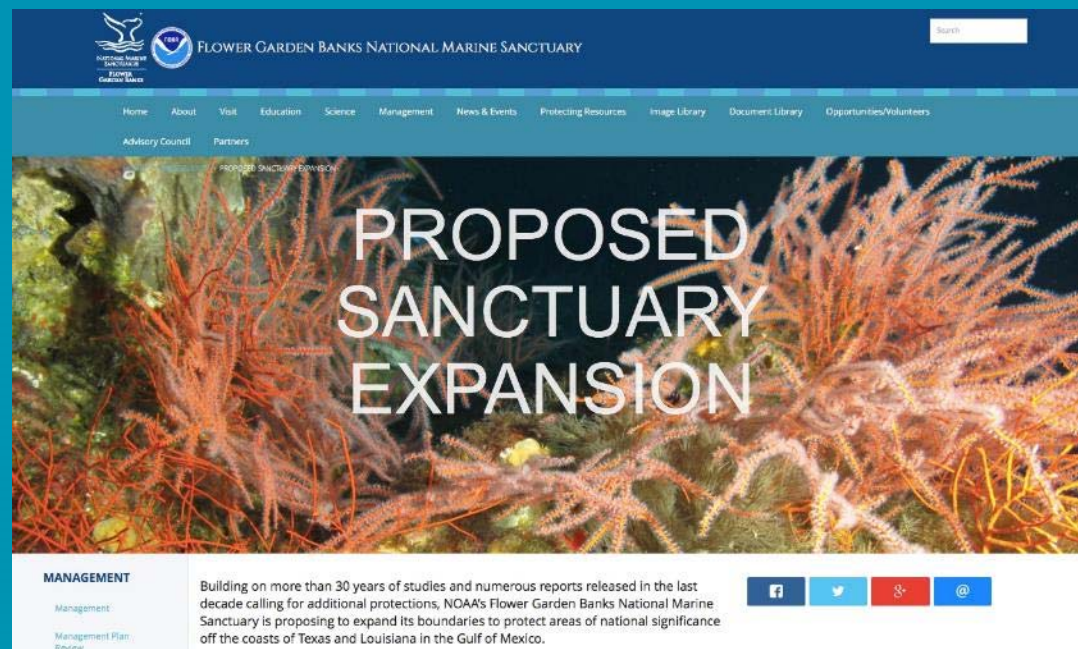
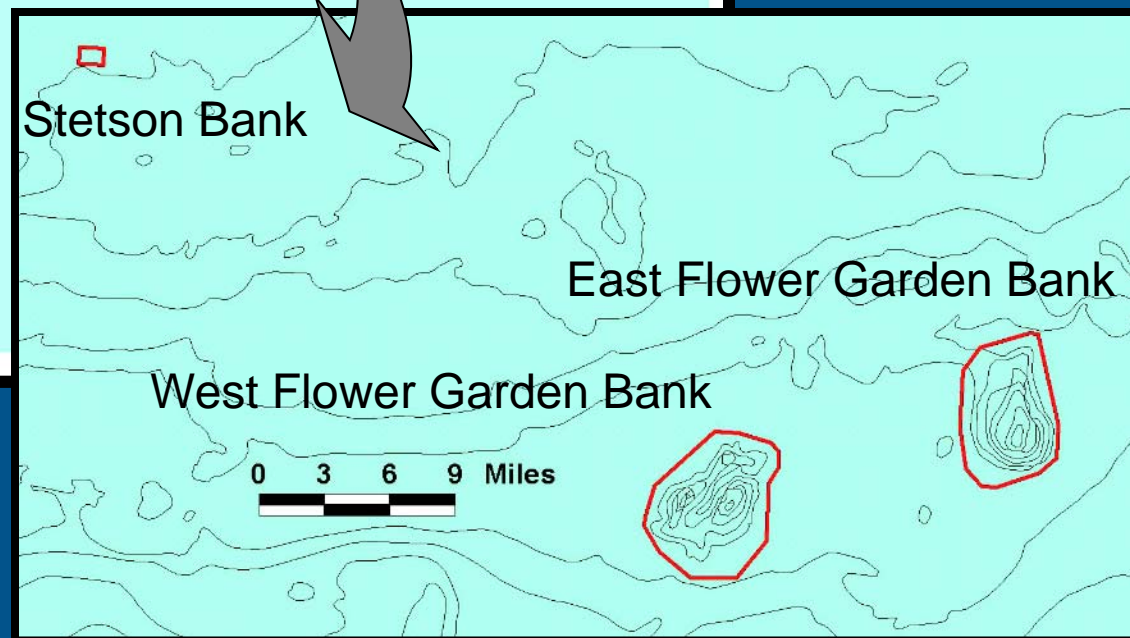




Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Update
August 20, 2018



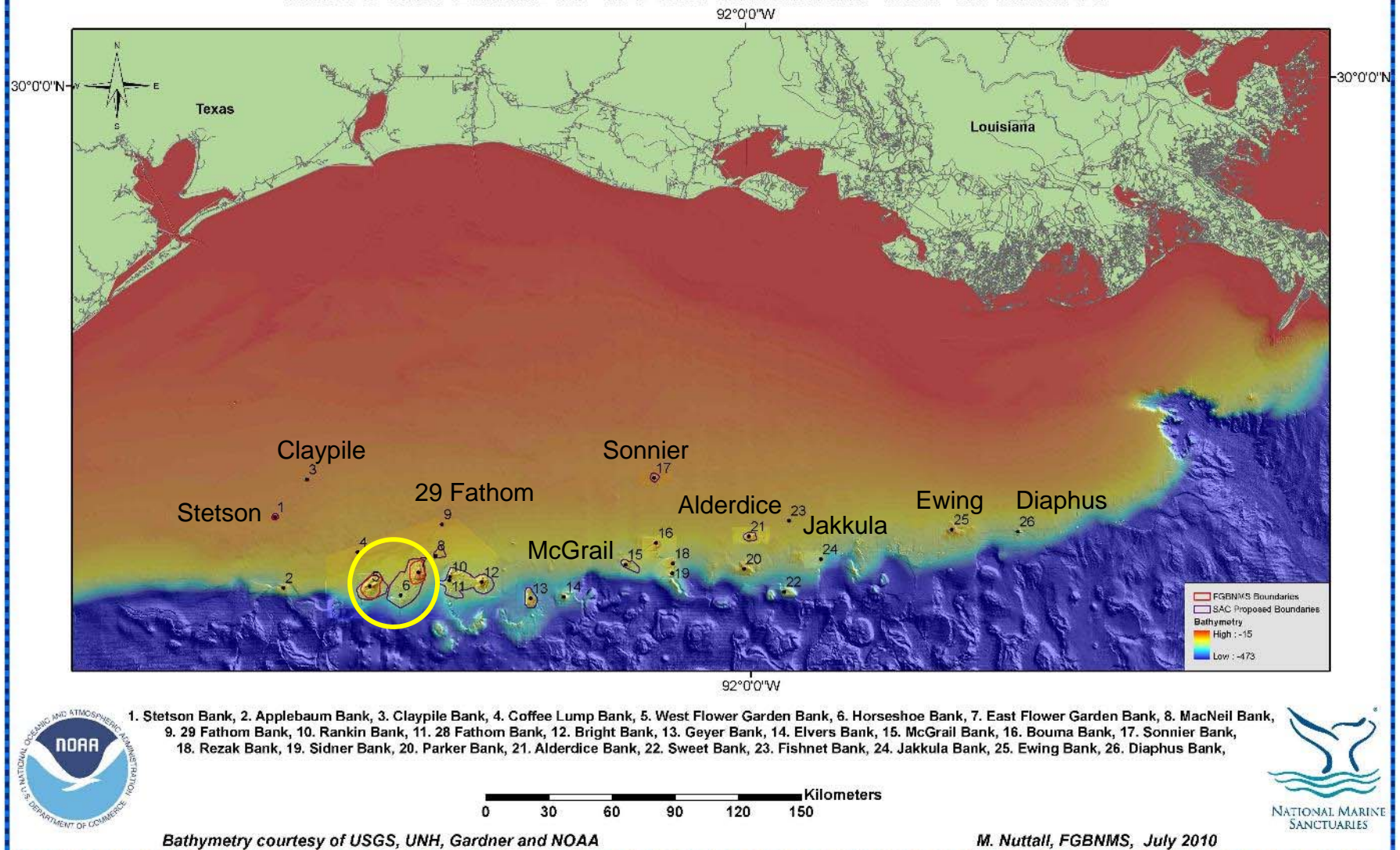
Remarkable Reefs of the Flower Garden Banks



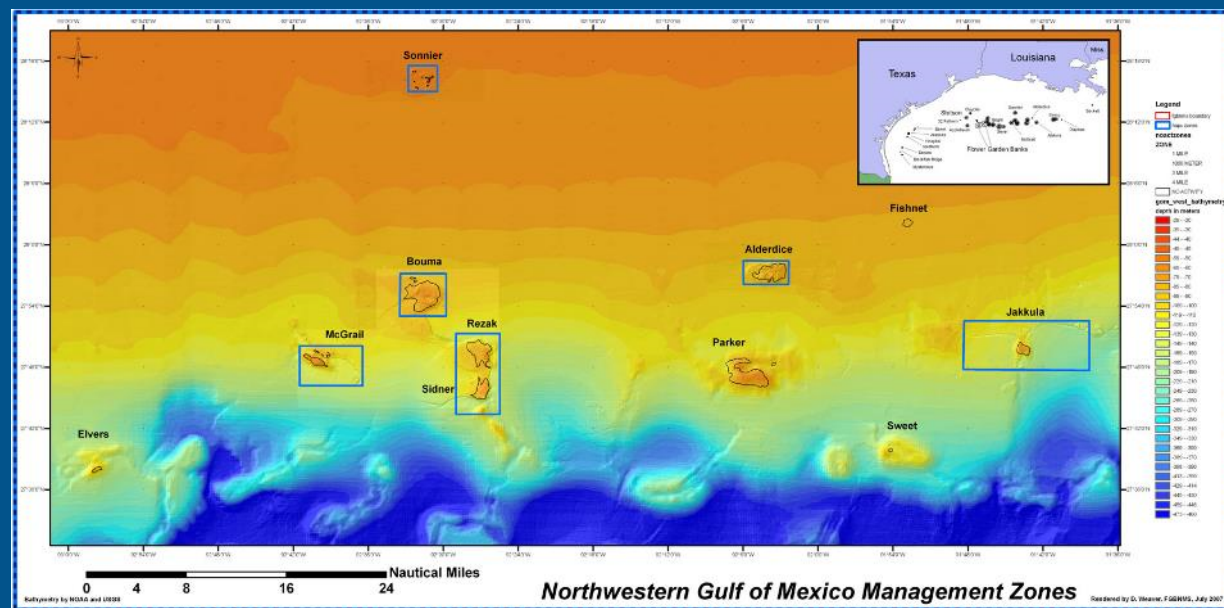
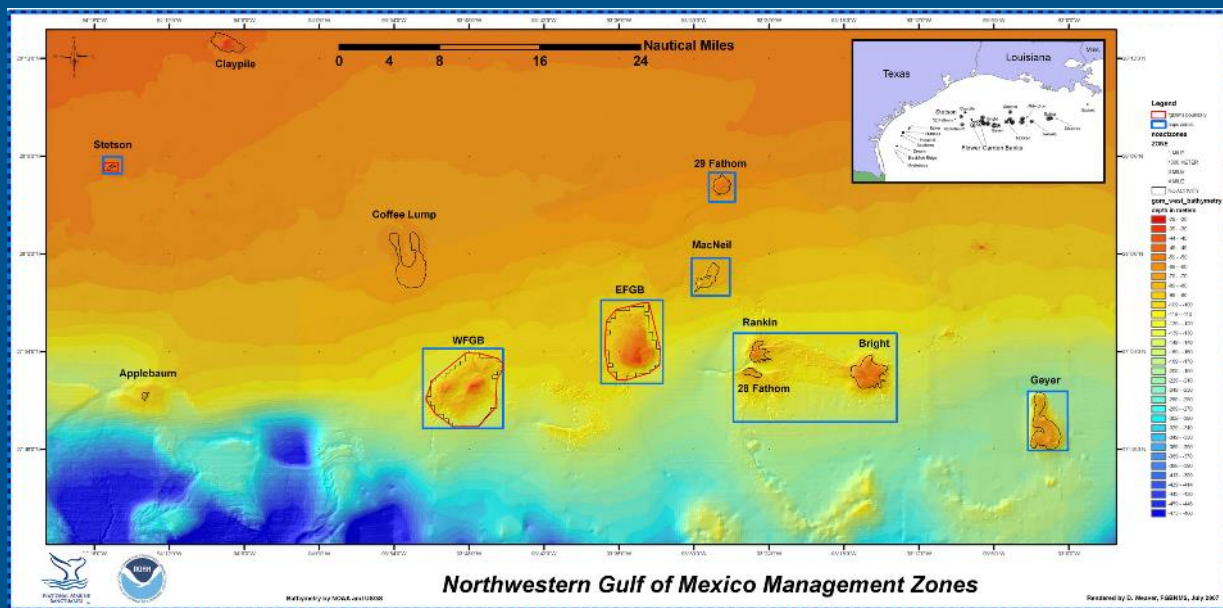


Juvenile Vermilion Snapper at Stetson Bank – 2015

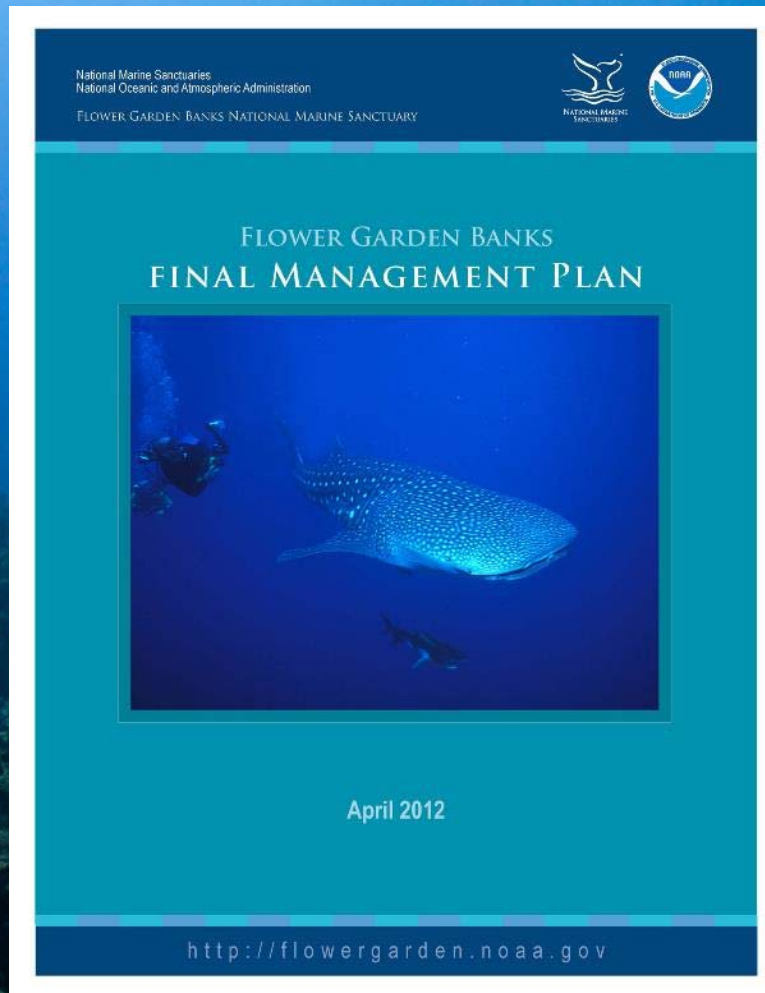
Reefs and Banks in the Northwestern Gulf Of Mexico



Reefs and Banks of the Northwestern Gulf of Mexico



Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC)



Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Revised Management Plan

- Process began in 2007
 - Draft released October 2010
 - Final Plan released April 27, 2012
 - Regulations effective May 29, 2012
- **Sanctuary Expansion**
 - Education and Outreach
 - Research and Monitoring
 - Resource Protection
 - Visitor Use
 - Operations and Administration

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT: SANCTUARY EXPANSION
VOLUMES I & II



