

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 JOINT CORAL/HABITAT PROTECTION & RESTORATION COMMITTEE

4
5 Hyatt Regency Birmingham Birmingham, Alabama

6
7 April 3, 2017

8
9 **CORAL COMMITTEE VOTING MEMBERS**

10 John Sanchez.....Florida
11 Tom Frazer.....Florida
12 John Greene.....Alabama
13 Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
14 Kelly Lucas (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
15 Campo Matens.....Louisiana

16
17 **HABITAT PROTECTION & RESTORATION COMMITTEE VOTING MEMBERS**

18 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
19 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
20 John Greene.....Alabama
21 Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
22 Campo Matens.....Louisiana
23 John Sanchez.....Florida
24 Greg Stunz.....Texas

25
26 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

27 Kevin Anson.....Alabama
28 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
29 Doug Boyd.....Texas
30 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
31 LCDR Leo Danaher.....USCG
32 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
33 Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
34 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
35 David Walker.....Alabama

36
37 **STAFF**

38 Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
39 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist-Statistician
40 Douglas Gregory.....Executive Director
41 Karen Hoak.....Administrative & Financial Assistant
42 Morgan Kilgour.....Fishery Biologist
43 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
44 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
45 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
46 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
47 Camilla Shireman.....Administrative Assistant
48 Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director

1	
2	<u>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</u>
3	J.P. Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy
4	Shane Cantrell.....CFA, Galveston, TX
5	Chris Conklin.....SAFMC
6	Levi Denham.....USCG
7	Tracy Floyd.....MDMR
8	Susan Gerhart.....NMFS
9	Ken Haddad.....ASA, FL
10	Chad Hanson.....Pew
11	Alison Johnson.....Oceana
12	Bill Kelly.....FKCFA
13	Amanda Nimbish.....CLS America
14	Bart Niquet.....Panama City, FL
15	Kirk Patterson.....CCA
16	Rusty Pittman.....MDMR
17	Clay Porch.....SEFSC
18	Bob Zales, II.....Panama City, FL
19	
20	- - -
21	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1
2
3 Table of Contents.....3
4
5 Table of Motions.....4
6
7 Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes.....5
8
9 Action Guide and Next Steps.....5
10
11 Summary of the Scoping Workshops for Coral Amendment 7.....6
12
13 Adjournment.....19
14
15 - - -
16

TABLE OF MOTIONS

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

PAGE 12: Motion to add a second amendment that would address the proposed areas not included in the scoping document for Coral Amendment 7 (Coral Amendment 8). The motion carried on page 19.

- - -

1 The Joint Coral/Habitat Protection & Restoration Committees of
2 the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the
3 Hyatt Regency Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama, Monday afternoon,
4 April 3, 2017, and was called to order by Chairman Dale Diaz.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

10 **CHAIRMAN DALE DIAZ:** This is a Joint Coral/Habitat Protection &
11 Restoration Committee. I would like to take just a minute and
12 read the membership. On the Coral Committee, it's going to be
13 John Sanchez, who is the Chair, Tom Frazer is Vice Chair, Johnny
14 Greene, Camp Matens, Kelly Lucas, and Martha Guyas. On the
15 Habitat Committee, I am the Chair of the Habitat Committee, and
16 the Vice Chair is Johnny Greene. Committee members are Patrick
17 Banks, Glenn Constant, Camp Matens, John Sanchez, Greg Stunz,
18 and Martha Guyas. Myself and Mr. Sanchez had a conversation
19 between the meeting, and it was agreed that I would chair this
20 meeting, and so we're going to proceed like that.

21
22 To get started, I would like to start with -- I would like to
23 entertain adoption of the agenda. Before somebody makes a
24 motion, does anybody have any other business that they would
25 like to add to the agenda? Is there any opposition to adopting
26 the agenda as it's written? Seeing none, the agenda is adopted.

27
28 Next up is Approval of the January 2017 Joint Coral and Habitat
29 Protection Committee Minutes. Any corrections or addition to
30 the minutes? Seeing none, is there any opposition to adopting
31 the minutes? Seeing none, the minutes are adopted.

