have we discussed this one enough? In  
10 the back.

11  
12 **MR. BROOKER:** I think we should also add someone from the Coral  
13 AP to meet with this working group. In light of that, I would  
14 move to add myself, J.P. Brooker, or, in the same spirit as the  
15 alternates for the longliners, Joe Weatherby. One or the other  
16 of us would attend.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Have we got any discussion on these additions?  
19 Hearing none, are you ready to vote? That's your business.  
20 There you go. I'm sorry.

21  
22 **MR. JAAP:** For the SSC and the coral group, all in favor.

23  
24 **MS. KRUEGER:** Thank you. **For the Coral AP, all in favor; any**  
25 **opposed. The motion passes.**

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Thank you. Morgan told me I've got  
28 things goofed up so bad that we're going to turn it over to the  
29 Vice Chair so he can take over. I have to apologize, but I've  
30 got to make a phone call. The Vice Chair will decide whether  
31 you all get a break or not.

32  
33 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do we need a break? We will take ten minutes and  
34 be back at five after three.

35  
36 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

37  
38 **MR. JAAP:** We've got a lot of work on our table, and, to make  
39 things go a little simpler, a little easier, I propose that we  
40 postpone any work on the northwest sites that were proposed in  
41 2015, because the sanctuary has basically set aside a series of  
42 seven banks and a complex of multiple banks in their proposed  
43 expansion, and we would defer to them to proceed with their  
44 procedure, and the council would stand by on the particular  
45 areas that have been proposed in the northwest area. I can read  
46 you something here.

47  
48 Basically, I will read this statement. It doesn't have to go in



1 with our debate there, but the Flower Garden Banks expansion  
2 will provide more comprehensive marine protected area  
3 management, an HAPC designation, which is limited to fishing  
4 activities. The expansion EIS preferred alternative, which is  
5 Number 3, identifies seven banks and complexes with multiple  
6 banks, totally 383.19 square miles, and we defer to the Flower  
7 Garden Banks expansion for the present and will focus HAPC  
8 designation on the other areas for consideration.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Now this is a Coral AP motion?

11  
12 **MR. JAAP:** Coral SSC.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Coral SSC. Do we have a second by a member of  
15 the Coral SSC?

16  
17 **DR. LANG:** I would like to ask G.P. to --

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We've got a second by Paul. Go ahead, Judith.

20  
21 **DR. LANG:** I would like to ask G.P. what is his preference.  
22 Does it matter to him if we vote independently?

23  
24 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I probably won't vote on this particular motion,  
25 but there is a lot of overlap here. We don't want to be  
26 redundant or duplicative on it, and so I think it's appropriate,  
27 because what we will be doing is essentially what the HAPC  
28 process would also be doing. However, we may be looking at it  
29 from a different perspective, slightly, and it may not meet the  
30 needs of the council, but I think it would be appropriate for  
31 the council to let the sanctuary process play out, and so I  
32 don't have any problem with this approach.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Steve.

35  
36 **DR. ROSS:** I mean if we do that, the concern I would have is  
37 that the sanctuary process may take considerable time with an  
38 uncertain outcome, and then we're back in the square one of  
39 reevaluating those sites that may not have made it or there's a  
40 long interim period where there is no protection.

41  
42 I am not sure that I see -- To me, in looking at those  
43 boundaries, I would have almost recommended that the HAPC  
44 boundaries and the sanctuary boundaries be one and the same and  
45 keep both processes moving forward, instead of two different  
46 sets of boundaries, and so I would have made a different  
47 recommendation, but I'm not sure I see why we would drop one for  
48 the other.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Any other --  
3  
4 **DR. LANG:** Well, we did vote to ask the sanctuary to relook at  
5 the boundaries of four of them and to move them, mostly very  
6 slightly, to accommodate the shrimp fishery.  
7  
8 **MR. SCHMAHL:** That is correct, but, from the input that we've  
9 gotten from the fishing industry in general, it's not the  
10 shrimping industry that's the most vocal about it. It's the  
11 reef fish snapper grouper fishery.  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Shelly.  
14  
15 **MS. KRUEGER:** Thank you. I would just think that if we are  
16 giving recommendations to the Gulf Council that then will  
17 contribute comments to the DEIS, if we don't discuss it prior to  
18 Flower Gardens, or even Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary,  
19 making their decisions, then how will we constructively be able  
20 to give the council recommendations to give to the national  
21 marine sanctuaries?  
22  
23 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, you had your hand up?  
24  
25 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, and this is hopefully -- I am trying to get  
26 us steered in the right direction as far as getting our work  
27 done. Remember that the council charge was to prioritize areas  
28 for consideration for HAPC status.  
29  
30 If you want to do this, which is great, then that means that we  
31 can focus on the other areas, because I was told that the  
32 council wants to look at ten, and potentially later we will look  
33 at additional areas, but forty-seven is a lot to digest in one  
34 document, and so that's just my little notation, is that the  
35 council wants this group to try and come down from forty-seven  
36 areas for this current document to ten. If you do this, then  
37 you already have eliminated seven or eight from consideration,  
38 and so you can focus on the rest of the Gulf, and that's great  
39 for me. It makes it easy, but the group needs to -- We need to  
40 come back to priority areas.  
41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Walter.  
43  
44 **MR. JAAP:** I guess my comment is supporting the effort of the  
45 sanctuary to expand. I think that's a separate sort of issue.  
46 We can, as a group, either from the SSC or the AP standpoint,  
47 recommend, in the letter, that we are supportive of their  
48 actions in any way we can, but I think, as Morgan pointed out,

1 we have probably, in an incremental idea of adding HAPCs to the  
2 Gulf Council's list, there is no way we're going to do forty or  
3 fifty of them.

4  
5 Somewhere between ten and fifteen is probably a reasonable  
6 number to think about, and we have less than a day to get the  
7 rest of this work done, and so I think it makes sense to me,  
8 from a practical standpoint, and it's not that I don't like the  
9 northwest Gulf sites. I think there are probably a lot of them  
10 that are very excellent, but it's just a matter of, from a  
11 practical standpoint, of things that we have in south Texas,  
12 Florida, and the northeast are on our plate, and we can take  
13 care of those and hopefully get a good list.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is there discussion? Who votes on this? Is  
16 it just the Coral SSC, Morgan?

17  
18 **DR. KILGOUR:** I think this was a Coral SSC motion, correct? So,  
19 unless the APs would like to make a similar motion or the same  
20 motion, yes.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Does the Coral AP want to address it?

23  
24 **MR. BROOKER:** Do we have to join? I mean do you need two of  
25 three or they can do it themselves? Is that right?

26  
27 **MS. KRUEGER:** We will decline at this moment.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** You will decline. What's the Shrimp AP want  
30 to do?

31  
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** Any suggestions? My suggestion would be to  
33 decline also, just because I think it fits your group better.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** All right. Coral AP, if you're the chair, you  
36 don't vote and is that how it works? Do you want me to handle  
37 it, so you can vote?

38  
39 **MR. JAAP:** For me? Since I made the motion, probably it would  
40 be a good thing. G.P., are you going to reclude?

41  
42 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, I think I will just abstain on this one.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We've got a motion on the floor.  
45 Frank.

46  
47 **MR. HELIES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a point of clarity. We  
48 mentioned Alternative 3 in here, and that's the sanctuary's

1 preferred alternative, but not necessarily the one that's going  
2 to be approved, and so is that -- Is that just going to be what  
3 we're going to look at anyway, as assuming that it's going to be  
4 approved?

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That is their preferred alternative at this  
7 time. Now, what makes the final cut in their process -- Okay.

8  
9 **MR. HELIES:** Walt, I just might add to yours that -- I don't  
10 know. Postpone, I don't know if that's indefinitely, but the  
11 ones in south Florida, after the discussions with the  
12 longliners, we could postpone those until a working group  
13 convenes, because, if we're trying to juggle around which ones  
14 we want to make a priority and cover in the next day-and-a-half,  
15 it seems like the ones in south Florida could also be postponed,  
16 since we're going to do a lot more work on that.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Let's get one out of the --

19  
20 **MR. JAAP:** We've already got one on the list.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We've got a motion on the floor for the  
23 Coral SSC. That motion is to postpone any work on the  
24 recommended HAPCs that are the same as those proposed in  
25 Alternative 3 in the Flower Garden Banks National Marine  
26 Sanctuary expansion DEIS. **All in favor, signify by saying aye;**  
27 **opposed. The motion passes.** The Coral AP and the Shrimp AP  
28 chose not to address this issue. Okay, Morgan, where are we?  
29 Let's move forward.

30  
31 **DR. KILGOUR:** Let's move forward. I like that idea. We're  
32 going to hopefully start making a lot more progress than two  
33 sites. Just for my own clarification, the last motion that was  
34 made about Pulley Ridge, to me, indicated that that was one of  
35 the priority areas in this list of ten.

36  
37 If it's all right with the group if I just can -- Can somebody  
38 give me another -- Let me also say that it's my understanding,  
39 based on the discussion earlier today about Viosca Knoll 862/906  
40 that that is another priority area, or is that incorrect?

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That is a priority area.

43  
44 **DR. KILGOUR:** Those are two priority areas for HAPC status.  
45 Both of those areas, I need to work with folks to modify the  
46 boundaries, and I will bring those modified boundaries to the  
47 council in October.

48

1 Are there any other areas on the West Florida Shelf that the  
2 group wants to consider as a priority area, based on the  
3 information that we currently have? Walt did some really great  
4 analyses using species richness and diversity, and so are there  
5 any other areas on the West Florida Shelf?

6

7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I've got a hand up. Steve, go ahead.

8

9 **DR. ROSS:** I would like to talk about those areas, the three  
10 boxes of Long Mound, the John Reed site, and Many Mounds. I  
11 wonder, Morgan -- I sent a couple of maps to the committee.  
12 There was one overview map that I would like to project that  
13 might help in this discussion.

14

15 Basically, what I would like to propose, and I will try to  
16 defend that, is that those three boxes be joined together into  
17 one area, even though it's large. That was the first map. That  
18 was the blow-up map.

19

20 There are no lat/long on that map, but basically the top of that  
21 map is where Long Mound starts, at roughly 26 degrees, 28  
22 minutes, and Many Mounds, you can see there it's jutting out of  
23 that red area, about the middle of the map. That's the Many  
24 Mounds area. What you're looking at is the West Florida Slope  
25 multibeam sonar maps from my cruises and the Okeanos Explorer  
26 cruises.

27

28 The red line is a rocky scarp that runs for nearly 200  
29 kilometers, from a little bit north of where this map is nearly  
30 to Key West, and it has a profile of somewhere -- It varies a  
31 lot between a couple of meters to five to ten meters tall. In  
32 the south, it can be as high as fifty to eighty meters,  
33 according to the multibeam data.

34

35 The blue dots offshore of that are coral and rocky ledges and  
36 mounds, some of which are bioherms and some of which are just  
37 rocky ledges. They have a combination of lophelia corals and a  
38 lot of black corals on some of the rocky areas.

39

40 Instead of three boxes here, to me, it makes a lot of sense to  
41 protect this as one area with a northern and southern boundary  
42 and an inshore boundary of something like 400 meters, or about  
43 1,200 feet, and an offshore boundary of about 600 meters, or  
44 nearly 2,000 feet. I could form that as a motion, but I thought  
45 maybe I would throw that out as a discussion point first. I'm  
46 not sure which, procedurally, is better.

47

48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Steve.

1  
2 **MR. BOSARGE:** I guess my question would be -- We're charged with  
3 coming up with the areas of particular concern, and if this is  
4 an area that you as a scientist are just now seeing and  
5 learning, I wonder if we wouldn't be better off to look at an  
6 area we know about and make that an area of particular concern,  
7 more than a place that we're just now seeing.  
8  
9 **DR. ROSS:** This isn't an area we're just now seeing. We've been  
10 studying this area for eight to ten years, and the geologists  
11 mapped and studied this area twenty years ago. It's been known  
12 for a long time, but it's just that the new data that's coming  
13 out now about this area is more coral related, and also it  
14 covers a lot more of the biodiversity that's there, but it's  
15 been known for quite a while. I think also I would push the  
16 southern boundary of this area further south. Anyway, thank  
17 you.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Walter.  
20  
21 **MR. JAAP:** Just to clarify for Steve that the three areas  
22 actually were suggested or nominated as separate areas. What  
23 Steve Ross is asking is that we connect the three of them  
24 together so they're not independent, so you have one homogenous  
25 line for that HAPC.  
26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** Once again, it's kilometers and meters, and can  
28 you come back with some -- It's not so much the kilometers.  
29 That's not a problem, but the depth that this coral lays in.  
30  
31 **DR. ROSS:** Right, and I mentioned that. On the inshore side, I  
32 would go with something like 400 meters, which is about 1,200  
33 feet, a little more than that, and, on the offshore end, there  
34 doesn't appear to be a lot of coral below 600 meters, which is  
35 about 2,000 feet, and so between 2,000 and 1,200 feet. It's a  
36 fairly narrow box, but, as Erik pointed out and we discussed  
37 earlier, because of the size of this area and the amount of  
38 rocky habitat, there is probably more living deepwater coral in  
39 this area than anyplace else in the Gulf of Mexico.  
40  
41 **MR. BOSARGE:** I am with you, but I still can't -- I feel like  
42 we've got areas that we should be concerned about more than  
43 maybe this area, in that there's nobody that's out there messing  
44 with it. It's in nature, and it's been in nature, and it  
45 appears to be staying. In other words, that's my point. I just  
46 wonder if we don't have areas of particular concern that would  
47 be more important than this area. Even though this is a -- Can  
48 you overlay the royal red tracks on that?

1  
2 **DR. ROSS:** To that point, we've always -- What we're trying to  
3 do here is not just protect areas, I think, that are in  
4 immediate usage, but trying to be a bit proactive and protect  
5 habitat that's biodiverse and important. It's very unlikely  
6 that anybody would want to pull a net here, but there are  
7 activities that could impact this area, and I think that's what  
8 we're trying to identify. It is the, as far as we know,  
9 arguably the biggest deepwater coral area in the Gulf of Mexico.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Ms. Bosarge.

12  
13 **MS. BOSARGE:** What activities are you seeing as posing a risk in  
14 this area, just out of curiosity? Is it anchoring or something?

15  
16 **DR. ROSS:** Historically, it was hydrocarbon exploration, and  
17 that's not an issue there, in that part of the Gulf now. There  
18 is some fishing activity, but I don't know -- It appears to be  
19 golden crab trap fishing, but I don't know to what extent that's  
20 going on. We do see abandoned traps in this area. I don't  
21 think there's a lot of trawler activity, but I'm not sure about  
22 that. There are potential fisheries that could develop in these  
23 areas, just like at Viosca Knoll. There's not a lot of fishery  
24 usage there, except for recreational fishermen.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Joe.

27  
28 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Again, we're here to look at some of these coral  
29 assemblages and evaluate them and prioritize them. My question  
30 now is -- I don't mind doing any of that. I think it's  
31 appropriate, but I wonder, to shift gears from looking at these  
32 spots to taking more bottom, is there a process by which anybody  
33 who reviewed this and said, well, they're going to go fishing  
34 there in a month, and then we're changing the parameters of what  
35 we're considering, and is there a way to notify the public about  
36 that, so nobody feels ambushed by the process?

37  
38 I think that also -- Again, if, like Dr. Ross here is saying, if  
39 it's the right kind of coral, we should set it aside, but I do  
40 think that people who had looked at this last week and then went  
41 to their job ought to be given an opportunity to weigh in on it,  
42 and I guess they will, but I don't know what the mechanism for  
43 that is. I hate to see anybody who went to work today thinking  
44 my little fishing hole is safe and then feel ambushed  
45 afterwards. I think it lends credibility to the work of the  
46 group as well.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Well, I'm sure the process will go in the

1 Federal Register. If you want to lose something, put it in the  
2 Federal Register, but that's all part of the process.  
3  
4 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I'm not pushing back on it, but I just don't  
5 know what the mechanisms are for all of that, that's all.  
6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, Joe. I don't think we have any  
8 sort of motion on the floor. Steve started the process, and  
9 he's got his hand up now.  
10  
11 **DR. ROSS:** If that's appropriate, I will make a motion that the  
12 West Florida Slope coral area be slightly changed from the three  
13 boxes that are currently mapped to a single rectangular box with  
14 a northern border at 26 degrees, 28 minutes, and a southern  
15 border at 26 degrees, 05 minutes, and an eastern border at the  
16 400-meter contour, which we'll change to feet, and an offshore  
17 western boundary at the 600-meter contour, with the  
18 understanding that those eastern and western boundaries can be  
19 adjusted to match whatever mapping necessities or law  
20 enforcement necessities exist.  
21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Just so we understand, 26 degrees, 28 minutes,  
23 that's the northern boundary of what's currently Long Mound?  
24  
25 **DR. ROSS:** It's close to that, yes.  
26  
27 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, and 26 degrees, 05 minutes is the  
28 southern boundary of Many Mound?  
29  
30 **DR. ROSS:** No, that's an expansion to the south.  
31  
32 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** It is an expansion, and so it's going further  
33 than the existing box?  
34  
35 **DR. ROSS:** That's because a lot of habitat was missed.  
36  
37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay, but you're going further south than that  
38 box that that's currently there.  
39  
40 **DR. ROSS:** Correct. That's my recommendation.  
41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. All right. A recommendation or did you  
43 make a motion?  
44  
45 **DR. ROSS:** Well, it looks like we need a motion, and so it was a  
46 motion.  
47  
48 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Can we get that up on the board?



1  
2 **DR. KILGOUR:** Sorry. We are having technical difficulties, and  
3 so I'm going to need that motion repeated so that Bernie can get  
4 it. We finally got the webinar back up and running, and now we  
5 can give you our full attention.  
6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** This is a Coral AP motion.  
8  
9 **DR. ROSS:** Do you need me to repeat it?  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Are you ready now, Morgan? Okay.  
12  
13 **DR. ROSS:** Okay. I made a motion that we reconfigure the  
14 existing West Florida Slope coral area from the existing three  
15 boxes into a single box with a northern boundary at 26 degrees,  
16 28 minutes, a southern boundary at 26 degrees, 05 minutes, an  
17 eastern boundary along the 400-meter contour, and a western  
18 boundary along the 600-meter contour. I think that's all.  
19  
20 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** You can see your motion up on the board. Is  
21 that what your intent is? Is that your motion?  
22  
23 **DR. ROSS:** Yes.  
24  
25 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We need a second by an AP member. Is  
26 that a second, Joe?  
27  
28 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Yes, it's a second.  
29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We've got a motion and a second. Walter.  
31  
32 **MR. JAAP:** For consistency, I would suggest that we might  
33 exchange "box" for "site".  
34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is that okay with you, Steve, the maker of the  
36 motion? Rather than "box", it would be "site".  
37  
38 **DR. ROSS:** Certainly. That's fine.  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Three sites or have we been calling them boxes  
41 in the past? Okay. We've got a motion and we've got a second.  
42 Is there discussion? Ms. Bosarge.  
43  
44 **MS. BOSARGE:** I am just -- We've been trying to -- The Shrimp AP  
45 tried to do some homework on these sites, to try and look at  
46 some stuff, and now we're combining three sites and extending it  
47 past the current boundaries, and, if you can think about it from  
48 the fishermen's perspective, we didn't have any -- You know

1 what's down there from a coral standpoint and your research, but  
2 we haven't had the opportunity to plug that into our computer  
3 plotters and see what -- Now, granted this is deep water, and so  
4 this is probably going to be possible royal red, but the point  
5 is that it's kind of being tossed out here, and I don't know  
6 that I want to set the precedent at this point of combining  
7 boxes and extending them past current boundaries and making that  
8 recommendation, because we put a lot of work into refining some  
9 boxes and getting it, and now we're going outside of what we  
10 have data for, from the shrimp perspective, coming into this  
11 meeting. In other words, we're kind of shooting blind here as  
12 far as what this may do from an impact perspective.

13  
14 **DR. ROSS:** Right, and I would like to respond to that. I'm  
15 sensitive to that concern, and when we looked at Viosca Knoll, I  
16 was onboard with shrinking that box considerably, and the only  
17 reason I suggested connecting these boxes and expanding the area  
18 is that it's all about the same habitat. It's a narrow box, and  
19 it's really rugged. It's almost impossible to trawl in there.

20  
21 Of course, I understand that you're getting that information  
22 from me and not first hand, but that's why I suggested the  
23 expansion, is it's really more of the same and not different,  
24 and I am pretty concerned about expanding into area that we  
25 don't need to.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Paul.

28  
29 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Since Morgan's system is up and working again, is  
30 it possible to have shrimping frequency overlaid on top of that  
31 graph that you just showed?

32  
33 **DR. KILGOUR:** It's not up and working. Our server is down, and  
34 that's what the problem is. Anyway, I am trying to put  
35 everything onto my desktop, so that we can work from there, but  
36 I apologize for the delay.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** But it is possible when things -- Steve.

39  
40 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think you said 400 meters out to 600 meters, and  
41 400 meters being about 200 fathoms out to about -- I mean I  
42 can't say that that's where those guys work, but that's the  
43 depth. I know they're not going to trawl through that, but I'm  
44 just concerned that we draw a big box and the bottom they may  
45 make a turn and you cut off a bunch of their bottom, because  
46 you're on a slope now.

47  
48 200 fathoms to 400 fathoms is not a large area. It's probably

1 three miles maybe, something like that. Here is my concern.  
2 Let's don't draw a box where we're going to cut off part of  
3 their bottom again.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Do you have any idea how much additional  
6 acreage that would be taking in, Steve?

7

8 **DR. ROSS:** No, I don't. That would be easy information to come  
9 by. All of this is in a GIS system, but I don't have that  
10 handy. I didn't necessarily come with that recommendation fully  
11 made.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Would it double the area or even more than  
14 that? I don't know how far south you're going from that  
15 existing Many Mounds boundary, but you said you suggest further  
16 south?

17

18 **DR. ROSS:** It may double it, but, if we look again at that  
19 overview map, you can see a bit of what we're trying to include,  
20 which is that rocky scarp, which is large, and the mounds  
21 offshore of that rocky scarp and not the inshore part. That  
22 really is the guide for those boxes.

23

24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Shelly.

25

26 **MS. KRUEGER:** Could I make a friendly amendment that we vote to  
27 approve the three boxes as is as a priority, since it -- If we  
28 start moving boxes around, then, all of a sudden, everything is  
29 kind of up for grabs again, and, for the sake of clarity and  
30 conciseness, to consider that as a motion, an amendment to the  
31 motion.

32

33 **DR. ROSS:** I will not accept that as an amendment to my motion.

34

35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I don't think that's appropriate for an  
36 amendment, but I do think it's appropriate for a substitute  
37 motion, if you want to do it that way.

38

39 **MS. KRUEGER:** Can I request to do that as a substitute motion?

40

41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** You said priority for the three existing sites  
42 as we see them on the --

43

44 **MS. KRUEGER:** As is. Instead of reconfiguring, to have the  
45 three be a priority as is.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We have a substitute motion, and help  
48 me with your motion, that the three existing sites listed in the

1 Florida Maps Bank or whatever the designation is would be  
2 priorities.  
3  
4 **MS. KRUEGER:** Correct.  
5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We need a second to the substitute  
7 motion by a Coral AP member. Is there a second?  
8  
9 **MR. BROOKER:** I will second for the purpose of conversation.  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Now make sure that's the motion you  
12 want. Okay. We've got a substitute motion. Is there  
13 discussion? Walter.  
14  
15 **MR. JAAP:** I would offer perhaps a second sentence, saying  
16 somewhere that during the process that the possibility of  
17 combining or merging the three sites be investigated.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** But you can't do that as an SSC member.  
20  
21 **MR. JAAP:** Then I will shut up.  
22  
23 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I guess we can all discuss it, but the only  
24 people voting are -- I think I'm correct on that. Steve, you're  
25 first.  
26  
27 **DR. ROSS:** There is another consideration in addition to the  
28 science that drives the logic behind combining these boxes, and  
29 that is that we trade three for one. If we're going to try to  
30 designate ten HAPCs, we've now got two less than we have to  
31 consider by having one larger box.  
32  
33 The other thing is, by having three boxes, we have some risk  
34 that all three may not pass, and so then we lose a significant  
35 area and one of the biggest coral areas in the deep Gulf, and so  
36 there's some additional arguments in addition to the data.  
37  
38 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Joe, go ahead.  
39  
40 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I understand and see the logic to Steve Ross's  
41 science and his proposition, but I also understand that  
42 everybody has come a long way and did homework to get here, and  
43 so I hear some of that piece, too.  
44  
45 That could be approved as a priority, because I think I hear  
46 that it should be, but it could be approved as a priority with  
47 an option to combine them, pending some comment from the  
48 possibly affected stakeholders who aren't here, royal red, and

1 Mr. Nelson is gone, or anybody who may be impacted, but I see  
2 some logic to that, too.

3  
4 I think that's also fair to the stakeholders who have got to  
5 live with this stuff, and so that gets Steve Ross's science into  
6 consideration, but it gives people a chance to catch up with  
7 their homework and agree. Does that make sense? I think what  
8 Walt is saying about amending it -- What Walt and Shelly are  
9 saying that the three existing be passed as a priority with an  
10 option here to consider combining it into one. I think that  
11 that -- If nobody pushes back hard, then we're there. I mean do  
12 we have to do it today?

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Now we've got nothing, but, Paul.

15  
16 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I think the problem is we're dealing with a --  
17 With the other ones that we've been doing, we had a relatively  
18 complete dataset of both the shrimping frequency and distribution  
19 abundance of that and the coral bottom and what's going on  
20 there, and we only have half of the picture here, and it's very  
21 difficult to say yea or nay or change it or whatever without  
22 knowing what's going on.

23  
24 I think a good point has been made. I think we ought to just be  
25 patient and maybe even put this one aside on the shelf, just for  
26 a half-hour or whatever, and move on to another one. When  
27 Morgan gets going again, we can bring it back and go, okay,  
28 what's up.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Indefinitely or table until when? Morgan,  
31 have you got it?

