

National Marine Sanctuaries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



# Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review

## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Briefing

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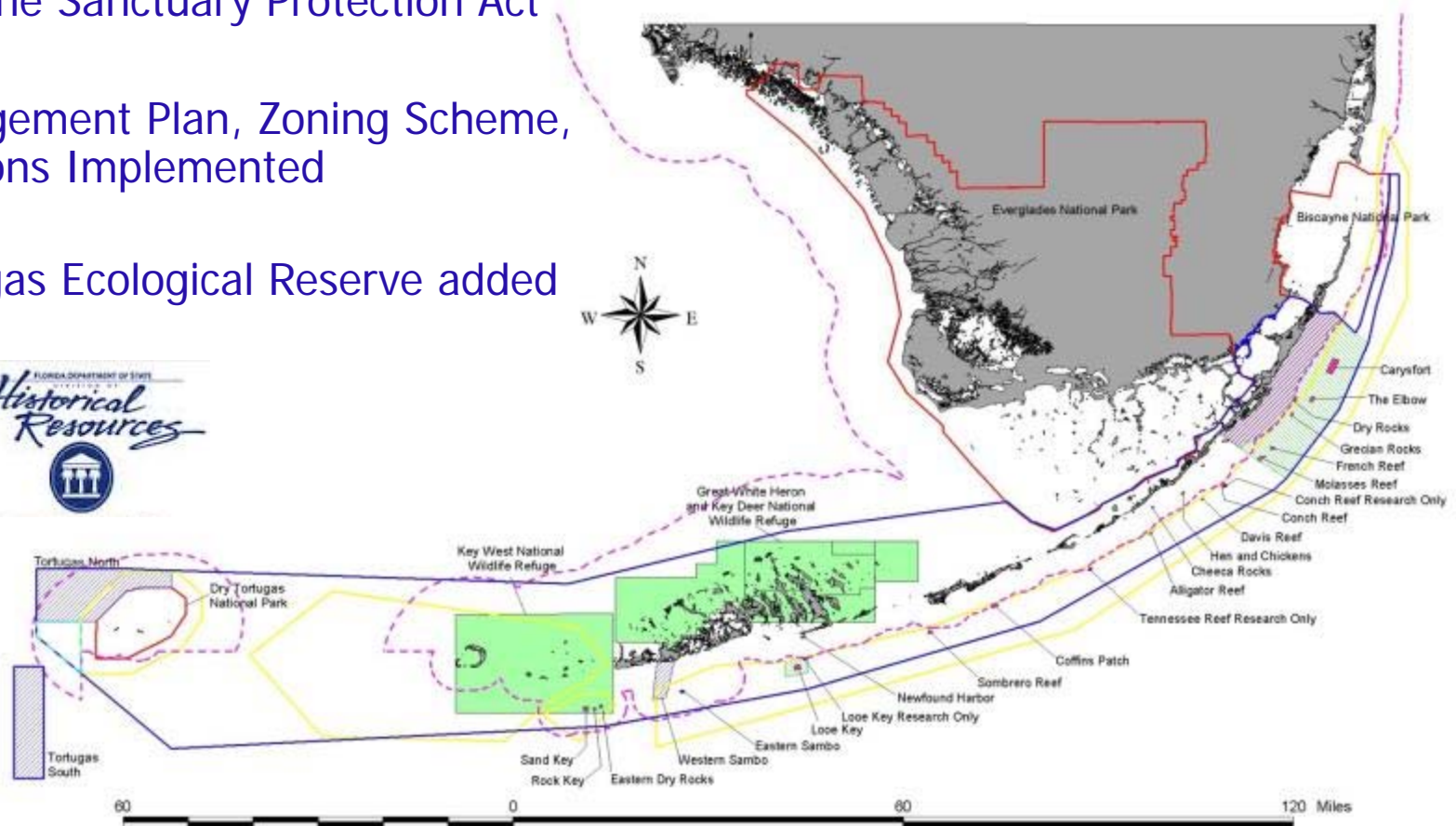
# Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary



1990 - Congress passed Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Protection Act