32
33 I will take just a minute, and the next thing on the agenda is
34 the Action Guide and Next Steps, and I just want to read one
35 section of it, so you can see what we had discussed to try to
36 just accomplish today. Mainly, it's to go through public
37 comments.

38
39 The committee will be presented with the results from scoping
40 workshops on Coral Amendment 7. The committee may make
41 recommendations on items or have discussion that it would like
42 to include in Coral Amendment 7. A draft options paper will be
43 presented to the council at the June 2017 meeting.

44
45 That's kind of what we're trying to accomplish here today.
46 First up on the agenda, Ms. Muehlstein is going to give us a
47 summary of the scoping workshops for Coral Amendment 7. Ms.
48 Muehlstein.

1
2 **SUMMARY OF THE SCOPING WORKSHOPS FOR CORAL AMENDMENT 7**
3

4 **MR. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will start
5 and kind of go state-by-state. We hosted in-person coral
6 scoping workshops in Galveston, Texas and also in Brownsville,
7 Texas. In Brownsville, we had six members of the public attend
8 and one member of the public spoke. Then, in Galveston, four
9 members of the public attended, and all spoke.

10
11 In Texas, we heard that deepwater protection should be
12 supported, because habitat and healthy fisheries are strongly
13 correlated. The decline of corals on a global scale should prod
14 the council into action. Reversing damage to deepwater corals
15 is difficult, because they are so old. It would be impossible
16 to conceive of a rebuilding plan for such long-lived species.

17
18 The area-specific comments that we received in Texas included
19 that the two proposed closures off of Texas have no shrimping
20 effort, and so there isn't any interaction with the shrimp
21 fishery, and so there was no concerns expressed. Also, there
22 must be a way to protect corals and preserve historical
23 commercial fishing access in these areas.

24
25 Some of the comments we heard in Texas that were specific to the
26 different management alternatives that the council could take
27 included that octocorals should be reincorporated into the
28 fishery management unit, because they're an integrated component
29 of the habitat.

30
31 The State of Florida should not manage corals across the entire
32 Gulf of Mexico. The electronic logbook data from shrimpers is
33 being used in this amendment to the industry's advantage.
34 Enforcement, however, should not be based solely on this ELB
35 data, if we do end up creating some closures.

36
37 Anchoring should not be allowed in the proposed areas, and then
38 there was concern expressed that if octocorals were
39 reincorporated into the fishery management unit that they would
40 be then subject to the same overfishing and overfished
41 limitations and the same rebuilding limitations as our finfish
42 species.

43
44 Some of the other comments we heard in Texas was that the joint
45 meetings of the industry and coral scientists went very well.
46 There is an area also in the Flower Garden Banks expansion that
47 is inshore, and it is very productive to shrimping grounds, and
48 folks were asking that the Flower Gardens sort of reevaluate

1 that.

2
3 Targeted outreach efforts are necessary to inform historical
4 fishermen of any new prohibitions that are made a result of this
5 amendment. Then, finally, in Texas, we heard that the council
6 should work in concert with the Flower Garden Banks National
7 Marine Sanctuary Program if it plans to redefine current HAPC
8 boundaries, because the National Marine Sanctuary currently uses
9 the existing council boundaries in their expansion plan.

10
11 Moving down the coast to Florida, there were seven members of
12 the public that attended the Key West meeting. There were
13 fifteen members of the public that attended the Madeira Beach
14 meeting, and seven of those members spoke. Then there was one
15 member of the public that attended the Panama City meeting, and
16 nobody spoke at that meeting.

17
18 Comments that we heard in Florida that were specific to the
19 different proposed areas included that there is concern with the
20 expansion of Pulley Ridge, because it's in historical fishing
21 grounds, and it would have serious economic impacts on the
22 fleet. There are longliners that fish in Pulley Ridge, and also
23 in the extension off the West Florida Shelf, all summer long,
24 and the proposed expansion to Pulley Ridge is over flat bottom
25 rather than over reef.