June 2016

<http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SANCTUARY EXPANSION

DATE OF RELEASE:
June 10, 2016

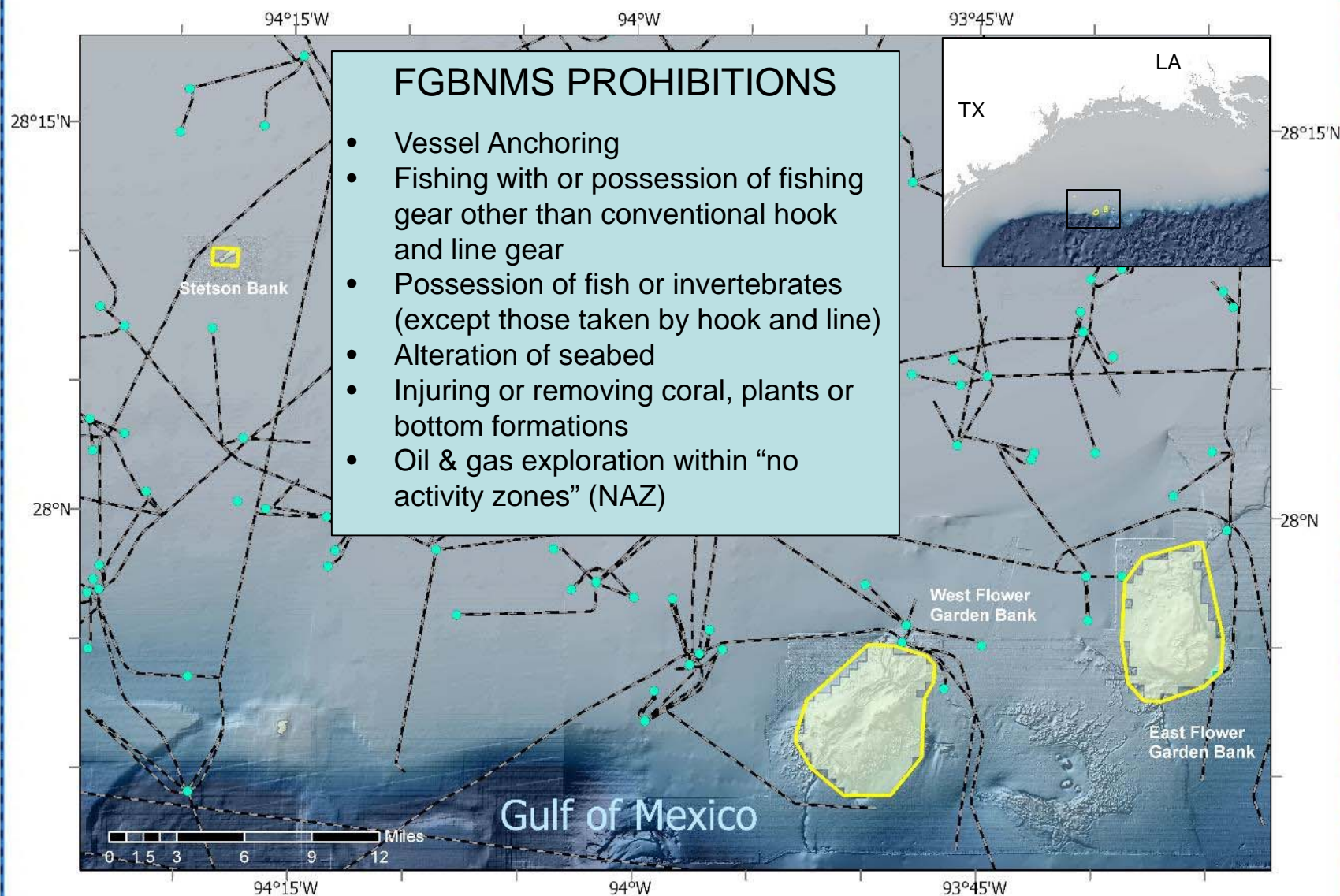
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:
June 10 – August 19, 2016

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Proposed Action (DEIS, p. ES-3):

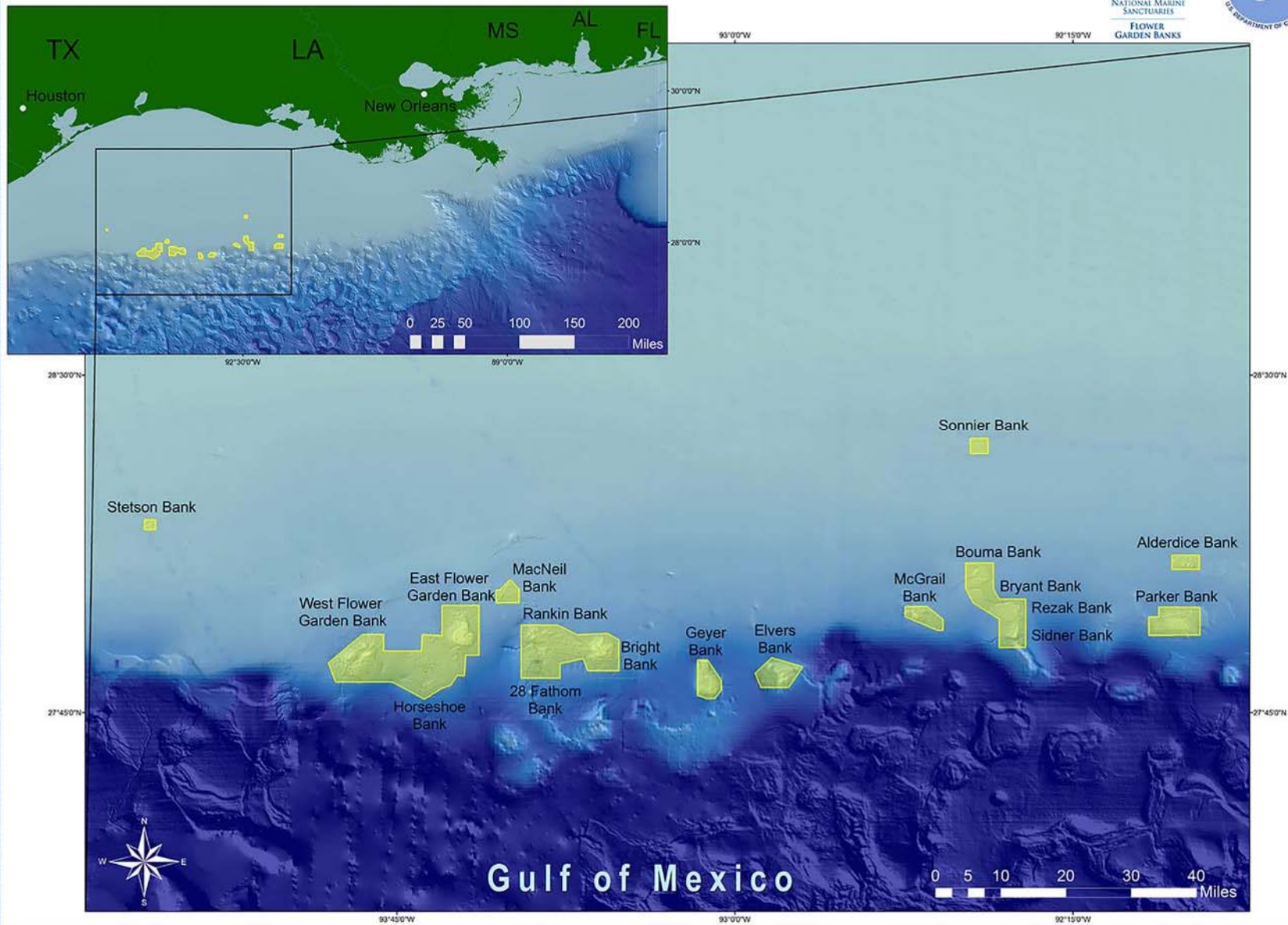
“Expand, as appropriate, the network of protected areas within the sanctuary, and apply the existing sanctuary regulations and management actions to the expanded area.”

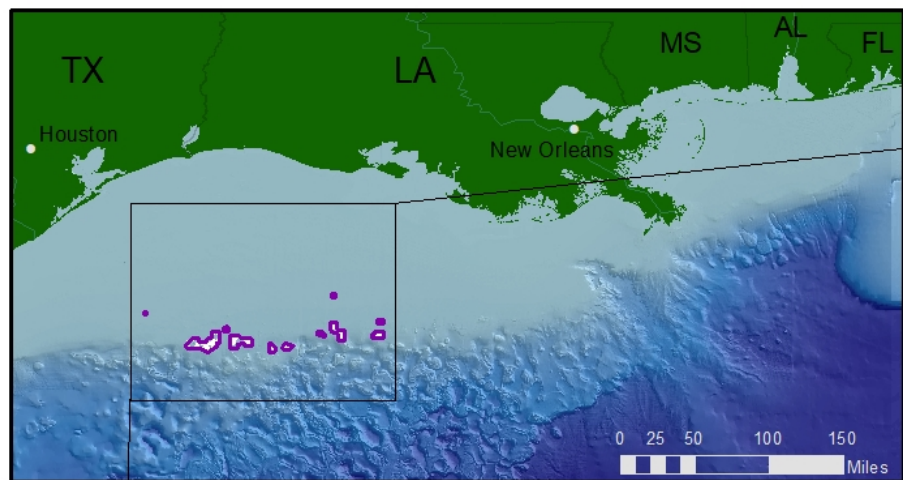




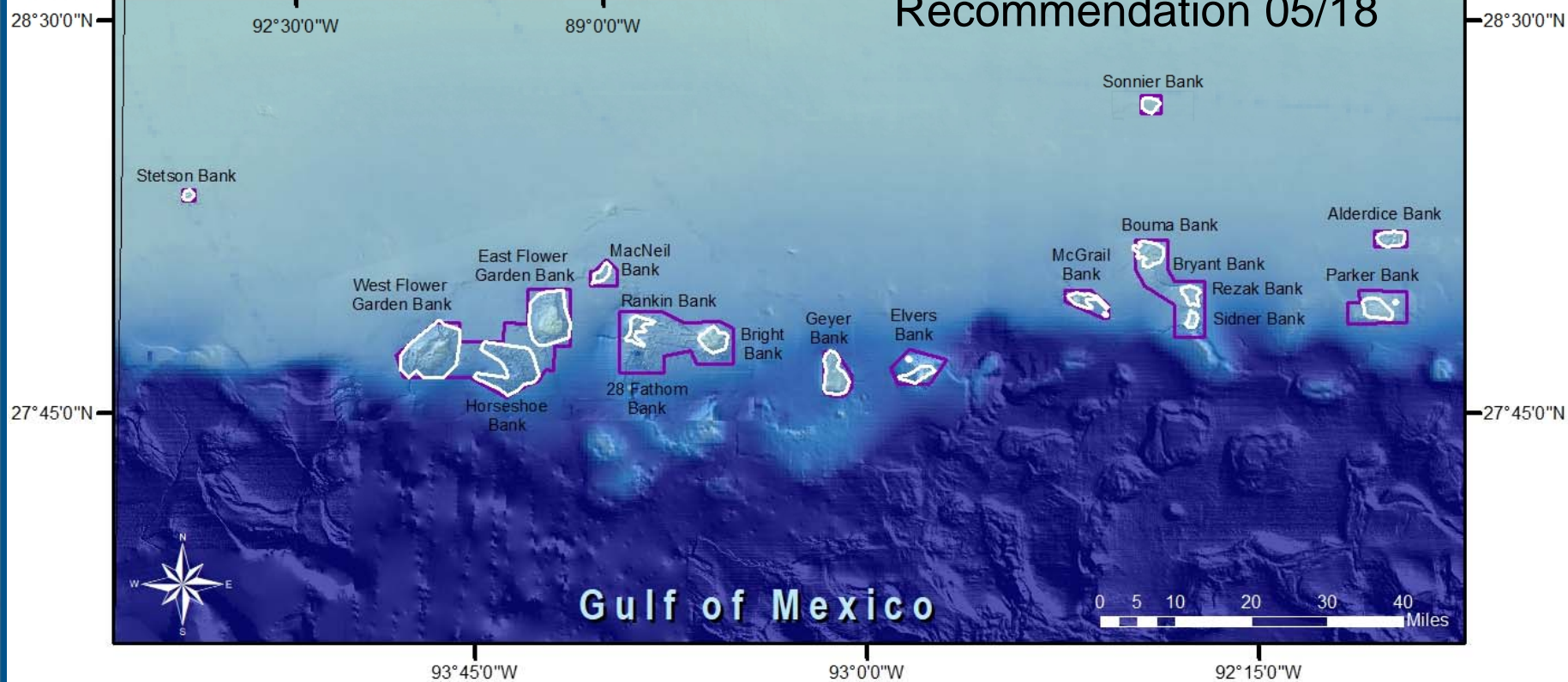
FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Expansion: Alternative 3





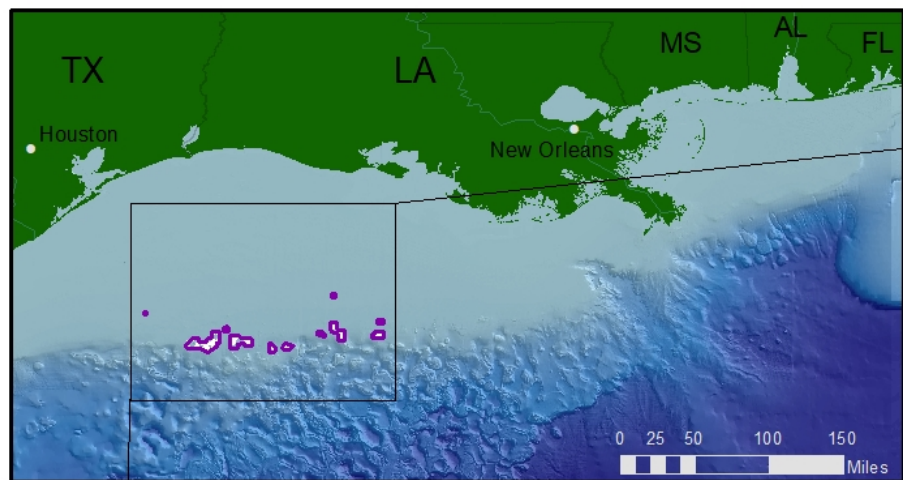
FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation 05/18



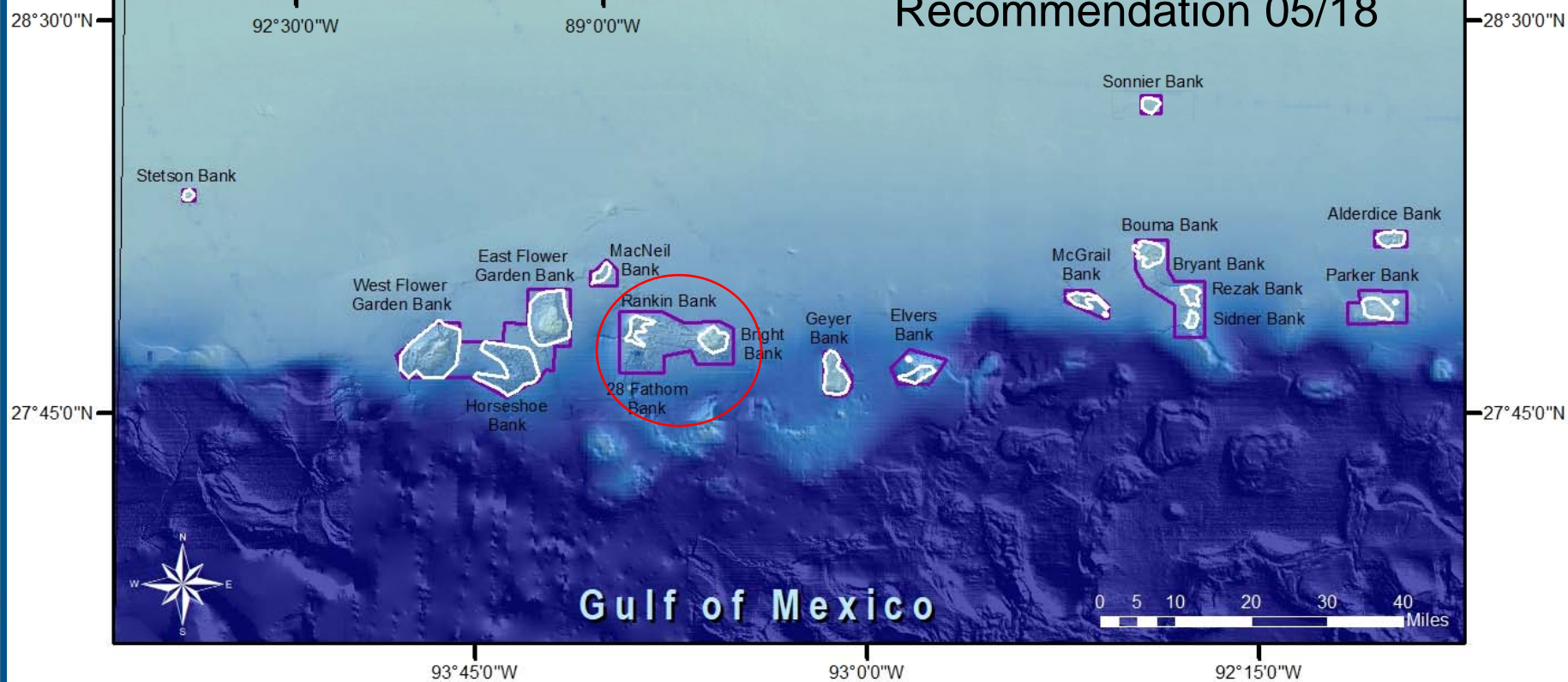
By the numbers:

- Existing area: 56 sq mi
- Expansion area: 14 additional reefs and banks
- Total recommended expanded area: 206 sq mi
- NOAA Preferred Alternative (2016 DEIS): 383 sq mi
- 2007 SAC Recommendation: 281 sq mi

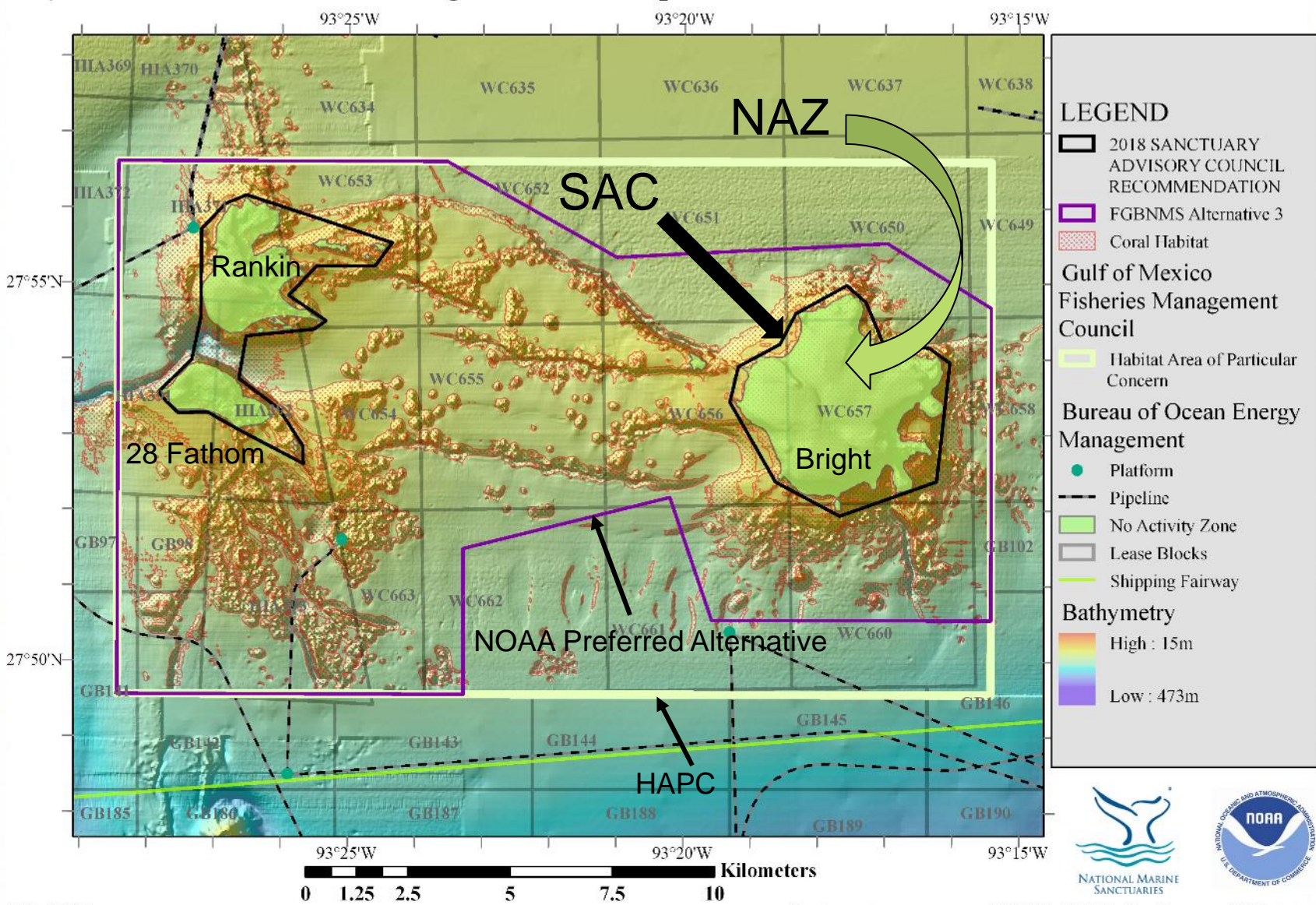




FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation 05/18



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Bright Bank Complex



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA





Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Managing Fishery Resources in the U.S. Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico

2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607 USA
Phone: 813.348.1630 • Toll free: 888.833.1844 • Fax: 813.348.1711
www.gulfcouncil.org

November 08, 2016

George Schmahl, Superintendent
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary
4700 Ave. U, Bldg 216
Galveston, Texas 77551

006578 NOV 20 16

Re: Comments on the Proposed Regulations for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS):
Sanctuary Expansion

Dear Mr. Schmahl:

Thank you for your attendance at the past three Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) meetings and providing information to the Council. This letter is accompanied by a white paper entitled "Evaluation of Regulations for the Expansion of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary" that includes the Council's recommendations and comments on the proposed regulations for the proposed Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) expansion. Additionally, the Council's recommendations on the regulations strictly pertain to the FGBNMS's Preferred Alternative 3. The Council does not support the expansion proposed in the DEIS for Alternative 4 nor Alternative 5 as the Council agrees with the FGBNMS assertion that Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 are outside the current operational capacity of the FGBNMS.

The Council urges the FGBNMS to consider a tiered approach to management of the FGBNMS as outlined in the attached white paper. The Council proposes that the first tier coincide with existing BOEM no activity zones and to make these areas into "no bottom tending gear" zones. Traditional hook-and-line fishing (including bandit rigs) would be allowable in these zones. The second tier would be the area outside the BOEM no activity zones but inside the boundaries of the proposed FGBNMS expansion. This tier would allow bottom tending gear and anchoring but would exclude bottom trawling, traps, and dredges. The third tier would be outside the boundaries of the proposed expansion and would not have any FGBNMS imposed regulations. The Council also recommends related endorsements, anchor restrictions, and mooring buoys.

The Council also requests that the FGBNMS include Council staff on any working groups regarding future regulatory or spatial analyses and welcomes further discussion of the regulations with the FGBNMS staff as noted, by you, at the October 2016 Council meeting.

Sincerely,

Leann Bosarge
Council Chairman
cc: Gulf Council
Billy Causey
Cindy Meyer
Council staff

11/8/2016

**Evaluation of Regulations for
the Expansion of the Flower
Garden Banks National Marine
Sanctuary**

White Paper

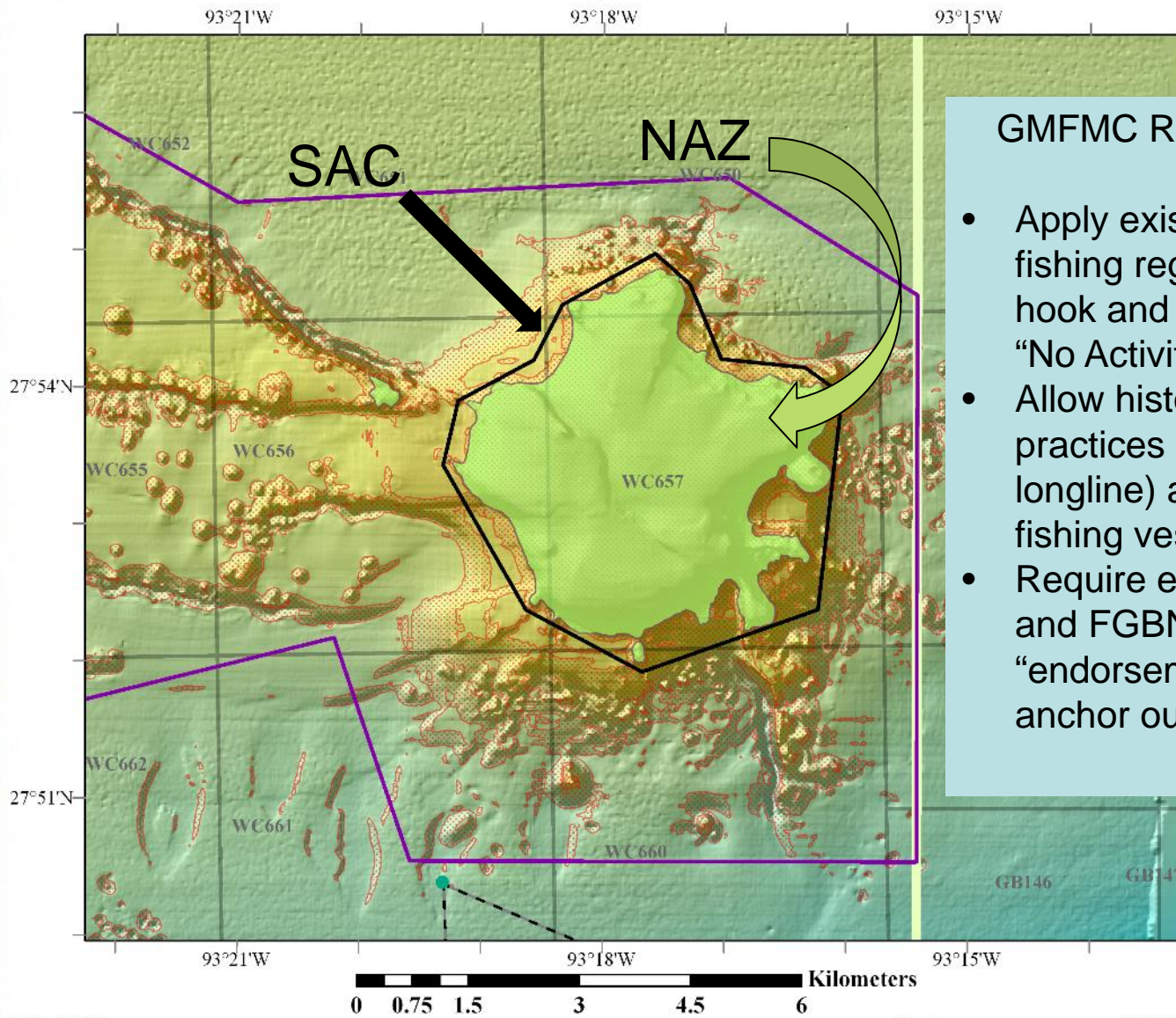
November 2016



This is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA15NMF4410011.

Recommendations from GMFMC on Fishing Regulations

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Bright Bank



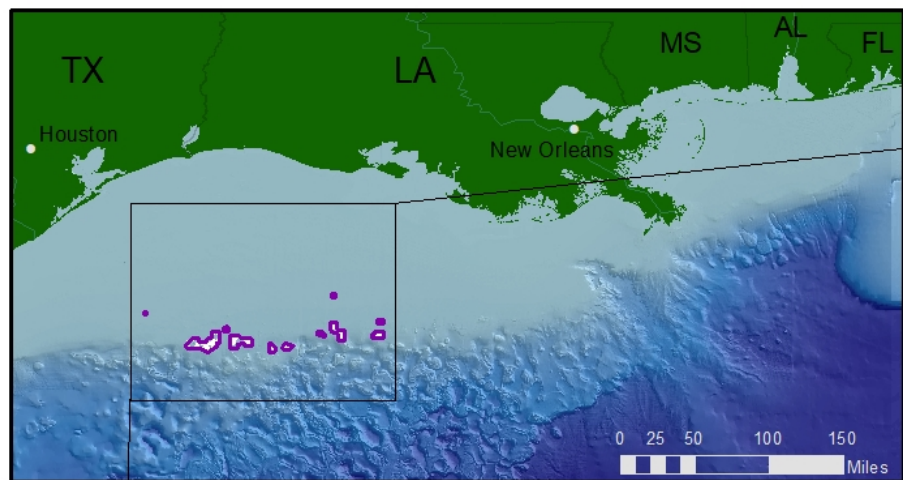
GMFMC Recommendation

- Apply existing FGBNMS fishing regulations (i.e. hook and line only) within "No Activity Zones" (NAZ)
- Allow historical fishing practices (i.e. bottom longline) and anchoring by fishing vessels **outside** NAZ
- Require education program and FGBNMS "endorsement" to fish or anchor outside NAZ

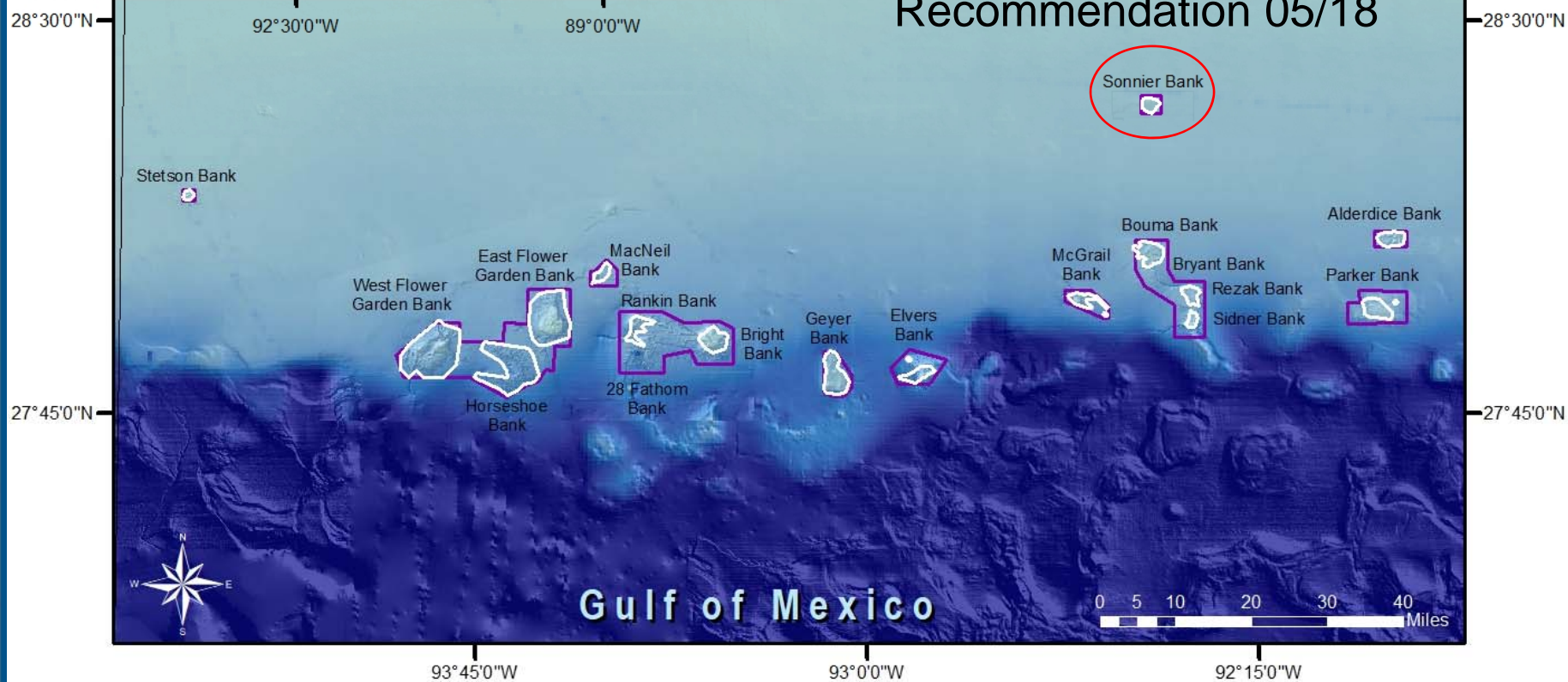
July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