1997 - Management Plan, Zoning Scheme, and Regulations Implemented

2001 - Tortugas Ecological Reserve added



# Working to Protect Florida Keys Marine Resources



## Coral Reef Ecosystem: Coastal Mangroves, Seagrass Beds and Coral Reefs



## Maritime Heritage and Submerged Cultural Resources



# What types of things do the Sanctuary and Refuge regulate?



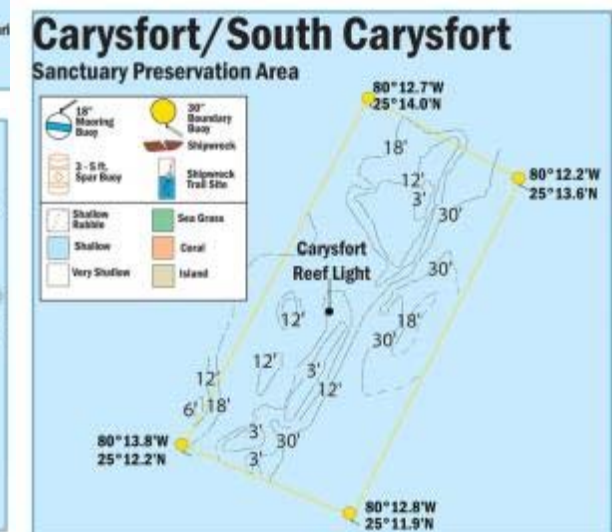
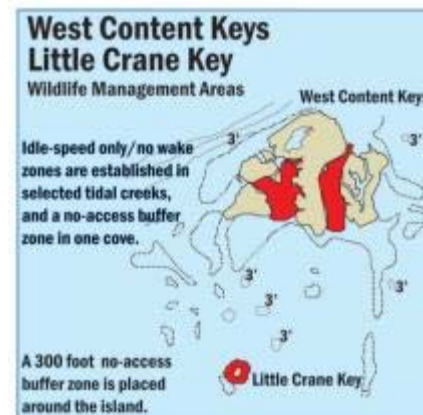
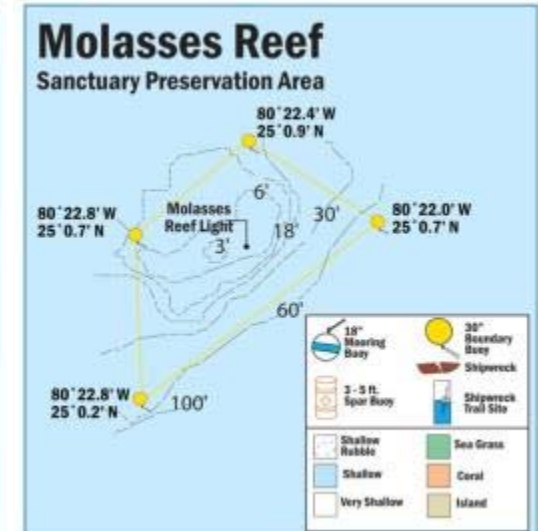
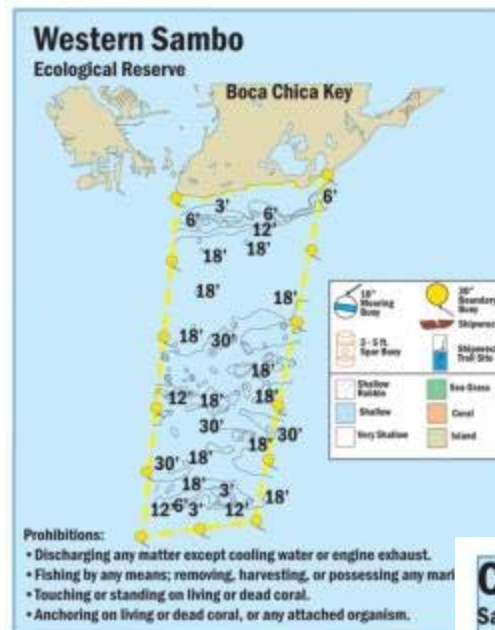
- Dumping / Discharges
- Spearfishing
- Fishing
- Vessel Speed
- Personal Watercraft
- Vessel Access
- Groundings
- Marine Construction & Dredging
- Oil and Gas Development
- Touching / Standing on Coral
- Diving / Snorkeling
- Marine Life / Aquarium Collection



# Existing Marine Zoning Plan



- Sanctuary Wide Regulations
- Existing Management Areas (Looe Key/Key Largo NMS & Refuges)
- Sanctuary Preservation Areas
- Ecological Reserves
- Wildlife Management Areas
- Special Use Areas – Research Only
- Area To Be Avoided: Large Ships >50m