26
27 We also heard, in the converse of that, that NOAA research shows
28 that the area that is proposed for the Pulley Ridge expansion
29 does have a high concentration of corals. Next, we heard that
30 expansion is being considered simply to create revenue from
31 fines of fishermen who are caught fishing within those closed
32 areas.

33
34 The feedback we heard that was management-technique specific was
35 that the industry is regulated enough with their gear and
36 seasonal restrictions, and so creating additional closures is
37 unnecessary and that the effectiveness of area closures should
38 be evaluated before the council moves forward.

39
40 Moving over to Alabama, we had ten members of the public attend,
41 and five of those members submitted comment. The area-specific
42 comment suggested that fishing rights should not be taken away
43 in areas where corals are not present. There was concern
44 expressed that the boundaries in the northern Gulf that approach
45 the fifty-fathom line are too close to royal red shrimping
46 grounds.

47
48 The comments we heard that were management-specific in Alabama

1 suggested that areas should not be expanded indefinitely, and
2 that commenter referenced that the South Atlantic shrimpers have
3 lost all of their rock shrimp bottom, through a series of
4 expansions, and cautioned that we don't take an indefinite
5 approach to creating closures. Observer coverage is good in the
6 commercial fleet, and there are no records showing that vessels
7 are catching corals, and so these extra protections should not
8 even be considered.

9
10 We also heard that analysis in the document should include
11 historical data on the progression of closed areas in both the
12 Gulf and South Atlantic.

13
14 We also conducted meetings in Houma, Louisiana, where we had
15 twenty-five members of the public attend, and none of them
16 commented on this document. If you remember, we did host those
17 documents in conjunction with shrimp public hearings for 17B,
18 and the people that showed up might not have been interested
19 specifically in this document. We also hosted a meeting in
20 Gulfport, Mississippi, where there were fifteen members of the
21 public present, and nobody commented.

22
23 Then we also received fifteen different comments through either
24 our online comment form or that were submitted to us via email.
25 Just really quickly, to go through those written comments that
26 were received, we heard that the council should establish strong
27 protections for deepwater corals, because deepwater corals are a
28 national treasure, essential to a sustainable, healthy Gulf. We
29 lose too many fragile deepwater corals, and so damaging fishing
30 practices should be restricted in the coral areas.

31
32 Protecting coral will benefit fishermen in the long run.
33 Deepwater corals are sensitive and take years to recover from
34 damage. Policies should safeguard these fragile areas by
35 prohibiting anchoring or the use of deep fishing gear. Coral
36 reefs should be protected, to allow for continued enjoyment of
37 the ecosystem. Designate new habitat areas of particular
38 concern that will lessen human impacts on coral growth. The
39 council should focus on protecting corals that are impacted most
40 by human activities.

41
42 Limiting commercial fishing can improve the ecosystems and allow
43 fish and invertebrates to thrive. Reincorporating octocorals
44 into the fishery management unit would benefit the ecosystem.
45 The Gulf Council should move forward by restricting the use of
46 bottom trawls, bottom longlines, dredges, traps, pots, bottom-
47 set nets, and fixed longlines in the fifteen identified areas in
48 the scoping document.

1
2 The eight additional HAPCs suggested in the document should
3 include consideration of fishing regulations. More HAPCs should
4 be created, with specific attention paid to bottom trawling.
5 Existing HAPCs should be redefined, using new research,
6 technology, and information that wasn't available when the
7 designation was initially made.

8
9 The draft scoping document does not offer an adequate number of
10 options for consideration. The document should include a no-
11 action alternative, and the creation of deep-sea coral zones, as
12 specified under Section 303(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

13
14 To avoid unnecessary confusion or potential conflicts with other
15 regulatory agencies, the council should consider how the
16 proposed actions integrate or overlap with existing regulations
17 from other federal agencies. The scoping document lacks
18 economic analysis that would ensure the balance of all concerns
19 related to the Gulf.