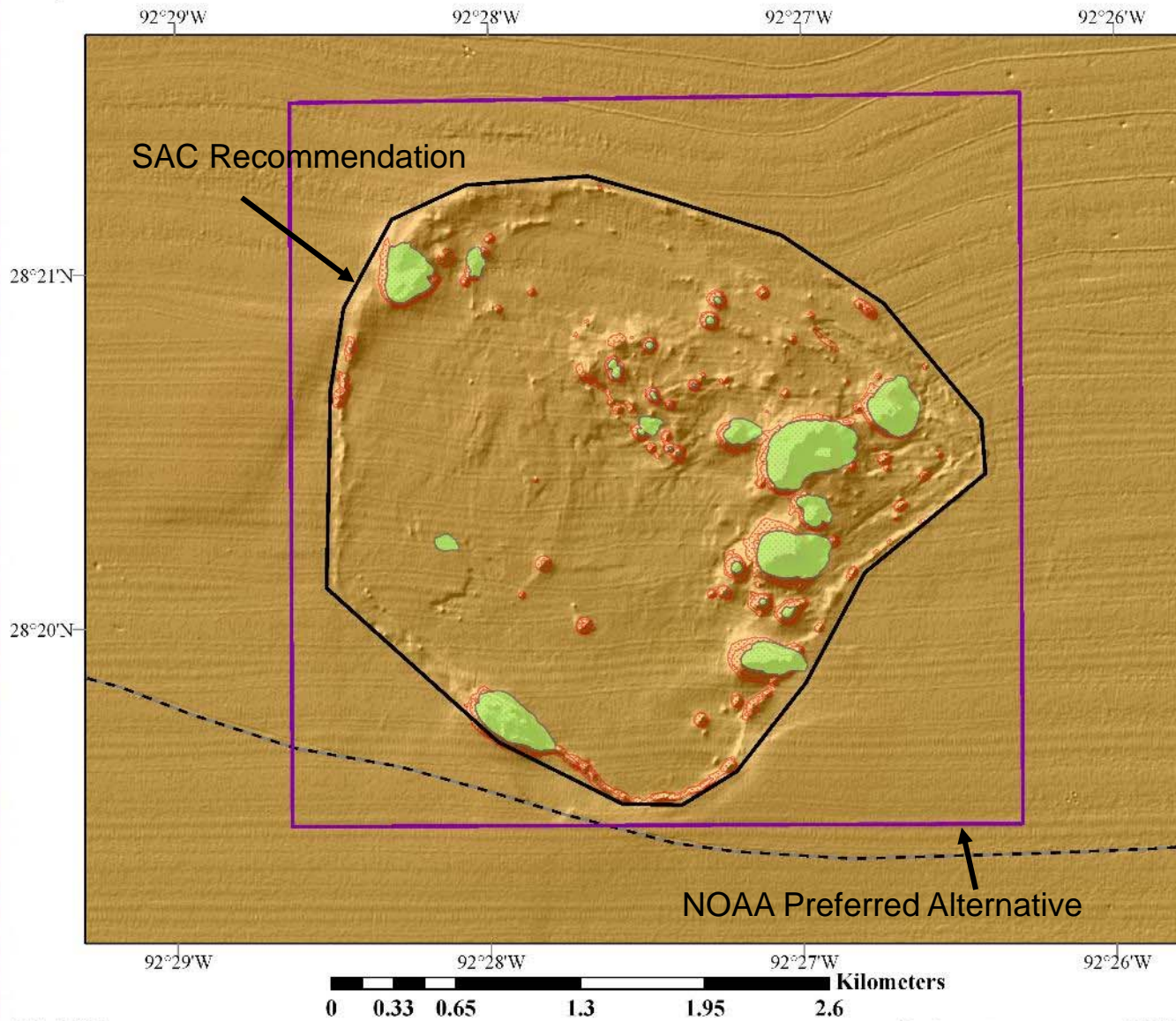




FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation 05/18



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Sonnier Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Preferred
Alternative

Coral Habitat

Bureau of Ocean Energy
Management

Pipeline

No Activity Zone

Bathymetry

High : 15m

Low : 473m



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

- Maintain current fishing regulations in the existing HAPCs with regulations
- Continue to allow historical fishing practices in the areas that are outside designated “No anchor / No bottom tending gear zones”
- Establish a certificate program or endorsement program that would allow for education of fishermen within the FGBNMS on the environmental importance of the area(s), fishing restricted areas and appropriate gear types (i.e. anchor type). This program could be a requirement for anyone that fishes in the FGBNMS proposed boundaries.
- Provide an adequate number of mooring buoys on any of the expanded “no bottom tending gear zones” to allow access for the public.

- If the area has an established “no activity zone” by BOEM, create a “no bottom tending gear zone” that utilizes the pre-established boundaries of the “no activity zone.”
- Establish a truncated “no bottom tending gear zone” for banks that have updated information but do not have “no activity zones” established by BOEM (e.g. Horseshoe Bank).
- In these “no bottom tending gear zones,” prohibit all fishing that is not by hook and line and prohibit all anchoring (i.e. no bottom trawling gear, bottom long line gear, traps or dredges).
- Allow historic fishing practices (with gear other than hook and line) within the proposed sanctuary boundary area to continue as long as that fishing is not occurring in the “no bottom tending gear zone.”
- Allow anchoring by fishing vessels over soft sediment outside the “no bottom tending gear zone”. These vessels must carry an operating vessel monitoring system (VMS); and anchors used should be specific to anchoring in soft sediment (e.g. Danforth anchors, etc) and equipped with a weak link environmental safe guard and must be ____ pounds or less in size.

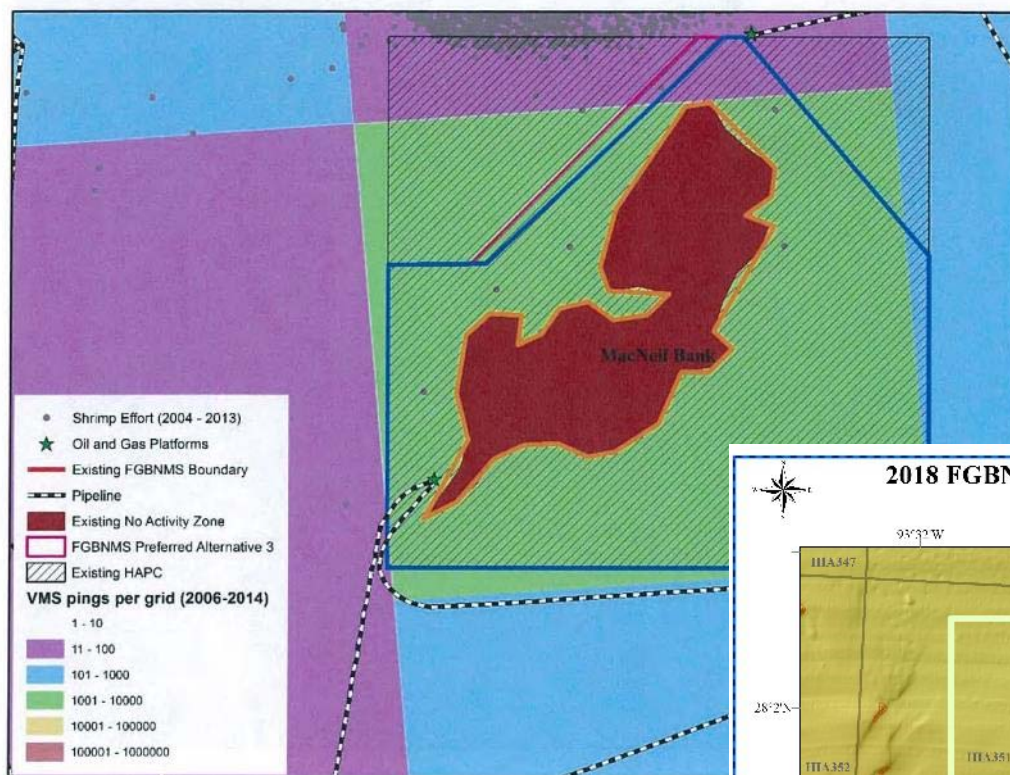
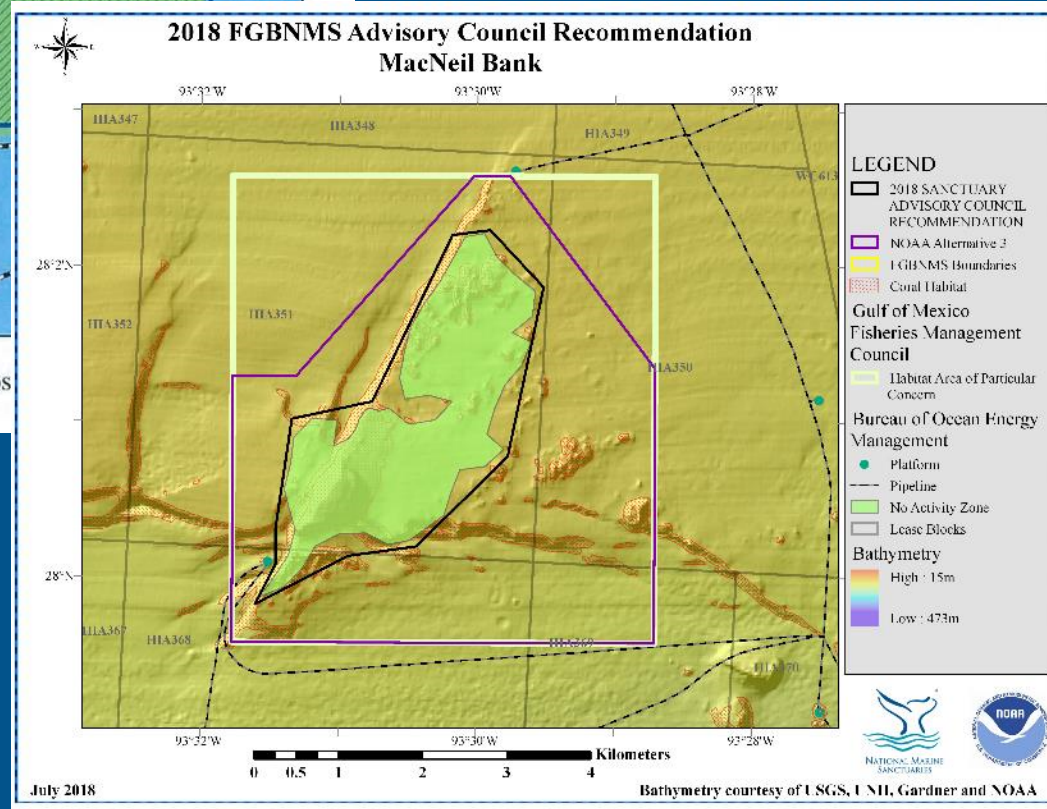


Figure 8. MacNeil Bank existing HAPC (hatched lines) and proposed (magenta).

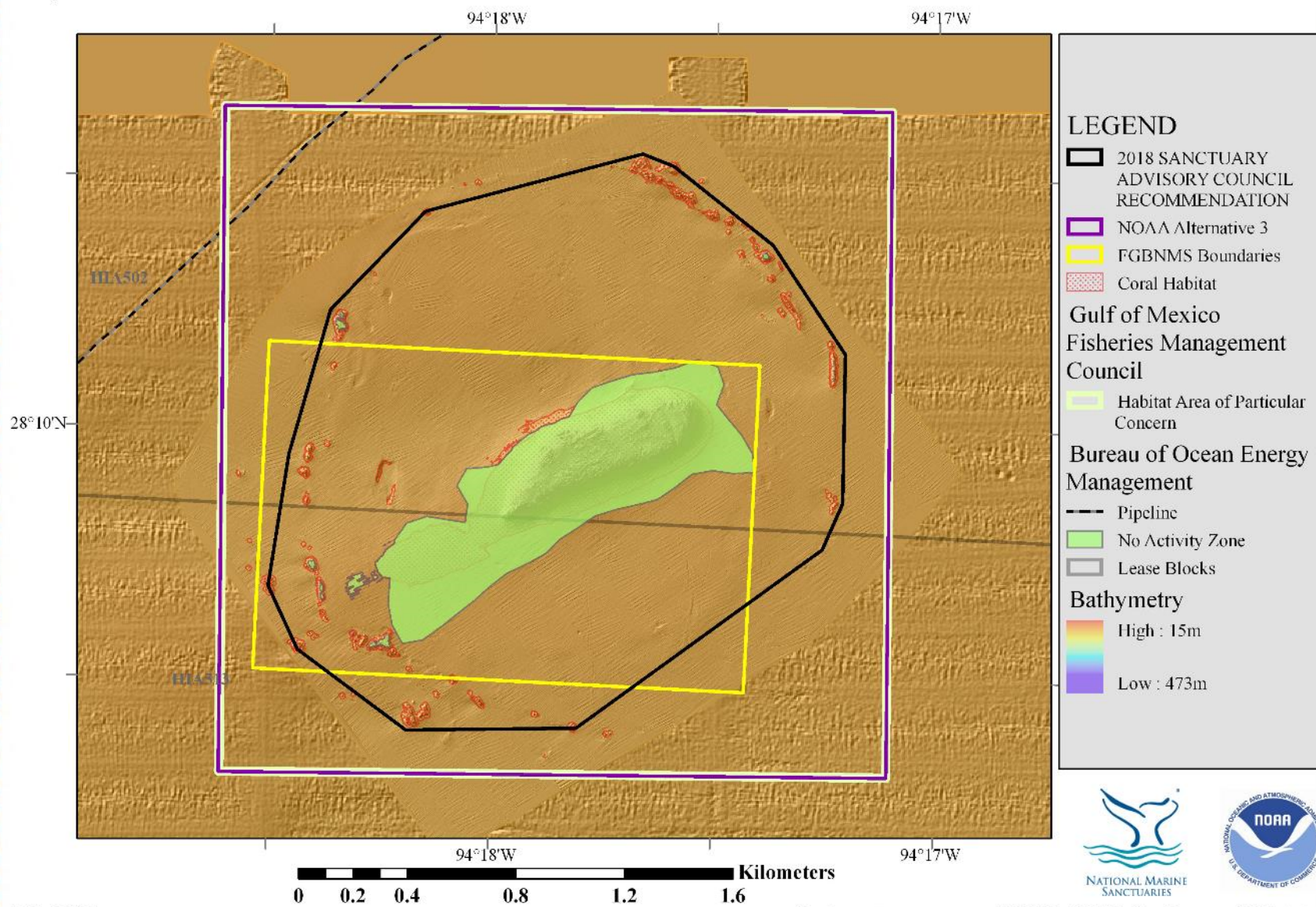
← Polygon = 36 sides

Polygon = 12 sides →





2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Stetson Bank



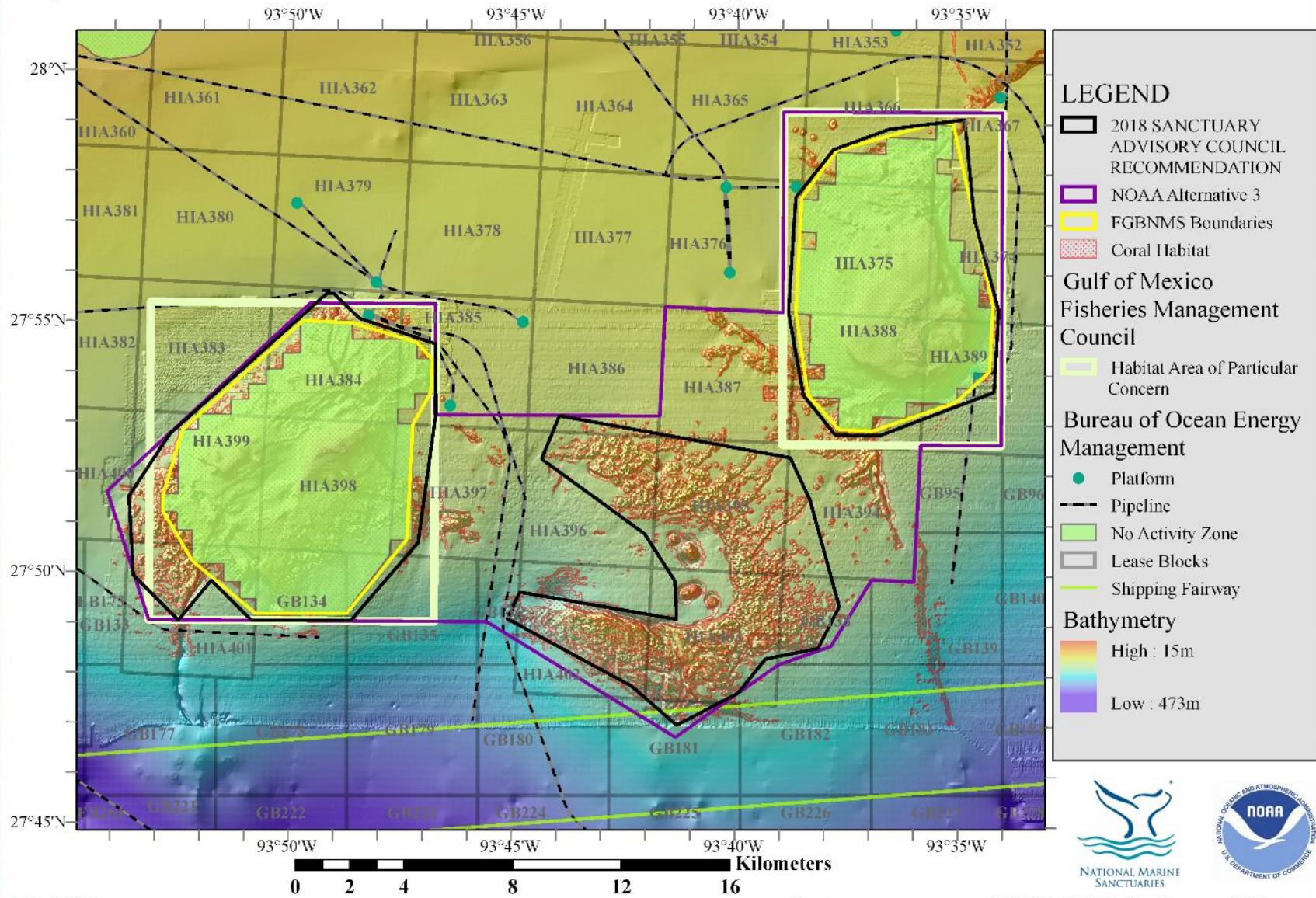
July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

