

**Coral Committee Report
August 20, 2018
Dr. Tom Frazer, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda and approved the minutes.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Update

Mr. Schmahl provided the Committee with an update on the proposed expansion of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. A Boundary Expansion Working Group was developed by the Sanctuary Advisory Council to evaluate the proposed boundaries in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The recommendations from the working group and the Sanctuary Advisory Council are different than those that were outlined in the DEIS, though all are within the DEIS preferred alternative 3. The Committee requested that staff provide information on fishing activities (from VMS and ELB data) within the new proposed boundaries for review at the October Council meeting, and may choose to provide an updated recommendation on the fishing regulations in the proposed sanctuary expansion.

Final Action: Abbreviated Framework Action: Clarification of Fishing in HAPCs

Staff reviewed the final action abbreviated framework which clarifies that deployment of bottom-tending fishing gear should be prohibited in HAPCs. The Committee felt it encompassed the Council's previous concerns, and made the following motion:

The Committee recommends, and I so move: **to approve the Abbreviated Framework Action: Clarification of Fishing in HAPCs and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.**

Motion carried with no opposition.

Coral Reef Conservation Program Grant Update

Staff provided the Committee with a brief summary of the CRCP grant. Staff also highlighted the final products of the previous three year grant. In the current grant, staff highlighted the accomplishments to date, the tasks and objectives, and the new staff member. The committee requested that staff add current events to the portal banner, such as the bleaching event that is happening in the Florida Keys. Staff was also requested to stay up to date on the development of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary possible expansion.

Madam chair, this concludes my report.