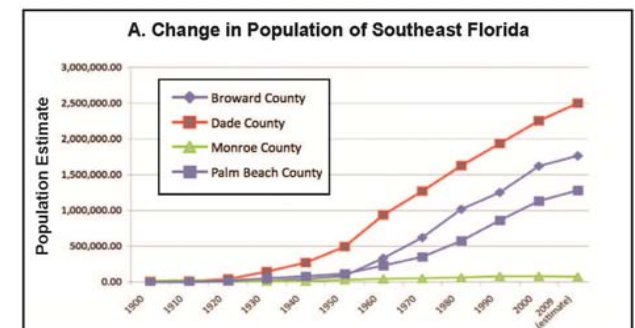
# 2011 FKNMS Condition Report: Foundation for Regulatory and Zoning Changes



- Over 40 scientists provided input and underwent peer review for publication
- History of discharges, coastal development, habitat loss, and over exploitation of large fish and keystone species
- Poaching, vessel groundings and discharging of marine debris
- Can be improved with long term management efforts, regulatory compliance and community involvement



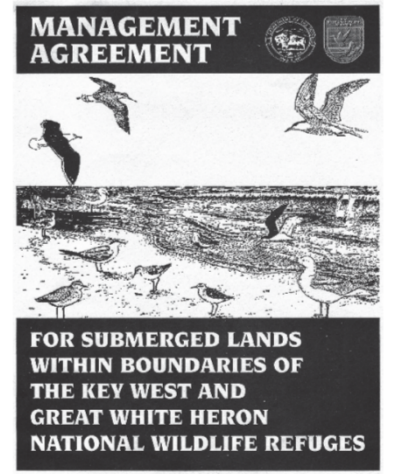
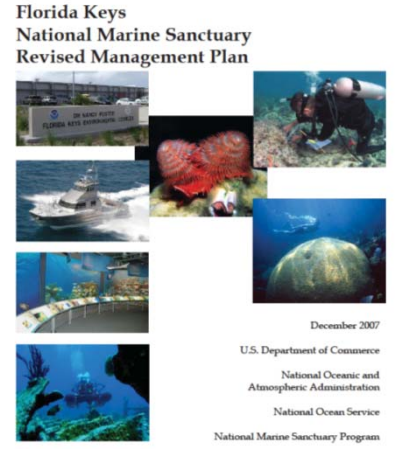
**Trends:**  
▲ Conditions appear to be improving.      ? Undetermined trend.  
— Conditions do not appear to be changing.      N/A Question not applicable.  
▼ Conditions appear to be declining.





# Why conduct the review?

- Community interest
- Periodic evaluation and public input is good management
- Science shows we can make improvements in management
- Emerging threats – climate change, invasive species, new marine uses
- Requirements – federal law and state resolutions, action plans adopted in 2007



# Sanctuary Advisory Council Leads Planning Efforts



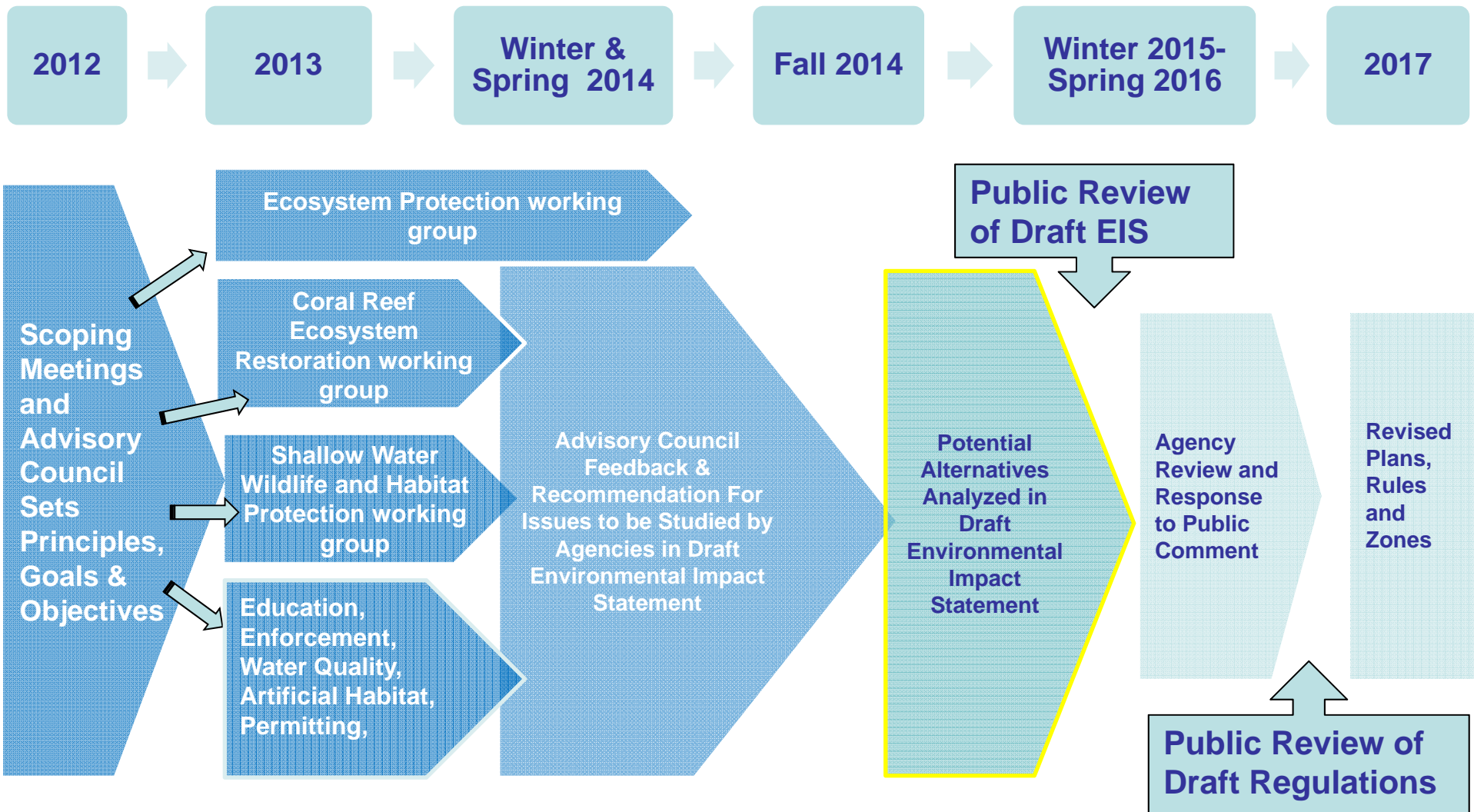
Community-based advisory group providing advice to Florida Keys NMS Management