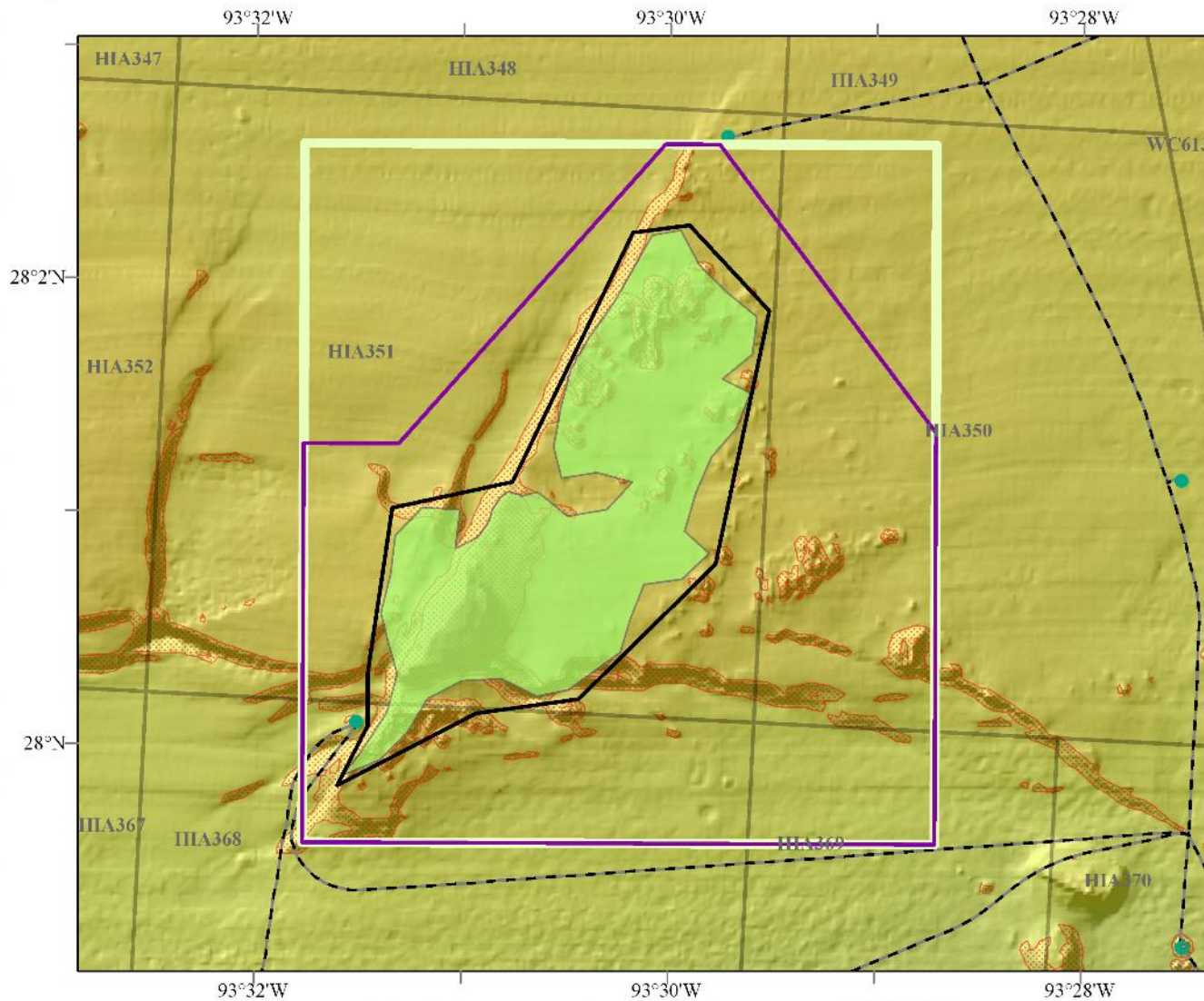




2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Flower Garden Banks Complex



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation MacNeil Bank



LEGEND

- 2018 SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
- NOAA Alternative 3
- FGBNMS Boundaries
- Coral Habitat

Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council

- Habitat Area of Particular Concern

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- Platform
- Pipeline
- No Activity Zone
- Lease Blocks

Bathymetry

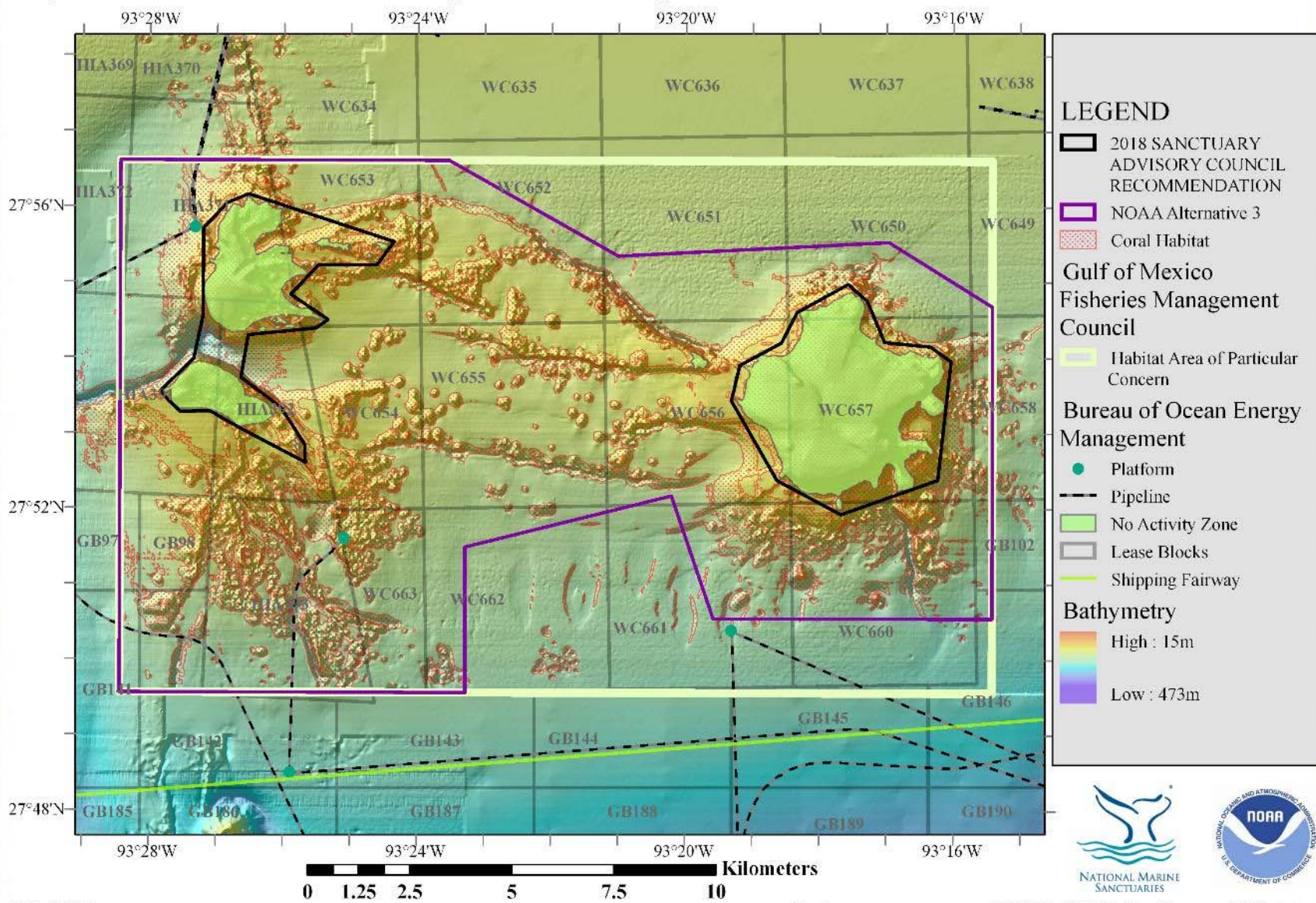
- High : 15m
- Low : 473m



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Bright Bank Complex

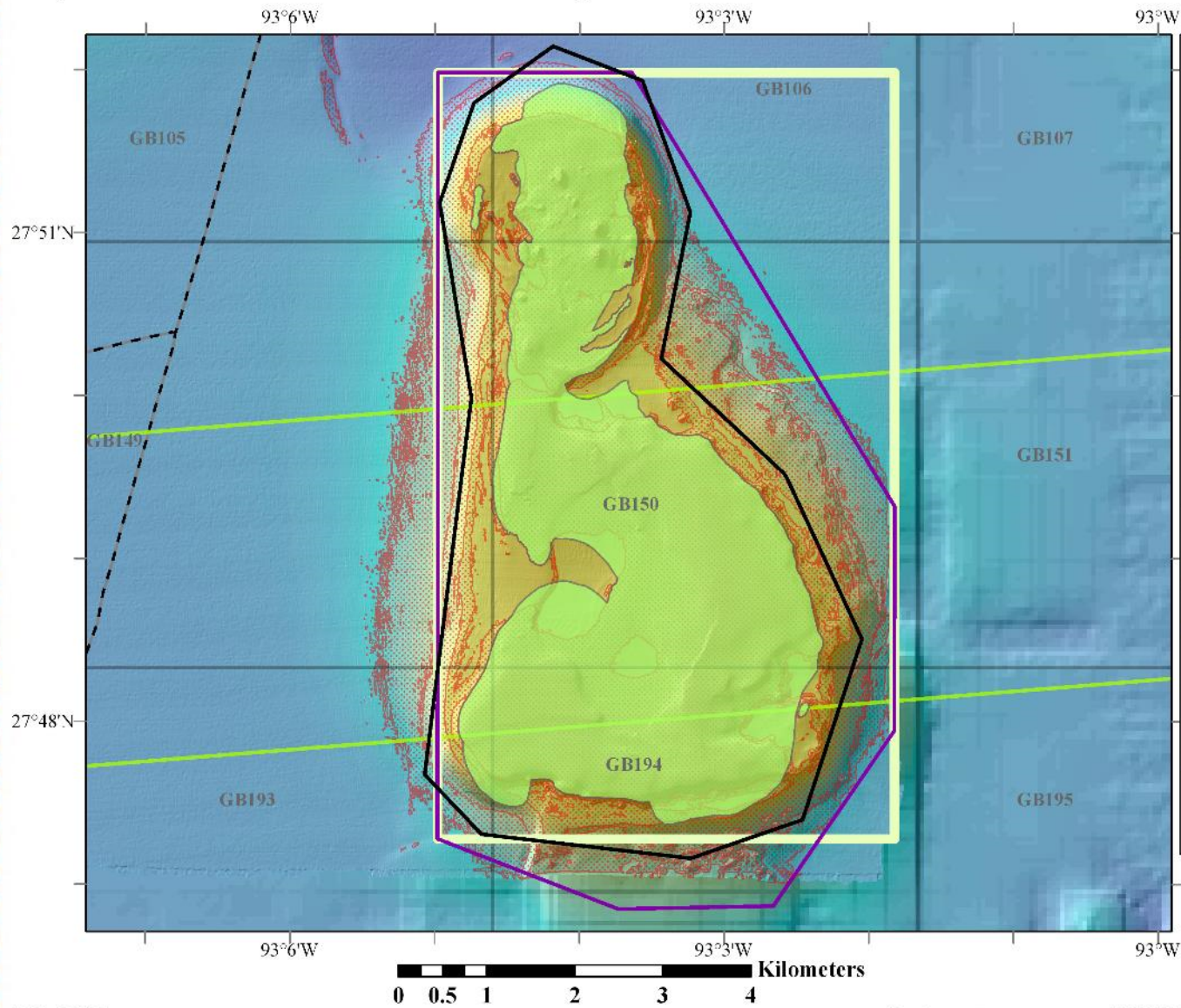


July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Geyer Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Alternative 3

Coral Habitat

Gulf of Mexico
Fisheries Management
Council

Habitat Area of Particular
Concern

Bureau of Ocean Energy
Management

Pipeline

No Activity Zone

Lease Blocks

Shipping Fairway

Bathymetry

High : 15m

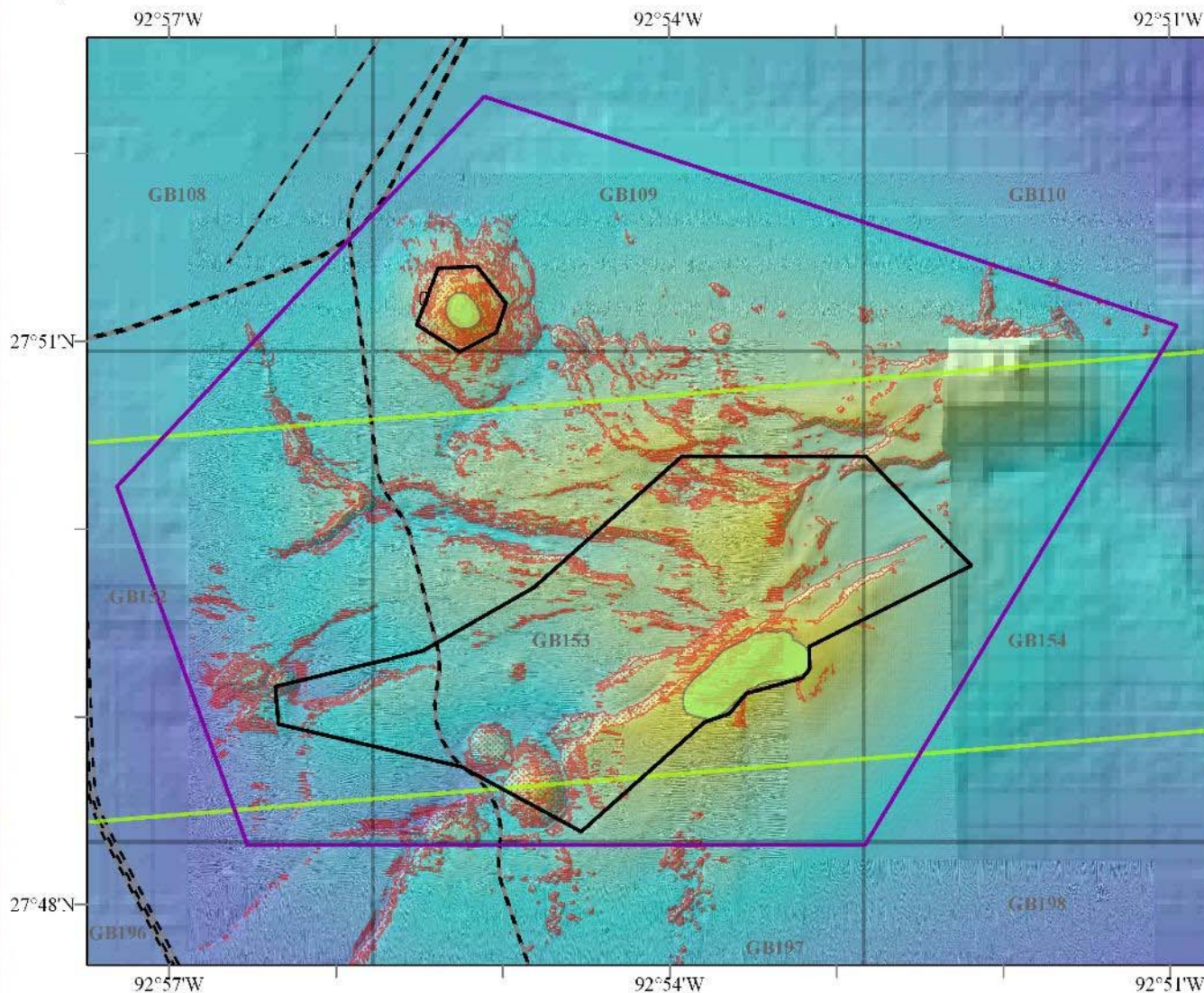
Low : 473m



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Elvers Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Alternative 3