32  
33 **DR. KILGOUR:** It's not the same thing that you were looking at  
34 earlier. I haven't been able to retrieve that. This is my  
35 backup of my backup, and so these are the sites that you guys  
36 are discussing, Long Mound, North Reed, and Many Mound.

37  
38 I haven't been able to put up the contours so that you could see  
39 where those would be. I will do that in a minute, but, from  
40 what I understand from the discussion, is we're looking at an  
41 area, and correct me if I'm wrong, that is about from the top of  
42 this down along the bathymetric contours from 400 meters to 600  
43 meters, and so I need to add those contours, and I'm doing that  
44 as soon as I can get on the network, but, for your information  
45 on shrimp, on where that is, those black dots, again, are the  
46 shrimping effort, and so you see one black dot here. I  
47 apologize, and thank you for your patience.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Ms. Bosarge.  
2  
3 **MS. BOSARGE:** I guess that was the point that I was making about  
4 changing the boxes. You see those points out there, and you've  
5 got to keep in mind that there's seven guys, on average, landing  
6 royal red shrimp every year, with a possibility of it changing  
7 hands between about fifteen, but that's the total.  
8  
9 Now, we know that there's an electronic logbook on one of those  
10 boats, at least, because Johnny has one on his boat, the guy  
11 that just left, and so it may not look like there's a lot of  
12 points out there, but if that's not an area that Johnny has been  
13 shrimping over the last few years, we may not see it on here. I  
14 can tell though that somebody has been royal redding out there  
15 pretty close to it, and so I guess that was where my concern was  
16 with starting to combine the boxes.  
17  
18 Maybe Johnny has looked at the individual boxes and said, well,  
19 but I just don't know about starting to create new boxes that we  
20 haven't really looked at yet, but I'm not opposed to -- It's not  
21 my ideal, but things that we've already looked at, I think we  
22 could discuss.  
23  
24 **DR. ROSS:** It doesn't look like there is much effort there  
25 though, correct, I mean anywhere close to those boxes. I mean I  
26 understand what you're saying about that, but --  
27  
28 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Morgan, can you give us a little bigger picture,  
29 more area?  
30  
31 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Harris.  
32  
33 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** When you're fishing an area and you've got a gap  
34 in between an area, you can drag it through there and you don't  
35 cause any damage. I see three boxes, and there's gaps in  
36 between those boxes. There is no danger of anyone dragging  
37 through there. He's not going to cause any damage to the coral  
38 reef.  
39  
40 If you extend the box all the way down, you're taking up  
41 territory that -- You can see the three boxes. You can drag  
42 around the box or you can drag inshore of the box or offshore of  
43 the box, north of the box, south of the box. Once you take the  
44 box and having three and you just make one, you're cutting area  
45 where a fisherman could legally go in and not cause any damage.  
46  
47 **DR. ROSS:** That's not true, because the rocky scarp is still  
48 there, and so are the corals and the mounds. Those boxes just

1 didn't get connected, but the habitat is still there.  
2  
3 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Morgan, are you still --  
4  
5 **DR. KILGOUR:** All right. I think I got what you want. I didn't  
6 do the 26 degrees, 05 -- What is it?  
7  
8 **DR. ROSS:** 26 degrees, 28 minutes and 26 degrees, 05 minutes.  
9  
10 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's latitude, right?  
11  
12 **DR. ROSS:** Yes.  
13  
14 **DR. KILGOUR:** That would be up here.  
15  
16 **DR. ROSS:** This area would actually be skinnier than those two  
17 southernmost boxes.  
18  
19 **DR. KILGOUR:** Right, and so this is about -- This isn't precise,  
20 but this is about -- 26, 28 is twenty-six-and-a-half, right?  
21 Twenty-six degrees, 28 minutes is twenty-six-and-a-half? So it  
22 would be from here, and that's 26, 28-ish, to what was the other  
23 latitude that was given?  
24  
25 **DR. ROSS:** 26, 05.  
26  
27 **DR. KILGOUR:** So from here to down to -- Now, don't look at the  
28 box. Just look at the upper and bottom line, and the red and  
29 blue lines are the depth contours. The red and blue line would  
30 be the east and west borders, and the line that I just drew  
31 would be the north and south borders.  
32  
33 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Paul.  
34  
35 **DR. SAMMARCO:** If I am interpreting what I heard correctly from  
36 Steve and Erik, I think what they've found, through their  
37 surveys and their reconnaissance, is that those areas between  
38 those boxes are indeed similar types of habitat of the things  
39 that are in the boxes, that it's a continuous habitat of hard  
40 bottom. It's not soft bottom. Is that right?  
41  
42 **DR. ROSS:** Yes.  
43  
44 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Okay. I just wanted to clarify that.  
45  
46 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Steve, the northern boundary moving down and  
47 removing part of Long Mound, is that because the corals are not  
48 in that northern part of that first site?

1  
2 **DR. ROSS:** No, that's because I was trying to be a little  
3 conservative. That scarp goes further north than that. The  
4 areas that are the most coral developed offshore of the scarp  
5 are actually pieces of the scarp that have broken off over time  
6 and fallen offshore, and they have become the substrate that the  
7 corals are growing on.  
8  
9 Everywhere that scarp is, it's got this debris field just  
10 offshore of it. That's why it's a fairly narrow band of  
11 habitat. In some places, the corals have actually started to  
12 form bioherms and not just rocky areas with corals.  
13  
14 We obviously, if we're arguing over this, we obviously can't  
15 extend this to cover the whole scarp, which is 200 kilometers  
16 long or more. This is the most significant part, where we've  
17 got good data.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** John had his hand up, and then you're next.  
20  
21 **MR. WILLIAMS:** I just wondered, if we had all this data, why the  
22 three boxes originally? Why didn't we just go with the single  
23 box to start with?  
24  
25 **DR. ROSS:** Other people had different opinions. I've worked out  
26 there, and other people have worked out there. We had different  
27 opinions. Walt would have to address that, I think, and I would  
28 have recommended then what I am recommending now, just based on  
29 my data. I don't see the justification for breaking it up into  
30 three boxes, and I feel like it's a simpler motion to have it as  
31 a single box, and so there are other advantages, but Walt will  
32 have to address that, I guess.  
33  
34 **DR. LANG:** Just for what I remember of a couple of --  
35  
36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Judy, I've got hands up, and so you're in  
37 line. Mr. Bosarge, and then you're going to be next.  
38  
39 **MR. BOSARGE:** My concern is, once we designate this as a HAPC,  
40 habitat area of particular concern, the regulations that will  
41 come with that later will basically take -- For the most part,  
42 it takes all commercial fishing out of the picture. When I  
43 argue with you as to are we going to close these three small  
44 boxes or are we going to take in -- If you had your wish, we  
45 would start at Key West and probably go up to the Mississippi  
46 Canyon. Do you see my point?  
47  
48 In other words, and I don't blame you. That's what you do.



1 That's what we need to -- But, at the same time, I am trying to  
2 look out for an industry that may be making their livelihood  
3 from that now or may want to in the future, but, if we just go  
4 and block off this big old square and say that, well, it may not  
5 happen right now, but you can bet that two years from now there  
6 will be -- Only commercial fishermen will be the ones that won't  
7 be able to transit it or won't be able to anchor in it or won't  
8 be able to fish in it. If you see my point of why I'm concerned  
9 that we're going to take this big old block say, okay, we're not  
10 going to do anything here.

11

12 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Judy, you're up.

13

14 **DR. LANG:** I was just going to say, in answer to the question of  
15 why we didn't make it one block a couple of years ago when we  
16 were originally looking at it, we did discuss that. We did  
17 mention that as a possibility, and we felt that, at the time, we  
18 didn't have information, and I think there is more information  
19 now than was available to us then, and, Steve, you were not part  
20 of that process.

21

22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Thank you. Erik.

23

24 **DR. CORDES:** I was going to make the same point, but I would  
25 also point out that this is a few miles long. To your point,  
26 this is -- Steve surveyed a lot of this for the first time, but  
27 we've both done a bunch of dives in this area, and it's -- I  
28 could make the same argument for fishing in the area.

29

30 This is about a hundred miles long. It's similar habitat all  
31 along there, as far as we know, from the multibeam maps. This  
32 area, where he is drawing one larger box, is the area where we  
33 have the best information now, and we know, because they are  
34 groundtruthed, that there are a lot of live corals and mounds  
35 and everything there. This is our favorite couple of miles in  
36 that hundred-mile stretch.

37

38 Odds are that the fish community and the shrimp and anything  
39 that may be of commercial interest is up and down that hundred  
40 miles, but we are asking for a small representative, our  
41 favorite, piece of that.

42

43 **MR. BOSARGE:** I do understand that, and I work also in state  
44 fisheries management, and I have watched in our state that we  
45 pick off this little piece and then we pick off that little  
46 piece and then we pick off -- Now, since we've got a spotted sea  
47 trout industry, where commercial guys get a 50,000-pound quota,  
48 the recreational fishery is 1.325 million, because what we did

1 was we took this away from them and we took this away from them  
2 and we kept taking it until they had no ground left and no tools  
3 to work with.

4  
5 That's what I worry about here, and, hey, I am with you. I am  
6 all for protecting. We don't need to tear up or destroy  
7 anything that's that beautiful in nature, but, at the same time,  
8 I have to look at where the industry is at and what they're  
9 doing, and we keep taking these little small pieces.

10  
11 For instance, we came here, and I forget the name of the  
12 restaurant we ate at last night, but Tommy had a nice piece of  
13 snapper. If we keep taking these places, how are we going to  
14 provide that?

15  
16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Steve is up and then Glen and then  
17 Paul.

18  
19 **DR. ROSS:** Steve, I think that's the value of these committees,  
20 is they're a mixture of people, because we aren't drawing the  
21 whole hundred-mile box and you aren't drawing no boxes, not that  
22 you wouldn't, and so what we're recommending here is a balance.

23  
24 I think your point was you kept saying small pieces. That's the  
25 point. They are small pieces, and, if you look at the whole  
26 Gulf of Mexico, these are little dots, and most of the Gulf is  
27 not protected. Most of the world is not protected, and all of  
28 us want to eat seafood. We don't want to put anybody out of  
29 business, but nobody is going to be in business if we don't  
30 protect the habitat.

31  
32 **MR. BOSARGE:** I agree.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Mr. Delaney.

35  
36 **MR. DELANEY:** Just an observation, and I have a high degree of  
37 respect for all the coral scientists that are here today, and I  
38 know we've worked together for many years on different projects  
39 and, ultimately, I think it's been a positive process, but it's  
40 always been based on some real science.

41  
42 This is sort of dissolved into a non-science process right now.  
43 I mean, this morning, we had a lot of good data images and very  
44 concrete, documented science. Right now, we're just having a  
45 discussion among people who have opinions, based on their own  
46 observations, and they readily admit that other people had  
47 different opinions in the scientific community, and this just  
48 doesn't feel right.

1  
2 Steve, I have profound respect for your work, but this is just a  
3 bunch of conversations and opinions on -- We don't have a piece  
4 of science that we're looking at, and that's not a criticism of  
5 you or saying that you're not telling the truth.  
6  
7 **DR. ROSS:** These are the same data that we've used for all these  
8 other sites.  
9  
10 **MR. DELANEY:** It's just there's nothing here. We are just  
11 having a conversation of opinions. What are you showing us?  
12  
13 **DR. ROSS:** I wasn't asked to give a talk here. I can give you a  
14 one-hour talk on the West Florida Slope.  
15  
16 **MR. DELANEY:** I just don't think this is a science-based process  
17 right now. We've got some people from the coral community here  
18 who feel one way, and there are apparently people in the coral  
19 community who see it differently, and that's why there is three  
20 boxes, as you said.  
21  
22 That kind of leaves folks like us saying what do we do? Where  
23 is the science that is so clear and definitive to support  
24 anything here? I am a little uncomfortable with it, personally.  
25  
26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. I've got two people on the  
27 list. Then, if my memory serves me right, we still have a  
28 motion on the board. We've got a substitute motion and the  
29 original motion. We've had a lot of good discussion on this,  
30 and let's hear from the two that are on the list and hopefully  
31 we'll put the motion back up and do something with it. Paul,  
32 you're up and then Mr. Williams.  
33  
34 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I just want to mention about some of the data  
35 that we were looking at this morning. If you remember, we had  
36 really good images of the reefs, really good images of the  
37 shrimping frequency, and so it was really interesting to put it  
38 together and then try to put the pieces of the puzzle together.  
39  
40 With this one, we're no more or less handicapped than we were in  
41 the previous ones, and the shrimping frequency data is clearly  
42 low in this area. I think we're lucky in that way, that this  
43 does not seem to be a heavily-worked area. If it is heavily  
44 worked, it's not showing up in the data any more or less than it  
45 would be showing up in the areas that we're looking at.  
46  
47 As I said, I think that we're lucky in that respect, and it  
48 seems to me that if the area were expanded that we're not

1 stepping on anyone's toes, that we know about anyway, and it is,  
2 I think it is -- The feeling I get as well is that the three  
3 little boxes that we had before were probably due to limited  
4 data. How long ago were they drawn? Was it ten years ago or  
5 twenty years ago or something? Now we have better data, and so  
6 that's just my feeling.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Just for the motion, should that  
9 be -- Shelly, it's your motion. We have three sites, Ms. Roy,  
10 that it just be made priorities, and I guess that -- Thank you.  
11 Mr. Williams.

12  
13 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Just a short statement and a quick question. I  
14 know, Dr. Lang, you mentioned a while ago that the reason for  
15 the three boxes originally was because you didn't have enough  
16 data then and now there is enough data and those boxes should be  
17 expanded.

18  
19 At what point in the next two years -- If we have more data and  
20 you expand those boxes again, and the next or two years, we  
21 expend those boxes again. At what point do we quit expanding  
22 those boxes and preventing potentially all commercial fishing or  
23 shrimping through there? Granted, there is probably very  
24 little, if any, shrimping, or probably very little commercial  
25 fishing at all, and so the question is what are we protecting it  
26 from? Thank you.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We have spent quite a bit of time,  
29 needed time, on this issue. The Coral AP has a motion, and it's  
30 a substitute motion. I would like to have a vote on that motion  
31 by the Coral Advisory Panel. The motion is the three existing  
32 sites of Long Mound, North Reed, and Many Mounds be made  
33 priorities. Coral AP members, all in favor, -- We are voting on  
34 the substitute motion. **All Coral Advisory Panel members in**  
35 **support of the substitute motion, please raise your hand, four;**  
36 **against, two. Four to two, and the motion passes.**

37  
38 That does away with the original motion. Does either of the  
39 other two panels want to address this same motion?

40  
41 **MR. JAAP:** From the SSC standpoint, gentlemen and ladies, are  
42 you in favor of supporting the alternative motion?

43  
44 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I just want to kind of clarify that those three  
45 boxes did come from a recommendation from our committee, from  
46 the SSC, in 2015, and so they weren't designated a long time  
47 ago. They were just recently, and that was based on information  
48 that we did have at the time.

1  
2 John Reed was involved in those discussions at the time, and we  
3 were being pushed very hard to limit the size of these areas to  
4 absolute known areas of high-density coral communities. Based  
5 on the information we had at that time, that's how those three  
6 boxes came up.

7  
8 I personally am in favor of what Steve is suggesting, because it  
9 is a continuous habitat, but the information that we had showed  
10 that those boxes contained some very high-value habitat, and so  
11 I would be in support of combining those boxes, but, at the same  
12 time, recognizing the process.

13  
14 This was a process, and we are following it, and I am  
15 sympathetic to coming in and changing those recommendations  
16 later, but we have more information, and these areas probably  
17 deserve to be protected. We're not here to shut down fisheries,  
18 but we're here to identify high-value habitat and protect those  
19 habitats for the future.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Okay, Coral SSC, what's your  
22 pleasure?

23  
24 **MR. JAAP:** Any other comments? My comment would be this, that I  
25 agree pretty much with everything that G.P. says. I think the  
26 opportunity to approve the three existing sites should be the  
27 priority and that, if we need to do something, we should  
28 approach it with another outside -- Maybe an auxiliary panel to  
29 reexamine this whole issue and include some of the user groups  
30 that might be using these sites and get back to the issue then,  
31 and that would resolve this issue, because I can understand  
32 where some of the gentlemen over here were concerned about the  
33 fact that -- Scientists don't always agree, but there is  
34 probably some truth somewhere, and we can agree on that and  
35 reach a reasonable outcome on that.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you, sir. Okay.

38  
39 **DR. LANG:** Can either G.P. or Walter create a motion out of  
40 these considerations that they would like to add to the  
41 substitute motion that's been passed that would capture our  
42 concern that the areas between the boxes perhaps are equally  
43 deserving of being considered HAPCs, but we don't want to do so  
44 without more consultation with the fishing industry and without  
45 looking at the data which has been acquired in the last two  
46 years, to make sure that they are as important habitats as we  
47 suspect, as we suspected two years ago.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Gregory.  
2  
3 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I haven't been paying attention  
4 lately, but I think each group should vote on the same motion,  
5 and it's okay if different groups have different conclusions.  
6 Then you can entertain a different motion, unless the Chairs  
7 want to have the different committees come up with totally  
8 different motions that are not voted on by the other committees.  
9 I mean it's getting complicated, to me.  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** The Coral SSC Committee -- I want them to have  
12 the opportunity to do what they want to do on this thing. The  
13 AP did their thing and the Coral SSC does their thing and then  
14 the Shrimp Committee will take it up one way or the other.  
15  
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I'm sorry, but I just ask the  
17 question. If one of the committees doesn't address a motion the  
18 other committees have passed, what does that mean? It doesn't  
19 mean they approved it or disapproved it, but they just ignored  
20 it, and that makes it hard to take a message to the council, it  
21 seems to me.  
22  
23 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** As a council member, I would have had  
24 absolutely no problem understanding if one committee passed one  
25 motion and the other two didn't want to address it. That tells  
26 me what the feelings of the other two committees were. They  
27 didn't necessarily agree with what was passed. That's why I'm  
28 asking, which way do you --  
29  
30 **MR. JAAP:** Okay, ladies and gentlemen from the Coral SSC, motion  
31 to support the Coral AP substitute motion.  
32  
33 **DR. LANG:** I second that motion.  
34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** It's moved and seconded that the Coral SSC  
36 supports the Coral AP's motion. It's not a substitute anymore.  
37 It's a motion that passed.  
38  
39 **MR. RUZICKA:** If I can just ask, and G.P. can provide  
40 clarification for the SSC, but you were in support of actually  
41 the motion that Steve proposed, is that correct?  
42  
43 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, that is correct. I would make that motion  
44 and I would go there if I -- I would actually vote against the  
45 motion that you guys just made.  
46  
47 **MR. RUZICKA:** I agree. I would actually be in support of what  
48 Steve had proposed, rather than what's here, for the reasons of

1 logistics and everything that he mentioned, and also the  
2 statistical and scientific data that's currently available.  
3  
4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** In my opinion, you've got a double-edged sword  
5 here. If you don't support this, you want the original motion,  
6 but the original motion wasn't passed. The substitute by the AP  
7 passed four to two, and so that's a pretty substantial majority,  
8 four to two, out of a six-member committee, but that's -- The  
9 motion currently by the Coral SSC is to support the Coral AP's  
10 motion, and that is the three existing sites be made priorities.  
11 That is the motion. Paul.  
12  
13 **DR. SAMMARCO:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Has the question been called?  
16  
17 **DR. LANG:** I have a question. If we support it, can we follow  
18 this motion with a motion of our own to possibly amend it on the  
19 basis of new information?  
20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Not amend it, if this passes, but you can --  
22  
23 **DR. LANG:** Or a separate motion or to consider it or --  
24  
25 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Anybody can make a motion and you get a second  
26 and we start all over.  
27  
28 **DR. LANG:** A brand new motion, that's what I was --  
29  
30 **MR. JAAP:** The motion on the floor is to support the Coral AP's  
31 motion of three existing sites to become on the priority list.  
32 Those in favor of that motion on the SSC.  
33  
34 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Has the question been called or can we have  
35 discussion on it?  
36  
37 **MR. JAAP:** We have been discussing it, and I was hoping we could  
38 move on, but if you want to discuss it longer, that's fine.  
39  
40 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I guess I'm having trouble, because, of course, I  
41 support this motion, because I want to at least see those three,  
42 but, speaking from the -- The SSC is supposed to represent the  
43 science side of it, and, based on the information that we are  
44 having from the scientists, I would go further than that and  
45 agree that it ought to be enlarged, but I would vote for this  
46 motion, because we want to see those, at a minimum.  
47  
48 **MR. JAAP:** We are getting paid very reasonably for this, and so

1 do your duty and be diligent and let us have a vote on this  
2 motion, because we can make a second motion that's independent  
3 to do other things to improve this whole system and get what we  
4 want, and so let's -- **All in favor of this motion.**

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Wait. What's the pleasure of the Shrimp  
7 Advisory Panel? I am asking my members. Never let it be said  
8 that I'm a dictator. I want to give my members the opportunity  
9 to make a motion or not make a motion. What is the pleasure of  
10 the Shrimp Advisory Panel?

11  
12 **MR. BOSARGE:** I am in favor of supporting the motion, simply  
13 because I don't feel like this is the time or place to be  
14 expanding these boxes. There is a mechanism for that, and it's  
15 not here.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** So your motion is to support the Coral  
18 Advisory Panel's motion to go with the three existing. Do I  
19 have a second? Second by Mr. Julius. Okay, guys, Shrimp  
20 Advisory Panel, we've got a motion and a second. Is there  
21 discussion? Any other discussion? **All those in favor, signify  
22 by saying aye; opposed, like sign. The motion passes.**

23  
24 Morgan, unless the group objects, I suggest it would be more  
25 meaningful to make that motion that the -- Since it started with  
26 the Coral AP and the Coral SSC was second and the Shrimp AP was  
27 third, that all three supported this action. Is that okay with  
28 the group? Okay. Frank, you had your hand up.

29  
30 **MR. HELIES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am probably speaking for  
31 myself here, but, as a Shrimp AP member, I don't feel it's my  
32 responsibility to be voting on what is a priority habitat area,  
33 because that's not my expertise.

34  
35 I appreciate us being involved in the process, and I feel like  
36 we should probably make a motion down the line to ensure that we  
37 are a part of the process moving forward, but I am not going to  
38 vote on any priorities for these areas, because I don't know.  
39 It's up to the Coral SSC to make those recommendations to the  
40 council.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Well, I agree with that, but, of course,  
43 advisory panel members have input based on their knowledge of  
44 activities in the area, and that's why the whole group got  
45 together, and, as early as we can get together on the frontend,  
46 I think it makes for a better work product as the end result,  
47 and that's the whole thing. Okay, Morgan, where are we? Does  
48 somebody else want to do something? Have we got another motion



1 coming? Ms. Bosarge.

2  
3 **MS. BOSARGE:** Just based on the discussion that everybody was  
4 having for those last three sites, I just wanted to back up and  
5 remind everybody of the phase that we're at. You all are giving  
6 the council input on what you think are high-priority areas to  
7 designate as HAPCs, and the shrimp industry and some of the  
8 longliners that were here are also giving input on that.

9  
10 That is going to create a document at some point that the  
11 council will start on and begin to examine this further, and so  
12 this is only the first time that this is going to come before  
13 you all, and, Dr. Ross, what I'm saying is that -- If those  
14 three areas end up in the amendment that the council starts,  
15 then that's going to, at some point, come back to the Coral AP  
16 and Coral SSC for you all to further comment on and examine, and  
17 so just to alleviate some of your concerns that this is not the  
18 one and only comment time.

19  
20 **DR. LANG:** Leann, I am really happy to hear you say that,  
21 because I know there is going to be a lot of new information  
22 coming out over the next year, in this area in particular.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay.

25  
26 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I think we should move on.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Thank you. Morgan, go for it.

29  
30 **DR. KILGOUR:** I think we're done with the West Florida Slope.

31  
32 **DR. ROSS:** The only question I would have is South Reed was not  
33 really challenged or discussed here. I am not sure whether we  
34 should just move on to the northeast or whether we should bring  
35 that to the table.

36  
37 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's a good point. There are two sites that you  
38 haven't discussed on the West Florida Shelf, but, right now,  
39 just to keep us on track, we have five sites identified. There  
40 is Okeanos Ridge and South Reed Site, which were both on the  
41 West Florida Slope, that haven't been discussed, but, if it's  
42 okay with the committee, we can move to the northeast Gulf and  
43 start talking about the Pinnacles Trend area. There is a lot of  
44 sites in there, and there's a lot of shrimping, I think, that  
45 occurs in there, and it's up to you guys.

46  
47 Here I have the shrimping tows, and I am not putting the  
48 bathymetry on here, only because it seems to be slowing things

1 down. If you really, really want to see it, I can put it up  
2 there, but these are the boxes that were drawn at the Coral SSC  
3 and AP meeting, and I will focus in on these. Some of these  
4 areas had boundaries that needed to be revised based on -- This  
5 is the wrong one.

6  
7 These are the proposed areas that needed boundary revision. Far  
8 Tortuga was one that was potentially needing boundary revision.  
9 I believe, in the Flower Gardens DEIS, that they talk about the  
10 corals that were there, and so there is documented presence.  
11 It's not as substantial as that found in Rough Tongue Reef,  
12 Patch Reef, and L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef, and so are any of  
13 these priority areas that we need to discuss or -- How about  
14 this. Which of these are the priority areas that we need to  
15 discuss for the northeast? This is just for -- I can zoom out,  
16 but this is the Pinnacles Trend area, again.

17  
18 These are all of the areas in the shallower portion of the  
19 Pinnacles Trend. There are some deeper areas, Mississippi  
20 Canyon 118, and, again, I will put on the shrimp effort, and you  
21 guys can tell me which ones you want to discuss.