- Boating Industry
- Elected County Official
- Citizens at Large (3)
- Conservation (2)
- Research
- Education
- Tourism (2)
- Diving (2)
- Charter Fishing (2)
- Commercial Fishing (2)
- Recreational Fishing
- Submerged Cultural Resources
- South Florida Ecosystem Restoration
- 10 Non-Voting Local, State, and Federal Agency Representatives

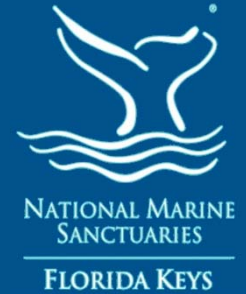




# Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review Timeline



# Advisory Council Issues and Management Priorities for Review



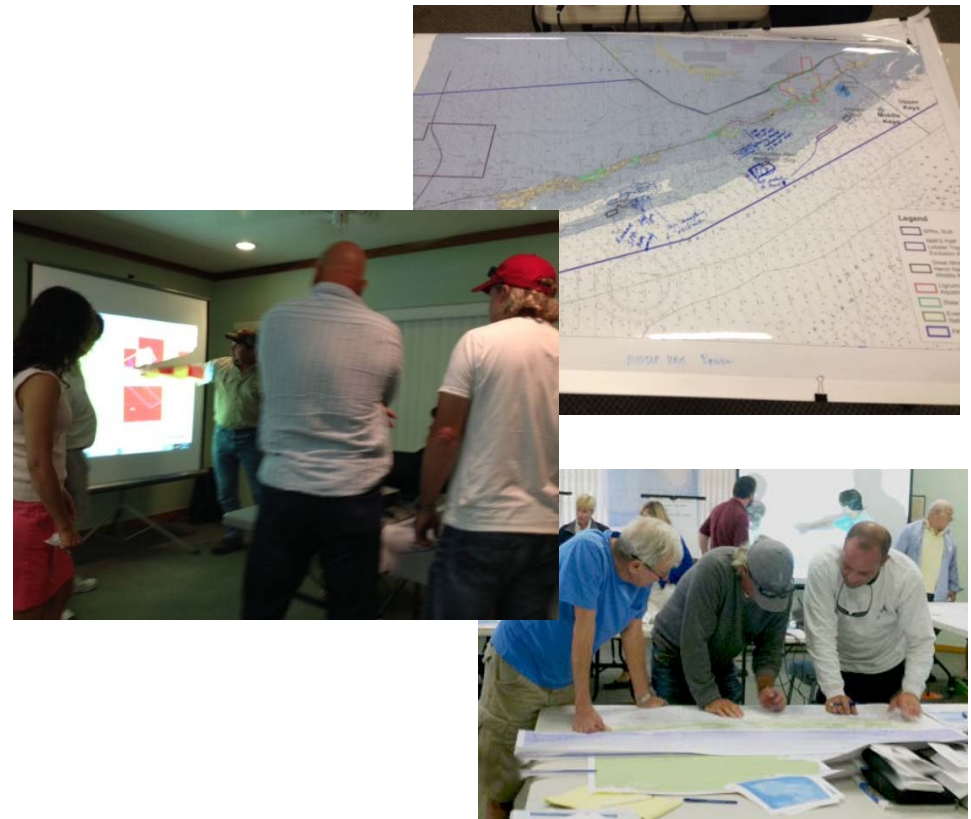
- 1. Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection**
2. Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration
- 3. Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection**
4. Permit Procedures and Adaptive Management
5. Artificial Habitats
- 6. Study Area & Boundary Modification**
7. Personal Water Craft Tours / Fishing Conflicts
8. Water Quality
9. Coordination with Fishery Management Agencies