Coral Habitat

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Pipeline

No Activity Zone

Lease Blocks

Shipping Fairway

Bathymetry

High : 15m

Low : 473m

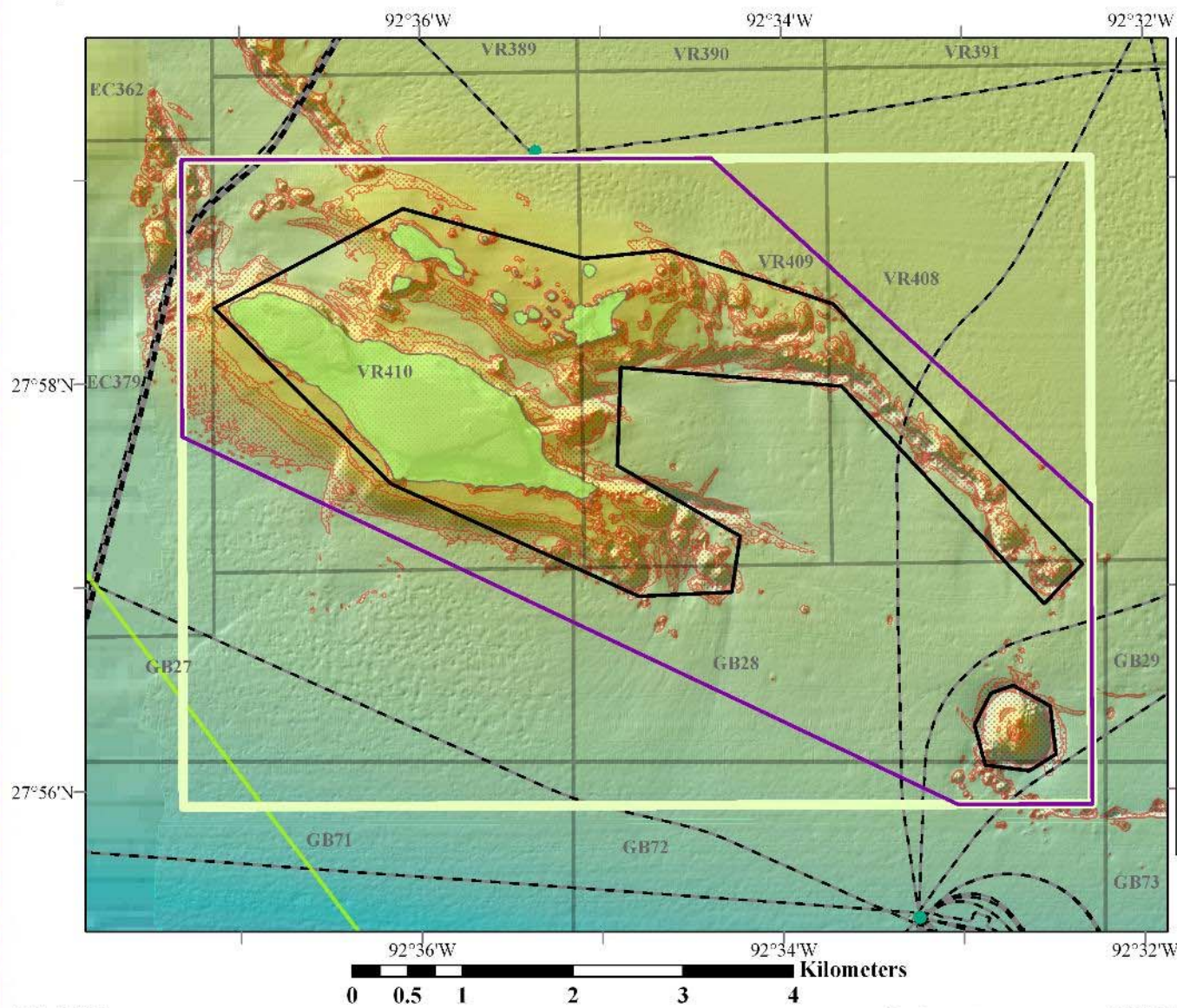
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation McGrail Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Alternative 3

Coral Habitat

Gulf of Mexico
Fisheries Management
Council

Habitat Area of Particular
Concern

Bureau of Ocean Energy
Management

Platform

Pipeline

No Activity Zone

Lease Blocks

Shipping Fairway

Bathymetry

High : 15m

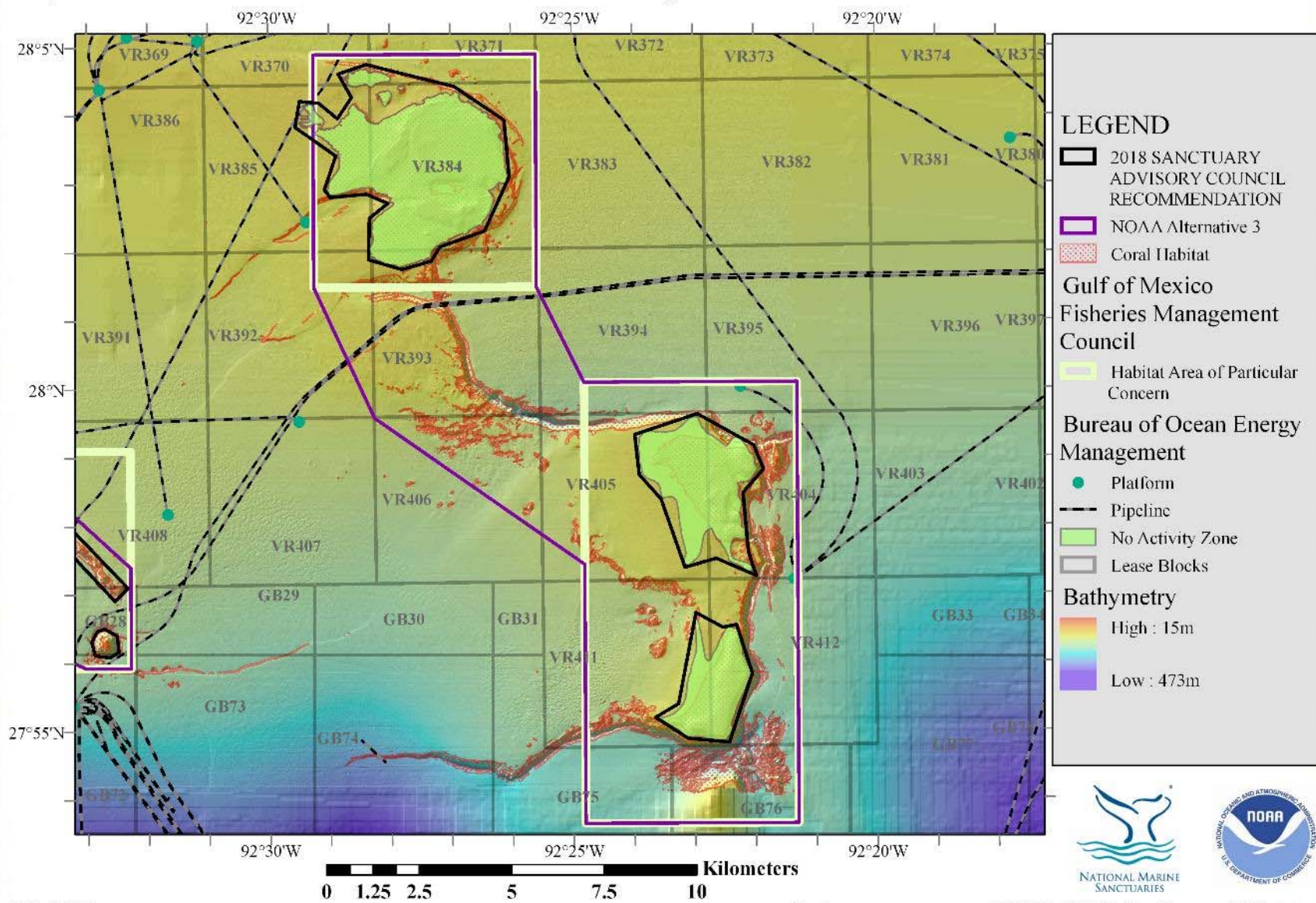
Low : 473m



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Bouma Bank Complex

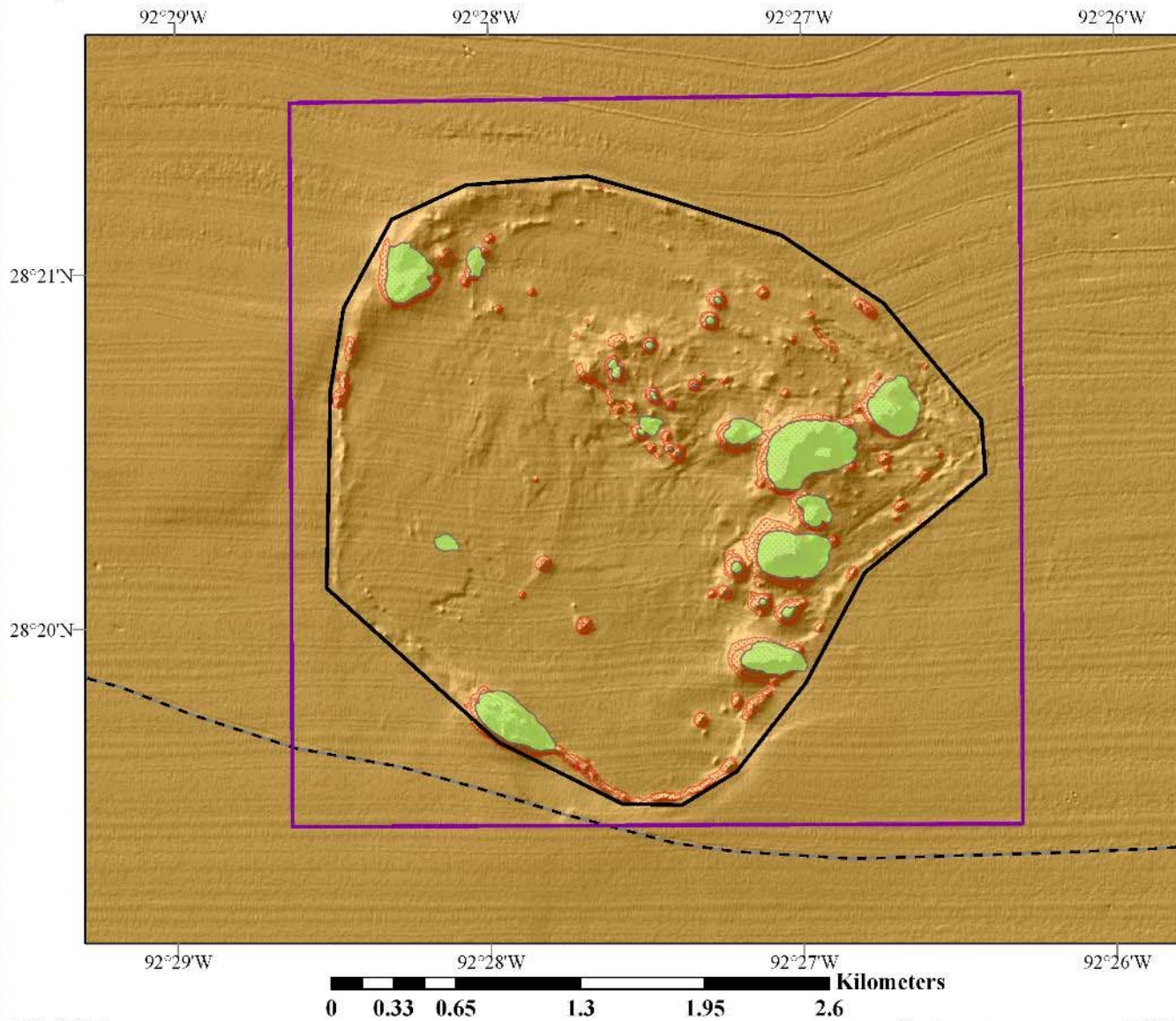


July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Sonnier Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Preferred
Alternative

Coral Habitat

Bureau of Ocean Energy
Management

Pipeline

No Activity Zone

Bathymetry

High : 15m

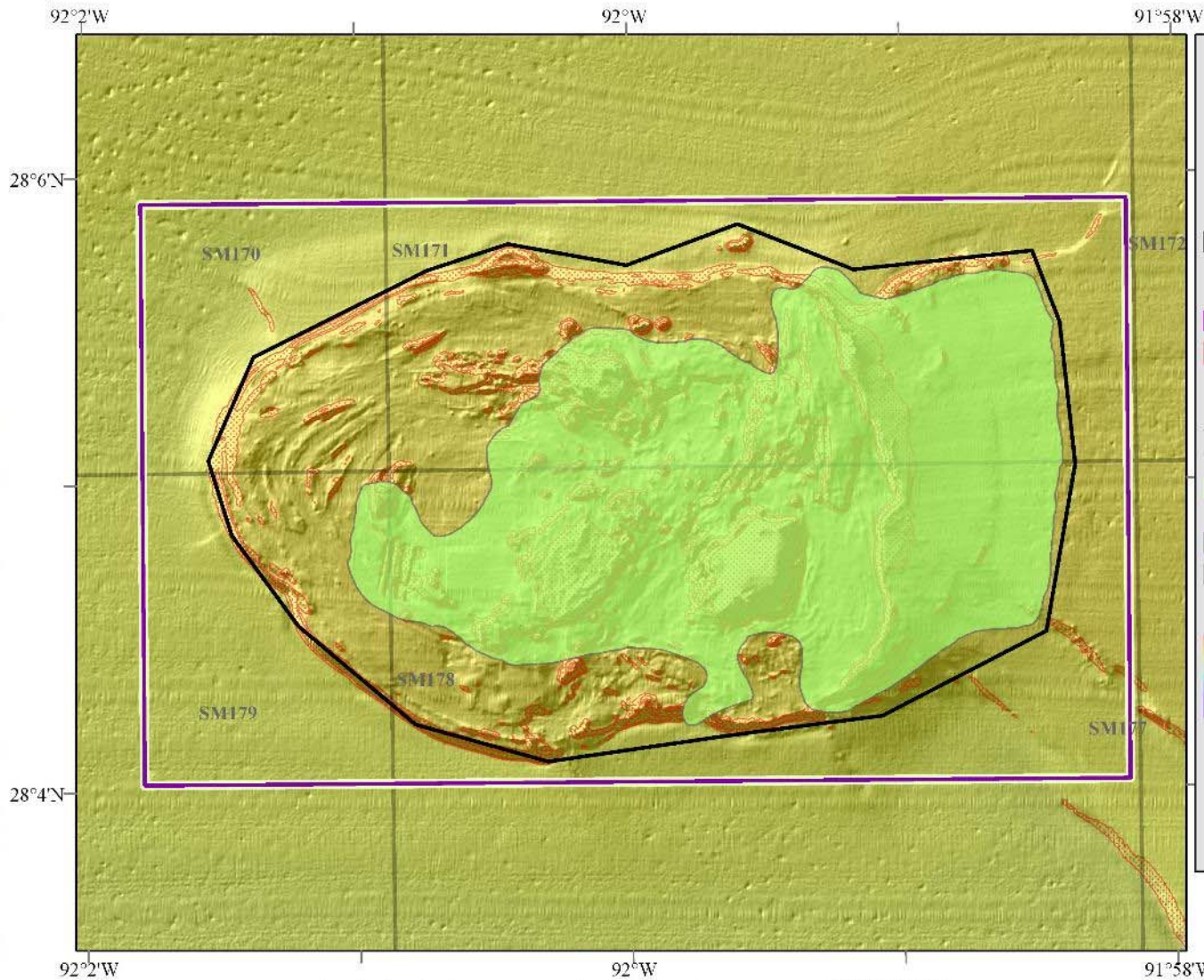
Low : 473m



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Alderdice Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Alternative 3