22  
23 **MR. JAAP:** Mr. Chairman, my straw list, and this is not written  
24 in granite, as I said, but I based this somewhat on biodiversity  
25 information, which are Triple Top, Double Top, Alabama Alps,  
26 Rough Tongue, L&W Pinnacles, and Scamp, and we've already done  
27 the Viosca Knoll area. That was just a straw list, and I'm not  
28 going to cry and walk away with my toys if you don't like them.

29  
30 **DR. CORDES:** Mr. Chair, if I may, there is just a couple of  
31 things that I want to point out up here. Viosca Knoll 826 is  
32 another large lophelia reef that I was talking about before.

33  
34 This is the site that probably has the most information about  
35 lophelia in the Gulf of Mexico, and it's probably second to a  
36 couple of the reefs in the northeast Atlantic for this species  
37 in the world. This has been studied for twenty years. It's  
38 really well known and mapped out. We've got tons of data here,  
39 and so I would throw that one out, or whatever the reverse of  
40 that is.

41  
42 The other two that I'm really familiar with are Alabama Alps and  
43 Rough Tongue, and these were two of the long-term datasets that  
44 Ken Sulak had following the spill, where they documented a lot  
45 of the changes in the fish communities there and also had some  
46 evidence for exposure and damage to some of the corals during  
47 the oil spill. These are two long-term monitoring sites. Those  
48 are the three that I am most familiar with, and I will defer to

1 other people for some of the other sites, but I would hold those  
2 up as priorities.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan.

5

6 **DR. KILGOUR:** I zoomed into Viosca Knolls 826 so you could all  
7 see it, but Alabama Alps was one that was identified as needing  
8 boundary revision, based on the discussion at the May 2015 Coral  
9 SSC and AP meeting. I went back and, because it was also  
10 determined that that was one of those heavily shrimped areas,  
11 and so I went back and I looked at where the shrimping occurred,  
12 and I overlaid the -- I put the bathymetry on there.

13

14 I basically followed the outline of the feature and tried to  
15 minimize the effects on shrimping by making sure that I got the  
16 feature, and I also tried to keep the boundary line straight,  
17 like the Law Enforcement Technical Committee had requested, and  
18 so you can see, if we cut off this northeastern portion, that  
19 alleviates a lot of the pressure on the shrimping industry,  
20 because that's where a lot of that shrimping occurs. Then you  
21 still have the HAPC that protects the Alabama Alps reef itself.

22

23 This is, again, something I did on my own, and that's what I  
24 came up with. I am going to try and pull up the bathymetry and  
25 hope that I don't break the system again while you guys discuss  
26 this, but I just wanted to show you for this particular one. It  
27 was one that was recommended to have a boundary revision.

28

29 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Mr. Bosarge while Morgan is --

30

31 **MR. BOSARGE:** If your calculations are correct, I don't see a  
32 problem with this. It looks to me like you've done a marvelous  
33 job of still protecting the coral and protecting the industry,  
34 and so, if everything is good, from my perspective, I think  
35 we're good with it.

36

37 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Joe.

38

39 **MR. WEATHERBY:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

40

41 **DR. CORDES:** I was just pulling it up, actually, and I can show  
42 you some pictures, but it was pretty patchy, the damage. The  
43 injury level -- I mean I can show you detailed maps of those two  
44 reefs and where the damage occurred.

45

46 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I guess maybe my question would be more towards  
47 do you see value in making this one a priority as opposed to  
48 another choice that didn't undergo damage?

1  
2 **DR. CORDES:** I would still support preserving these. There is a  
3 lot of undamaged space in those Trends, and the fact that there  
4 is fifteen or twenty years of long-term data on the fish  
5 communities and the other associates with the corals I think is  
6 also good evidence, good support.  
7  
8 **MR. BROOKER:** Just further to that point, whether it's damaged  
9 or undamaged, it doesn't mean you have to protect it or don't  
10 have to protect it. I mean, if Mr. Bosarge and the shrimpers  
11 seem to think that it's a good compromise, I would say we should  
12 just include it on the list anyway. Are we looking for a  
13 motion at this point?  
14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I've got one hand up, if you hold up and let  
16 Walter say what he has to say. I don't see any other hands, and  
17 then I would be ready. Go ahead, Walter.  
18  
19 **MR. JAAP:** My comment is, when we have these sites like this  
20 that are close to the Deepwater Horizon wellhead, and there is a  
21 lot of research and a lot of dollars going into those sites,  
22 because they're being monitored for probably another ten years  
23 or something like that, and so there is some real good  
24 information that could be received, as well as we can probably  
25 piggyback on those cruises and get information, and so, if there  
26 is some damage and injury, there will be an opportunity to see  
27 how quickly it recovers too, and so it has some benefit, I  
28 think, even though it has some --  
29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Thank you. Okay. Did you want to make a  
31 motion?  
32  
33 **MR. BROOKER:** Sure. I will make a motion to -- How many areas  
34 are looking at here? It's three, right?  
35  
36 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I was addressing just this one. That's what I  
37 was thinking, but go ahead, Morgan.  
38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** I just wanted to note that the dark-green line is  
40 the boundary that I redrew, and then this lime-green line is the  
41 Flower Garden Banks Alternative 5 boundary. If you see, there  
42 is some topographic relief that's outside of that original  
43 boundary that they included, and so there you go.  
44  
45 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Morgan, this is what you did?  
46  
47 **MR. BROOKER:** Before I make the motion, I would also like to  
48 point out that there is probably some other areas that are

1 similar to this that might not be problematic, from the  
2 fishermen's perspective, and that probably could be included in  
3 an amendment that goes to the council, regardless of  
4 prioritization, because they're little fished or not especially  
5 fished, and so I would just like to keep that in some folks'  
6 minds, and it might be worthwhile to create maybe two  
7 categories, one category for prioritization and another category  
8 for areas that are not of specific concern and wouldn't really  
9 be problematic as HAPCs from anyone's perspective. It's just  
10 something to think about as we carry on.

11  
12 **In light of that, I will make a motion to set aside the Alabama**  
13 **Alps as a -- I guess we can call this one an area for priority**  
14 **at this point.**

15  
16 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Which boundary?

17  
18 **MR. BROOKER:** Mr. Bosarge, which boundary did you say worked for  
19 you?

20  
21 **MR. BOSARGE:** The purple.

22  
23 **MR. BROOKER:** So the purple. I don't know if you can capture  
24 the language from my garbled sentences there, but --

25  
26 **DR. KILGOUR:** How about the staff-recommended boundary?

27  
28 **MR. BROOKER:** **Yes, staff-recommended boundary sounds great.**

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We have a motion. Do we have a second  
31 by the AP? Okay. We've got a motion and second being proposed  
32 by the Coral AP. Paul had his hand up. Was it to the motion or  
33 you had another issue?

34  
35 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Just a quick note. It looks like the Flower  
36 Garden Banks original configuration catches some of the hard  
37 bottom which is outside of Morgan's. It's just a point of  
38 information. It depends on whether you want to protect it or  
39 not.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That was on the southeastern end?

42  
43 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Yes, the southeast.

44  
45 **DR. LANG:** There may not have been any information on that a  
46 couple of years ago when we were looking at these, and so we  
47 would have included them if we thought they were important or if  
48 we thought we knew what was there.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. We have a Coral AP motion. Is there  
3 discussion? Any more discussion? Is the Coral AP ready to  
4 vote? **All those in favor of the motion, raise your hand, six;**  
5 **any opposition. Hearing none, Coral SSC.**  
6  
7 **MR. JAAP:** Does the Coral SSC want to support this? Yes.  
8  
9 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Shrimp AP, what's your pleasure? The Shrimp  
10 AP supports it. Unless there is opposition, I am going to ask  
11 that it be made into one motion with the Coral AP first, the  
12 Coral SSC second, and the Shrimp AP taking up third, and so one  
13 motion and all three panels recommends it as a priority. Moving  
14 right along. Morgan, when you're ready, give us another one,  
15 please.  
16  
17 **DR. KILGOUR:** The other two that I heard that you wanted to look  
18 at for priority areas, and please tell me if I'm wrong, were  
19 Viosca Knoll 826 and Rough Tongue Reef. Is that correct?  
20  
21 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I think that's -- 826, that's correct, and  
22 what was the other one?  
23  
24 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Rough Tongue and Viosca 826.  
25  
26 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay.  
27  
28 **DR. KILGOUR:** This is Viosca Knoll 826. You can see that there  
29 are a couple of dots that go along the top of it for shrimping  
30 effort. I spoke with Mr. Nelson about this particular area,  
31 because of these dots, at the Coral SSC/AP meeting in 2015.  
32  
33 This was one that I needed to look at again, and he said that he  
34 ran his tracks again and that this was not a prime royal red  
35 shrimping ground, which is why he didn't need to wait for this  
36 discussion, and so I don't know who those tracks are from, but  
37 it's one set, and it could very well be a transit that's just  
38 slow. This is Viosca Knoll 826, and the Coral SSC and AP  
39 recommended the whole lease block. That's all I have about  
40 that.  
41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay.  
43  
44 **MR. JAAP:** The SSC would make a motion to place Viosca Knolls as  
45 a priority.  
46  
47 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That's 826?  
48

1 **MR. JAAP:** 826, yes.  
2  
3 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Is there a second? Do I have a second?  
4  
5 **DR. LANG:** I will second.  
6  
7 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Judith seconds. It's moved and seconded. We  
8 have a motion and we have a second.  
9  
10 **MR. JAAP:** Any discussion? Want to vote? **All in favor.**  
11  
12 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** I think that was unanimous. AP?  
13  
14 **MS. KRUEGER:** Coral AP, all in favor, or do you have to say  
15 that?  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Does the Coral AP support that motion by the  
18 Coral SSC? I don't hear any opposition. Shrimp AP, do you  
19 support that motion? Okay. I think the motion is supported by  
20 the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and the Shrimp AP for Viosca Knoll 826  
21 as a priority. What was the next one?  
22  
23 **DR. KILGOUR:** This is Rough Tongue Reef. There are, again, a  
24 couple of points. You can see there is three shrimp points  
25 inside the boundary, and so, again, those can be artifacts of  
26 the algorithm. Perhaps you were going just the right speed for  
27 just the right amount of time, because it doesn't look like  
28 that's a track. You would see dot, dot, dot, dot.  
29  
30 **MR. JAAP:** With the information from the shrimp community, I  
31 would ask the SSC to consider this as a priority area. I will  
32 make the motion for Rough Tongue Reef, that it be placed on the  
33 priority list.  
34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We've got a motion and we've got a second by  
36 Paul. Is there discussion?  
37  
38 **MR. JAAP:** Any discussion, gentlemen and ladies? **In favor.**  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** The motion passes. Rough Tongue Reef, how did  
41 it get its name? Okay. The motion was made by the Coral SSC,  
42 and the AP is yea or nay? Coral AP is yea. Shrimp AP, what's  
43 the Shrimp AP's pleasure? The Shrimp AP is yea, and so the  
44 motion is the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and the Shrimp AP make Rough  
45 Tongue Reef a priority area. **It passes by all three committees.**  
46 Thank you.  
47  
48 **DR. KILGOUR:** Now we're up to seven.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** We're at quarter of. Do you want to stop it  
3 now, so you guys get a half-day of work tomorrow or what's your  
4 pleasure? Do you want to continue?  
5  
6 **DR. KILGOUR:** We have still several deep areas that we haven't  
7 discussed, and we still have the South Texas Banks, which I  
8 think we need to have ample discussion on.  
9  
10 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Tomorrow morning.  
11  
12 **DR. KILGOUR:** As long as people are still going to be here.  
13  
14 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Ms. Bosarge, do you have a comment?  
15  
16 **MS. BOSARGE:** I just had a question. Outside, I had heard that  
17 there was a few shrimpers that may not be here tomorrow, and I  
18 know those South Texas Banks get pretty close to a lot of  
19 shrimping activity, and so who will be here tomorrow from the  
20 Shrimp AP? Will everybody be here?  
21  
22 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Everybody but me.  
23  
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** Everybody but -- Julie won't be here tomorrow.  
25 All right. I was just checking.  
26  
27 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** Okay. Morgan, do you want to try and take one  
28 up in the next fifteen minutes, since you're scheduled for a  
29 five o'clock stop, or do you want to --  
30  
31 **DR. KILGOUR:** I was going to say I think we're at a good  
32 stopping point, and maybe I can get my computer to work a little  
33 bit harder tomorrow.  
34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** That would probably help. Where is Doug  
36 Gregory?  
37  
38 **DR. KILGOUR:** If you're going to get him in trouble, I don't  
39 know where he is.  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN PERRET:** No, no. Anyway, Mr. Gregory, I apologized to  
42 the group, but I had a prior commitment tomorrow, and so I will  
43 not be around tomorrow. I want to thank all of you for being so  
44 cooperative. I want to encourage council staff to encourage the  
45 council to get advisory panels and scientists together early on.  
46 I think we end up with a much better work product in the long  
47 run, and I just want to publicly tell you that Dr. Morgan has  
48 done a great job for all of us, and so thank you.



1  
2 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on August 3, 2016.)  
3

4 - - -

5  
6 August 4, 2016

7  
8 THURSDAY MORNING SESSION  
9

10 - - -

11  
12 The Joint Shrimp Advisory Panel, Coral Advisory Panel, and Coral  
13 Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Gulf of Mexico  
14 Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Gulf Council  
15 Office, Tampa, Florida, Thursday morning, August 4, 2016, and  
16 was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Vice Chairman Steve Bosarge.  
17

18 **MR. BOSARGE:** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our second  
19 day. I'm glad to see everybody that --  
20

21 (There is a gap in the audio recording.)  
22

23 **DR. KILGOUR:** We had to pare it down from the forty-seven, and  
24 that forty-seven did include, I believe, thirteen current  
25 existing HAPCs with no regulations, and so that's what we need  
26 to do, is we need to prioritize ten areas for the council to  
27 consider at this upcoming coral amendment.  
28

29 You are welcome to make a recommendation that the existing HAPCs  
30 with no regulations are also considered. That would be fine,  
31 but it was my understanding that we were going to, from the  
32 Coral SSC, let those just stay as they are and let the Sanctuary  
33 process play out. Was that clear as mud?  
34

35 **MR. BOSARGE:** Walter and then Paul.  
36

37 **MR. JAAP:** To clarify, it would be helpful to know which of  
38 these HAPCs that currently exist are in that northwest area,  
39 just so we maybe can think about that and what we want to do.  
40

41 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's a good question. Morgan, can you do that,  
42 and then we'll have Paul.  
43

44 **DR. KILGOUR:** I sure can. If you all have your maps in front of  
45 you, and I also had it on that Excel spreadsheet that I sent out  
46 with the zoomed-in maps, but the current HAPCs that don't have  
47 regulations that are included in the Flower Gardens Alternative  
48 3 that would be removed, if you guys chose to not address them,

1 would be MacNeil Bank, and that's an HAPC with no regulations,  
2 Rankin, 28 Fathom, and Bright Bank. Those are part of the  
3 Rankin Bright Bank Complex as an HAPC with no regulations.

4  
5 Geyer Bank is an HAPC with no regulations and McGrail Bank is an  
6 HAPC with regulations. Sonnier Bank is an HAPC with no  
7 regulations. Alderdice Bank is an HAPC with no regulations, and  
8 then the Bouma, Bryant, Rezak, and Sidner Bank, part of that is  
9 an HAPC, and so the Rezak/Sidner Bank is considered an HAPC. It  
10 would expand in the sanctuary proposed Alternative 3.

11  
12 There are two banks that don't have any HAPC status now that are  
13 in that Alternative 3, and that's Parker Bank and Elvers Bank,  
14 and those were recommended by the working group and by the Coral  
15 SSC and AP, but they're not currently HAPCs.

16  
17 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul.

18  
19 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I guess I'm a little bit confused about the ten  
20 HAPCs and whether that's supposed to be for our entire meeting  
21 or if it's just from this group. Secondly, further on to that,  
22 my feeling is that we're here. If we can do twelve or fifteen  
23 or whatever it is during the period that we're here, we should  
24 take advantage of the time that we have. It's a while before  
25 we'll all get back together again. That's just my feeling.

26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** G.P. and then Morgan.

28  
29 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I guess I am a little concerned, because the  
30 purpose -- First of all, an HAPC with no regulations doesn't do  
31 much. The purpose, I thought, of this process was to identify  
32 those areas as HAPCs that would also have some sort of  
33 regulations, particularly related to bottom-tending gear and  
34 anchoring. That's typically what would be associated with a  
35 coral HAPC, is to sort of elevate the areas that have been  
36 designated as HAPCs with no regulations to the level of coral  
37 HAPCs, which would have some level of additional protection.

38  
39 I think, and we went through a process yesterday where we went  
40 through the northwestern banks and basically identified that  
41 there were no major issues with fishing conflicts. Therefore,  
42 why not put them into the area of priority status? I don't  
43 think -- I understand we have a charge from the full council to  
44 keep it to ten, but the fact is there is more than ten, and  
45 there needs to be more than ten.

46  
47 I would think that we should, especially if there is no  
48 conflicts, and many of these areas have been shown to have no

1 apparent conflicts with shrimping activities, that we should  
2 identify those and not be constrained by an artificial number.

3

4 **MR. BOSARGE:** Morgan.

5

6 **DR. KILGOUR:** Just to clarify, this ten number was not part of  
7 the actual motion. The motion was that the group identify and  
8 rank the most important coral areas and provide this information  
9 to the council in a report.

10

11 This ten number is something that was discussed as a logical or  
12 -- It wasn't a definitive number, but forty-seven is not going  
13 to work, and so we need to prioritize the areas that need to be  
14 considered for HAPC status, with the thought that those will be  
15 HAPCs with regulations, although that's at the council's  
16 pleasure on what they decide to do.

17

18 I understand that there's a lot of important coral areas in  
19 here, but the group really does need to prioritize which areas  
20 are the most important for consideration. I am really going to  
21 have a hard time selling to the council that they're all  
22 important and so they all need to be considered equally, because  
23 there are areas, from the discussion, that I can tell have a lot  
24 of research done and have -- Like Viosca Knoll, that's one of  
25 the best-studied areas, 826, and that probably needs to be on  
26 that priority list, whereas some of these other areas that may  
27 have a lot of coral, but aren't as well studied and don't have  
28 the documentation, maybe not, but that's up to you guys to  
29 decide on which areas need to be ranked high priority and which  
30 can be ranked medium priority and low priority.

31

32 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I will point that a lot of these HAPCs with no  
33 regulations in the northwestern Gulf were identified in 2006,  
34 and so they were identified as priorities then, and, to not have  
35 them on a list of priorities now, it seems contradictory.

36

37 **MR. BOSARGE:** Walter.

38

39 **MR. JAAP:** Thank you. Just two points. As G.P. pointed out,  
40 these ones that we are talking about that are currently HAPCs,  
41 also most of them are on your list for your preferred option,  
42 right?

43

44 **MR. SCHMAHL:** That is correct, yes, but that doesn't mean that  
45 that's going to happen.

46

47 **MR. JAAP:** I understand that, but I'm just saying that if we are  
48 sort of looking at the logic of we think that the regulations

1 coming out of the sanctuary type program are more comprehensive  
2 and inclusive than just the fishery aspects, then it stands to  
3 reason that it's okay, and I guess we could say that leaving  
4 them to the sanctuary expansion program would be okay.

5  
6 I guess the other point I would make is that if we look at  
7 Section X on our agenda, Item e, it says we should also look at  
8 regulatory suggestions, and so, in the HAPCs, when we finish up  
9 here, I think we should give some direction to the council that  
10 we expect that there would be some form of regulation, because  
11 to have an HAPC without regulation or management doesn't make  
12 much sense.

13  
14 It's a place on the map, and I'm looking at something that came  
15 out of IUCN, which is Lessons Learned in Marine Protected Areas,  
16 and one of them is basically that you should have clearly-  
17 defined objectives and performance regularly checked by  
18 monitoring programs and that it's going to have to have some  
19 form of checks and balances for status and trends, to make sure  
20 that, if we're doing something, is it working?

21  
22 **MR. BOSARGE:** Glen.

23  
24 **MR. DELANEY:** I apologize. I've only had one cup of coffee, but  
25 I could swear that the people that are speaking to this right  
26 now all voted to suspend action on this for some future  
27 consideration yesterday, and so we're going backwards on the  
28 agenda is all I would point out, and we don't have a whole heck  
29 of a lot of time, and so, in the scheme of priorities, if these  
30 are indeed the most important areas among the many that we  
31 haven't even looked at yet, then perhaps it's appropriate to go  
32 back and reconsider them and that vote was inappropriate  
33 yesterday, even notwithstanding your votes to suspend it, but,  
34 if these fall on the middle or lower end of your priorities,  
35 then we're kind of delaying getting to the real priorities,  
36 which may be in the northeastern Gulf or Gulf Coast Texas.

37  
38 I don't know what your priorities are, and so it seems to me  
39 that we're going backwards. You guys all voted to not do this.  
40 The coral community said don't do this now, and so now the coral  
41 community is saying do this now, and so the shrimp industry  
42 doesn't have a lot of ability to evaluate what's a priority for  
43 you. We are just kind of here to say please be kind to us.

44  
45 **MR. BOSARGE:** Harris and then Joe.

46  
47 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** In a democracy, you don't have a magic wand  
48 where you say all forty-seven, and it's a slow process, as you

1 can see with Congress, and the reason it's a slow process is so  
2 everyone can have a voice and have their opinion.

3  
4 If we are mandated to do ten or twelve, let's do ten or twelve,  
5 but what I would ask Morgan is how many do we have on the  
6 priority list now and how many do we need to meet our ten or  
7 twelve and do that, instead of a blanket forty-seven.

8  
9 As you have seen in the testimony here with some of the  
10 fishermen, there were some of the areas where there were  
11 problems, and, here again, we need to look at this. We can't  
12 just say, okay, prioritize all forty-seven and we don't have a  
13 voice to see if these lines are extended to where they're going  
14 to interfere with fishing. That's all I have to say, but I  
15 think we need to know how many we have prioritized and how many  
16 more do we need to get to our ten or twelve and get this show on  
17 the road. Thank you.

18  
19 **MR. BOSARGE:** Thank you. Joe.

20  
21 **MR. WEATHERBY:** For me, I think, maybe building off of what I  
22 just heard everybody say, for me, if there are forty-seven spots  
23 I think it's very clear to me that we have to get through the  
24 stakeholder conflicts, in the interest of the fishing, the  
25 different types of fisheries that we're looking at, but, once  
26 we're beyond that, I want a little help in talking about what  
27 makes one a priority over another.

28  
29 Is it about twenty-five years of research that's been done  
30 there? Is it about size? Is it about resources for regulation?  
31 What are the drivers? What are the bottlenecks that makes one a  
32 priority and another one just like it, with the same black  
33 coral, not so much? If you can help me with that, I would  
34 appreciate it.

35  
36 **MR. BOSARGE:** I had thoughts of maybe some criteria for what we  
37 would rank these sites at, as to what is priority and what is  
38 not. G.P.

39  
40 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I just wanted to respond to Glen a little bit.  
41 First of all, I was asking for clarification, because I was  
42 assuming that the vote yesterday was to not spend time on these  
43 areas because they had already been dealt with, essentially, but  
44 I am finding out now that they haven't been dealt with, because  
45 they're not going to be on the priority list that goes to the  
46 full council. If that's the case, then I do have a problem with  
47 it, and I would also point out that I did abstain from that vote  
48 yesterday.

1  
2 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, Gary.  
3  
4 **MR. GRAHAM:** G.P., one point of clarification. I would ask that  
5 you don't take a brush and say there is no conflict with the  
6 fisheries, because, if you start looking at the HAPC line,  
7 again, that MacNeil Bank, that inshore side of MacNeil Bank, is  
8 -- It's productive, and I would just ask that you don't say that  
9 there's no conflicts if we're looking at HAPCs. Thank you.  
10  
11 **MR. BOSARGE:** Morgan.  
12  
13 **DR. KILGOUR:** In the interest of time, the group may decide to  
14 make a recommendation that might be a middle ground, which is if  
15 the sanctuary expansion does not go through that these be  
16 reconsidered, or maybe you have a second ranking of existing  
17 HAPCs with no regulations be considered for regulations as a  
18 separate -- Perhaps separate the new areas from the existing  
19 areas, so that it's not such an enormous amount of information  
20 all in one spot.  
21  
22 I am just trying to think of a way to work around the fact that  
23 you were asked to prioritize and rank these areas. We're at  
24 seven areas now, and we still haven't finished the northeastern  
25 Gulf, any of the deepwater sites, or even started on South Texas  
26 Banks, and so, in the interest of time, I guess I need a little  
27 bit more clarification on which direction you want me to go for  
28 this morning's discussion.  
29  
30 **MR. JAAP:** Morgan, I think that idea of having some sort of a  
31 proposal -- I would make a motion to say that if the sanctuary  
32 expansion plan, for whatever reason, isn't dealt with, let's  
33 say, that these HAPCs that have been currently designated would  
34 be given consideration for regulation by the council, or  
35 something to that effect.  
36  
37 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Johnny.  
38  
39 **MR. WILLIAMS:** I am certainly not trying to slow things down  
40 any, but I am still stuck on the prioritizing. I feel like the  
41 user groups and the coral committee and the SSC and the shrimp  
42 industry and recreational and longliners would each have a  
43 different opinion on what should be prioritized, especially when  
44 it comes to that the priority will most likely be the HAPC that  
45 will get regulations.  
46  
47 Regulations for one user group may not work for the other one,  
48 and so I am still struggling in trying to see how do we

1 prioritize everything if we all have a different view of what  
2 should be prioritized. Maybe you all can help out or something.

3

4 **MR. BOSARGE:** Leann.