# Sanctuary Advisory Council Establishes Working Groups for Recommendations on Specific Topics and Priority Issues



**Ecosystem Protection** and **Shallow Water Habitat** Working Groups Include Council Members and other Stakeholder Representatives from:

- Commercial Fishing
- Conservation
- Recreational Fishing
- Charter & Flats Guides
- Diving and Boating Industry
- Snorkel & Ecotourism
- Research & Monitoring
- Marine Life Collections
- Citizen at Large
- Tourism Industry



# Sanctuary Advisory Council Working Groups: Specific Charges and Objectives



## **Ecosystem Protection Working Group Charge:**

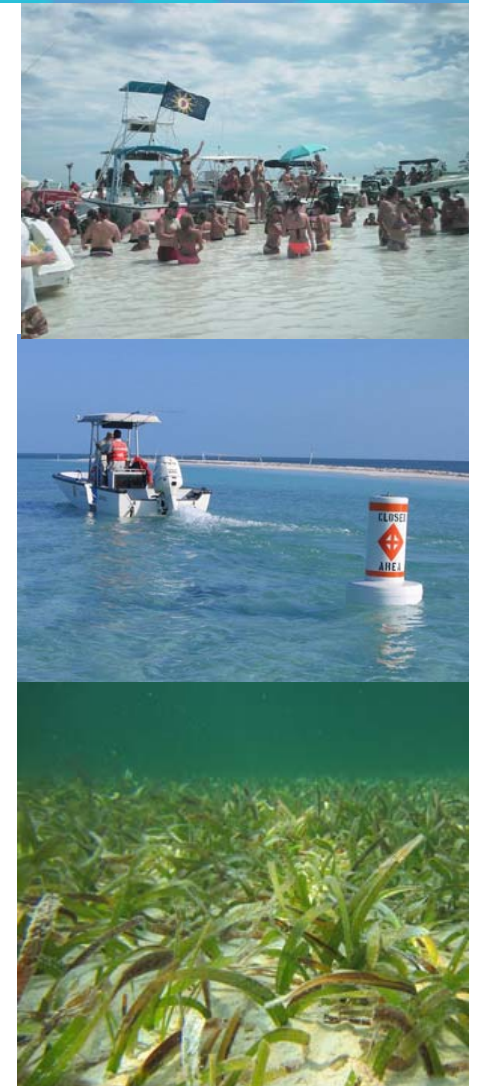
Review Zones addressing ecosystem level protection in no-take / limited take zones.

## **Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Working Group Charge:**

Evaluate zones for habitat and wildlife protection;

Identify concentrated uses that may be harming resources;

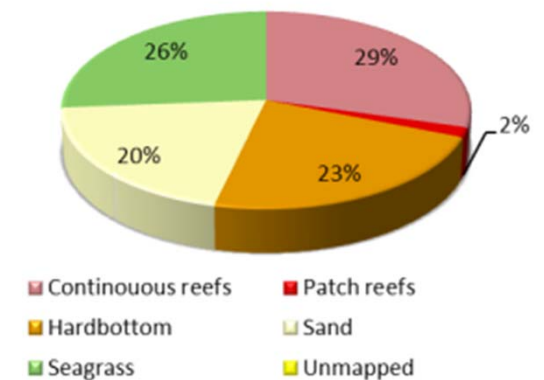
Evaluate marine salvage issues and harm to seafloor – particularly seagrass habitats.