Coral Habitat

Gulf of Mexico
Fisheries Management
Council

Habitat Area of Particular
Concern

No Activity Zone

Lease Blocks

Bathymetry

High : 15m

Low : 473m

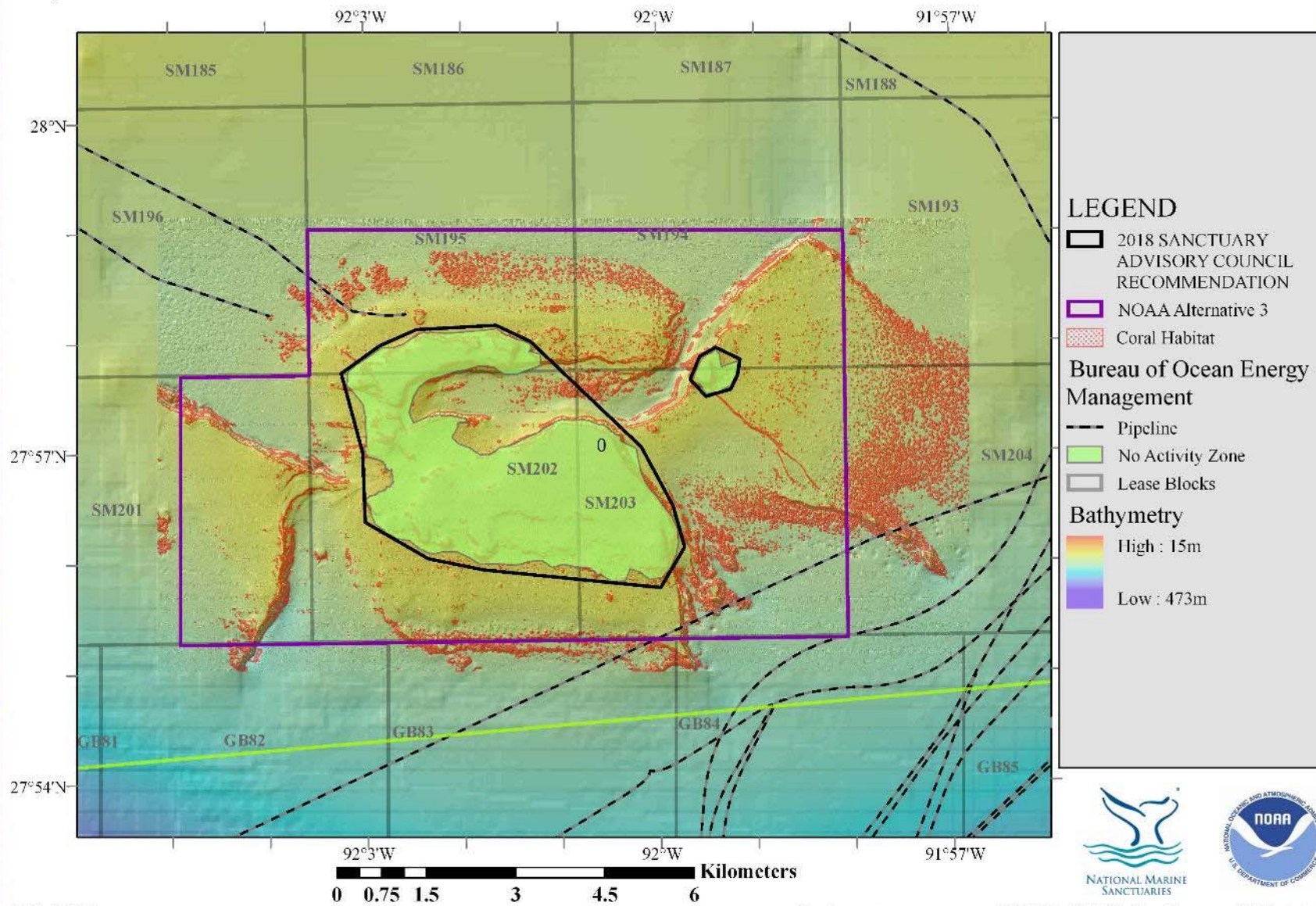


July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Parker Bank



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

National Marine Sanctuaries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



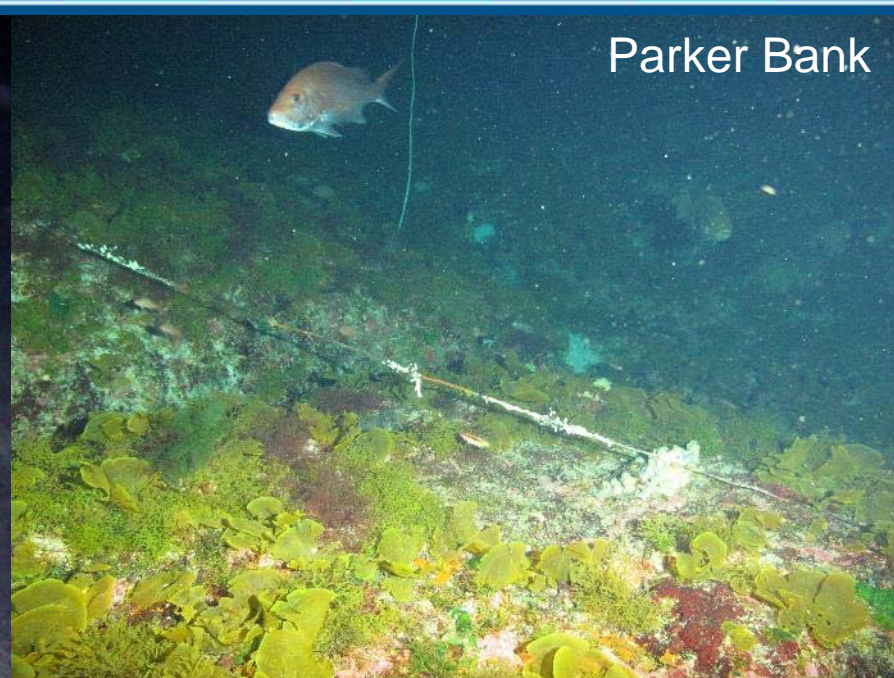
NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES

FLOWER
GARDEN BANKS

<http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>



Stetson Bank



Parker Bank



Alderdice Bank



Horseshoe Bank

Fishing / Anchor Impacts – FGBNMS Expansion Alternative 3

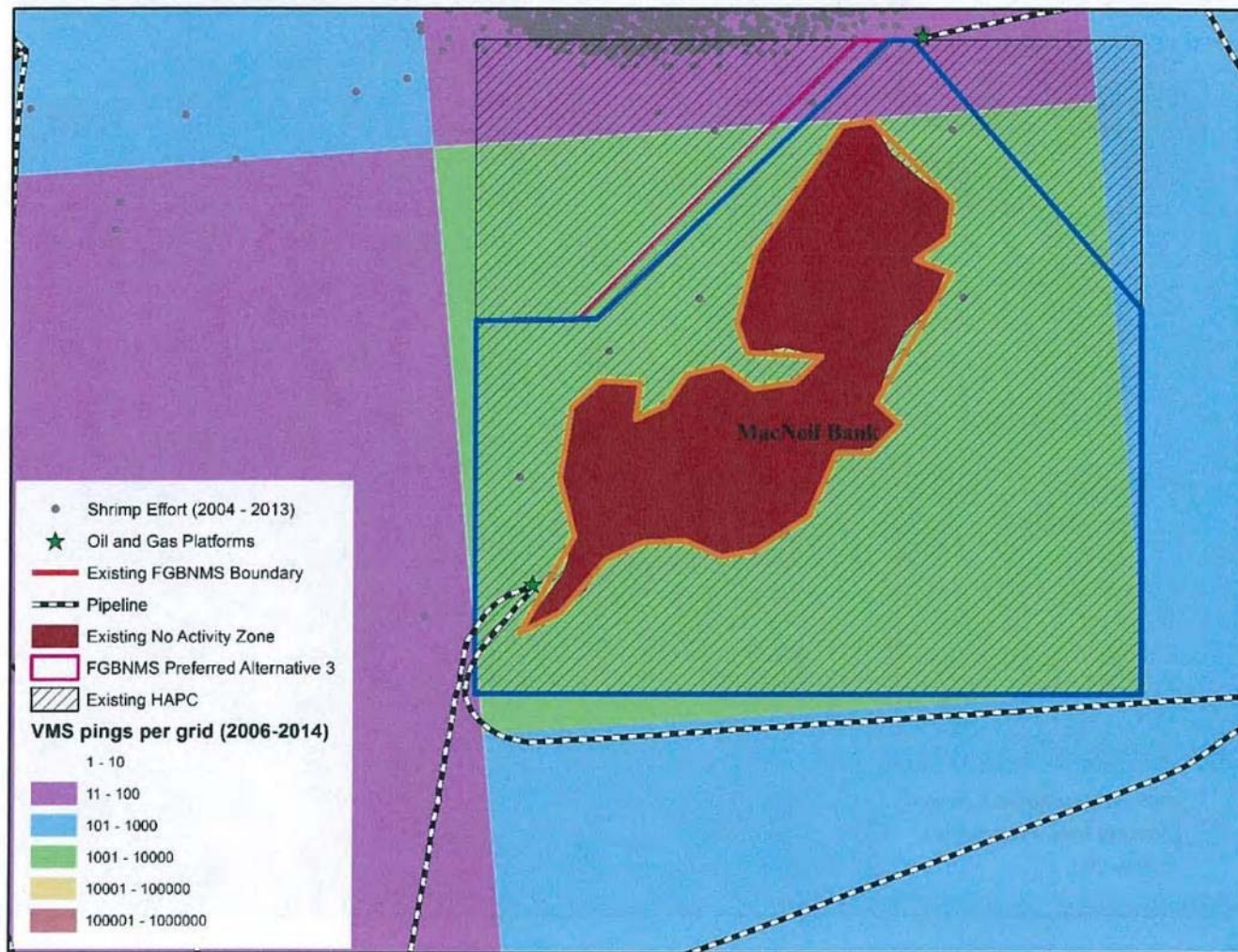
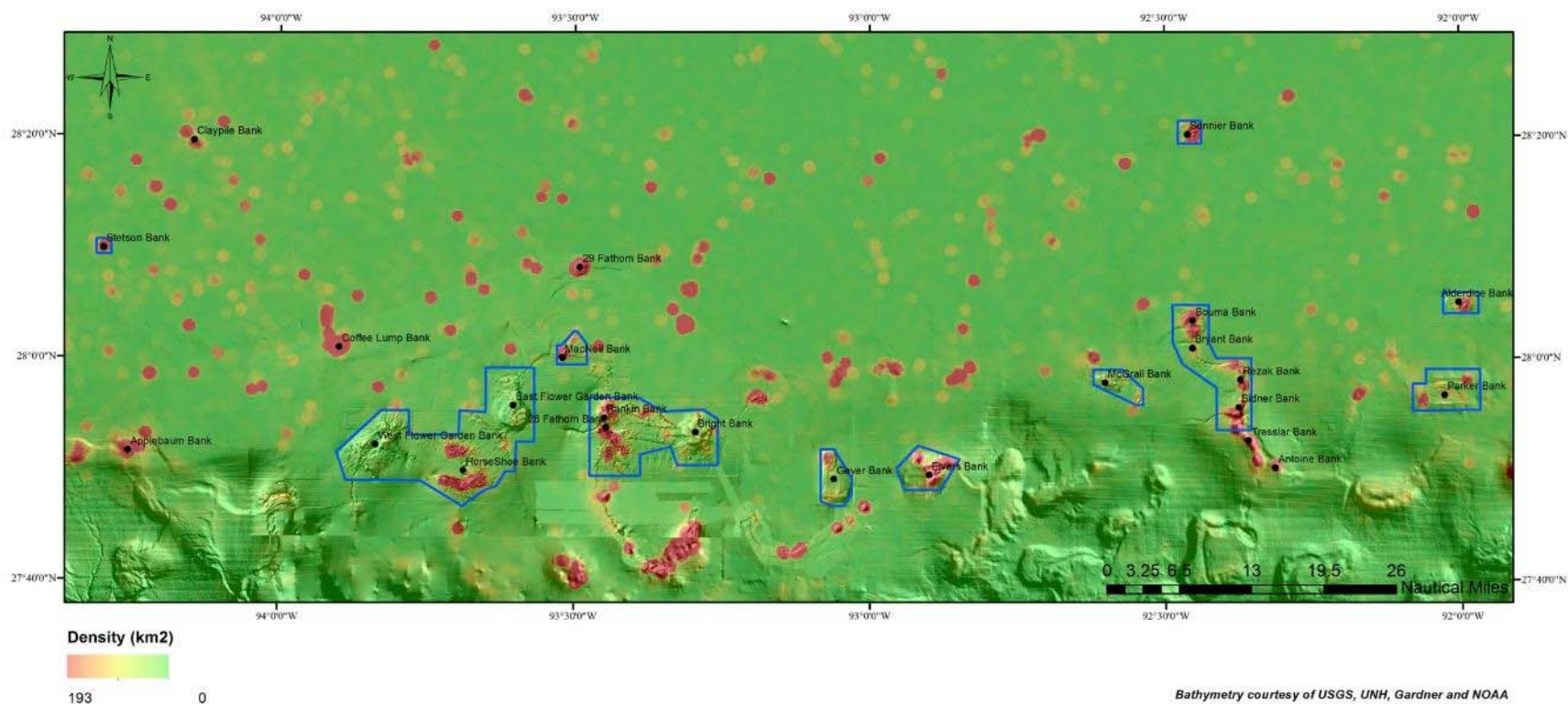


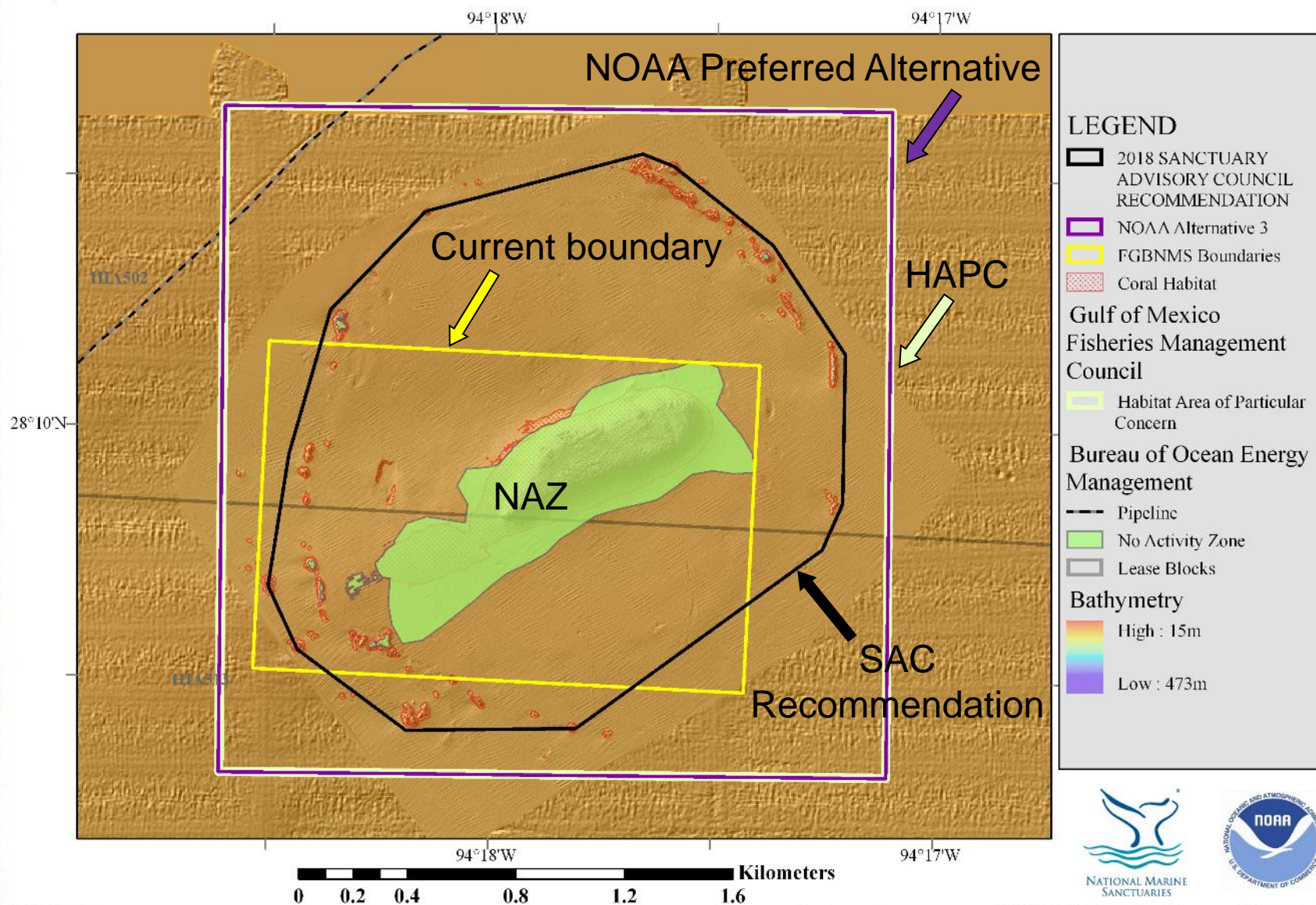
Figure 8. MacNeil Bank existing HAPC (hatched lines) and proposed expansion (outlined in magenta).