5

6 **MS. BOSARGE:** You're exactly right, and so what's going on  
7 beyond what's just in this room, as far as from the council  
8 perspective, we're going to have some things that come out of  
9 this meeting, and you're exactly right that a priority list from  
10 the coral side of the room would probably look very different  
11 from anything that would come off the shrimp side of the room,  
12 but what the council hopes to do is to have staff bring us,  
13 after this meeting plus the Reef Fish AP -- Those people have  
14 weighed in some, and then we got some feedback from the  
15 longliners in the eastern Gulf today, and so staff is going to  
16 almost bring us like a spreadsheet looking thing and say, well,  
17 from the coral side of the house, these are their priorities.

18

19 Then, from say the fishing stakeholder side of the house, these  
20 were the sites that were most critical to them, as far as  
21 needing a revision or this is where they fish or this is where  
22 they shrimp or they need this or that.

23

24 It's going to be a conglomeration and a crosspollination of  
25 priorities and issues, and then the council will look at all of  
26 that and take it all into perspective together and say, okay, so  
27 where do we need to focus our efforts, and we will begin a  
28 document to look at some number of those sites, some number, as  
29 Morgan said, less than the forty-seven, because it's just a  
30 little too much for us to handle, and so that's where we're  
31 going with this.

32

33 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's right, this is just beginning, but what's  
34 bogging us all down is we all have different thoughts of what is  
35 the priority. With me, it's my concerns is what's going to  
36 happen once we make it a priority site. Who is it going to  
37 affect? We all want to be proactive and protect the coral, but,  
38 at the same time, the coral has been there for years and years  
39 and years. We don't want to just shut everybody out and change  
40 peoples' ways of life over, like Harris said, one motion.  
41 Anyhow, go ahead, Gary.

42

43 **MR. GRAHAM:** I just -- Look, the Flower Gardens are holy, and I  
44 don't even think we need to waste time on the Flower Gardens. I  
45 think they're a priority. I think that you guys are showing me  
46 some other areas that I'm unaware of that I think need to have  
47 more focus. If I went back to Texas and the Flower Gardens  
48 weren't a priority, I would probably have to change states. I

1 just take the Flower Gardens as certainly one of the areas, and  
2 I don't think they ought to be considered one of the ten. I  
3 think automatically they're there, and let's look at some other  
4 areas here. Do you understand where I'm coming from there?  
5  
6 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think the Flower Gardens are already a  
7 sanctuary, and they're already regulated.  
8  
9 **MR. GRAHAM:** But they've got some other areas there too around  
10 that.  
11  
12 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes. MacNeil Bank and -- To move on, do we want  
13 to look at some of these -- Go ahead, Walter.  
14  
15 **MR. JAAP:** Like I said, we can look at the sites, but I think  
16 this motion that Morgan suggested was the basically we kind of  
17 say something to the fact that if the sanctuary program doesn't  
18 go into the expansion that they prefer, that these HAPC sites  
19 that were formerly designated without regulation be considered  
20 for regulation. That's sort of the motion I would make.  
21  
22 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do you want to make the motion?  
23  
24 **MR. JAAP:** Yes, sir.  
25  
26 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Second.  
27  
28 **MR. BOSARGE:** This would be from the Coral SSC.  
29  
30 **UNIDENTIFIED:** By regulation, what do you mean?  
31  
32 **MR. JAAP:** Well, it would have to do, obviously, with -- Because  
33 we can only regulate fishing, but it would be something to the  
34 effect that certain types of gear that might be causing -- By  
35 documentation, have caused some sort of harm or injury to the  
36 resources, that those would be considered for regulation.  
37  
38 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Would that be the shrimp industry you're talking  
39 about?  
40  
41 **MR. JAAP:** I think it could include shrimp, it could include  
42 longline, it could include other forms of fishing that have  
43 bottom-tending gear.  
44  
45 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I've seen some of these sites that are so deep in  
46 the water that a ship anchor's can't touch the site and a shrimp  
47 trawl can't touch the site and longliners can't probably touch  
48 the site, and why do they need regulations on those?



1  
2 **MR. JAAP:** Historically, the Florida Middle Grounds -- I will  
3 use it as an example. That was the first HAPC that we  
4 designated, and there are certain types of fishing activity that  
5 are forbidden in that particular area, and it has had some  
6 effect on protecting the resources there, and that's why I would  
7 say that that potentially -- If they go into forming some type  
8 of regulation in those areas, that it would be -- We only can  
9 deal with fishing. We can't deal with anchoring and we can't  
10 deal with petroleum exploitation and things like that.

11  
12 **MR. BOSARGE:** Ms. Bosarge.

13  
14 **MS. BOSARGE:** Walt, when we went through those yesterday, all  
15 the sites that are in that Preferred Alternative 3 for the  
16 Flower Gardens Sanctuary expansion, I think there were like  
17 three sites, three or four, that we looked at and we said, well,  
18 we see some trawling going on at the very northern portion of  
19 that site, and we kind of had some suggestions on how to adjust  
20 the boundaries so that it would have less impact on the shrimp  
21 fishery.

22  
23 Would you consider having that as part of your motion, that if  
24 those sites -- If the sanctuary Alternative 3 isn't put in place  
25 by NOAA, which we have no control over, but, if it's not, then  
26 you are wanting those to be reconsidered, essentially, by the  
27 council, but would you mind putting something in there that as  
28 amended or as adjusted by this group, with the boundaries that  
29 were adjusted by this group?

30  
31 **MR. JAAP:** It could say "to included adjusted boundaries".

32  
33 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right.

34  
35 **DR. LANG:** As an aside, this will make sure that G.P. doesn't  
36 forget.

37  
38 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I won't forget.

39  
40 **DR. LANG:** I will second that.

41  
42 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. We have Judith.

43  
44 **MR. JAAP:** Any further discussion? SSC members, please vote  
45 for; those against.

46  
47 **MR. BOSARGE:** **The motion carries.** Does the Coral AP want to --  
48

1 **MR. BROOKER:** I don't know if we need to make this motion. I  
2 think coming from the Coral SSC is probably sufficient.  
3  
4 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. Shrimp AP?  
5  
6 **MR. DELANEY:** Again, I really struggle with this notion that the  
7 shrimp industry is going to recommend priority HAPCs. I mean  
8 that's not our job. Our job is the -- The coral community  
9 should identify habitats that are priority, for all the reasons  
10 that you think they're priorities, and the shrimp industry is  
11 here to work with you to try to minimize the adverse impacts on  
12 our operations, while still achieving the greatest benefit to  
13 protecting habitat as possible.  
14  
15 We're not in a position to say anything about what coral  
16 priorities are. That's not our expertise, and we don't want to  
17 pretend that we have that expertise, and so we're reacting to  
18 your prioritization and trying to work in a cooperative fashion  
19 to resolve any conflicts between our interests, and you guys  
20 have been amazingly responsive to that.  
21  
22 I think this probably the most productive meeting, in that  
23 context, that I've ever been in dealing with coral. I mean it's  
24 fantastic and we appreciate that, but, again, we're not going to  
25 offer prioritization of coral. What would we base that on?  
26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** So the Shrimp AP declines. All right. We have a  
28 motion, and we had a vote. The motion carried.  
29  
30 **MR. SCHMAHL:** There was one objection.  
31  
32 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. Four to one. Morgan.  
33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** For record keeping, it was four to one? I didn't  
35 count.  
36  
37 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes.  
38  
39 **DR. KILGOUR:** Okay. Sorry. I just wanted to make sure we have  
40 it right on there, because I can't see right through here.  
41  
42 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. We are moving on with the  
43 prioritizing. As you can see, we in the shrimp industry don't  
44 feel we have the expertise, and so we're going to have to leave  
45 it in your hands.  
46  
47 **MR. JAAP:** My suggestion would be that we look at the area that  
48 we were talking about, which would be L&W Pinnacles and Scamp

1 Reef and --  
2  
3 **MR. BOSARGE:** And that Mississippi Canyon 118.  
4  
5 **MR. JAAP:** It's in the northeast area. It's the 100 to 300-  
6 meter range and documented with twenty-six different kinds of  
7 corals on the site.  
8  
9 **MR. BOSARGE:** Morgan, can you put that up and put the  
10 bathymetry?  
11  
12 **MS. BOSARGE:** Morgan, just so we're all on the same page, we're  
13 looking at the northeastern Gulf sites, right?  
14  
15 **DR. KILGOUR:** Correct. This is L&W Pinnacles and --  
16  
17 **MR. JAAP:** It's combined also with Scamp.  
18  
19 **DR. KILGOUR:** And scamp reef, okay.  
20  
21 **MR. JAAP:** It's a fairly small area. It's twenty-two, almost  
22 twenty-three, square kilometers.  
23  
24 **DR. KILGOUR:** All right, and if I put shrimping effort on there,  
25 and the VMS effort is not showing up. It's not showing. This  
26 is L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef. The shrimping effort is on.  
27 You can see the black dots, and the VMS is not showing. The  
28 bathymetry you can see. It's just not color. Let me zoom in on  
29 this for you. It looks like there is one shrimping tow point  
30 right here, but that might just be --  
31  
32 **MR. BOSARGE:** The depth one more time?  
33  
34 **MR. JAAP:** It's been 100 and 300 meters.  
35  
36 **MR. BOSARGE:** So fifty fathoms to --  
37  
38 **DR. KILGOUR:** The depth is probably going to be an issue,  
39 because I'm not connected via hardwire, to try and alleviate  
40 other problems, but I should have it on there. It is between  
41 300 and 500 meters, and so that's -- It's definitely outside the  
42 fifty-fathom line.  
43  
44 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.  
45  
46 **DR. ROSS:** While we're bringing that up, I have a quick question  
47 maybe for Walt's group. It looks like in some of these boxes --  
48 I am not sure whether we can adjust boundaries at this meeting.

1 We got into problems with that yesterday, and I'm going to have  
2 a couple of suggestions, but it appears that, if this box were  
3 tilted on a diagonal, that it would cover more reef and give  
4 back more trawlable territory and do a better job of protecting  
5 the resource than the box I see there now. Is that an  
6 adjustment we can make here or is that --

7  
8 **MR. BOSARGE:** It needs to run with the bottom, and that's the  
9 problem. It's not running with the bottom.

10  
11 **DR. KILGOUR:** We can fix that.

12  
13 **DR. ROSS:** I mean that's my question. As we suggest and  
14 prioritize these areas, can we also make some minor adjustments?

15  
16 **DR. LANG:** We were doing that yesterday, and so why not  
17 continue?

18  
19 **MS. BOSARGE:** I think what Morgan did for us in the past was  
20 essentially the coral scientists provided some boundaries, and  
21 then they had their meeting, and Morgan looked kind of at some  
22 different things and made some adjustments to the boundaries,  
23 but we didn't do that in the meeting, per se, right? I think  
24 that that's definitely something you could ask Morgan to do  
25 though, if you wanted Morgan to look at it, and possibly look at  
26 tilting boxes, but I don't know that it's something that she may  
27 want to do on the fly. Do you see what I'm saying?

28  
29 Then we're changing coordinates and things like that, but I  
30 think it's definitely something that she can look at. As I said  
31 before, this will be the first time that this group is going to  
32 get a shot at this, and then it's going to become a document.  
33 Then it will be revised and tweaked more after that.

34  
35 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I just want to mention that we attempted to do a  
36 little bit of that when we were drawing boundaries for the  
37 proposed sanctuary expansion, and so you might want to take a  
38 look at the Flower Gardens Banks proposed boundary for that  
39 area. I don't recall exactly what it was.

40  
41 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul.

42  
43 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I would just like to say that I agree with some  
44 of what I've heard. That's important, and I think it's wise to  
45 get it right the first time, because, once we focus on it and  
46 discuss it and get it right and push it up, we may not have to  
47 redo it three or four times or whatever, and so the dialogue is  
48 good, and I think tweaking this would be a really good idea. It

1 would be helpful for everyone.

2  
3 **MR. BOSARGE:** If our time is not constrained too bad by moving  
4 it around, I agree that it needs to be changed. If it was  
5 twisted, it would do everybody more good.

6  
7 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Looking at that map, the sanctuary boundary  
8 covers the reef tract fairly tightly, proposed sanctuary  
9 boundary.

10  
11 **MR. JAAP:** Morgan, do we have to make a motion, or can you just  
12 take the instruction or advice to look into changing that into  
13 the idea that the sanctuary put forward?

14  
15 **DR. KILGOUR:** I can do either. I can either just adjust that  
16 box and tilt it, and you can direct me on what you would like it  
17 to look like, or, if the group recommends that larger feature  
18 that follows the reef tract, I can do that too and edit the  
19 boundaries and make it that.

20  
21 **MR. JAAP:** I think the preference would be to try to follow the  
22 reef tract, rather than just twist the box.

23  
24 **MR. BOSARGE:** Here again, as far as I feel the shrimp industry  
25 is concerned, I say we could go with the green line. My concern  
26 would be for the longline fishery and the reef fish fishermen  
27 that are not in the room, because, if the regulations are put in  
28 place, it would affect them more. Steve.

29  
30 **DR. ROSS:** I don't know if we need to make this as a motion, but  
31 we're prioritizing relatively few sites from the list, and this  
32 expansion covers the reef, and I think it helps make this more  
33 of a priority site, using pretty much the sanctuary's proposed  
34 green boundary. Do we need a motion to change this or more  
35 discussion?

36  
37 **DR. KILGOUR:** I think at this stage, because there were motions  
38 to accept the boundaries in the last SSC/AP meeting, that I  
39 would probably prefer it if you guys could make a motion that  
40 you would like me to change the boundaries to this, to the  
41 sanctuary's boundaries, and I can do that easily, but I'm  
42 showing you what was the difference.

43  
44 **MR. BOSARGE:** I will just make one comment and then we'll deal  
45 with it. If all we did was to turn the box, and there are  
46 regulations applied to that box, then, even though your  
47 protection may not go on each, you are leaving some of that for  
48 these commercial guys to work. In other words, the Reef Fish

1 Committee is going to look at this also, and so just keep that  
2 in the back of your mind. Go ahead, Steve.  
3  
4 **DR. ROSS:** Having heard that comment, I think we could go either  
5 way, but I am going to propose as a motion that we adjust the  
6 boundary of this site, L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef, to go to  
7 the proposed boundary suggested in the sanctuary expansion and  
8 that this area be a priority area.  
9  
10 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do we have a second from the Coral AP? Paul.  
11 Steve made the motion and Paul seconded.  
12  
13 **DR. LANG:** No, Paul can't second it.  
14  
15 **MR. BOSARGE:** I'm sorry. Paul is not part of that. Shelly is  
16 going to second the motion, and this is the Coral AP. Is there  
17 discussion? Any discussion?  
18  
19 **MR. BROOKER:** I will say did that conform to the Shrimp AP's  
20 boundaries there? I mean I missed some of that conversation,  
21 because I was standing up over at the other side of the room.  
22  
23 **MR. BOSARGE:** I don't want to speak for the whole Shrimp AP, and  
24 so we will let Johnny.  
25  
26 **MR. WILLIAMS:** I don't really have a problem with it. I think  
27 it makes a lot of sense where that boundary will follow that  
28 reef more, because I don't see any shrimping effort at all in  
29 there, and so I don't have a problem with it.  
30  
31 **MR. BROOKER:** Then I would support this motion as long as the  
32 shrimpers can get behind it as well.  
33  
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** I have one reservation, in that the reef fish  
35 fishermen are going to -- That's another fight for another day,  
36 I guess.  
37  
38 **MS. KRUEGER:** All in support of this motion.  
39  
40 **MR. BOSARGE:** We've got six for.  
41  
42 **MS. KRUEGER:** Opposed.  
43  
44 **MR. BOSARGE:** None. The motion carries unanimously.  
45  
46 **MR. JAAP:** The SSC will vote to support this particular motion.  
47  
48 **MR. BOSARGE:** Five for. Any opposed?

1  
2 **MR. JAAP:** We just supported that motion, that's all.  
3  
4 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay, and so the Coral SSC supports the motion.  
5 The Shrimp AP supports the motion also. All right. Now we move  
6 on. Morgan, I don't want to rush you, but can we move on to  
7 Mississippi Canyon 118?  
8  
9 **DR. KILGOUR:** We sure can.  
10  
11 **MR. JAAP:** This is a deep site somewhere between 800 and 1,500  
12 meters. The area is almost 338 square kilometers. I presume,  
13 unless I am -- My colleagues down here can tell me differently,  
14 but, right now, this doesn't have a lot of, I guess, study on  
15 it. It has something like three -- I have in my list, from the  
16 previous work, about three coral species, but I think it's one  
17 of these areas that, because it's so deep, it hasn't had a lot  
18 of research, but, Steve, what's your idea on that?  
19  
20 **DR. ROSS:** As far as I know, this is a small coral area with  
21 scattered hard grounds. It's not very big. It hasn't been  
22 researched that much. It's hard to tell how significant it is,  
23 but it is deep, and it's outside the area of most conflict.  
24 There's not a lot you can say about that site.  
25  
26 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I guess where my head is going is Steve doesn't  
27 know much about the research. If there's not danger and they're  
28 not fishing it, and we're trying to prioritize things, this  
29 looks like a good one to skip to the next one is what I'm  
30 saying. If we don't have a lot of research and if it's not in  
31 danger of being trawled over or if it's not on the priority list  
32 for the fishing interest, there might be some other places.  
33 This might be a place to save time is what I'm saying.  
34  
35 **DR. KILGOUR:** Erik Cordes is on the webinar, just in case we had  
36 questions about some of these deepwater areas, because he has  
37 been there, and he has something to say, I think. Erik, are you  
38 still there?  
39  
40 **DR. CORDES:** Hi, everybody. Sorry I had to leave, but MC 118 is  
41 the site of the gas hydrate observatory that's been in place for  
42 quite a while. It's run out of the University of Southern  
43 Mississippi. In more recent years -- There is a ton of research  
44 at this site, but it's focused mostly on the seeps.  
45  
46 In more recent years, when we've been going back, we have  
47 actually found fairly extensive areas of corals, and this is the  
48 site that I was showing you the pictures of that had all the red

1 crabs all over it. As you can see, there is some fishing effort  
2 here.

3  
4 I just wanted to throw that out there. I am not sure that it  
5 makes it to the top ten if we only have a couple of sites left.  
6 Maybe this isn't one of them, but, just so you know, there is a  
7 ton of research. We do have really good maps and we have good  
8 coral distributions, and this is that red crab habitat that I  
9 was showing you.

10  
11 **MR. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Erik.

12  
13 **DR. CORDES:** Just one more thing. To the point of very little  
14 fishing effort down here and no conflict, I was just -- You know  
15 we had talked a little bit offline about taking some of the  
16 sites that are uncontested and kind of moving them as a sort of  
17 bulk recommendation, rather than trying to fit them into this  
18 list of only ten sites.

19  
20 Take a bunch of these, especially these deeper sites, where  
21 there is much less interest from the fishing community, and  
22 possibly setting those aside sort of en masse, as we recommend  
23 that these all be considered HAPCs, due to the lack of conflict  
24 and the potential importance of these sites, and so I just  
25 wanted to throw that out there. Thank you.

26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** Thank you. Morgan, I saw the shrimping tracks,  
28 but what are the black dots?

29  
30 **DR. KILGOUR:** Those are tow points. I can't explain it, because  
31 this is very deep.

32  
33 **MR. BOSARGE:** How deep?

34  
35 **MR. JAAP:** This particular site goes up to 1,500 meters.

36  
37 **DR. KILGOUR:** 4,500 feet.

38  
39 **MR. BOSARGE:** I can't imagine. That doesn't make any sense.  
40 Paul.

41  
42 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Does that mean -- I don't really know, and I'm  
43 not a trawl man, but does that mean that people are doing mid-  
44 water trawling?

45  
46 **MR. BOSARGE:** No, this is all LGL or electronic logbook data  
47 from trawlers. Harris.

48



1 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** That's why it's important to put the depths,  
2 because you might have 1,000 feet and then, all at once, there's  
3 a bank and it goes up to thirty-eight fathoms. I mean that's  
4 the way it is. Even on the fifty-fathom curve, you have fifty  
5 fathoms and then right here you have thirty-eight. Then you  
6 have 1,000, and it's not consistent, and so, there again, we  
7 don't have the depth, and we don't really know where they're  
8 dragging or what depth they're dragging.

9  
10 **MR. BOSARGE:** True. Morgan.

11  
12 **DR. KILGOUR:** I am going to try and get the -- I know it doesn't  
13 go up to fifty fathoms. It's just way too deep for that, and so  
14 this is deep water, but one thing I wanted to mention is that  
15 all of these points are extracted using an algorithm, and so  
16 your vessel had to be going a certain speed for a certain length  
17 of time for this point to show up, and so I don't know if this  
18 transiting and you're just working on nets or something. I  
19 don't know, but there is a lot of shrimping point out in this  
20 area, and so I am going to try and get the fathoms on there and  
21 see what I can do.

22  
23 **MR. BOSARGE:** While you're doing that, can you also go back out  
24 a little bit, where we can see the rest of the tracks?

25  
26 **MR. JAAP:** While she's doing that, just to make people aware  
27 that, in terms of the deepwater sites, we have just this one in  
28 the northeast and we have one in the Florida Banks system, and  
29 the rest of them are in the -- I think there's four or five in  
30 the northwest, of the forty-seven things that we're proposing.

31  
32 **MR. BOSARGE:** You said you have one in the northeast?

33  
34 **MR. JAAP:** Yes, the Mississippi Canyon, that we're looking at  
35 right now. When we get into the northwest, we've got Green  
36 Canyon 852, AT 357, AT 047. They're all clustered in -- Well,  
37 they're clustered for me, in my analytical sense, but then, in  
38 Florida, we have the John Reed South site, which is south of the  
39 Pulley Ridge area. Perhaps it has some conflict issues with the  
40 longliners.

41  
42 **MR. BOSARGE:** And in south Texas?

43  
44 **MR. JAAP:** There are no deep sites in south Texas.

45  
46 **MR. BOSARGE:** I am just looking -- Morgan, that's off the mouth  
47 of the Mississippi River?

48

1 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes. If I turn off the shrimping effort, things  
2 go a lot faster, and so I will turn it on when we're zoomed in a  
3 little bit more, if that's okay with you, just so you can see  
4 where this is. The Mississippi Canyon is right here, and I  
5 believe the other sites that Walt was talking about are these  
6 four and possibly this one right here. Is that correct, Walt?  
7 So AT 357, AT 047, Green Canyon, and Garden Banks.  
8

9 **MR. BOSARGE:** I'm going to ask one more time, but the actual  
10 depth at this Mississippi Canyon 118? I mean we've got a range,  
11 but what is the depth?  
12

13 **DR. LANG:** According to Sandra, it's 850 meters, and so 2,500  
14 feet.  
15

16 **DR. KILGOUR:** That's the fifty-fathom line in the Gulf of  
17 Mexico, this thing right here. Apparently the coral area, the  
18 center of it, is at about 2,700 feet.  
19

20 **MR. BOSARGE:** So a little over 400 fathoms. I can only surmise  
21 that that would be vessels transiting.  
22

23 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, or overnighiting slowly going somewhere.  
24

25 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, and there's not, to my knowledge -- I don't  
26 know that anybody has got that much wire. All right.  
27

28 **DR. KILGOUR:** Was there a motion made about this site?  
29

30 **MR. BOSARGE:** There has been no motion.  
31

32 **MR. JAAP:** Does the SSC have any other comments or the AP on  
33 this particular site?  
34

35 **DR. ROSS:** I think Erik provided some additional good data. As  
36 he said, the hydrate observatory is mostly seep-related, and  
37 he's got better data on some of the corals there, and it's a  
38 small site. I think the problem is that we're nearing sort of  
39 the end of the number of sites we're going to recommend, and so  
40 it's unclear how this site ranks in regard to some of the others  
41 we might consider.  
42

43 It might be that this is sort of a maybe until we talk about a  
44 couple of the others. I'm not sure whether that's a good way to  
45 go, and I'm not sure how this site compares to the other  
46 deepwater sites, if we need a deepwater representative, and  
47 which would be the best one.  
48

1 **MR. BOSARGE:** G.P.  
2  
3 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I would like to follow up on that a little bit,  
4 because I think the suggestion that Erik made, in addition, was  
5 -- I still feel this constraint that we're trying to fit within  
6 a number, which I think is arbitrary, that when there is some of  
7 these deepwater sites that are not really contested, that don't  
8 have any conflicts, I think they should be included, whether  
9 they -- I have to remind you that all of these areas have been  
10 identified as priorities by the Coral SSC, all forty-seven, and  
11 so it's not like -- Now we're trying to reprioritize within that  
12 forty-seven, but all of these areas are priorities, and, if  
13 there's not a conflict, why not include them and why be  
14 constrained within that arbitrary number?  
15  
16 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.  
17  
18 **DR. ROSS:** That's good point, and, in that case, I won't make a  
19 motion, but I will suggest that we consider making a motion that  
20 all the deepwater sites be included as priority areas, and there  
21 may be three or four of them, and just be done with it.  
22  
23 **MR. JAAP:** I think we have to kind of look at the other sites to  
24 begin with, to make sure there aren't the fishing conflicts,  
25 right? I would think that would be a reasonable thing, first of  
26 all, to see if the boundaries are reasonable and that these are  
27 okay, but we could move on and look at 047, the AT sites, and  
28 see how they look relative to the Mississippi Canyon.  
29  
30 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. John.  
31  
32 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Without any further detail and whatnot, I think  
33 we need to go on and let's get it done. It's nine o'clock  
34 already.  
35  
36 **MR. BOSARGE:** If that's the consensus of the group, let's move  
37 on. We will hold this site to look at to come back to after we  
38 have visited the other four sites you've mentioned. Now we're  
39 back over into the --  
40  
41 **MR. JAAP:** We can go to the northwest Gulf and look at AT 047  
42 and AT 357.  
43  
44 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Morgan is gone, but we've got good  
45 help. Which one would you like to look at first, Walt?  
46  
47 **MR. JAAP:** 047.  
48

1 **MR. BOSARGE:** 047. Can we get that one up? Have you got shrimp  
2 points out there?  
3  
4 **DR. KILGOUR:** It looks like you could be very easily transiting,  
5 but I don't know. Maybe fishing. I don't know.  
6  
7 **MR. BOSARGE:** Maybe so. Can you give us a little detail on  
8 what's here?  
9  
10 **MR. JAAP:** Again, the data I have is fairly sparse. It lists  
11 three different kinds of corals that are found on the site. I  
12 don't know if Erik has any more information on it, and it would  
13 be around twenty-three-and-a-half square kilometers, not very  
14 big.  
15  
16 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Johnny.  
17  
18 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Looking at the supposedly shrimp effort, if  
19 that's shrimp effort, that guy is still out there trying to get  
20 his rigs off of there.  
21  
22 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I do have notes from our review of this that this  
23 area does have several large mounds of madrepora coral, and this  
24 is also a site where numerous red crabs have been noted and  
25 documented.  
26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul.  
28  
29 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Does the Flower Garden Banks group have a revised  
30 line around that place other than the rectangle that we're  
31 looking at, or is that it, because the area of the bank, of the  
32 hard bottom, seems different than the area that is encompassed  
33 by the square.  
34  
35 **MR. BOSARGE:** We will have to refer to Morgan on that.  
36  
37 **DR. KILGOUR:** I'm sorry, but what was the question?  
38  
39 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Is there a sanctuary boundary as well?  
40  
41 **DR. KILGOUR:** Let me look. Yes, Alternative 5 includes -- This  
42 is Henderson Ridge Mid-South.  
43  
44 **MR. BOSARGE:** Which appears to be the same boundary. Thank you.  
45  
46 **MR. JAAP:** Maybe the thing to do is just look at the other AT  
47 site and just get an idea and a glimpse of that, and then we  
48 could consider all three of these.