20
21 The document should include an alternative that manages deep-sea
22 corals using the discretionary deep-sea coral authority described
23 in NOAA's 2017 strategic plan. Amendment 7 should include the
24 pathway for areas to be considered and managed, if and when new
25 science becomes available. The amendment should be organized to
26 group sites by location and depth. The council's coral expert
27 working group divided the Gulf into three depth zones and by
28 geographical regions.

29
30 A separate action should be included to address the very deep
31 coral sites, predominantly in the northeastern and northwestern
32 regions, where little occurs. This approach both corresponds
33 with the distinct physical and biological characteristics of the
34 various coral communities and may make it easier for
35 stakeholders to assess and comment on potential impacts.

36
37 The council should work with the State of Florida to reinstate
38 deepwater octocorals into the Coral Fishery Management Plan to
39 protect them in federal waters, and then, finally, we heard that
40 the sites identified by the council's coral expert working group
41 that did not ultimately get included in the Flower Garden Banks
42 expansion should be included in this document, and that
43 concludes my report of the comments that we heard during scoping
44 for Coral Amendment 7.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Thank you, Ms. Muehlstein. Any questions for
47 Emily? Kevin.

1 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not on your
2 committee, or committees, but just two comments. Emily, it
3 appeared you had read more than what was shown on the board.
4 There is several bullets that you continued talking about that
5 wasn't part of the written documentation that we have in our
6 briefing book. Will you update that and put it in the record
7 then?

8
9 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Yes, and we actually received a comment letter
10 an hour after we submitted, and so we updated it, and we will
11 absolutely update it on the website, so that we're showing the
12 most current draft.

13
14 **MR. ANSON:** Then just a minor point. For consistency purposes,
15 I recall prior summaries, here as of late, providing the
16 individual, the name of the individual, when they provided
17 comments, and this form does not provide that. Is there a
18 reason why?

19
20 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Because these were scoping -- What we have sort
21 of tended to do is, in public hearings, we do attribute the
22 comments to the individuals. However, when we're scoping,
23 rather than sort of go through that iterative process of writing
24 down multiple times what people have said, what we have tried to
25 do is just go bullet-point-by-bullet-point, rather than give the
26 individual attribution.

27
28 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Any other comments or questions? Dr. Frazer.

31
32 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thanks, Dale. I know that we're trying to
33 figure out how to move forward and what might be included in
34 this amendment, and I thought about it quite a bit, and I
35 actually think that it's going to cause a little bit of work on
36 the part of the staff if we ask them to do this, but I would
37 like to see all forty-seven of those areas that were identified
38 by the scientific committee, I guess, and the AP put back in the
39 document.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Okay. Mr. Gregory.

42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY:** Our plan was to do a couple or
44 three different amendments to cover all forty-seven, thinking
45 that it was too much to begin with, and so we went through a
46 process of having working groups identify the top-priority
47 areas, and that's the fifteen we've got now. That was our
48 original plan. I would have to defer to Morgan, but, if we go

1 back to all forty-seven, we will pretty much be starting from
2 scratch again, but I don't know.

3
4 **DR. MORGAN KILGOUR:** I don't know if we would be starting from
5 scratch, but we definitely didn't scope all forty-seven areas.
6 That doesn't mean that we couldn't include them, but it will
7 just -- We'll just have to buckle down and do it, if that's what
8 the council would like.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Frazer.

11
12 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks again, Dale. I mean, I realize that it's
13 probably going to be a lot more work than many people wanted to
14 do, but there is some good reasons for doing it. I think that
15 we don't have a lot of information on most of those other sites.

16
17 I mean, we have identified fifteen that, very likely, could have
18 some alternatives that talk about fishing restrictions, but then
19 there were other ones that didn't have fishing restrictions, and
20 it's very likely that the other ones won't have any either, but
21 one of the things about putting them in the document is that
22 they would be recognized as HAPCs, and it makes them
23 identifiable.

24
25 If you go back and you look at the strategic plan that NOAA is
26 working with, with regard to the deep-sea corals and deep-sea
27 coral habitats, they are going to spend, or are supposed to
28 spend, some significant effort in 2017 and 2018 in the Gulf of
29 Mexico. By keeping them in the document, it helps prioritize
30 what areas they might visit, and, ultimately, I hope that we
31 will get some more information to make more informed decisions
32 down the road.