Example: MacNeil Bank NAZ Polygon (GMFMC 2016)

VMS Point Density, 2012-2013



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Stetson Bank



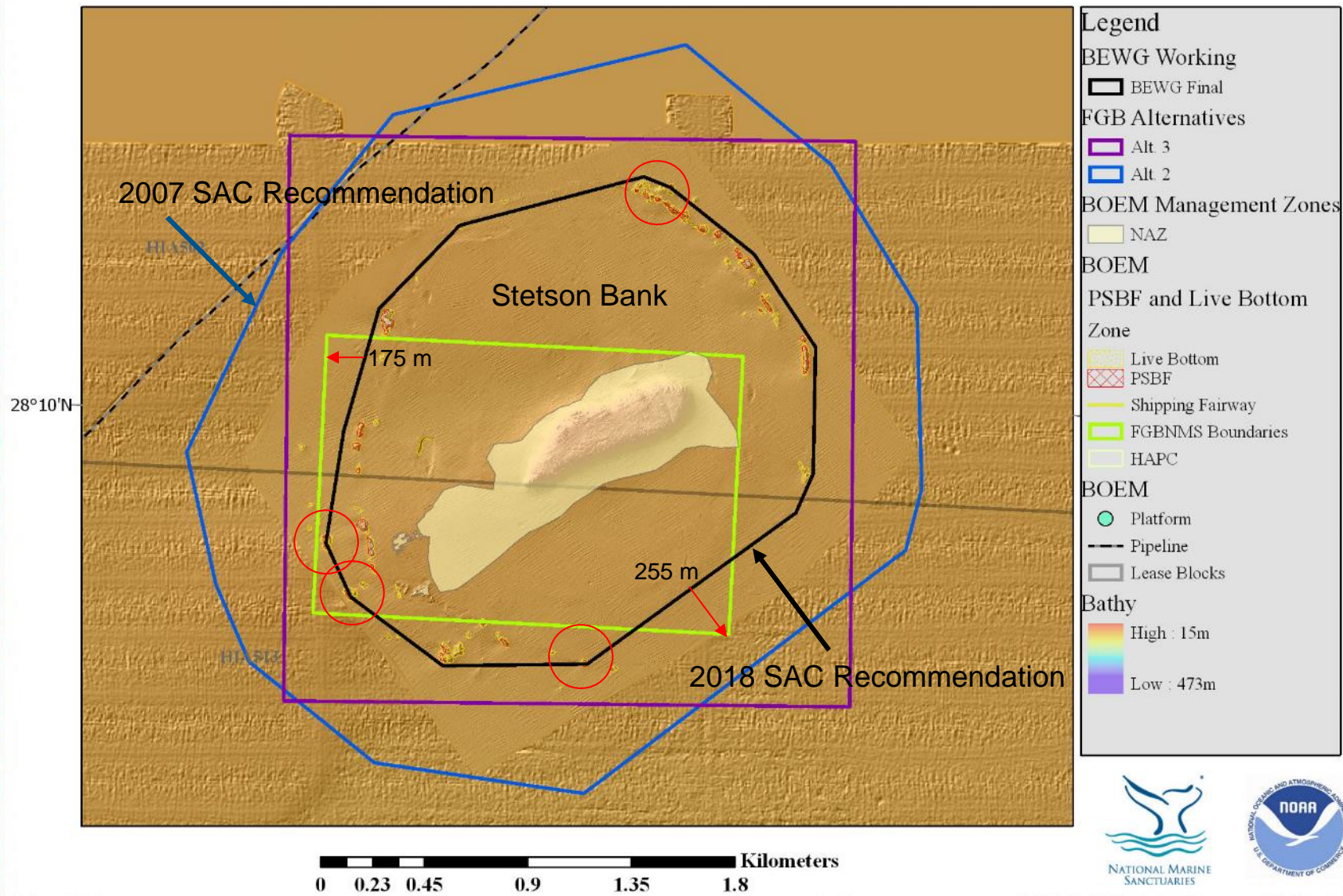
July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

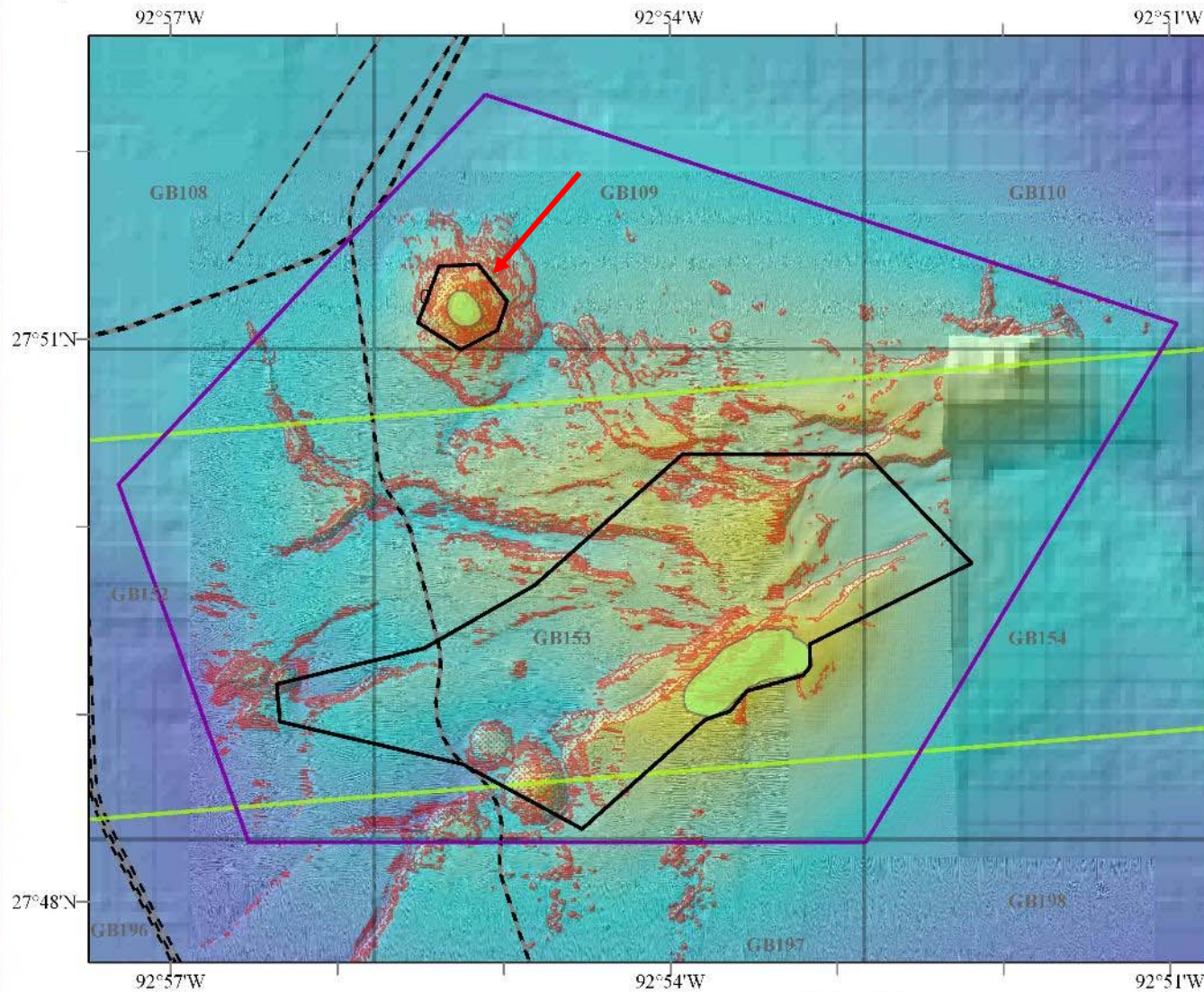




Boundary Expansion Working Group Recommendation Stetson Bank



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Elvers Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Alternative 3

Coral Habitat

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Pipeline

No Activity Zone

Lease Blocks

Shipping Fairway

Bathymetry

High : 15m

Low : 473m

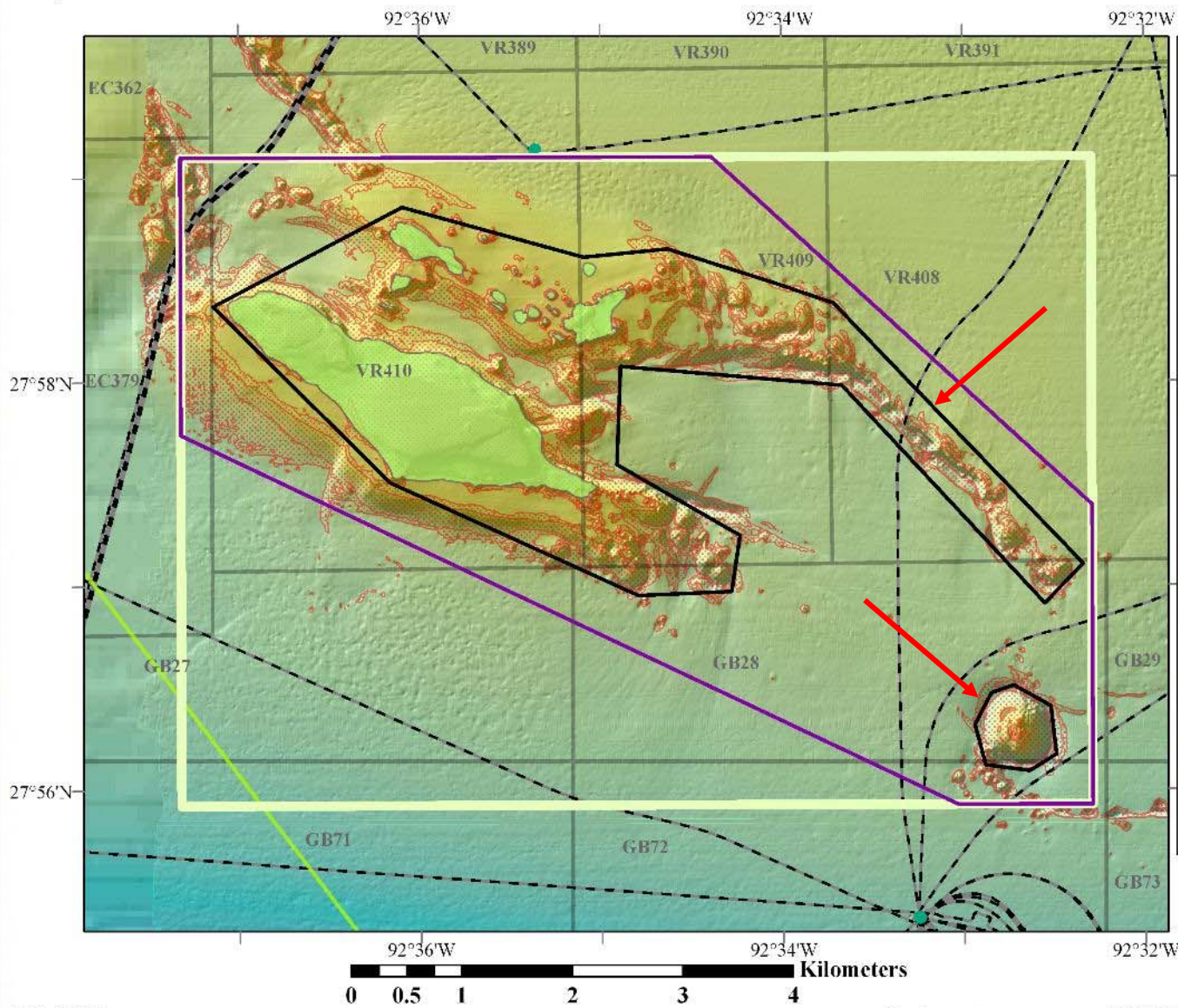
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation McGrail Bank



LEGEND

2018 SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION

NOAA Alternative 3

Coral Habitat

Gulf of Mexico
Fisheries Management
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High : 15m

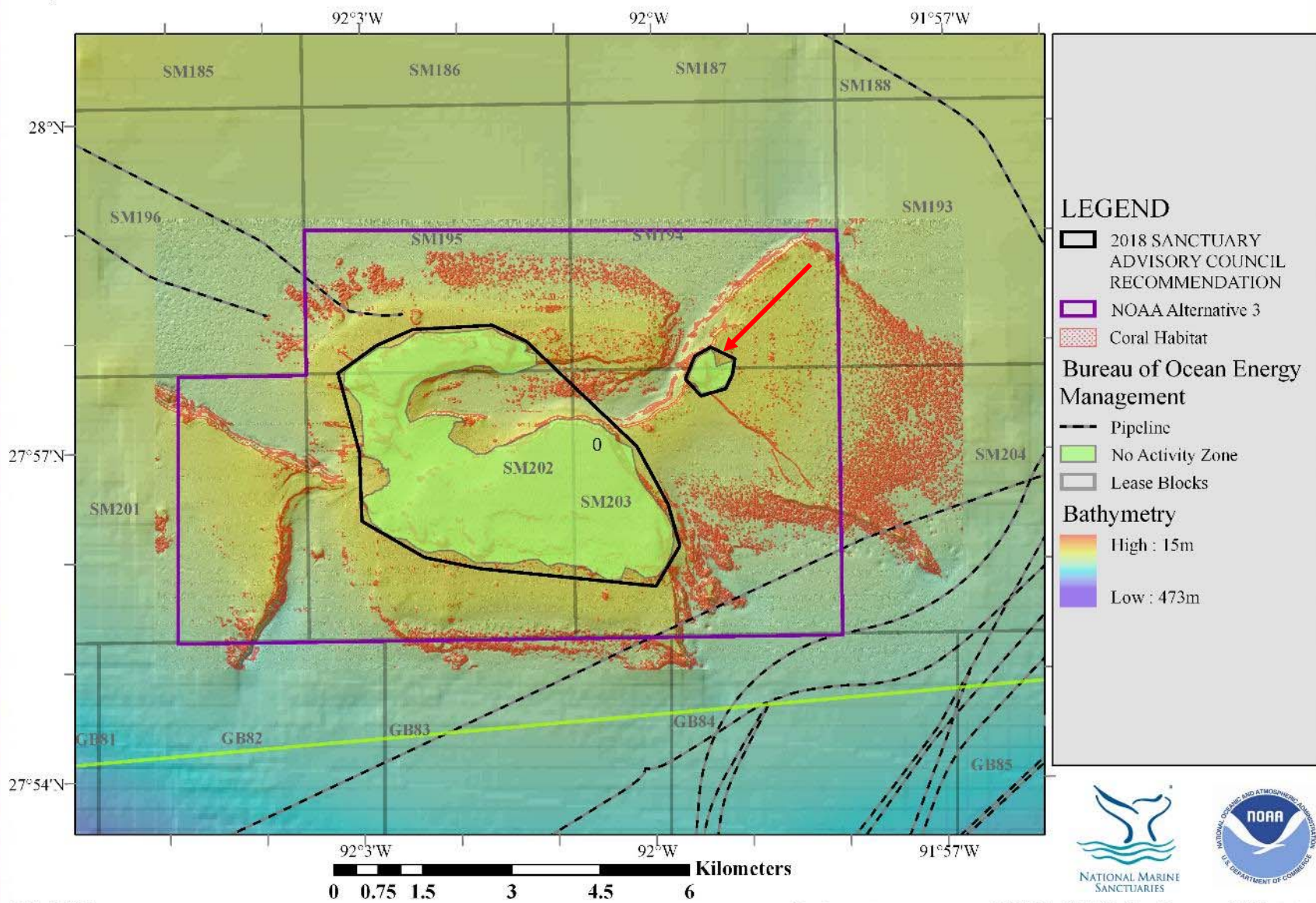
Low : 473m



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Parker Bank



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