1  
2 **MR. BOSARGE:** Which one would be your next one?  
3  
4 **MR. JAAP:** The next one would be AT 357, please.  
5  
6 **DR. KILGOUR:** I have the Alternative 5 from the Flower Gardens.  
7 It's Alternative 4 and 5, but they call it something different.  
8 It's Henderson Ridge South, but this is the lease block name, AT  
9 357. It looks like the difference is they encompass this larger  
10 feature. All of the documented coral presence that I have in my  
11 database, which is not all-inclusive. There's been some new  
12 published studies that we're still incorporating into the  
13 database, but it's up here on this little peak.  
14  
15 **DR. CORDES:** This was discovered in some of the work following  
16 the Deepwater Horizon. This is the biggest and most extensive  
17 coral area that we know of in the Gulf in waters over 1,000  
18 meters. It was only discovered about five years ago.  
19  
20 When we were drawing the Flower Gardens expansion, the fact that  
21 it looks very -- The area to the south looks very similar to it,  
22 but we just haven't had a chance to get out there yet, and  
23 that's why they encompassed it, based on some of the predictive  
24 work we did, but that little purple dot over the "A" is --  
25 Actually, it's not so little.  
26  
27 It's maybe half-a-mile wide, and we know that there are corals  
28 pretty much throughout that entire area. It's mostly sea fans,  
29 but it was a large population of one of the species that was  
30 impacted during the spill, and so it's of significance for that  
31 reason, but I would lump this -- This is another in that list of  
32 offshore, deepwater, uncontested sites that hopefully we can  
33 maybe consider in bulk.  
34  
35 **MR. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Erik. Steve.  
36  
37 **DR. ROSS:** I think this looks like a similar issue to what we  
38 had before with the sanctuary boundary and including the reef  
39 proper better. There's a lack of conflict here, and I would  
40 like to point out something else. We have a lot more data in  
41 the Gulf of Mexico than we used to, and the oil spill research  
42 helped contribute to that, but there's still lots of places  
43 where we haven't looked, and using these multibeam maps to help  
44 define these reefs is a pretty good idea, because a lot of this  
45 bathymetry is what the models use to predict coral habitat, and  
46 so I would recommend that this be a priority area with the other  
47 deepwater areas and use the sanctuary boundary.  
48

1 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Morgan.  
2  
3 **DR. KILGOUR:** I have two things to say. First of all, I would  
4 like to remind everyone that one reason why HAPC status, even if  
5 you're not fishing there, would be important is that it requires  
6 a consultation with NMFS if oil and gas want to expand to this  
7 area. If it has an HAPC status, they have to do some type of  
8 looking at it before oil and gas can enter there. It doesn't  
9 prevent it, but it just requires an extra step, and so there is  
10 that.  
11  
12 The second thing is, is there anything other than sea fans  
13 currently on HE 357, because, right now, the Gulf Council has  
14 removed all octocorals from the fishery management unit, and it  
15 needs to reincorporate deepwater octocorals in order for those  
16 to be considered as corals in coral EFH.  
17  
18 If there is black coral or stony coral, that's fine, but  
19 octocorals as a whole have been removed and need to be  
20 reincorporated back into the fishery management unit for us to  
21 consider them as coral EFH. That's just another hoop I have to  
22 jump through, and it's already been recommended to the council  
23 that they reincorporate octocorals in the FMU, but it just  
24 hasn't happened yet.  
25  
26 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Shelly.  
27  
28 **MS. KRUEGER:** That was my comment, that I thought we had voted  
29 to re-include them, but it just hasn't been --  
30  
31 **UNIDENTIFIED:** It hasn't been moved yet.  
32  
33 **DR. CORDES:** This is Erik again.  
34  
35 **MR. BOSARGE:** One second, Erik. G.P.  
36  
37 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Erik is probably going to say what I'm maybe going  
38 to say, but I do have in our notes from our review that there  
39 are large colonies of madrepora in this area, and so there are  
40 stony corals here.  
41  
42 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Erik and then Joe.  
43  
44 **DR. CORDES:** That was it. G.P. got it.  
45  
46 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Pardon me, but, as a new member, I'm still  
47 getting my legs under me, but pardon me if I'm asking  
48 rudimentary questions. The charts I've seen displaying all the

1 web of oil and gas pipeline, have they already been considered  
2 in here as far as -- Like are there issues that we need to be  
3 considering as we're doing this? I thought I just heard them  
4 say there's another process, someone saying there's another  
5 process, that they go through.

6  
7 **MR. BOSARGE:** I believe that was Morgan talking about that if  
8 they become an area of concern that the oil and gas industry can  
9 still go there and drill, but they have to look at what they may  
10 affect in the process. In other words, there is a process they  
11 have to go through.

12  
13 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Again, my question is less about drilling  
14 platforms and more about these -- The charts I've seen showing  
15 the pipeline, pipeline webs that are on the bottom, which more  
16 directly impact the coral, have they been -- Is there a filter  
17 that these HAPCs have been through, or is that considered  
18 afterwards? I don't need a primer, but I'm just asking for like  
19 how does that work?

20  
21 **MR. BOSARGE:** I can't answer the question. Maybe Walt.

22  
23 **MR. JAAP:** Historically, I mean we can regulate the fishing  
24 activities and so forth, and, as Morgan pointed out, when an  
25 area is designated as an HAPC, there is negotiations with  
26 Minerals Management or whatever the agency is now that currently  
27 manages the --

28  
29 **MR. WEATHERBY:** BOEM, right?

30  
31 **MR. JAAP:** But we really don't, I think, have a -- I know, from  
32 the Gulf Stream pipeline project that I worked on that goes from  
33 Mississippi into Tampa Bay, there were a lot of things that were  
34 brought up from an ecological and fishing standpoint when they  
35 put that pipeline in, and so I think there are some checks and  
36 balances, but probably they are all considered in the EIS  
37 process.

38  
39 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Maybe my question is better answered offline,  
40 when everybody is not talking, but there's got to be a  
41 relationship between shrimp dragging and pipeline placement  
42 along the bottom, correct? I need to understand that a little  
43 better too, and I apologize, Mr. Chairman.

44  
45 **MR. BOSARGE:** As far as the pipeline placement, they put the  
46 pipelines where they need them. I mean there is no consultation  
47 between the shrimp industry. When they're getting ready to put  
48 a pipeline down, it's Point A to Point B, and I believe, if I'm

1 not -- I'm pretty sure that I'm correct on this, but anything  
2 inside of 300 feet has to be buried and anything outside of 300  
3 feet can lay on the bottom.

4  
5 There is no consultation between the shrimp industry and the  
6 pipeline industry, but, a lot of times, I look at the pipelines,  
7 especially once they get them above the water, and it's more  
8 structure for things to attach to and grow and fish to -- It's a  
9 give-and-take.

10  
11 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I'm an artificial reef guy, and I get that part  
12 of it, but I'm just wondering, do they lay them right over the  
13 black coral and then mitigate somewhere else or how does that  
14 work?

15  
16 **MR. BOSARGE:** To my knowledge, they don't.

17  
18 **MR. JAAP:** The Gulf Stream pipeline that comes down had to avoid  
19 Madison Swanson, it had to avoid the Middle Grounds, and it had  
20 to avoid high-profile habitat, and so I think -- Currently, I  
21 think they are pretty proactive in trying to work with the  
22 environmental and the fishing industries to make sure they don't  
23 do any more harm than is possible. When they do harm -- Gulf  
24 Stream put in 200,000 ton of limestone boulders to compensate  
25 for hard-bottom habitat injuries.

26  
27 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Sorry. I don't mean to sidetrack the process.

28  
29 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's fine. Go ahead.

30  
31 **MR. CHAD HANSON:** Chad Hanson with the Pew Charitable Trusts. I  
32 just wanted to make one comment to that last comment by Mr. Walt  
33 Jaap. On the Madison Swanson, the oil and gas industry was  
34 going to lay that pipeline, and the person that was doing the  
35 research out there from FSU actually had to fly to D.C. to point  
36 out that that's actually a HAPC. They were not being proactive  
37 when they were laying the pipeline through. It took the  
38 scientists to go and be proactive to try to get them to put the  
39 pipeline around that, and I just wanted to point out that  
40 clarification.

41  
42 **MR. BOSARGE:** Thank you. All right. Back to our site, we're  
43 looking at it, and we do see some tracks there that I know, and  
44 most of you other shrimpers know, that's got to be transit  
45 tracks. Do we want to, and it has to be the coral, want to  
46 adopt the -- Go ahead, Walt.

47  
48 **MR. JAAP:** I would say we have at least two options. One would



1 be to adopt the three sites in the deep water that we've looked  
2 at, AT 047, AT 357, and Mississippi Canyon, or, as someone  
3 pointed out, I think that the AT 357 site seems to have more  
4 resources and perhaps is a better site to put on the priority  
5 list. Is there any discussion on that?  
6

7 **DR. LANG:** I guess I would like to ask Erik for his  
8 prioritizing.  
9

10 **DR. CORDES:** I would definitely rank this as, in my opinion, of  
11 the rest of the deepwater sites that we have on the list, this  
12 would be my number one.  
13

14 **MR. JAAP:** 357?  
15

16 **DR. CORDES:** Yes, that's right.  
17

18 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do we adopt the boundary that is in the green or  
19 the red? The green is the sanctuary boundary. Do we adopt the  
20 sanctuary boundary or do we adopt this prioritizing boundary?  
21

22 **MR. JAAP:** I would recommend that we consider the sanctuary  
23 expansion boundary rather than the SSC's recommendation.  
24

25 **MR. BOSARGE:** It looks like it fits the bottom better, and so  
26 would you like to put that in a motion?  
27

28 **MR. JAAP:** G.P., do you have a comment?  
29

30 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Just as part of the discussion, I prefer the first  
31 thing that you said, was to incorporate all three of these  
32 areas, and essentially because even though this 357 is probably  
33 the highest priority of the three, all of them are important  
34 deepwater sites and none of them appear to have any fishing  
35 conflicts associated with them.  
36

37 **MR. JAAP:** All right. I will make a motion that we prioritize  
38 the three deepwater sites, which are AT 047, AT 357, and  
39 Mississippi Canyon 118, as priority sites in deep water.  
40

41 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.  
42

43 **DR. ROSS:** Before we do that, what are we going to do with Green  
44 Canyon 852, which is also a deepwater site?  
45

46 **MR. BOSARGE:** Is Green Canyon 852 the one we looked at prior or  
47 we have not looked at it?  
48

1 **MR. JAAP:** We haven't looked at it yet, I don't think.  
2  
3 **DR. ROSS:** I mean I guess my point is let's get all of these in  
4 one batch and deal with them, but just make sure we've covered  
5 all those bases for deepwater sites.  
6  
7 **MR. BOSARGE:** Morgan, can you show us where Green Canyon 852 is?  
8  
9 **DR. KILGOUR:** I absolutely can.  
10  
11 **MR. JAAP:** It has more species listed, from the earlier work.  
12 It's in the depth range of --  
13  
14 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I will also point out that there is a couple of  
15 additional ones that I don't think we've talked about yet  
16 either, Mississippi Canyon 751 and 885.  
17  
18 **UNIDENTIFIED:** One of those I don't think is on our original  
19 list though.  
20  
21 **DR. CORDES:** I just wanted to point out that pretty much all of  
22 the sites that are listed by their lease block numbers are all  
23 in water depths over 1,000 feet, and those are the sites that I  
24 was sort of suggesting that we could just consider in bulk, as  
25 long as there is no conflict.  
26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Thanks.  
28  
29 **DR. CORDES:** There is maybe eight to ten of them, or maybe more.  
30  
31 **MR. BOSARGE:** Morgan.  
32  
33 **DR. KILGOUR:** What you're seeing here is those purple dots are  
34 all coral points. The green line that runs through, that's a  
35 pipeline. If I turn off the coral points, so we can better see  
36 when I zoom in, there doesn't appear that there is any points  
37 for shrimping tracks or anything like that.  
38  
39 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. What does the Coral SSC --  
40  
41 **MR. JAAP:** We could add this one to the other three that we had.  
42  
43 **MR. BOSARGE:** What kind of total does that bring us to?  
44  
45 **MR. JAAP:** I think it would bring us a little over ten, wouldn't  
46 it? There is four here.  
47  
48 **MR. BOSARGE:** Is there anybody with any more discussion? Steve.

1  
2 **DR. ROSS:** Well, there is a suggestion that there is more than  
3 four of these deepwater sites, and we're kind of -- It seems  
4 like we're sort of getting bogged down in this part without  
5 going back to consider the shallow-water sites. The problem is  
6 we don't have a clear set of objective criteria to balance all  
7 of these against, and so I'm not sure whether we should just  
8 limit ourselves to a few of these deepwater sites and move on or  
9 not. That's unclear to me.  
10  
11 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul.  
12  
13 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I think what we have here is a group, and we may  
14 as well deal with them, accept them or not accept them or  
15 whatever, now and move on to the next group, and I think we  
16 should de-focus on the number ten or eleven or twelve or  
17 whatever it is and do what we can do, but we've already gone  
18 through and discussed these and we've analyzed them. They seem  
19 to be in pretty good shape, and let's deal with them.  
20  
21 **MR. BOSARGE:** Walter.  
22  
23 **MR. JAAP:** I think I support what Paul suggested, is basically  
24 we consider this group, these four deepwater sites, and then I  
25 would suggest we move to south Texas. There are a couple of  
26 sites there that we need to look at. They are in shallower  
27 water, but I think they need to be evaluated and discussed.  
28  
29 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. I thought you said we didn't have anything  
30 in south Texas.  
31  
32 **MR. JAAP:** Not in deep water. I'm saying we get the deep water  
33 and then we move to Texas. That would be my suggestion, but I  
34 think the motion is on the board and we should address it and  
35 either vote it up or down.  
36  
37 **MR. BOSARGE:** It's up to you to make the motion.  
38  
39 **MR. JAAP:** The motion is up there. Any further comment? Go  
40 ahead, Morgan.  
41  
42 **DR. KILGOUR:** Just so I'm clear, did you want to add Green  
43 Canyon 852 to this? I'm just unclear.  
44  
45 **MR. JAAP:** Yes, please. The SSC then would -- All in favor of  
46 this.  
47  
48 **MR. BOSARGE:** One second, Walt. We've got Chad.

1  
2 **MR. HANSON:** Unfortunately, Erik is not here. He's on the  
3 phone, but he has made suggestions. He's one of the deep-sea  
4 scientists that's been out there to these areas, and he is  
5 making a suggestion to include them all, and I am not clear as  
6 to how these areas here are being prioritized over the others,  
7 when some of the scientists are saying they all should be  
8 included, and so I think maybe that's probably where the  
9 committee could go.

10  
11 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I would agree with that. I would agree with this  
12 motion, because these are priorities, but I will point out again  
13 that there is Mississippi Canyon 751 and Mississippi Canyon 885  
14 and Green Canyon 234 and Green Canyon 140 and 272 and Garden  
15 Banks 299 and Green Canyon 354 and Garden Banks 435. These have  
16 also been identified as important deep-coral areas, and I think,  
17 to make this simple, we could take them all and identify them as  
18 priority areas. They don't have fishing conflicts, and we could  
19 do them as a group.

20  
21 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul.

22  
23 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I agree that these areas are probably all  
24 important. However, with respect to our trawling colleagues,  
25 our shrimpers and so forth, I think we really need to go and  
26 review each one of them, so that everyone is comfortable with  
27 our declaring them a go or no-go. They may well all be go, but  
28 at this point it's -- Without reviewing them, it's hard to say.  
29 I know that bogs the process down, but it is the process.

30  
31 **MR. BOSARGE:** I am worried about if we throw too much at them at  
32 one time that -- Anyhow, Morgan.

33  
34 **DR. KILGOUR:** I'm going to make a suggestion. Once you're  
35 finished with this motion, I would really recommend that we move  
36 over to the South Texas Banks, because there is -- I mean we're  
37 supposed to end at noon today, but flights don't always go  
38 according to my schedule, and so I would like to make sure that  
39 we at least get the areas that are going to be involved with  
40 friendly conversation before we go to these deepwater sites,  
41 since there doesn't seem that there's a lot of heartburn about  
42 them, and you guys can decide how to address these after we do  
43 the South Texas Banks. That's my plea. Thank you.

44  
45 **MR. BOSARGE:** The most heartburn will be from the oil and gas  
46 industry on these.

47  
48 **MR. JAAP:** In an incremental approach here, we're going to go

1 and -- I would suggest we vote on the sites that are up there  
2 and the motion as priority for -- These are all deepwater sites.  
3 We've had discussion on them. **All in favor.**  
4  
5 **MR. BOSARGE:** Five. **Anybody against?**  
6  
7 **MR. JAAP:** **Is anyone against that particular motion on the SSC?**  
8  
9 **MR. BOSARGE:** **The motion carries unanimous.**  
10  
11 **MS. KRUEGER:** I would like to ask the Coral AP if they would  
12 like to approve the same motion. Any opposed?  
13  
14 **MR. BOSARGE:** Coral supports the motion. The shrimp industry?  
15 The Shrimp AP supports the motion. Dennis Henderson.  
16  
17 **MR. HENDERSON:** You know we're here, and the way I understood  
18 it, we were going to do ten sites. Now it looks like every site  
19 is a priority. I mean I don't think we'll ever finish this  
20 meeting today if we keep going on the way we are.  
21  
22 **MR. BOSARGE:** Ms. Bosarge.  
23  
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** I think what Morgan had suggested, I think it's  
25 probably a good idea. I think she's going to move into the  
26 south Texas ones, which are a little bit shallower and may have  
27 some conflicts, and then essentially the group can put as many  
28 priority areas in as they want, but just keep it in mind that if  
29 that list grows too vast that what happens is, when it gets to  
30 the council, then the council ends up trying to figure out which  
31 ones were really the important ones, if we feel we can only  
32 handle ten sites in a document or something.  
33  
34 We really want that to come from you all, and so that's why it  
35 was important for you all to kind of -- What Morgan had said  
36 about the discussion at the council and what we were thinking  
37 about doing with that document, so that you all are the ones on  
38 the coral side that tell us the very most important ones.  
39  
40 You're more than welcome to put them all in there, but if we  
41 can't handle them all in a document, then we end up going, okay,  
42 well, which ones were really their top ten, essentially, or  
43 something like that, and so we really want that to come from you  
44 all, and so just keep that in mind as you go through these  
45 discussions.  
46  
47 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Joe.  
48

1 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I think that these folks have come a long way,  
2 and let's get to the ones that are going to be contentious or  
3 that need adjustment, as opposed to stuff in deep water, where  
4 there is no fishing.

5

6 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. That sounds good. Walter.

7

8 **MR. JAAP:** I would say we move to the south Texas. We voted on  
9 this, and it's approved.

10

11 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. We have a motion, and it's all  
12 approved, and let's go to south Texas.

13

14 **MR. JAAP:** The sites in south Texas include Baker Bank,  
15 Hospital/North Hospital/Aransas Banks, and that's all one, the  
16 Southern Banks, Dream Bank, Big Adam, Blackfish Ridge,  
17 Mysterious Banks, and Harte, all of which are in the fifty to  
18 one-hundred-meter range, which we consider to be the shallower  
19 area, and I will suggest maybe does someone have a particular  
20 bank they would like to offer up as a starting point? Morgan.

21

22 **DR. KILGOUR:** I would like to remind the Coral SSC and AP that  
23 these all, except for Harte Bank, were areas that needed  
24 boundary revision, based on the discussion that was had at the  
25 May 2015 meeting. I did another one of my boundary revisions,  
26 where you can see, now that shrimp effort is being overlaid on  
27 this, that this is a pretty prime shrimping grounds.

28

29 What I did was I would go into each individual bank, and when I  
30 have bathymetry of data available, which I do, but it's -- You  
31 can see it's checked, but it's not showing, and so my computer  
32 is giving me issues again.

33

34 I followed the feature, as best I could, while trying to  
35 minimize shrimping, and so, if we want to start from south and  
36 go north, that would be fine, and I can zoom in and you can see,  
37 if that's all right with you, but I was trying to minimize the  
38 number of points.

39

40 Really, when you look at the effort, you can see where the banks  
41 are pretty much without having to even see the bathymetry, and  
42 so just imagine that it's there, and you can see where the banks  
43 really are, because there aren't tow points over the tops of  
44 these banks, for the most part. There is a few, but when you  
45 look at where the shrimping occurs, it's really not on the tops  
46 of these banks.

47

48 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. Here again, these are going to be

1 contentious spots, in that, if you look at south Texas and the  
2 shrimp industry, we pretty much know where the coral is at, and  
3 we're staying off of it, and Morgan has done a good job of  
4 trying to draw the boxes where they fit best.

5  
6 My concern is, if you also look at shrimp tracks, you can pretty  
7 well see that there are very little other bottom obstructions or  
8 natural bottom for other fishermen to fish other than these  
9 places, and so, if we make this an HAPC and we regulate all  
10 commercial fishing out of it, you pretty much are going to take  
11 away the commercial fishermen from that end of the state.

12  
13 This is my problem with it. As far as the shrimp industry is  
14 concerned, we've done a really nice job of making it work for  
15 our industry, but my concern is for the other industries that  
16 also depend on this.

17  
18 **MR. JAAP:** Are these -- Would you describe them as being bandit  
19 fisheries or longline or both or what?

20  
21 **MR. BOSARGE:** Both. Go ahead.

22  
23 **MR. RUZICKA:** Morgan, is that Alternative 5 that you have in the  
24 green there or what does the green box represent?

25  
26 **DR. KILGOUR:** The green box represents my boundary revision,  
27 based on the bathymetry of the feature, and I want to say that  
28 this is -- I have bathymetry on here, and you can see the bank  
29 right in here, but this is not the extent of the whole bank. I  
30 have better bathymetry. There's been a couple of cruises on  
31 there, and so that's why this looks significantly larger. This  
32 is -- What you can see is very broad-scale bathymetry. It's for  
33 the whole entire Gulf of Mexico. What I have is much better,  
34 and it, unfortunately, won't show up.

35  
36 If you want, before you make a decision on each individual bank,  
37 I can move from bank to bank to bank, so you can see where the  
38 shrimp tracks are. There is only one really that wasn't an  
39 issue, and I should have started with that one.

40  
41 That's Harte Bank right here. You can see that it's avoided  
42 pretty well. That was the one that didn't seem to need  
43 revisions. Up here, we have another bank. You can see the  
44 feature, Blackfish Ridge. It's pretty well avoided already. A  
45 lot of these communities also -- There are black corals on  
46 there, and so they are a part of the fishery management unit,  
47 but most of the coral diversity on here are octocorals, which,  
48 again, would need to be reincorporated.

1  
2 Big Adam Rock, there is just a small corner of this whole entire  
3 lease block that really has the feature. Green Bank, you can  
4 see it, but I mean, when you zoom in, you can see where the  
5 banks are just without even the bathymetry, because they are  
6 avoided.

7  
8 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.

9  
10 **DR. ROSS:** I haven't worked these sites. I have read some about  
11 them, but it appears that the actual hard ground is avoided,  
12 which you would expect if anybody knows what they're doing out  
13 there, but is there any -- Do we have any information or any way  
14 to ecologically rank these eight sites, instead of just looking  
15 at these maps? Does anybody have any data that would suggest  
16 that one site is better than another or richer or more diverse  
17 or has a higher profile? That's the kind of information that I  
18 would like to --

19  
20 **MR. JAAP:** Steve, the data from the earlier work, which is  
21 probably -- It's incomplete, in some respects, but Baker, we  
22 didn't have anything for at that time. Hospital/North  
23 Hospital/Aransas had fourteen coral species, and that would  
24 include octocorals, scleractinians, and black corals. Southern  
25 Bank had seven. Big Adam, I did not have any information on.  
26 Blackfish Ridge was five. Mysterious Bank, we don't have data,  
27 and Harte had five, and so, of the group, it appears that  
28 Hospital and North Hospital probably had -- From that  
29 preliminary data, it was richer.

30  
31 **MR. BOSARGE:** Harris was next.

32  
33 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** I have two issues that I want to talk about.  
34 First, Morgan, I'm kind of confused on the dots. Are they in  
35 tow or are they in transit, and do they have longliner dots on  
36 there? No longliners? How about the dots? Are they in transit  
37 or they're dragging? They're all dragging? Okay.