33
34 It also kind of gets to the point, I guess, of the public
35 comment, and what I heard in our public hearing when I was in
36 Tampa is a lot of the fishermen are really concerned about
37 piling regulations on, year after year after year, whether
38 that's real or not, and I think, if we put them all in right
39 now, then we don't have to come back with a second document or a
40 third document that says we're just adding more and more of
41 these HAPCs. It just kind of puts it all on the table right
42 now.

43
44 Again, I think I would like to emphasize that the vast majority
45 of these sites are really, really deep, and I don't think you're
46 going to have to place many fishing regulations to begin with,
47 and that's not my intent.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** I guess, for clarity, Dr. Frazer, are you
2 wanting to make a motion to the effect that we would add them
3 all back in?
4

5 **DR. FRAZER:** If that's necessary. **I am willing to make that**
6 **motion.** I think maybe the staff is just looking for a little
7 bit of guidance on how to move forward.
8

9 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Mr. Gregory.
10

11 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I am not here to debate anything.
12 I was just pointing out the rationale of why we chose fifteen to
13 begin with, instead of going with all forty-seven.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** As the committee chair, I think it would be
16 better to do this in the form of a motion, because we started
17 down the path, by direction from this committee, to take this in
18 bite-sized pieces, and that's kind of where we're at up until
19 now. I would feel better, if we're going to change directions,
20 if we do it with a motion. Ms. Bosarge.
21

22 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I did attend most of those meetings, where
23 we had the coral scientists and different groups of fishermen
24 all in the room together, and I had been a big advocate of that
25 before we started the document, and that was because I knew this
26 was going to be contentious between the fishermen and the
27 scientists.
28

29 By doing it that way, no one had the upper hand yet. Everybody
30 was on a level playing field, because the document, with the
31 sites, had not been started yet, and so they could come together
32 and prioritize and hone it down and find some compromises and
33 figure out what was the most important for us to work on,
34 because I didn't feel that we were capable of taking on forty-
35 seven sites in one document and tweaking the borders of forty-
36 seven sites to make sure that we have them all in the right
37 place and then figuring out the fishing regulations for forty-
38 seven different sites in one document.
39

40 Now, having said that, I guess what I am worried about is, if we
41 go this route, after having all those people in the room
42 together and coming up with a compromise, what does that say to
43 the fishermen if we then say, well, thanks for your input and
44 taking time out of your day to come and help us with this, but
45 guess what? We're going to do them all. I just feel like it's
46 slightly disingenuous to go back in that direction.
47

48 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ms. Guyas.

1
2 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** I think I can support this. If the plan was
3 to basically do these fifteen and then go back and revisit the
4 other forty-seven, I feel like putting them all on the table at
5 one time probably would be better, from a fisherman's
6 perspective, and at least we're upfront about what we're working
7 on here.
8
9 I mean, if we move forward with something for these fifteen, or
10 consider changes there, if I am someone outside of the council
11 process, I think, okay, the council chose their fifteen and
12 they're done and not there is going to be two more rounds of
13 this.
14
15 I kind of think it would be better to look at this holistically,
16 at least, and look at them all at one time. Maybe we end up in
17 a place where the fifteen that have been identified by the AP
18 and the SSC and that have been worked on this whole time --
19 Maybe those are the ones that we really need to work on, because
20 we need to tweak the borders and we need to -- These are
21 priority areas. Maybe some of the other ones, like Tom said,
22 end up not having regulations associated with them or whatever,
23 but -- I mean, I see both ways, but I don't know, and I know
24 it's big and nebulous, but maybe it is better to do it all at
25 once, rather than try to do it in three tiers. I don't know.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Frazer, is that your motion?
28
29 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, that's my motion.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Okay. Do we have a second for the motion on the
32 board?
33
34 **MS. GUYAS:** I will second it.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Seconded by Ms. Guyas. Did you have a comment,
37 Dr. Frazer?
38
39 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, and I would just like -- Again, I have been
40 thinking about this quite a bit, and I really appreciate
41 Chairwoman Bosarge's comments. I really do. I think it's
42 really important to work together with all the sectors, in this
43 case, the commercial fishermen, who brought a lot of goodwill to
44 the table.
45
46 In my heart of hearts, what I think is that the focus will
47 continue to be on those fifteen priority areas, and I think
48 that's where all of that good discussion is going to end up, and