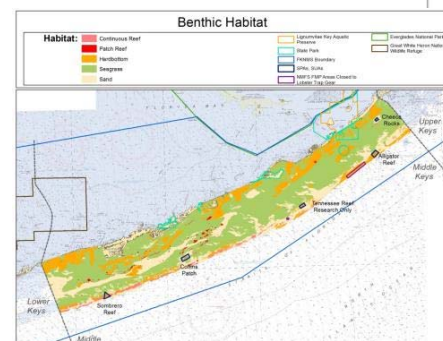
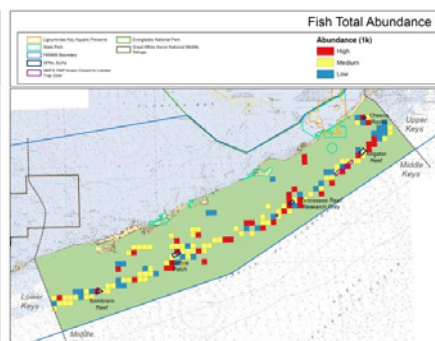
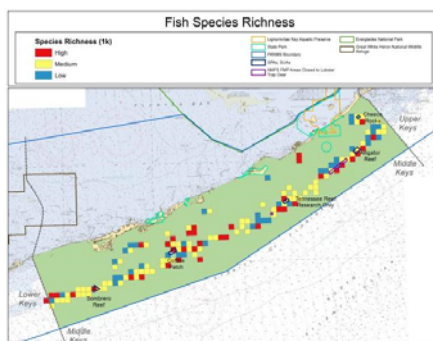
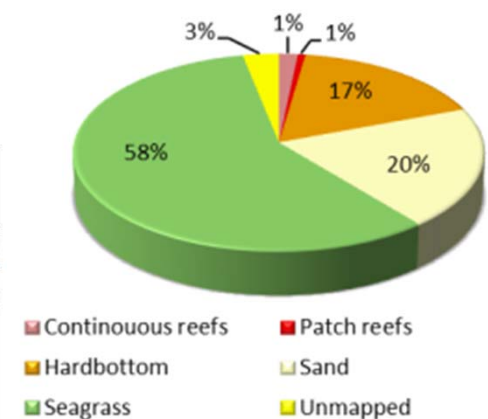
# Natural Resource Analysis

- Area is within current marine zoning scheme?
- Habitat types distributed within current marine zoning scheme
- High relief reefs
- Resilient reefs
- Federal and State threatened coral species
- Fish spawning aggregation areas
- Coral cover and diversity
- Fish abundance and diversity