38  
39 The second issue that I want to talk about is we do have maps,  
40 and Gary might address this. I don't know what the map's name  
41 is, but it shows all of these areas, and shrimpers try to keep  
42 away from there, because, first of all, some of these areas, if  
43 you get in the rocks and all, it's like razor blades, and it  
44 tears up your nets, and nets are very expensive now. They used  
45 to have cotton nets and nylon nets, and now they're going to  
46 these poly plastics, which are very expensive, and you can't  
47 afford to lose your gear.

48



1 Then Gary also came out with a hang book, and I don't know if  
2 Florida and Mississippi and all have hang books, but every  
3 shrimper has a hang book that shows you where the rocks are, and  
4 it shows you where the reefs are at, and it shows you where the  
5 sunken boats are at, and you avoid that, because you could lose  
6 \$10,000 or \$20,000 worth of equipment. That's why you see the  
7 shrimpers staying away from these areas, and I will let you  
8 comment, Gary.

9  
10 **MR. GRAHAM:** Well, first of all, my hang book went back to --  
11 They're dinosaurs now. That was all back in the loran days,  
12 and, when we got GPS, that obviated a need for my efforts,  
13 because what you do now is fishermen have computers on their  
14 boats with very advanced navigation and plotting systems and  
15 these sorts of things, and what they do is they exchange  
16 information through computer chips and stuff now, Harris, and  
17 these guys know that -- You can see that. They know.

18  
19 Hospital, these areas were -- I have been around a long time,  
20 and they were named before I ever came on the scene in 1966.  
21 Hospital got the name because an old shrimper said if you get in  
22 there that it's going to tear you up and put you in the  
23 hospital. I mean that stuff has been known for years, but, yes,  
24 the industry has this information, and it's very obvious in  
25 looking at the plots that they're avoiding it.

26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** Joe, you were next.

28  
29 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Maybe Harris answered my question, but, Morgan,  
30 is there any information, anecdotal or otherwise, for fisheries  
31 that are not shrimping, as far as activities around some of  
32 these areas, the bandits and -- I don't know if there's any  
33 trapping or -- I just heard you say no longlining information,  
34 right?

35  
36 **DR. KILGOUR:** I just put on the VMS data, and so it's -- Like I  
37 said, the purple is cold and red is hot, and so it doesn't  
38 appear that -- What I wanted to say is that I have the  
39 unpublished from the University of Texas Brownsville, and there  
40 are published reports from Harriet Nash that they went on two  
41 cruises in 2013 and 2014, I believe, and they mapped all this  
42 and they did extensive studies.

43  
44 These areas are very different from all of the other areas that  
45 you are considering. Their makeup is different, and the species  
46 on them are different, but the one area, I believe, that I  
47 remember, and I could be misspeaking, that all of the  
48 researchers out there that -- That was their priority area, was

1 Unnamed Bank, this Harte Bank.  
2  
3 They found an interesting diversity of animals, and it also had  
4 interesting sedimentation and non-sedimentation. It was hard to  
5 -- They had to go there three times before they could actually  
6 see anything, because of the currents, but that was, I think,  
7 and I might be misspeaking, but that was their priority area of  
8 all of these areas, because it was the most diverse with fish  
9 and coral, and it was it unique.  
10  
11 **MR. WEATHERBY:** When I'm looking at this, the hot and cold  
12 representation on this type of chart or representation or  
13 whatever we're calling it, is this representing -- This  
14 represents more than shrimping, correct?  
15  
16 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, this is the VMS points. She can't give you  
17 the actual points, because that would be too proprietary.  
18  
19 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I understand that, but I mean what I'm saying  
20 is, when I look at -- There was a chart up a couple of seconds  
21 ago that was almost entirely purple.  
22  
23 **MR. BOSARGE:** That was shrimping.  
24  
25 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Does that mean there's no shrimping in it or  
26 does that mean there's no longlining or bandit or --  
27  
28 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's just shrimping.  
29  
30 **DR. KILGOUR:** The purple represents the VMS, and that would be -  
31 - We have four different permits that we were able to -- There  
32 is a lobster VMS, there is a reef fish VMS, there is a snapper  
33 VMS, and there is a shrimp VMS. That's what all of this is.  
34  
35 All this means is that, over the past ten years, there was up to  
36 thirty-three hits in that purple box. The aqua boxes are  
37 actually -- There is more hits in those, and so anywhere between  
38 173 and 900 over the past ten years.  
39  
40 I forgot to mention that -- I mean I used to live in south  
41 Texas, and so I'm a little bit more familiar with the  
42 recreational side of these, but all of these banks are heavily  
43 recreationally fished, but, again, the regulations that you are  
44 proposing to the council wouldn't affect all of that, but these  
45 are prime spots for fishermen to go and fish.  
46  
47 **MR. WEATHERBY:** Again, just to -- I'm sorry if I seem thick,  
48 but, just to be real clear, this is not only shrimping, but it's

1 all commercial fishing effort, correct?  
2  
3 **DR. KILGOUR:** This is not shrimping at all. This is VMS data.  
4 The shrimping data are the dots that are going to show up that  
5 will make this all black.  
6  
7 **MR. WEATHERBY:** All right. Very good. I just want to make sure  
8 that -- There is industries that aren't here, and I want to make  
9 sure that we're at least thinking about them while we're doing  
10 this, that's all.  
11  
12 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Johnny and then Steve.  
13  
14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Based on what Harris said and certainly Gary's  
15 reply and what we see here from the shrimp industry, I honestly  
16 don't see why these spots are even being considered at HAPCs.  
17 That's very aggressive, but we don't need it.  
18  
19 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.  
20  
21 **DR. ROSS:** I guess I am confused now, too. I was asking Walt  
22 that question about data, and I'm having a hard time reconciling  
23 what Walt said with the data that Morgan just threw out. I'm  
24 trying to find a way to -- These are topographic highs, and they  
25 obviously have some other fisheries besides shrimping that are  
26 related to them, but it would appear, from Walt said, that  
27 Hospital and Aransas Bank complexes is the area where there is  
28 the most biological or ecological significance, but I am trying  
29 to find a way to move forward here. It seems like we're sort of  
30 stuck on looking at these maps and dots, and we haven't made any  
31 progress.  
32  
33 **MR. BOSARGE:** Well, we knew this was going to be kind of  
34 contentious.  
35  
36 **MR. JAAP:** Just to clarify for you, Steve, I was using data that  
37 came from I think the 2014 group that got together. Morgan has  
38 a lot more data that has been compiled since that point in time.  
39 I guess you could say that, priority-wise, at least when I did  
40 my multivariate exercise, I pulled out Harte Bank as being one  
41 of the priority sites in this particular area. It seems like  
42 other people have, for other reasons, have picked that site as a  
43 primary site, and so that's all I can say, and I hope that  
44 clarifies it, to some degree.  
45  
46 **DR. ROSS:** Just to respond quickly, it does, and that's also the  
47 area that has the least conflict, it would appear, and so is  
48 that where we would want to start and talk about that one and

1 move forward?

2

3 **MR. BOSARGE:** Possibly, but let me get Dennis in here first.

4

5 **MR. HENDERSON:** Morgan, can you put that area up there where  
6 you've got the dots inside there? Let me explain to you. A lot  
7 of that is, okay, dragging is one, two, or three knots, but a  
8 lot of fishermen would pull off there if they had some kind of  
9 trouble and they picked their rigs up and they would just idle.

10

11 They would go two or three knots, and it would look like they  
12 were shrimping, but really they're probably working on their  
13 rigs, and they probably went in there because there wasn't any  
14 boats. Don't think, just because those dots are there, that  
15 they were actually shrimping, because there is no real lines to  
16 them.

17

18 If you put that up, one you had up there -- See, all the rest of  
19 them is lines. They are dragging for two or three hours and  
20 everything. Those things there, they look like maybe fifteen or  
21 thirty minutes or something like that there. That don't  
22 actually mean that they were dragging.

23

24 If you're in a fleet of boats and you've got a little bit of a  
25 problem, that would probably be the area where there wouldn't be  
26 any boats, and you would go in there and you would just idle and  
27 fix your problem and go back out. I just want you all to  
28 understand that.

29

30 **MR. BOSARGE:** Harris.

31

32 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** They may also be just trolling and fishing over  
33 the reef, too. They might not be going all the way down to the  
34 reef, but you've got sports fishermen. A lot of these shrimpers  
35 -- I never did it. I would rather go to sleep and wait and work  
36 at night, but some of them would stay up and they would fish,  
37 and so you don't really know why they were in that area. If  
38 there were rocks or reefs, they weren't dragging. There was no  
39 way they could be dragging, because they would lose everything.

40

41 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's right. Paul, you're next.

42

43 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I think we're dealing with an area here that is  
44 diametrically opposed to the area that we were just dealing  
45 with, where it was deep and there was not a lot going on and  
46 that sort of thing. Here, there is heaps going on, and we know  
47 there is hard bottom, and we know it's of value.

48

1 The frequency of trawling is much, much higher on the skirts of  
2 these things than the ones that we've looked at. Therefore,  
3 over time, if you integrate that over time, there's a higher  
4 probability that somebody may get lost or go over the top or  
5 whatever it is, and, again, these banks are old. I liken them  
6 to old-growth forests, like a redwood forest. They take a long  
7 time to establish, and, once they're kind of decimated, they  
8 take a long, long time to bounce back.

9  
10 The object of the game is to protect the hard bottom, and it  
11 seems to me that having the HAPC isn't really going to affect  
12 99.99 percent of the trawlers anyway, because they are avoiding  
13 the area. They know it's there, and they will stay out of it.  
14 They don't want to lose their nets. I wouldn't want to if I  
15 were a trawler. It sounds very expensive. I just think that's  
16 something to keep in mind.

17  
18 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Gary.

19  
20 **MR. GRAHAM:** I am kind of compelled to indicate to you that we  
21 did a study in the early days of these electronic logbooks. We  
22 put observers on the boats to match what the boat was doing and  
23 what was being recorded from the electronic logbooks. It's not  
24 100 percent accurate. I think we got a 97 percent accuracy.

25  
26 You've still got a 3 percent outlier involved in this, and so I  
27 just think you need to understand that too, if there is some of  
28 these dots that are not matching up. It was 97 percent though,  
29 which we think, Johnny, was pretty good, but we conducted a  
30 several-year study on that with observers through the  
31 Foundation, and so --

32  
33 **MR. BOSARGE:** One comment I would like to make is I look at  
34 these banks and I see that Morgan has drawn the boxes in the  
35 right direction and we've got it all tweaked down, but, in  
36 reality, making them HAPCs, what are we going to accomplish  
37 here? In other words, unless somebody goes out there and builds  
38 a wall or a fence around it, you're still going to have the  
39 shrimpers there. They're still going to be in the same place.

40  
41 The only thing that, as far as protecting the coral, the only  
42 thing that could come out of it would be to shut the bottom  
43 fishermen out. I mean am I right or am I wrong? I mean what  
44 will you gain, other than being able to -- If one shrimper goes  
45 in there and does something, being able to go and maybe take him  
46 to court and get something done that way, but, as far as drawing  
47 a box around it and putting rules in place, that's not going to  
48 -- If somebody is going to accidentally do something, it's not

1 going to stop that. Are you following what I'm saying? In  
2 other words, what would we gain by giving these that status?  
3 What would we gain?

4  
5 **MR. JAAP:** I guess, from a practical standpoint, you could say  
6 that, as Morgan had pointed out, that if some agency or some  
7 company wanted to go do a mineral extraction or oil and gas  
8 development or something, there would be some review of the  
9 area, more so than it would be if it was not an HAPC, and I  
10 think, from an ecological standpoint, as Morgan pointed out  
11 also, that this site has some unique attributes in terms of the  
12 species and the densities and the abundance of these organisms.

13  
14 From an ecological context, there is some value in supporting a  
15 minimalist approach of protection for this area. I agree with  
16 you that it's heavily used and it's going to not be a pristine  
17 site, for sure, and it has that kind of thing, and so I mean  
18 it's debatable where we go here.

19  
20 **MR. BOSARGE:** To me, by making this an HAPC, it hasn't affected  
21 the shrimpers. All you've done is to take the rights away from  
22 the commercial fishermen to go in there and fish it. You left  
23 the rights -- Most of the time, the way the rules go, you left  
24 the rights to all the recreational fishermen. They can still go  
25 in and do whatever they want to do, however they want to do it,  
26 within reason, and so it's almost like you -- If it was blanket  
27 rights, where, okay, we're going to take everybody out of here  
28 and nobody is going to come in and nobody is going to -- Then,  
29 okay, this is fair.

30  
31 Otherwise, to me, it's unfair. That's just my opinion, but the  
32 one Unnamed Bank or Harte Bank on the very bottom, that looks  
33 like a spot that we might could do something with, but Steve.  
34 That's just my opinion.

35  
36 **DR. ROSS:** Maybe we had better stick with Harte Bank. I guess I  
37 was just going to say that my understanding of the rule would be  
38 that it would eliminate bottom-disturbing gear, regardless of  
39 who is using it, and so the protection would be, I think,  
40 uniform, and we could ask that. I am a little worried about  
41 applying that criteria, because we could have asked that  
42 question of all of these sites, is what are we gaining and  
43 nobody is using it and why are we doing it.

44  
45 I think some of this process is with an eye toward the future  
46 that we don't yet know, setting aside areas that are productive,  
47 that will continue to be productive, and protect those habitats,  
48 and so I think that's what we should focus on, and it would

1 appear that Harte has got some criteria that support it.

2

3 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Johnny and then Joe.

4

5 **MR. WILLIAMS:** I certainly agree with Steve and to your comment,  
6 Steve. On these issues, I think we should go with what we know  
7 and not necessarily into the future on this particular issue.  
8 Now, other ones may be different, but I think we should go with  
9 what we know, and what we know is we don't use this bottom.

10

11 We can't use this bottom, and there is so much activity around  
12 it, and I think the Harte Bank certainly sounds unique,  
13 according to what Morgan said, and maybe consider making that a  
14 HAPC and just leaving the rest of it and let it continue to do  
15 what we do. Now, Morgan, tell me again, if you don't mind, how  
16 old are these tracks or these dots? They go from 2003 to 2013?

17

18 **DR. KILGOUR:** 2004 to 2013.

19

20 **MR. WILLIAMS:** 2004, okay. That's a long time. I mean that's a  
21 good example of the shrimp industry, in ten or twelve years, not  
22 even making a drag in these places, not even anything, and so I  
23 still stand by the argument that maybe, with the exception of  
24 the Harte Bank, because it appears to be unique, leave these  
25 things alone. That way, you don't shut out any fishing, any  
26 commercial fishing of any kind, while still they're being  
27 protected, because people can't work in them.

28

29 **MR. BOSARGE:** I've got Joe next.

30

31 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I would say some of the value that I see to  
32 these HAPC designations -- Again, I want to hear from all the  
33 stakeholder groups, and I like eating fish, and so I'm all for  
34 fishing. However, I would say this.

35

36 It's a big ocean out there. Some of these places that are  
37 identified as having a certain concentration of species and a  
38 certain set of resiliency and a certain hardiness, to the extent  
39 that they can survive next to all that shrimping says something  
40 about the way that they're constructed as positive  
41 environmentally.

42

43 Even though there is a million scientists coming from a million  
44 places that want to study this, it's a big ocean, and I think  
45 that the HAPC designation serves to concentrate the limited  
46 financial resources, that we get a big database on a small,  
47 resilient area, which would have more value than 15,000  
48 scientists studying 15,000 separate places.

1  
2 These places, just like Gary was saying, they were named before  
3 his time and they're still here. This says something, something  
4 inherently powerful, about that place environmentally, something  
5 survivable, and, to the extent that it's close offshore and you  
6 can get more scientists there than you can at 150 miles farther  
7 out, it might make the information coming from that more  
8 valuable in the long run to all the fishermen and to all the  
9 environment, and so I see some logic to setting these places  
10 aside, even though I know it's hard to do and a pain in the  
11 neck.

12  
13 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Judith.

14  
15 **DR. LANG:** Thank you, Joe. I appreciate those remarks, and I  
16 would add to them that, if a couple of the banks besides Harte,  
17 which is apparently unique, are considered HAPCs and longlining  
18 and dragging on the bottom and those kinds of fishing efforts  
19 are curtailed on those couple of sites, they will act as  
20 reservoirs for the reef fish populations to flourish, and there  
21 will be a spillover effect that will positively impact all the  
22 other banks where the longliners are allowed to continue  
23 fishing. In terms of benefitting the fishing industry, it also  
24 makes a lot of sense to set aside a couple.

25  
26 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I would like to make a brief comment.

27  
28 **MR. BOSARGE:** Walt is next.

29  
30 **MR. JAAP:** To begin the process and get us to move a little bit  
31 here, I will make a motion that Harte Bank be given priority  
32 status as an HAPC.

33  
34 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. We've got some more folks that want to  
35 speak here. We've got Steve next and then Gary and then Joe and  
36 then Paul.

37  
38 **DR. ROSS:** I was going to propose something similar to what Walt  
39 just said, and I would like to add to that that I think the  
40 Coral AP should join in that motion, so it's a joint motion, at  
41 least.

42  
43 **MR. BOSARGE:** Gary.

44  
45 **MR. GRAHAM:** I just wanted to address something that Judy said  
46 there. You're saying longline, but Steve related back that you  
47 could maybe take the longliners out, but what are you going to  
48 do with the recreational fishermen and everything that are going



1 in and removing the fish? That's an issue that I think is quite  
2 important.

3

4 **DR. LANG:** Morgan, if we designate this as an HAPC, do any  
5 future regulations that are associated with that affect  
6 recreational fishing? Is that off the table?

7

8 **DR. KILGOUR:** No, the current regulations will -- Let me preface  
9 this by saying this is always a council decision, but the  
10 regulations that were recommended by the May 2015 group was that  
11 they would be consistent with the current regulations on HAPCs,  
12 which is basically bottom-tending gear. Recreational angling  
13 would still be allowed, but they would not be allowed to anchor  
14 while recreational angling. Now, if they were diving, they  
15 could still do that.

16

17 **MR. BOSARGE:** Which that's bottom-tending gear. I'm talking  
18 about for the recreational side.

19

20 **DR. KILGOUR:** The council can only regulate fishing activity,  
21 and so anything that's not fishing activity is outside of the  
22 regulations.

23

24 **MR. GRAHAM:** For whatever it's worth, Blackfish Ridge has got  
25 artificial reefs on it. Nobody has mentioned that, but I  
26 thought that I might bring that out.

27

28 **MR. JAAP:** Is it an oil rig thing?

29

30 **MR. GRAHAM:** Yes, sir. It's a sunk oil rig, if I'm not  
31 mistaken.

32

33 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Rob.

34

35 **MR. RUZICKA:** Morgan, let me just ask you in a different way.  
36 Are there any HAPCs in the Gulf of Mexico that do regulate  
37 recreational fishing, as of now, just to put it in perspective?

38

39 **DR. KILGOUR:** No.

40

41 **MR. BOSARGE:** I am going to get to you, but do you see why we as  
42 commercial fishermen have a little bit of a problem designating  
43 these as HAPCs, because all we're doing is cutting our own  
44 throat.

45

46 **DR. ROSS:** Wait a minute. As I understand that, the rules apply  
47 to both groups equally. It's bottom-tending gear, regardless of  
48 who is setting it, and so everybody is equally applied there,

1 aren't they or not?

2

3 **MR. BOSARGE:** Leann.

4

5 **MS. BOSARGE:** Because it's a definition of what is considered  
6 bottom-tending gear, and the gear that recreational fishermen  
7 typically use, that traditional hook and line gear, it doesn't  
8 fall into that bottom-tending gear category.

9

10 Therefore, the prohibitions that typically apply to recreational  
11 fishermen are the anchoring prohibitions, like Morgan was  
12 saying. They can't drop their anchor within the site, but they  
13 can fish there with their gear, which goes down toward the  
14 bottom, but it's not considered bottom-tending gear, based on  
15 the definition.

16

17 **DR. ROSS:** But that doesn't include bandit rigs, right?

18

19 **DR. KILGOUR:** No, you can still do bandit rigs.

20

21 **MR. BOSARGE:** I've got Joe and then John.

22

23 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I understand that. What we're saying though is  
24 if these HAPCs -- A swordfish longline would be okay and so  
25 would a driftnet, but it's just anything that's impacting the  
26 bottom or no? Could I float a swordfish longline over a HAPC?

27

28 **DR. KILGOUR:** As long as it's not a bottom longline, I am pretty  
29 sure that you could still use it. It would have to be a mid-  
30 water longline or --

31

32 **MR. WEATHERBY:** For me personally, I don't see a problem with  
33 parity for recreational fishing. However, and I can see how  
34 some of that gear even drifting without an anchor can impact the  
35 bottom, from using big-drop weights and bouncing them off the  
36 coral, and I get that as well. I don't see a problem  
37 considering some parity. What's good for the goose is good for  
38 the gander, as far as some of these HAPCs go.

39

40 **MR. BOSARGE:** John is next.

41

42 **MR. WILLIAMS:** What is the contention at this point? It seems  
43 to me like Morgan has already made the rectangles and the boxes  
44 and whatnot inside of all of your areas that you don't fish  
45 anyway, and so what does it matter? It seems to me like what we  
46 need to do is not do ten of these things, but narrow it down to  
47 two and be done. We've got already thirteen or fourteen, don't  
48 we, and the mandate, or at least from the council, was to say,

1 hey, let's narrow it down and let's don't do -- We're already  
2 over ten. We're almost at fifteen.

3  
4 **MR. BOSARGE:** I guess I will try to answer your question. The  
5 contention is it doesn't really affect the shrimp industry, but  
6 it still affects commercial fishermen. Like I said before, even  
7 with the redrawn lines, giving them the HAPC status won't change  
8 what happens in there other than to stop one sector of  
9 fishermen, period. That's all you're going to do.

10  
11 You're going to take commercial fishermen out. The only other -  
12 - You talk about the recreational fishermen still being able to  
13 go in there and fish, but the problem is where there is -- In  
14 the State of Texas, there may be a hundred fishermen. On the  
15 recreational side, the boats are bigger and they're faster and  
16 that effort is doing this.

17  
18 For every one of your commercial fishermen, you're going to have  
19 ten or fifteen recreational fishermen, and I don't mean to harp  
20 on it, but, if you want to know what the area contention is,  
21 this is the area of contention. All you're doing is wiping out  
22 one sector with your regulations that will be put in place.  
23 Steve.

24  
25 **DR. ROSS:** What sector and what gear are we talking about here?

26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** It would be those bandit fishermen.

28  
29 **DR. ROSS:** But that's not prohibited.

30  
31 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, bandit fishermen would be prohibited,  
32 correct?

33  
34 **DR. ROSS:** No, they're not. It's not bottom-tending. You  
35 couldn't anchor. So I mean let's be more clear about who is  
36 being eliminated.

37  
38 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Walt and then --

39  
40 **MR. JAAP:** These are highly-contentious areas, obviously. We  
41 have heard about it, but remember that this process is -- We're  
42 on I guess you would say the first inning. The rest time  
43 around, the review process may say that this is just  
44 unacceptable to do, and so we're doing the best we can with the  
45 information we have. We really respect everyone's opinion, and  
46 I think if you want to take it off the -- Not put it in there,  
47 that's fine, but I think, to me, we need to have a balance, to  
48 some degree, of these HAPCs throughout the Gulf region, and this

1 would be the good one for probably the western or south Texas  
2 area.

3

4 **MR. BOSARGE:** Ms. Bosarge.

5

6 **MS. BOSARGE:** Steve, just to answer your question, we have a lot  
7 of those commercial fishermen that come to a lot of the council  
8 meetings, and they talk to us about some of this that's going  
9 on. From my understanding, a lot of what they do is they anchor  
10 right outside of these areas, right outside the coral, and then  
11 fish over where they need to be.

12

13 They may be using gear that's going to be allowed even if you  
14 draw this box, but what happens is, if you don't draw that box  
15 right up next to that coral, then they can no longer anchor  
16 where they need to anchor, and so then they're essentially shut  
17 out. That's what happens.

18

19 They can't anchor 1,000 meters outside of this and be able to  
20 get where they need to get to fish, and so the anchoring  
21 prohibition is what ends up eliminating them from fishing in  
22 these areas, because there is just almost no way for you to get  
23 that box tight enough for them to continue to fish there.

24

25 **DR. ROSS:** Right, and that was the clarification I was looking  
26 for, is exactly who is excluded and for what reason. I guess  
27 that brings us back to another issue, is can we live with any  
28 HAPCs in this area or can we live with a couple of example  
29 HAPCs?

30

31 I think Joe pointed out a couple of reasons why focusing  
32 attention on these areas would potentially allow for some  
33 additional data collection that would help all of us, because  
34 what we're struggling with here is a lack of information on all  
35 of these sites. That's one thing to consider, I think, too, but  
36 I wish we had more effort on that hook and line fishery to look  
37 at, like we do for the shrimp fishery. That would help us a  
38 lot.

39

40 **MR. BOSARGE:** Harris.

41

42 **MR. LASSEIGNE:** You know, we're looking at all these dots, but  
43 you're talking about I think she said 2003 or 2004 to 2013. The  
44 dots have been eliminated, because we have limited entry. There  
45 are less and fewer boats in the Gulf than there were in 2003,  
46 and we keep losing fishing area.

47

48 We're out there trying to make a living, a livelihood. It would

1 be like if I come here and I tell John that, hey, you're going  
2 to lose your job, because I'm going to pass this regulation and  
3 you're not going to have a job. That's basically what happens.

4  
5 We lose areas that we're talking about putting a bunch of  
6 windmills out in the Gulf of Mexico, and I don't know where  
7 that's at, but that's going to take away some fishing grounds.  
8 You have pipelines out there, and you have boats that sink. As  
9 we talk, there are probably some vessels that are going to sink,  
10 and that will be another obstruction that we're going to have to  
11 miss in our fishing grounds.