1 I think we'll be in a good place, I think, but it also allows us
2 to look at some of those contentious sites, like Pulley Ridge,
3 as an individual area and as a HAPC, or whatever it might be,
4 and work through that process and try to allow those fishermen
5 that have historically exploited that area to continue to do so.

6
7 I would like to see that happen, I really would, but I also
8 think that I am hearing these guys in the public hearings saying
9 don't keep throwing regulations at me. Don't come back at me
10 with a Document 2 and a Document 3. I think these twenty-
11 something other potential HAPCs that are sitting out there are
12 really non-issues, from a fishing perspective. I think they're
13 too deep, for the most part. I think they're not in the areas
14 that are traditionally trawled over or around.

15
16 There's another probably -- The Viosca Knoll one is something
17 that we could talk about, but I think, again, we have a good
18 relationship with the fishermen there, and I think we can deal
19 with that site.

20
21 If we just don't pay attention to them, I don't think we will
22 ever -- We will have very few opportunities to collect the
23 information or the data that we need to actually make informed
24 decisions, because, right now, we don't have that type of
25 information.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Kilgour.

28
29 **DR. KILGOUR:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was just going to bring
30 to the committee's attention that if you want to do this, I
31 would like a little bit more time, maybe present an options
32 paper to you in August, since we're essentially doubling. Right
33 now, we have fifteen areas that are in the scoping document,
34 plus an additional eight areas that were recommended to not have
35 regulations, and so that's twenty-three.

36
37 It would be another twenty-four sites, and I should also note
38 that some of these twenty-four sites that aren't included in the
39 scoping document are existing HAPCs that don't have regulations,
40 but, if it would be all right with the committee, I would
41 request some additional time, if this goes forward.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Ms. Bosarge.

44
45 **MS. BOSARGE:** Morgan, if we put forty-seven different sites in
46 this document and we have a Coral Committee meeting, I can tell
47 you that I am not going to let it rest until I look at the
48 borders of every single one of those forty-seven sites, and I

1 want to see shrimp tracks going around them, so that I can see
2 that we have those borders just right. I am going to want to
3 see effort on the commercial finfish fishing side of the house,
4 to see what the effort is there, and so, when we did that in
5 these AP meetings, we are talking about eight, nine, ten hours
6 to go through forty-seven sites.

7
8 Some of these meetings, I believe one of them, was a two-day
9 meeting to get through forty-seven sites and actually take a
10 good, hard look at what we're doing, because I refuse to go out
11 there and do a blanket forty-seven sites and this is it. No,
12 we're going to go and look at them, because you have to do it
13 with the mindset that one day all fishing may be prohibited in
14 those sites, and so you better make sure you get your borders
15 right on the frontend. It is a lot of work.

16
17 I guess that's why I am frustrated about forty-seven sites in
18 one document and thinking that we will really and truly be able
19 to do a good job, as managers, of looking at that and getting it
20 right and not having unintended consequences later on down the
21 line, because, although we may not put fishing regulations on
22 them now, the scientists were very upfront with us, and I
23 appreciate that, and they said our intention is to have fishing
24 regulations on all of these sites.

25
26 That is their end goal, and that's fine, as long as we get the
27 fishing regulations correct, but doing all of that in one fell
28 swoop, in one document, and really thinking that we will have
29 the time in a four-day meeting to look at that, I don't want to
30 mess this up. I want to get it right. That is why I intended
31 to go with fewer sites and concentrate very hard on it and make
32 sure we do a good job. Anyway, that's my two-cents.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Any further discussion? Mr. Greene.