SPAs, SUAs



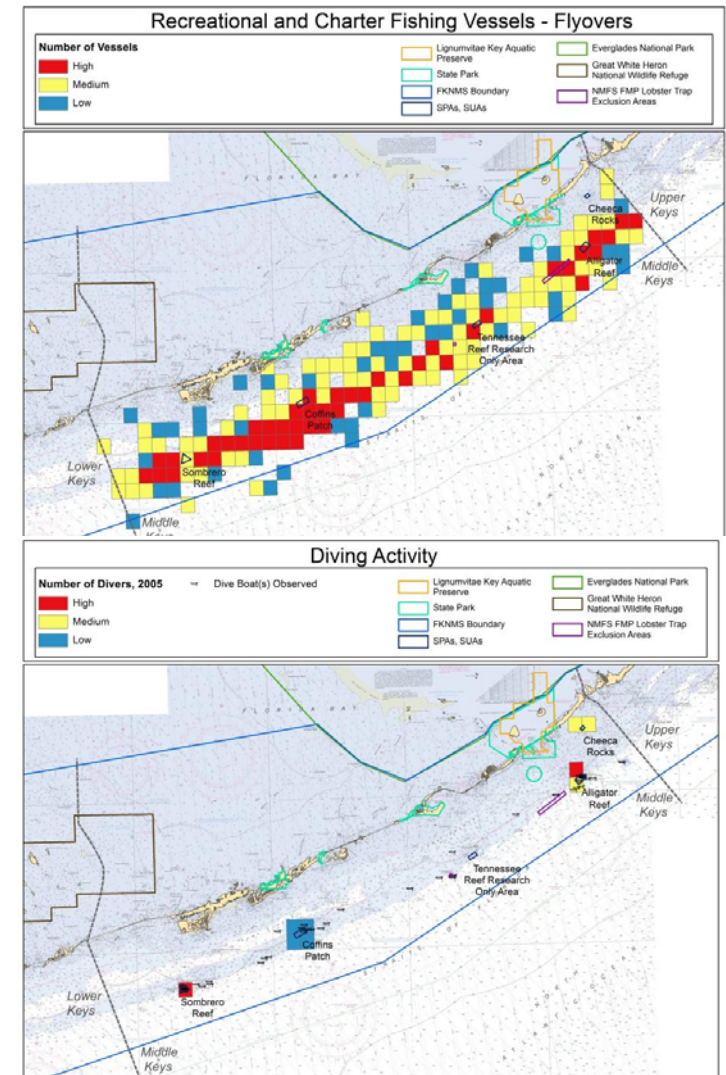
Remaining FKNMS, oceanside



# Human Use Analysis



- Commercial Fishing
  - Distribution of **Commercial Fishers**
  - Distribution of Commercial Fishing Landings
- Recreational Fishing
  - Distribution of **Recreational and Charter Fishing Vessels**
- Recreational Diving
  - Distribution of **Diving Vessels**
  - Distribution of **Recreational Divers**
- Distribution of **Marine Debris**
- Location of **Vessel Groundings**



# Sanctuary Advisory Council Working Groups: Proposing Alternatives to Analyze in Draft EIS



## **Ecosystem Protection WG (and Council) Recommend Analysis of:**

- Modify 11 existing marine zones
- Modifications to the Sanctuary and ATBA boundary
- Proposing 7 new marine zones
- Removing certain exceptions in 4 existing marine zones
- Zone recommendations range from limited access or anchoring restrictions to no access (research only)

## **Shallow Water WG (and Council) Recommend Analysis of:**

- Remove 2 existing zones (not needed)
- Modify 19 existing zones
- Proposed 24 new zones – mainly pole /troll or idle, some temporal access restrictions

# Study Area & Boundary Modifications



## Value of identifying a Study Area:

- Locations within the study area – but outside present FKNMS boundaries – can be considered in the zoning and review process
- Evaluate economic and environmental impacts of applying Sanctuary-wide regulations in study area
- Apply Sanctuary-wide regulations to the study area should those new boundaries be adopted