12  
13 The Rigs to Reef, they have dumped some of these Liberty ships  
14 in areas where we fish. We told them not to dump them there,  
15 but they went ahead and dumped them, and they took away our  
16 fishing grounds, and so we are losing fishing grounds, and you  
17 can pass regulations, which is fine, but sometimes when they  
18 pass regulations, they don't listen to the people they're  
19 affecting.

20  
21 Our economy is lousy in this country. We are not producing  
22 anything. Our fisheries keep shrinking. Where are we going to  
23 get our products, from China or Thailand? What's coming into  
24 this country that we can't produce because we're shrinking our  
25 own people and taking them out of jobs? That's the bottom line.

26  
27 Now, you can pass all the regulations you want, but you do have  
28 to have at least a little heart and consideration of people who  
29 have been doing this for years. The shrimping industry has a  
30 proud and a long history, and then what's going to happen? Are  
31 they going to say, well, what happened to the shrimping  
32 industry? Where did it go? Well, I will tell you where it  
33 went. If you keep regulating and choking it to death -- Do you  
34 know what it costs to replace a shrimp boat right now?

35  
36 Our shrimp fleet is getting old, and I don't think there's  
37 anyone in the room that really can have pocket change to buy a  
38 new vessel. That's another thing that's getting expensive, and  
39 so you're going to make the shrimping industry into a dinosaur,  
40 and eventually you're going to have all kinds of imported  
41 seafood and you won't be producing seafood in this country.

42  
43 **MR. BOSARGE:** Thank you. Rob and then Paul.

44  
45 **MR. RUZICKA:** I certainly understand those concerns, and I don't  
46 know if we're getting a little bit off track here. I guess I  
47 look at this as a two-part process, where right here we're with  
48 the Shrimp AP, and what you guys are recommending -- It looked

1 like, from some of these maps that Morgan had drawn, that we  
2 would be able to stay out of you guys way and affecting your  
3 ability to catch shrimp in this area.

4  
5 The concerns that I had heard were voiced through the other  
6 fishing industries that could be impacted, and so I think, to  
7 try to steer this forward, if we could pick one or two, or maybe  
8 it isn't a possible situation here, but that the Shrimp AP would  
9 agree that, as long as we're inside of these boundaries here and  
10 we're not going to affect your industry in this area, then we  
11 have a second part to this job, which is to go to the other  
12 fishing industries and say we would like to propose these HAPCs  
13 in this area and is there benefit from the recreational  
14 community, from the longline community, from the bottom-fishing  
15 community? Would it affect them if these HAPCs -- We might  
16 find, from the recreational community, or even the other  
17 commercial fishing sectors, that there might be some high-value  
18 areas that they would be willing to protect in these areas, and  
19 so I guess I'm proposing it to the Shrimp AP.

20  
21 If there is one or two of these areas where we can condense  
22 these boundaries that aren't going to affect you, are you all  
23 going to be agreeable to that and then we can move the  
24 conversation forward to the other fishing sectors?

25  
26 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul.

27  
28 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I just wanted to address something I think Steve  
29 said, something about anchoring, or something that Leann said.  
30 I guess it's a question to you and to Morgan, which is, is it  
31 possible to put mooring buoys out, very much like we have on the  
32 Flower Garden Banks, for vessels that want to come out and  
33 anchor, but they are prohibited to anchor in the areas that are  
34 HAPCs or whatever, so they can do whatever they want to, but  
35 they're not tearing up the bottom as they anchor?

36  
37 **MR. BOSARGE:** Let me get to Julius.

38  
39 **MR. COLLINS:** One thing that hasn't been mentioned yet is  
40 there's a possible mistake that the shrimp boats are coming and  
41 going and they are close to the line. All of a sudden, one  
42 turns and he's got to go into the zone, which he didn't want to  
43 do, but the Coast Guard sees him and fines him and takes away  
44 his license and he can't fish anymore. That could happen if  
45 these things exist where a lot of shrimping is going on.

46  
47 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, that would be one way it would affect it.  
48 Ms. Bosarge.

1  
2 **MS. BOSARGE:** I think that would be a question for maybe your  
3 Reef Fish AP and your other finfish fishermen, but what they  
4 have said in the past is there's just not enough of those  
5 mooring buoys, and if you can imagine the frequency with which  
6 they fish out here, they don't always go to the same exact spot  
7 every time, and so to have one spot where they can anchor,  
8 regardless of what the current is doing and what the wind is  
9 doing -- Do you see what I'm saying? They have to kind of  
10 adjust themselves where they need to be, and so the mooring  
11 buoys really limit them.

12  
13 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Lance.

14  
15 **MR. NACIO:** A recommendation could be that maybe they use some  
16 type of sea anchors that don't go to the bottom and just hold  
17 them in a slow drift to fish.

18  
19 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, and I think they're working on some of that  
20 to present. I have a question for the -- I see Gary looking  
21 hard at the charts.

22  
23 **MR. GRAHAM:** I didn't want to comment, but I am just sitting  
24 here thinking of buoys. I don't like buoys. I have dealt with  
25 buoys for a long time through the years on artificial reefs and  
26 other things, and the lights go out on them, and they present  
27 problems from somebody running at night if they're not  
28 maintained, and I have just never liked buoys. I have been  
29 involved in that issue for many, many years, and I promise you  
30 they're trouble.

31  
32 **MR. BOSARGE:** I guess my question to maybe the Shrimp AP is --  
33 Morgan, could you put those shrimp tracks back up there? Is  
34 there one of these banks that would be within the shrimping  
35 tracks, one that we could set aside that would be a place that  
36 we could make it an HAPC for betterment of the research within  
37 that area? I think Harte is a done deal, and maybe I'm wrong,  
38 but I am talking about one of these others like Blackfin or --

39  
40 **DR. LANG:** Like Hospital or Southern, but could we also refer to  
41 it as a potential replenishment zone, to emphasize that if  
42 there's less fishing that --

43  
44 **MR. BOSARGE:** I tend to differ from you there. I don't think  
45 you're going to see less fishing. You're just going to see  
46 different fishing. It won't be less fishing, and, as the years  
47 go by, I think it will be more and more and more fishing, and so  
48 I can't see it being a replenishing.

1  
2 **DR. LANG:** Somehow, the other fishing needs to be addressed, and  
3 I don't know how -- I don't know what to suggest as the way of  
4 doing that, but maybe it comes down to the corals and reminding  
5 the council that the recreational fishing needs to be addressed  
6 in the South Texas Banks ecosystem. Are we allowed to do that,  
7 Morgan?  
8  
9 **DR. KILGOUR:** You can make any recommendations that you would  
10 like to do.  
11  
12 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. I've got Johnny.  
13  
14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** This is just a personal perspective, but I still  
15 stand by that we don't need these to be HAPCs, as simple as  
16 that. I just don't believe we do, from the shrimp industry  
17 perspective.  
18  
19 Now, I can't speak for the fishing industry, but I do agree that  
20 the fishing industry, all the fishing industry, recreational and  
21 longline, should be involved and should be addressed and should  
22 be talked with about it, but, also from a shrimp industry  
23 perspective, if we made one of these HAPCs, I would certainly do  
24 it with Morgan's redrawing of the lines, but, personally, I  
25 would like to hear from each Shrimp AP member to see what their  
26 thoughts are.  
27  
28 **MR. BOSARGE:** I don't mean to pull away from the group, but if  
29 we're going to get a consensus out of the Shrimp AP, we've got  
30 to have a little side meeting here, so to speak. Let's do a  
31 ten-minute break and we'll come back at 10:30.  
32  
33 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)  
34  
35 **MR. BOSARGE:** The Shrimp AP has had time to sit down and look  
36 this over and talk amongst ourselves, and we've got Frank that  
37 wants to speak, and he will tell you maybe where we can  
38 compromise.  
39  
40 **MR. HELIES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. **First and foremost, and I**  
41 **don't know if we need to make this is a motion or not, but the**  
42 **Shrimp AP is very uncomfortable with the current box sizes, and**  
43 **any action moving forward should utilize the council staff's**  
44 **realigned green boxes, and so we want that on the record, first**  
45 **and foremost, before we move forward.**  
46  
47 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think we probably need to put that in the form  
48 of a motion, where it makes it to the council.



1  
2 **MR. HELIES:** I will make that motion.  
3  
4 **MR. GRAHAM:** I will second it.  
5  
6 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Did you get the motion as made by  
7 Frank and seconded by Gary?  
8  
9 **UNIDENTIFIED:** A question. Does that include the South Texas  
10 Bank sites?  
11  
12 **MR. BOSARGE:** That would be for the South Texas Banks.  
13  
14 **MR. HELIES:** For the region, yes, that Texas region.  
15  
16 **MR. BOSARGE:** J.P.  
17  
18 **MR. BROOKER:** The Coral AP would happily join that motion.  
19  
20 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay.  
21  
22 **MR. HELIES:** Let's put it up on the board before we start adding  
23 things.  
24  
25 **DR. KILGOUR:** Is that okay?  
26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's it, yes. All right. We've got a motion  
28 and a second. Any discussion? **All in favor aye; opposed. The**  
29 **motion carries unanimously.** Does the Coral AP want to weigh in?  
30  
31 **MS. KRUEGER:** **All in favor; any opposed. The motion carries.**  
32  
33 **MR. BOSARGE:** Coral SSC.  
34  
35 **MR. JAAP:** **Coral SSC, all in favor; opposed. It carries.**  
36  
37 **MR. BOSARGE:** The Coral AP, Coral SSC, and the Shrimp AP all  
38 support the motion unanimous. All right, Frank.  
39  
40 **MR. HELIES:** Mr. Chairman, thank you for that. That will  
41 alleviate some of our concerns. **Moving forward, the Shrimp AP**  
42 **will support the Unnamed Bank, Harte Bank, as a priority area in**  
43 **the document.**  
44  
45 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do we have a --  
46  
47 **MR. COLLINS:** I will second that.  
48

1 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. Frank made the motion and Julius seconded.  
2  
3 **MR. JAAP:** Just a point of order. The SSC motion was never  
4 seconded, because we got into other discussion, and so I think  
5 we do need to do that.  
6  
7 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do we have a second from the SSC on the previous  
8 motion?  
9  
10 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Second.  
11  
12 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul seconds. That was on the previous motion.  
13 We had to back up there just for a minute. We did not have a  
14 second on the SSC's motion to support the Shrimp AP motion. Do  
15 you need to vote on it again?  
16  
17 **MR. JAAP:** I don't think we voted on it, and so we need to vote  
18 on that again.  
19  
20 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. I'm sorry. We got a little ahead of  
21 ourselves.  
22  
23 **MR. JAAP:** The Coral SSC, and the motion is to make Harte Bank a  
24 priority area for HAPC status, all in favor.  
25  
26 **MR. RUZICKA:** I guess, just in terms of this, to make -- Well,  
27 it's been changed. I guess I was going to say, if it was just  
28 supporting it, does that mean all the other banks are  
29 unsupported, I guess, just as a point of clarification?  
30  
31 **MR. BOSARGE:** Frank.  
32  
33 **MR. HELIES:** We kind of got ahead of ourselves here. I was  
34 making that motion, and I don't even know if it was considered a  
35 motion, but we are supporting the Harte Bank being named a  
36 priority area, with some caveats, and so we weren't to the point  
37 of discussing it yet, and so you guys may or may not want to be  
38 attached to this motion. You guys kind of got ahead of  
39 yourselves here, and so if we want to go back and -- I got a  
40 second from Julius, and so we can have some discussion on the  
41 original motion that I presented.  
42  
43 **MS. BOSARGE:** Morgan, we're confused.  
44  
45 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, let's start this over again.  
46  
47 **DR. KILGOUR:** I am going to interrupt. The Coral SSC and Coral  
48 AP made -- They were talking about making this motion, but it

1 was never formally seconded and it was never voted on. If you  
2 support this motion, then you can just vote on it now with them  
3 and I can alleviate some ink on the report with having two  
4 motions that say the same thing, but it's up to you on how you  
5 want to do this, but you can just vote on this one and we'll be  
6 okay, if you want to.

7

8 **MR. BOSARGE:** Frank.

9

10 **MR. HELIES:** Thank you. I will rescind the previous motion that  
11 I made and we will add our name to this motion that was made  
12 prior to the break.

13

14 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. It's the Shrimp AP's motion, correct?

15

16 **DR. KILGOUR:** You need to vote on it. Everybody else voted on  
17 it, right?

18

19 **MS. KRUEGER:** We didn't. The AP didn't.

20

21 **MR. BOSARGE:** Nobody actually voted on this motion. Frank made  
22 the motion and Julius seconded, and I believe we were working on  
23 the SSC, and so we've got to get caught up here. That's what I  
24 was trying to figure out, whose motion it is. It's the Shrimp  
25 AP's motion, and so we need to let the Shrimp AP vote first on  
26 their motion. Is there any discussion? No discussion and go  
27 ahead.

28

29 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Frank just rescinded your motion for this, to add  
30 to the --

31

32 **UNIDENTIFIED:** We will just have one motion.

33

34 **DR. KILGOUR:** I made things a lot more confusing. What happened  
35 was we didn't vote on the -- The vote on this from the Coral SSC  
36 and the Coral AP didn't happen, and so you were supporting a  
37 motion that didn't exist, because it never was seconded or voted  
38 on, and so we went back to the motion that wasn't seconded or  
39 voted on and you can be part of that motion is what my  
40 recommendation was, because it's supporting the motion that  
41 never happened.

42

43 **MR. BOSARGE:** So where did that original motion --

44

45 **MR. JAAP:** All in favor of the motion to make Harte Bank a  
46 priority for HAPC, all in favor; opposed, none.

47

48 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right.

1  
2 **MS. KRUEGER:** Coral AP, motion to make Harte Bank a priority  
3 area for HAPC status, approve; opposed. No opposition.  
4  
5 **MR. BOSARGE:** It carries unanimously. Now we're ready for the  
6 Shrimp AP. All in favor say aye; opposed. The motion carries  
7 unanimously. Now, Frank.  
8  
9 **MR. HELIES:** To answer his concern previously, we don't feel  
10 comfortable with any of the other proposed areas being labeled  
11 an HAPC. Now, if the SSC decides to name one a priority area  
12 for this list, we will have some comments for that.  
13  
14 **MR. JAAP:** From the SSC, is there a proposal to include other  
15 South Texas Bank sites for consideration as a priority HAPC?  
16  
17 **MR. BOSARGE:** Chad.  
18  
19 **MR. HANSON:** Thank you. I'm looking at a document that Dr.  
20 Sandra Brooke sent in. I think some of the Coral SSC folks have  
21 it, and she identified some areas that would be like priority  
22 areas from her perspective, and she has listed Hospital Bank and  
23 Southern Bank in addition to Harte Bank on this, and so I would  
24 like that to be known to this committee, that she has put some  
25 comments in on these areas as well.  
26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right.  
28  
29 **DR. LANG:** I would just like to follow up on Chad's remark,  
30 because Sandra has listed a large number of taxa in addition to  
31 the corals and gorgonians that Walt mentioned in his analysis of  
32 the banks, and, of them, the two that were clearly the greatest  
33 standouts were Hospital and Southern.  
34  
35 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Frank.  
36  
37 **MR. HELIES:** To those points, I didn't want to be the one to  
38 promote those areas, but we will support Southern Bank.  
39  
40 **MR. JAAP:** A formal nomination of the bank, please.  
41  
42 **DR. LANG:** Perhaps we could look at both Southern and Hospital  
43 before we make a final determination, and I would like to ask  
44 Frank why Southern in particular.  
45  
46 **MR. HELIES:** It's the lesser of the evils. There is less  
47 fishing activity around that area. There were some concerns  
48 discussed about Hospital. Gary may be able to elucidate that

1 information.

2  
3 **MR. GRAHAM:** It became more recognized. There's not just one  
4 bank there. There's three, and I guess that was one of the  
5 things that kind of -- It became kind of difficult, and I knew  
6 that Southern was also an area of particular interest, and so,  
7 quite frankly, Judy, that's why we decided that. We thought it  
8 was probably a little simpler.

9  
10 **MR. BOSARGE:** It looks like it has a lot of good topography.

11  
12 **DR. LANG:** Southern was one of the highest rated ones in my own  
13 evaluation originally, and so, personally, I am comfortable with  
14 it.

15  
16 **MR. BOSARGE:** It gets you up a little bit further in the state,  
17 a little distance, but, Paul.

18  
19 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I am just looking at Sandra's notes here, and she  
20 is saying that the species diversity is the highest ranking, as  
21 Judy had said, for all of these, with high-relief features, and  
22 I can tell you that high-relief features usually means high  
23 diversity.

24  
25 It's not as big as Hospital Bank, and it has a higher number of  
26 different taxa, 420, which is pretty high. 420, compared to  
27 what we've seen, I think, in the northern Gulf, is pretty high,  
28 and a lot of them are unique to the bank, unique meaning that  
29 she hasn't seen them in other banks, and so I would support  
30 Southern Bank.

31  
32 **MR. BOSARGE:** Walt.

33  
34 **MR. JAAP:** It also clustered out or came out in the analysis  
35 that I did as one of the -- Harte and Southern were the two that  
36 came out, because they're quite a bit different from one  
37 another, in terms of the fauna, even though it was a marginal  
38 list of fauna, and so I guess it has some benefit from the fact  
39 that it is quite a bit different than Harte.

40  
41 **MR. BOSARGE:** Frank.

42  
43 **MR. HELIES:** This is just for my education, and I am not a coral  
44 scientist. I am a marine biologist, but it's interesting to  
45 hear those. I don't know much about coral, and so, moving  
46 forward, as these processes continue, having a one-page white  
47 paper on how you all decide what should be high priority -- Like  
48 high relief equals high diversity, I didn't know that, and so

1 that's interesting information for me to have when I want to  
2 make some of these decisions, just moving forward, as a point of  
3 order.  
4  
5 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right.  
6  
7 **MR. JAAP:** Do we have a motion? Paul.  
8  
9 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I would like to move that we include Southern  
10 Bank as a high-priority area for an HAPC in the western Gulf.  
11  
12 **MR. JAAP:** Have we got a second?  
13  
14 **MR. BOSARGE:** Rob seconds it.  
15  
16 **MR. JAAP:** Is there further discussion on Southern? **All in**  
17 **favor; any against. The motion is unanimous.**  
18  
19 **MR. BOSARGE:** Coral AP.  
20  
21 **MS. KRUEGER:** Do we have to do a motion and a second or can we  
22 go ahead and vote? I am lost now.  
23  
24 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think you're voting on this motion.  
25  
26 **MS. KRUEGER:** Okay. Coral AP, do we support the motion to make  
27 Southern Bank a priority area for HAPC status? Opposed. **All in**  
28 **favor.**  
29  
30 **MR. BOSARGE:** Okay. The Shrimp AP is not going to support the  
31 motion. We're with you, but we're not going to support it, and  
32 we have a motion supported by the Coral AP and the Coral SSC.  
33 All right. Where do we move from here?  
34  
35 **MR. JAAP:** We could crank up the music and dance, I guess, but  
36 my suggestion is take a minute or two to think about the one  
37 deep reef area that we haven't really addressed, and that was  
38 the Reed South site. It's in the Florida Bank area.  
39  
40 **MR. BOSARGE:** Morgan.  
41  
42 **DR. KILGOUR:** I kind of suspended your conversation about the  
43 other deepwater sites that Erik had brought forth that were  
44 uncontested that were named after lease blocks and moved you to  
45 the South Texas Banks, in the interest of making sure everybody  
46 was going to be here.  
47  
48 Before we go all the way back to Florida, I just want to make

1 sure that there was no further discussion on those deepwater  
2 sites, the MC 751 and -- Maybe I wrong, but it was the  
3 northwestern Gulf. It was Garden Banks 299, Green Canyon 354,  
4 those banks that you were talking about that were all deep water  
5 that were kind of uncontested, but what did you want to do with  
6 those?

7  
8 I know that you had already made priority areas of the two  
9 deepwater waters, of two or three of the deepwater ones, but I'm  
10 just making sure that I didn't artificially suspend the  
11 conversation and forget to come back to it.

12  
13 **MR. SCHMAHL:** In the absence of other discussion, I would make a  
14 motion for discussion that all of those deepwater coral sites --  
15 We should probably just list them out, but that they be  
16 identified as priority sites for HAPC designation.

17  
18 **MR. BOSARGE:** Leann.

19  
20 **MS. BOSARGE:** Morgan, just as we're going back to these, I think  
21 we're -- How many sites are we at, twelve or thirteen or  
22 something like that? Fifteen? Okay. Before we add these.  
23 Maybe, as the coral group has this dissuasion, to help the  
24 council -- Because you can imagine this is going to come to the  
25 council and it's going to say these were the coral scientists'  
26 priorities.

27  
28 When you have this discussion, if these are a -- I don't know  
29 what your priorities are, but if these are like a medium  
30 priority and all the ones you had before this are high priority,  
31 if you could have that discussion and put that on the record, it  
32 might help the council, rather than us just end up seeing  
33 nineteen or twenty sites that are all priority and then, if we  
34 decide whatever number we're comfortable with in one document,  
35 honing it down, we really have nothing to go on as to what your  
36 true highest priorities were.

37  
38 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.

39  
40 **DR. ROSS:** I think that's a good idea, but it's going to be  
41 difficult to do, because of the diversity and sometimes lack of  
42 data we've got for these sites. I'm not sure how exactly we  
43 would do that.

44  
45 I don't know whether Walt or G.P. have a suggestion there, but I  
46 would support G.P.'s motion that the deepwater sites are all  
47 equally important and seem to have fairly low contention. I  
48 don't know how to sort those out into two different priority

1 levels though any better than we did.

2

3 **MR. BOSARGE:** Walt.

4

5 **MR. JAAP:** Well, I can see we're in a little bit of a dilemma  
6 here. I have no problem supporting them, but I guess I would  
7 say, philosophically, with this process, I was sort of hoping to  
8 sort of make sure that we had some sites from the different  
9 depth ranges throughout the Gulf, as we divided it into Florida  
10 northeast and northwest and south Texas, even though the south  
11 Texas sites were limited to the shallow areas, because of the  
12 depth that we're dealing with.

13

14 I would say that I can support it, but, right now, there is no  
15 deep site for Florida, and even though I am a Floridian, that's  
16 my problem and not yours, but that's the reason I would suggest  
17 we go there, because I think if we have too much -- I'm not sure  
18 it's all redundancy, but if we have these great number of deep  
19 sites in the northwest, it makes for a little bit of a challenge  
20 for the council, as you pointed out, Leann, to say where are  
21 they going here and why did they do that, and so I think that's  
22 the only thing I would say.

23

24 **MR. BOSARGE:** Shelly and then Erik.

25

26 **MS. KRUEGER:** What if we amended that to say an HAPC with no  
27 fishing regulations, since it's very deep and really the main  
28 concern would probably be oil and gas?

29

30 **MR. BOSARGE:** Erik, do you want to weigh in and then Paul?

31

32 **DR. CORDES:** Just a couple of things real quick. I think there  
33 is a few things. There were some deepwater Florida sites.  
34 Those were the ones that we discussed yesterday that Steve was  
35 trying to get the three combined into one. Those are lophelia  
36 sites, and they are right off the shelf break, and they're a  
37 little bit a deeper, 400 or 500 meters.

38

39 The two Viosca Knoll sites that we discussed before, I would  
40 very strongly suggest that they be included in the ten and not  
41 lumped with the other sites, but, all of the other ones, I think  
42 the suggestion here is that this recommendation be made that  
43 they not be included in the ten priority sites, but be  
44 considered, and this amendment is fine, HAPC status with no  
45 fishing regulations, so that we get them out of the ten, because  
46 you're right, Leann, that they're not -- Because of the lack of  
47 pressure, I wouldn't say they're the top priority, and I don't  
48 want the council to get confused about that. Again, the two



1 Viosca Knoll sites and the three Florida sites that we talked  
2 about yesterday I think should stay in the ten. Does that make  
3 sense?  
4

5 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Just, as the maker of the motion, I do accept the  
6 no fishing regulation amendment.  
7

8 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Paul and then Steve.  
9

10 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I have a question for Morgan and for the Chair,  
11 for Steve, and that is we've been going through this process and  
12 we've identified what we -- We've discussed fifteen or more of  
13 these reefs and banks or whatever. There is obviously a balance  
14 of thirty or whatever it is, but is this pretty much the end of  
15 the process or will we be reconvening in the future, at some  
16 point in time, to discuss the balance of these banks?  
17

18 **MR. BOSARGE:** I will have to defer to Morgan on that. I'm sure  
19 that -- I feel we will be.  
20

21 **DR. KILGOUR:** I will probably be working on this until I retire,  
22 but this isn't the end of the process, but this is to get the  
23 ball rolling for a scoping document, and so there will  
24 definitely be reiterations. However, the areas that you are  
25 putting forth will be the primary areas that that document  
26 focuses on.  
27

28 Now, if you have these areas with no fishing regulations, I  
29 still have to do the same biological, economic, and social  
30 analyses, and so you're still going to get the same information  
31 whether they have regulations or not, and so it will all be  
32 there in a nice package sometime by 2050, but it will all be  
33 there, if that makes any sense.  
34

35 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.  
36

37 **DR. ROSS:** I think I was going to -- If I'm not mistaken,  
38 somewhere in this process, and this comment maybe is for you,  
39 Erik, but we didn't limit ourselves to just ten sites as the  
40 magic number, but agreed we would go to twelve or fifteen or  
41 even eighteen. We're still reducing the overall number by a  
42 significant amount, but we're not stuck with that one target, I  
43 think, and I believe that's the way we've been operating.  
44

45 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Walt.  
46

47 **MR. JAPP:** I guess you would say we have identified other sites,  
48 some of which Erik brought up in his last comment, and so I

1 think the Knoll sites are all there, and they're going to be on  
2 the priority list. It's just, as I said, that I think we give  
3 the council some better information that if we -- Be  
4 conservative in terms of not giving them eight deep sites.  
5 That's just my feeling about it, and I would like to have a  
6 little discussion, as I said, on this deep Florida site, because  
7 I think it's the other -- When we're talking about deep, we're  
8 talking 1,000 to 1,500 meters and not less than 1,000, and so  
9 that's what we were trying to do with these deep sites. That's  
10 my feeling about it, and I may be wrong, but that's sort of my  
11 philosophy on it.