35
36 **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** I've kind of been mixed on this, and have
37 been back and forth both ways, and I kind of see what the hang-
38 up here is on this, but, noting some of the water depths --
39 Green Canyon and Garden Banks and Mississippi Canyon, I mean,
40 that's some pretty deep water.

41
42 By no means do I think we need to exclude all forty-seven sites
43 from the document, because I think what Dr. Frazer was getting
44 at is important. It's important to have the information in the
45 document, and so I think it needs to stay in there, but I think,
46 at some point, we've got to kind of break this down.

47
48 The speed at which we work, I'm afraid that, if we try to do

1 forty-seven sites in one document, I don't know that we will
2 ever get done, and so I think that we need to kind of whittle it
3 down a little bit somehow. I don't know if maybe you make a
4 different approach and maybe look at it by water depth, because,
5 for the life of me, I can't imagine what type of fishery you
6 would have in 4,920 feet to 6,565 feet in Green Canyon 852 that
7 you're going to have.

8
9 Some of these things are going to be kind of whatever, but, to
10 Ms. Bosarge's point, I don't really want to -- I don't want to
11 go down a thing that seems like we're just rubber-stamping these
12 things to get through because we're tired of looking at all
13 forty-seven of them and it's just killing us to come back. I
14 think that we really need to think this through before we move
15 forward.

16
17 I think that I just -- I know we need to do something, but to
18 throw all forty-seven in one document I think is just -- I think
19 it would be the death of all of us to go back through it. I
20 think that maybe let's look at some water depths or let's look
21 at some regions, and I know Dr. Frazer was talking about
22 fishermen talking about coming back and adding regulations on
23 top of regulations, and, well, I'm a fisherman, and I've dealt
24 with those regulations for a long time.

25
26 Maybe we do it some way through water depth or perhaps by
27 region, but to just do all of them at once is crazy. Now, I
28 think it's important to keep all of them in document, as you
29 mentioned, Dr. Frazer, to make sure that it is recognized and
30 that we do think that it's important. I am not saying that
31 anything in 5,000 feet is less important than something in 500
32 feet of water, but I think that, just seeing how the process
33 works and how slow it is, I think it would just be a bad move to
34 try to do all of them at once, but that's just my opinion.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Frazer.

37
38 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks, Dale. Again, I am listening really hard,
39 and I'm looking at Leann's eyes. She's like, I don't want to
40 hit you on the head, and, trust me, I do not want to make this
41 difficult. If we can work with staff or I can work with the
42 staff to figure out how to keep all forty-seven sites in the
43 document, to where it's not such a laborious task, then I am
44 willing to do that.

45
46 I mean, I personally am willing to throw a lot of hard work into
47 this and work with the staff, if necessary, but I don't want to
48 sacrifice the rigor that Leann is talking about, because, if

1 we're going to do something and we're going to make a decision
2 as a council, it better be a good one, and it better be well
3 reasoned. I think we should make every effort not to kind of
4 tarnish the working relationship that has been developed, and I
5 think that's really important here.

6
7 My question, really, at this point, would be to staff. Is there
8 a possibility somehow that we can work together to figure out
9 how to creatively keep these forty-seven sites in the document
10 without sacrificing the rigor and the original intent of the
11 committees that were in place?

12
13 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Kilgour.

14
15 **DR. KILGOUR:** Absolutely. Whatever the committee and council
16 wishes, we will make it happen. I just need some direction,
17 that's all. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Lucas.

20
21 **DR. KELLY LUCAS:** I have a question, and I'm just trying to seek
22 compromise and see if this will work. Is there a way to split
23 this where the seventeen, fifteen or seventeen, that we're
24 already working on and moving that forward and go ahead and
25 start a second amendment, maybe, moving the other ones over,
26 which shows our intent to consider moving forward with some of
27 the others, but to separate them out, so we're working on this,
28 these seventeen, to get them going, but really showing, in the
29 other amendment, that we do intend to continue working on the
30 other coral sites, and they're just as important, but that maybe
31 there is a way to move one a little bit faster, just because
32 there is more information about it, and it won't bog down as
33 much, and that's just a thought, and maybe somebody from staff
34 can chime in on that.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** That is kind of what we did with 36A and 36B.
37 With 36A, we did the low-hanging fruit, and 36B was things that
38 we thought would take more time and be more difficult to work
39 through, and so we did it that way. Any other comments? Mr.
40 Matens.