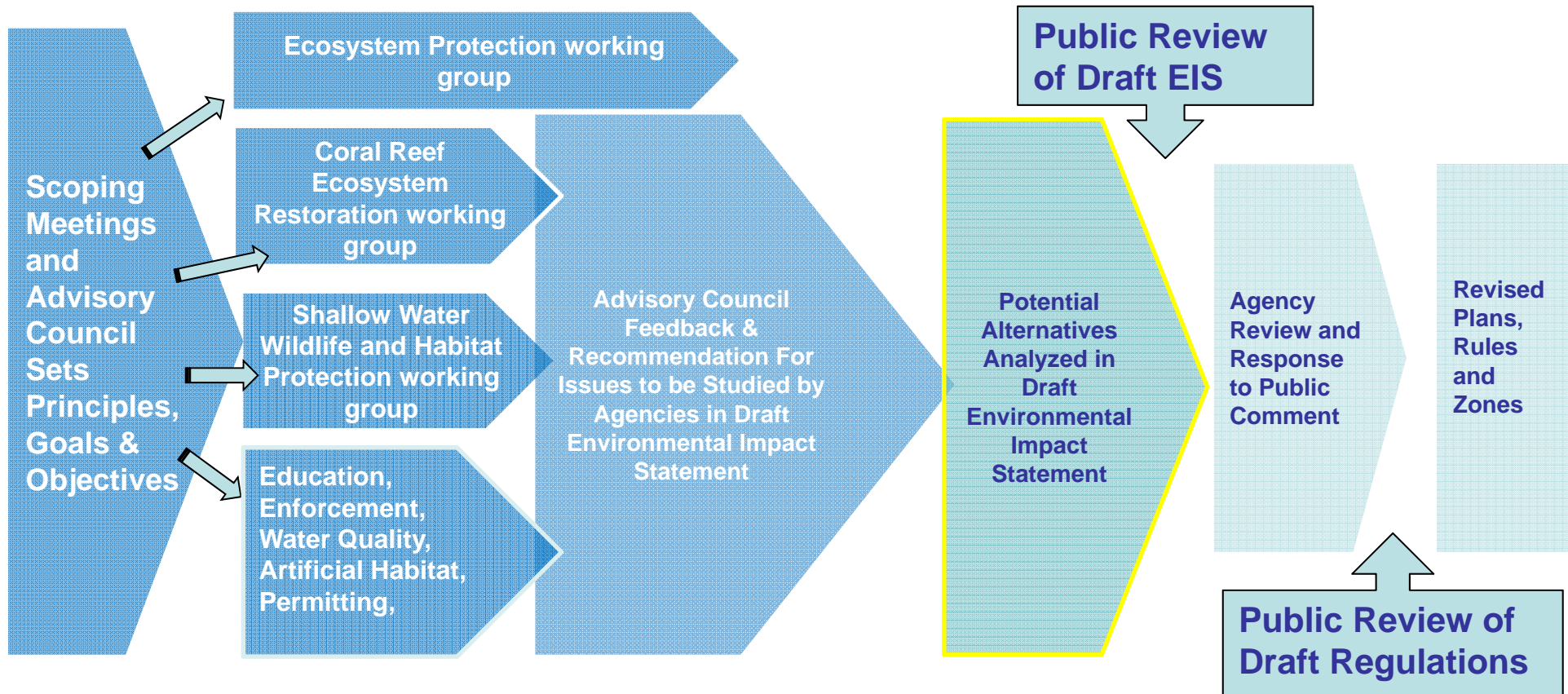


# Pulley Ridge Area

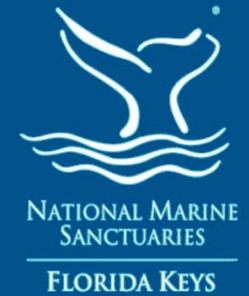
- Portion of Pulley Ridge presently a Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC)
- Strong ecological connectivity to the Florida Keys



# Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review Timeline



# Looking Ahead – Overall Next Steps



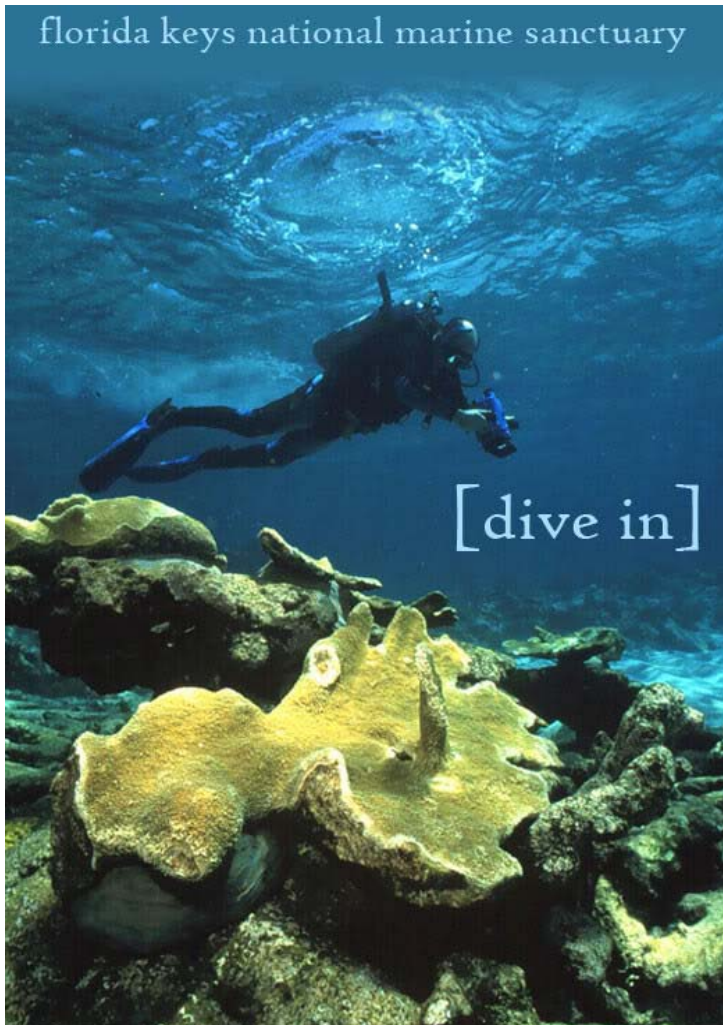
## ✓ Advisory Council Feedback & Recommendation for Agencies

- Agency staff develops range of regulatory and zoning alternatives based on scoping comments, Advisory Council recommendations and input, and agency input.
- Potential Alternatives and Analysis released in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement
  - Initiate NMSA § 304(a)(5) consultation if necessary
- Agency Review and Response to Public Comments
- Proposed Actions and Alternatives released in a Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Revised Rules and Marine Zones

For more information:



florida keys national marine sanctuary



**Websites:**

[floridakeys.noaa.gov](http://floridakeys.noaa.gov)

[facebook.com/floridakeysnoaa.gov](https://facebook.com/floridakeysnoaa.gov)

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**Sanctuary Advisory Council:**

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/>