12  
13 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's a discussion between you two groups. Go  
14 ahead, Portia.

15  
16 **MS. SAPP:** Would this be a good time to maybe just go back over  
17 the sites that we have nominated or the sites that we've agreed,  
18 because I think there's a little bit of confusion, and I just  
19 want to make sure that we're all on the same page.

20  
21 **DR. KILGOUR:** I think that's an excellent idea. If we just  
22 scroll up to the top of the motions, that's how I'm going to do  
23 this, since I haven't been able to take excellent notes. The  
24 first site is Viosca Knoll 862/906. The second site that you  
25 recommended was the three existing of Long Mound, North Reed,  
26 and Many Mounds sites. You also recommended that Pulley Ridge  
27 be a priority area, and so I don't know why that's not up there.  
28 Oh, I missed it. This is what happens when you're on decaf  
29 coffee.

30  
31 We have Pulley Ridge, Long Mound, Many Mounds, and the North  
32 Reed Site. Those are all Florida. Viosca Knoll 862/906, and we  
33 also have Alabama Alps, Rough Tongue Reef, Viosca Knoll 826.  
34 Those are all the northeastern Gulf of Mexico.

35  
36 Again, L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef, that's the northeastern  
37 Gulf of Mexico. AT 047 and AT 357 and GC 852 and Mississippi  
38 Canyon, those are all deepwater areas. Then we went to South  
39 Texas Banks, and so --

40  
41 **MR. SCHMAHL:** That's fifteen, by my count.

42  
43 **MR. BOSARGE:** Go ahead.

44  
45 **MS. SAPP:** Can we just go back to the very first motion,  
46 because, the way I read it, it didn't necessarily say that  
47 Viosca Knoll is going to be made a priority, but it was just to  
48 redraw the boundary, and so do we need to clarify that, or is

1 everybody getting that that's a priority site?  
2

3 **DR. KILGOUR:** You're absolutely right. I guess that motion was  
4 never made, but it was discussed that that was a priority site,  
5 and so that was my interpretation, but if you would like to make  
6 a formal motion that that become a priority site, that would be  
7 fine.  
8

9 I am not sure how we can really go about the redrawing of the  
10 boundaries without me providing that to the whole group, and so  
11 I guess that's something that I am going to have to figure out  
12 my way around, or I might need a motion from the group letting  
13 me know that I can redraw the boundaries based on that input and  
14 everybody would be okay with that. I guess that would be okay,  
15 because, if we have to have another meeting, that just delays  
16 this process even more, and so --  
17

18 **MR. BOSARGE:** Steve.  
19

20 **DR. ROSS:** I think the way we left that discussion was that you  
21 might start those boundaries or that Erik or I would, but that  
22 all three of us would be involved and then pass that to the  
23 royal red shrimping group as well, to come up with the final  
24 boundary for the group to look at, but, regardless of what  
25 boundary we end up with at that Viosca Knoll site, it would be a  
26 priority. Maybe we could state that as a motion. The boundary  
27 is still pending, but the concept is not.  
28

29 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do you want to make that motion, Steve?  
30

31 **DR. ROSS:** Very well. I move that --  
32

33 **MR. BOSARGE:** Wait. There still is a motion on the floor.  
34

35 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, you still have this motion, and so --  
36

37 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes, we have a motion on the floor.  
38

39 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes, and so do this motion first, so we don't have  
40 the same trouble as we did last time.  
41

42 **MR. BOSARGE:** We've got the --  
43

44 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I don't believe it was ever seconded.  
45

46 **MR. BOSARGE:** No, it wasn't, G.P.'s motion. We have a motion on  
47 the floor. Do we have a second? Of course, this is the Coral  
48 SSC's motion.

1  
2 **MR. JAAP:** We have an SSC motion to make GB 535, GB 299, GC 354,  
3 GC 140 and 272, GC 234, MC 751 and 885 as priority HAPC status  
4 with no fishing regulations.  
5  
6 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul seconded it.  
7  
8 **MR. JAAP:** That's the motion. Do we need any more discussion on  
9 that? Those in favor.  
10  
11 **DR. LANG:** Maybe we should just clarify that this, I believe,  
12 was being discussed as a medium/high priority rather than a  
13 high/high priority.  
14  
15 **DR. KILGOUR:** I understood that, but you're automatically  
16 putting it in a different category by adding that no fishing  
17 regulation part, and so I understood that.  
18  
19 **MR. JAAP:** Okay. **The motion, all in favor; all opposed.** I  
20 abstain on that.  
21  
22 **MR. BOSARGE:** The motion passes four to one.  
23  
24 **MR. JAAP:** With one abstention.  
25  
26 **MS. KRUEGER:** Same motion for the Coral AP. **All in favor; any**  
27 **opposition. No opposition and the motion passes.**  
28  
29 **MR. BOSARGE:** Shrimp AP, do you support that?  
30  
31 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I don't think we need to vote on it.  
32  
33 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay, and so we abstain. All right. Now we can  
34 go to Steve's motion.  
35  
36 **DR. ROSS:** Okay. Back to the Viosca Knoll sites. **I move that**  
37 **Viosca Knoll 862/906 be accepted as a priority deep coral site,**  
38 **with the provision that the boundaries will be redrawn by the**  
39 **council, with input from Steve Ross, Erik Cordes, and the**  
40 **industry representatives.**  
41  
42 **MR. BOSARGE:** Shelly, it's your motion.  
43  
44 **MS. KRUEGER:** Okay. The motion is that Viosca Knolls be made  
45 priority areas for HAPC status with provisions for boundary  
46 revisions for Morgan. The motion is to make Viosca Knoll  
47 862/906 with input for boundary revisions from Steve Ross, Erik  
48 Cordes, and John Nelson be made a priority area for HAPC status.

1 Is there a second?  
2  
3 **MR. BOSARGE:** Joe seconds.  
4  
5 **MS. KRUEGER:** So now we will vote on it. **Motion to approve this**  
6 **motion, any opposition? The motion carries.**  
7  
8 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right.  
9  
10 **MR. JAAP:** Does the SSC support the motion? **All in favor. The**  
11 **motion carries.**  
12  
13 **MR. BOSARGE:** The motion carries. The Shrimp AP should support  
14 this motion. I mean we've looked at it. Do you want to vote?  
15 **All in favor of supporting the motion; against. We're all in**  
16 **favor? All right.** Good deal. We all support it. All right.  
17 We're starting to wind down here. I know you want to get down  
18 in Florida, but --  
19  
20 **MR. JAAP:** I just think it needs to be discussed.  
21  
22 **MR. SCHMAHL:** We need to discuss it, at least.  
23  
24 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Let's be quick.  
25  
26 **MR. JAAP:** I will be quick on it. It's just basically it's the  
27 South Reed site. It's a little bit -- It's very close to the  
28 Pulley Ridge site, and it's on, I guess you would say, right on  
29 the margin of the shelf break. It's a deep site. There  
30 potentially are, from what we heard yesterday, some, I guess you  
31 would say conflict areas there, because of the longline guys.  
32  
33 It's not a very big site. It's way down south. It's 400 to  
34 1,500 meters deep. It's a small area. When we're concerned  
35 about Pulley Ridge being 666 square kilometers, this place is  
36 23.28 kilometers, and it's quite small. The depth is 400 to  
37 1,500.  
38  
39 They have identified a number of both stony corals as well as  
40 black corals and octocorals on the site. This was recommended  
41 by John Reed. He's the guy that sort of found it, and, as I  
42 said, it's -- I don't know if you can get the chart up there,  
43 but --  
44  
45 **MR. BOSARGE:** Are you working on it, Morgan?  
46  
47 **DR. KILGOUR:** Yes.  
48

1 DR. LANG: What was the depth range?  
2  
3 MR. JAAP: The depth was 400 to 1,500 meters.  
4  
5 DR. LANG: So 1,300 to 4,500 feet.  
6  
7 DR. KILGOUR: Again, I apologize. My bathymetry doesn't want to  
8 pull up on another site that we are looking at. I have fine-  
9 scale bathymetry, but here is the fifty-fathom line.  
10  
11 MR. BOSARGE: Do the shrimp points -- Will they pull up?  
12  
13 MR. JAAP: Is this an area that would be potentially or is a  
14 royal red area?  
15  
16 MR. BOSARGE: I don't think.  
17  
18 DR. KILGOUR: At the last meeting, it was thought that this  
19 might potentially be a royal red shrimping area, but I spoke  
20 with Mr. Nelson after the meeting, and he talked with who he  
21 thought was shrimping down there, and that was not an area of  
22 concern.  
23  
24 MR. BOSARGE: I believe it appears it's pretty well outside of  
25 that bottom.  
26  
27 DR. KILGOUR: My computer is giving me issues again, but there  
28 is a line of tracks right here and right over here.  
29  
30 MR. BOSARGE: That was someone who is very brave.  
31  
32 MR. JAAP: Perhaps an option here is to do as we did with some  
33 of the others and say that this would be a medium priority site  
34 in the context of perhaps no fishing regulations on it.  
35  
36 DR. LANG: If you make that a motion, I will second it.  
37  
38 MR. JAAP: **The motion is to make Reed South an HAPC with the**  
39 **stipulation of no fishing regulations.**  
40  
41 MR. BOSARGE: All right. We have a motion. Judy seconds.  
42  
43 MR. JAAP: Any comments? Should we vote? **All in favor.**  
44  
45 MR. BOSARGE: **It looks like unanimous.**  
46  
47 MS. KRUEGER: **Coral AP, all in favor of the motion on the board;**  
48 **any opposed. The motion passes with no opposition.**

1  
2 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think we're going too fast for them, for once.  
3 Shrimp AP?  
4  
5 **UNIDENTIFIED:** I don't think we need to vote on anything like  
6 that.  
7  
8 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. The Shrimp AP abstains. Frank.  
9  
10 **MR. HELIES:** Just a note. If we're not voting on it, we didn't  
11 support a previous one, which didn't show up in the motion. I  
12 just want to make sure that's on the record, that it's different  
13 from not supporting and just not participating in the vote.  
14  
15 **MR. BOSARGE:** Do you want to make that clear?  
16  
17 **MR. HELIES:** Does that matter, Morgan? I know we haven't been  
18 attached to some of the previous motions from yesterday, and the  
19 only one that I see a concern with is the Southern Bank for  
20 Texas, where we did support, but -- Well, we supported, but it  
21 we didn't want to officially participate in that.  
22  
23 **MR. BOSARGE:** I think we will just leave it as be. All right.  
24 Have you got it all?  
25  
26 **DR. KILGOUR:** We have addressed all the sites that were  
27 recommended. We went through a lot, and so, unless there is any  
28 other comments or concerns or recommendations that the group  
29 wants to make, I am good.  
30  
31 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. I am trying to find my agenda.  
32 Anyhow, the --  
33  
34 **DR. LANG:** The portal.  
35  
36 **DR. KILGOUR:** That is the important thing, right? Bryan is here  
37 to give you a little update on the portal that is now working  
38 again. The server is back. Thank you for reminding me.  
39  
40 **MR. BOSARGE:** Go ahead, J.P.  
41  
42 **MR. BROOKER:** Can I just ask a quick question of Morgan before  
43 we go into that? Morgan, who is going to be reporting out on  
44 this to the council, and is that report going to be going to the  
45 council at the next meeting in New Orleans?  
46  
47 **DR. KILGOUR:** I will be giving the summary to the council, and,  
48 yes, it it already on the council's August agenda, and so a

1 summary of this will be going out to the Chairs, as usual, and,  
2 as soon as they can turn it back around, it will make it into  
3 the briefing book.

4

5 **MR. BROOKER:** Great. Thanks.

6

7 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Now we'll have an update on the  
8 portal.

9

#### 10 **CORAL DATA PORTAL OVERVIEW**

11

12 **MR. SCHOONARD:** My name is Bryan Schoonard, and I'm the GIS  
13 Analyst for the Gulf Council staff. This is the portal site.  
14 We've been working on it for about a year-and-a-half now. The  
15 framework was here before I got here, but there have been a lot  
16 of different websites added to it. It has a lot more content.

17

18 I am going to show you two today that pertain to this meeting.  
19 The first one is the coral viewer. This one actually will  
20 display coral points throughout the Gulf of Mexico. Right now,  
21 the legend basically shows that we have stony corals, and it  
22 displays the fifty-meter bathymetry contour and also the 200-  
23 meter bathymetry contour.

24

25 It's also mobile friendly. It can be used on iPads and phone,  
26 Apple and anything, and so we made it to where people can  
27 actually get out and use this a lot more. You can click on the  
28 individual points and it will show the species of coral and also  
29 the depth associated with that coral.

30

31 You see that there was two points that are overlaying on each  
32 other right now, and so you can click the little arrow, and that  
33 will give you an idea of the one that was sitting underneath it,  
34 and so every one of them is clickable. I will bring up what we  
35 have for black coral, stony coral, octocorals, and sponges.  
36 They are very quick to turn on, and all of these also can be  
37 clicked on and have the information associated with them.

38

39 We also just made a simple welcome page that allows people to  
40 understand why we made these sites, and it gives a little bit of  
41 the background. We have it to where people can actually see the  
42 coral data and actually get an idea of tabular from seeing all  
43 the data itself. It's actually kind of a smart table. By doing  
44 queries, you can query out just certain types of coral, and you  
45 can it queried out just the black corals.

46

47 We also have it by species, and we also can do it by depths. We  
48 have a depth range, where you can see just certain corals at



1 certain depths, and so I will change this, and now it's giving  
2 me the corals from 963 to 3,075. You also have where you can  
3 either get an Excel, PDF, or print, and so it allows people to  
4 actually really get to the data and see it for themselves.

5  
6 We have it to where people can download the data and bring it  
7 into their own environments and do their own analysis. We have  
8 a help video that allows people, actually step-by-step, to show  
9 them how to use the site, and we thought it was a good idea to  
10 come up with coral descriptions with pictures, to actually  
11 understand about these corals and the different habitats they  
12 inhabit.

13  
14 We also have it to where people can do depth charts. You can  
15 pick black coral, and I can basically define my own thing. You  
16 can make it a polygon and hit "apply", and it will actually give  
17 you the depth ranges. Everything that is circled in red, it  
18 gives you the depth ranges of those corals. It also can do  
19 this. If you click on the actual magnifying glass, it will  
20 bring it out to a spreadsheet, and it's interactive, to where  
21 you can click on each one and it tells you which coral has those  
22 depths associated with them.

23  
24 We built a nice little tool that says "find the coral near me".  
25 You give it a range and say I want to see everything within a  
26 click, thirty-four miles from this click, and so I will click  
27 just right here, and it will search and tell me exactly which  
28 corals are in that location by mileage of what you specified.  
29 You actually can click and it will tell you which individual  
30 coral it is, the depths, and the species name, and it tells you  
31 how far away from that click it was.

32  
33 **MR. BOSARGE:** Does it actually give you a location, I mean to a  
34 lat/long location?

35  
36 **MR. SCHOONARD:** Yes, you have a lat/long location at the bottom  
37 of your screen right here, to the left. It tells you the  
38 lat/long. You can see my mouse moving, and you will see the  
39 lat/long changes, and you actually can click a little plus, and,  
40 anywhere you click on the mouse, it will display the coordinates  
41 of those clicks, and so that it now shows the coordinates of  
42 that click, so you can exactly know exactly where these corals  
43 are.

44  
45 Then we have a simple measurement tool. We wanted people just  
46 to be able to take simple measurements, and, if it will work for  
47 me, just so you get an idea of how far things are, real quickly,  
48 and it gives you different attributes to pick from. Here is the

1 kilometers. We also have it to where, if you want to get an  
2 idea of an area, of an HAPC or something like that, you can  
3 actually free-hand draw a polygon and it will display, in the  
4 dialogue box, the exact square miles for that polygon, so you  
5 actually can get an idea of exactly -- If we had an HAPC or  
6 anything like that, you can get the exact square miles of that.

7  
8 The next site I want to talk about is the HAPC viewer. This is  
9 a little bit more complicated site, but it definitely pertains  
10 to this meeting and the proposed or recommended and also the  
11 ones that have no fishing regulations or ones that have fishing  
12 regulations for HAPCs. Give it a second to load. It's got a  
13 lot of data associated with it.

14  
15 When it first loads, it just has an overview of the Gulf of  
16 Mexico, and it gives you an idea of -- The legend is down here.  
17 Everything is green is HAPCs with fishing regulations, purple is  
18 recommended HAPCs, and I think it's kind of an orange is HAPCs  
19 without fishing regulations.

20  
21 We also have it to where the legend is over here, and you can  
22 see black corals, and it gives you an idea, because we actually  
23 incorporated the coral points to where you can click and it will  
24 give you the coral points to show you, in those particular  
25 HAPCs, where the corals are located. As long as our site works  
26 with me, we will be able to zoom into one.

27  
28 You can see now the purple are the recommended, and the chart  
29 here actually is very nice, because it shows you, within your  
30 screen, wherever you're looking, it tells you the actual square  
31 miles of the purple versus the recommended versus the HAPCs with  
32 fishing regulations, and so, as you move this, the chart will  
33 actually change and tell you exactly in your view how much  
34 square miles you are actually pertaining to these HAPCs.

35  
36 The nice thing about this is we can turn on coral points, and  
37 it's going to be a little bit jumbled, but you can actually see  
38 the coral points that fall within these HAPCs. It gives you a  
39 good idea of what corals were located in these areas.

40  
41 Everything on the left-hand side here are the charts that have  
42 to do with each HAPC with fishing regulations or without fishing  
43 regulations or recommended, and so you actually get an idea of  
44 what's being recommended, and these are the smart tables, like I  
45 was talking about before for the coral viewer. They also have  
46 the coral locations in tabular format too, and so you have a way  
47 to see it on the map and you also have a way to actually  
48 visualize it in a tabular format.

1  
2 We also have a predictive model one. I will just real quick  
3 show this one. We took Brian Kinlan's data and we brought it  
4 into one of our frameworks, and we are able to display it in a  
5 very user-friendly method.

6  
7 This right now is just the black coral predictive model, and you  
8 can see, from the legend, that it has different colors to  
9 associate your high likelihood or low likelihood of corals being  
10 in a location. The nice thing we were able to do was actually  
11 incorporate the actual observations, and so now I have turned on  
12 the black coral observations, where they actually saw black  
13 corals, versus the model.

14  
15 If I zoom in, you can see a lot of these guys are falling into  
16 the very high likelihood of where the predicted black corals  
17 were, but also they actually observed them too, and we have it  
18 to where we have all of the different types of models that were  
19 pertaining to the Gulf Council and the Gulf of Mexico outputs,  
20 and I will turn on one more, and maybe we will turn on the  
21 lophelia model. Then you can actually turn on the lophelia  
22 observations. They're the white kind of triangles or diamonds.  
23 You can actually see where these guys were located and where  
24 they thought they were.

25  
26 The same thing with this. You've got the legend. It tells you  
27 what you guys are looking at, and all of these are mobile  
28 friendly, and every single one of these has a print, to where  
29 you can make your own map. It's just a really easy way. You  
30 can take a PDF or a JPEG, and it will basically -- You can print  
31 a map out and share it with your colleagues, and it makes it  
32 very easy to stay on the same page when you guys are talking  
33 about things, but we encourage you guys to use this as much as  
34 you want.

35  
36 We are going to keep enhancing these sites, and we have some  
37 other sites coming out soon. We have the lionfish site and some  
38 other things like that, but I just encourage you guys to use the  
39 portal and mess around with it and understand it.

40  
41 **MR. JAAP:** Bryan, is this going to be available to the general  
42 public as well?

43  
44 **MR. SCHOONARD:** It already is. You can type into Google the  
45 "Gulf Council Portal", and it comes right up.

46  
47 **MR. BOSARGE:** That's amazing. What I wouldn't have given for  
48 that information about twenty-five years ago. That's great.

1 That's impressive, and good job.

2

3 **MR. SCHOONARD:** Thank you.

4

5 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Any more business? Johnny.

6

7

#### OTHER BUSINESS

8

9 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Before we get away from here, I would like to  
10 recommend -- I don't know if we need a motion or just a  
11 recommendation, but a strong recommendation for strong  
12 consideration that anytime that there is more than one species  
13 involved or a shrimp species and it's a coral habitat that we do  
14 joint meetings like this in the future. This is amazing, and it  
15 was certainly great working with you all, and I look forward to  
16 all the future meetings.

17

18 **MR. BOSARGE:** Yes. That was going to be my comments exactly.  
19 There was a lot camaraderie. I appreciate the back-and-forth.  
20 We hammered out a lot of issues, and, of course, there's some  
21 things that we didn't agree on, but, anyhow, it's all good.  
22 That's what it's all made of. Kim.

23

24 **MS. CHAUVIN:** I had a question, because I came across something  
25 last night, and it was on social media, and it had to do with  
26 the coral reefs, and I looked at some of the comments that were  
27 made or how much you had in favor of protecting the coral reefs  
28 or what have you.

29

30 When I read it, it was directed at the oil and gas industry, and  
31 I looked at that, and I have to wonder how many comments are in  
32 favor of thinking that NOAA has anything to do in stopping the  
33 oil and gas industry from doing anything when you're getting  
34 these comments, because it was directed not at commercial  
35 fishing, but it was directed at the oil and gas industry.

36

37 From what I know, in dealing with NOAA and the oil and gas  
38 industry, because of the stuff that they blew up the rigs and  
39 they have all the red snapper on them, I was told that they only  
40 thing that they could do to regulate anything was to send a  
41 letter and there was no regulations that they could do, and that  
42 was by Roy Crabtree.

43

44 My question is, and I guess it would be directed at G.P., when  
45 you got all those comments, was it directed -- Were you getting  
46 them because people were thinking that this will have a lot more  
47 to do with making sure that the oil and gas industry is nowhere  
48 around them? It's just one of those things that just happened

1 last night, and I've just seen it, and so I was kind of curious  
2 about it.

3  
4 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I'm assuming that you were looking at the comments  
5 that were coming in for the proposed Flower Garden Banks  
6 National Marine Sanctuary expansion, and, in that case, in fact,  
7 we would have some -- We do have authority to regulate  
8 activities within the National Marine Sanctuary, and that  
9 includes oil and gas activities.

10  
11 I think, when Roy Crabtree was talking to you, he was talking  
12 related to authorities under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and under  
13 the fisheries act, whereas, under the National Marine  
14 Sanctuaries Act, we actually do have authority to regulate oil  
15 and gas, but obviously those comments are open, and they are  
16 very wide-ranging. A lot of people are providing comments, a  
17 lot of it because of the Deepwater Horizon incident and because  
18 of the interest in the impacts of oil and gas, and so, yes, we  
19 are getting a lot of those comments. We do have authority.  
20 What we do about it, that's another question, but --

21  
22 **MR. BOSARGE:** Paul and then --

23  
24 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Different agencies have different  
25 responsibilities by regulation, by law, and NOAA has theirs and  
26 National Marine Sanctuaries has theirs. The other one, what  
27 used to be MMS, is now BOEM, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,  
28 and BSEE, Bureau of Environmental Safety and something or other.  
29 They keep changing it.

30  
31 BOEM does regulate drilling. They are pretty heavy on  
32 environmental regulations, and they are very sensitive about  
33 coral reefs, about where you can drill and where you can't. Of  
34 course, as you probably know, Florida is sacrosanct and there  
35 ain't no drilling in Florida, because of decisions made years  
36 ago, but it generally comes under BOEM, except when it's on one  
37 of G.P.'s reefs or one of the National Marine Sanctuary reefs,  
38 in which case it sort of defaults to them.

39  
40 **MR. BOSARGE:** All right. Go ahead.

41  
42 **MR. WEATHERBY:** I hadn't thought of that until Kim's question.  
43 G.P., and I'm not trying to cause any trouble, but you can  
44 regulate oil and gas within the sanctuary, correct? That's what  
45 I just heard you say?

46  
47 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes.

48

1 **MR. WEATHERBY:** How about proximal to the sanctuary? If I  
2 wanted to drill a quarter of a mile over the boundary, I can do  
3 that?

4  
5 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, we would only have authority inside the  
6 boundary, however that's established. We do have some existing  
7 regulations right now that say something like discharge that  
8 happens outside of the sanctuary, but enters the sanctuary and  
9 injures a resource, we have the ability to take an enforcement  
10 action against that, but there is that extra step of we have to  
11 show that injury did occur from the activity.

12  
13 **MR. WEATHERBY:** FYI, I have no intention to drill a quarter of a  
14 mile outside of the sanctuary. I just wanted to know how it  
15 worked, that's all.

16  
17 **MR. BOSARGE:** Besides, they've got directional drilling now.  
18 Walt.

19  
20 **MR. JAAP:** Just again, thank you very much for everyone's  
21 participation and your open-mindedness to listen to one another,  
22 and I think it was a good meeting. I would mention to Paul that  
23 there were oil drilling rigs in Florida in the 1950s.

24  
25 They drilled about a half-a-dozen wells between Key West and the  
26 Dry Tortugas, and they actually --I went out to a well that was  
27 drilled within a quarter of a mile of the Middle Grounds too,  
28 and so I think drilling can be done if it's done in a good way,  
29 and if it's regulated. It gets a lot of -- When you have a  
30 Horizon-type incident, it really gets a lot of news.

31  
32 **MR. BOSARGE:** Good deal. All right. Any other business? Do I  
33 have a motion to adjourn? So moved. It's seconded. All in  
34 favor. We are unanimous. Thanks, everybody.

35  
36 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 4, 2016.)

37  
38 - - -