41
42 **MR. CAMP MATENS:** I had almost decided that I wasn't going to
43 comment on this, but I think, as this is moving forward, I am in
44 certain sympathy with the fishing and the shrimping industry
45 here. There is more and more interest in deepwater recreational
46 fishing, and I don't know how deep the deep is, but I am told
47 that these corals are in waters that are deeper than 300 feet.

48

1 Certainly, that's within what recreational fishermen do, but, in
2 addition to that, I also understand that at least one of these
3 reefs is divable, that it has pinnacles to sixty-five or
4 something, and I have discussed this with some of the other
5 people that are interested in this, and it seems like they would
6 talk about mooring buoys, and that's oilfield construction.

7
8 That is not a little bitty thing out there, and so I think this
9 is more complicated, and it's not just the commercial fishing,
10 fin fishing, and not just the shrimpers, but some of the
11 recreational interests also. I don't want to add to the
12 problem. I don't want to make this longer than I really is, but
13 I wanted to bring this up now, so there are no surprises later
14 on.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Lucas.

17
18 **DR. LUCAS:** I am going to attempt a substitute motion here to
19 add a second amendment that would -- I don't even know how to
20 phrase this. I may need some help with this. **That would move**
21 **the coral habitat areas that weren't being considered in this**
22 **amendment into the second amendment.** How to phrase that, I need
23 some wording help. **To add a second amendment that would --**

24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** You could go ahead and name it
26 Coral Amendment 8.

27
28 **DR. LUCAS:** Coral Amendment 8.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Do you like the wording, Dr. Lucas? Mara.

31
32 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Just a suggestion. The areas we're saying are
33 not included, you could say to add a second amendment, or I
34 don't know how you want to say it, that would address the
35 proposed areas that are not included in the scoping document for
36 Coral Amendment 7. Then I would delete "to a later amendment",
37 because you're already saying to add an amendment.

38
39 **DR. LUCAS:** So delete "to a later amendment" and just have
40 "Coral Amendment 8".

41
42 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Kilgour.

43
44 **DR. KILGOUR:** I just wanted, if it's okay, to refresh everyone's
45 memory that some of these areas that are not included in this
46 scoping document were part of the Flower Gardens Banks
47 expansion, and so seven of those areas in the twenty-four not
48 included in Amendment 7 are part of that, and so we might have

1 more information about those seven areas in the future, when we
2 get that final EIS from the Flower Garden Banks, as well.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** We have a motion on the board. Do I have a
5 second? Second by Mr. Matens. Mr. Greene.
6
7 **MR. GREENE:** Just a question to Morgan. With what you said
8 about the Flower Gardens expansion, do we need to take these out
9 of the document, since they're going to go through the Flower
10 Gardens expansion?
11
12 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Dr. Kilgour.
13
14 **DR. KILGOUR:** No, we don't, because they're not in the document
15 right now. They were not part of the fifteen priority sites
16 that the Coral SSC and AP addressed, because they felt that the
17 sanctuary expansion would encompass them, and so anything that's
18 included in the sanctuary preferred alternative was not included
19 in the proposed sites for Coral Amendment 7.
20
21 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** Any further discussion on the substitute motion?
22 Seeing none, we're going to go ahead and call this to a vote.
23 **All in favor of the substitute motion, raise your hands.**
24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** This would be committee members.
26 Nine yeas.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** All opposed, like sign.
29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Zero. **The motion passes nine to**
31 **zero.**
32
33 **CHAIRMAN DIAZ:** All right. Is there any further discussion for
34 this committee? Does anybody have any other business? Seeing
35 none, this committee business is done, and we are adjourned.
36
37 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 3, 2017.)
38
39 - - -