

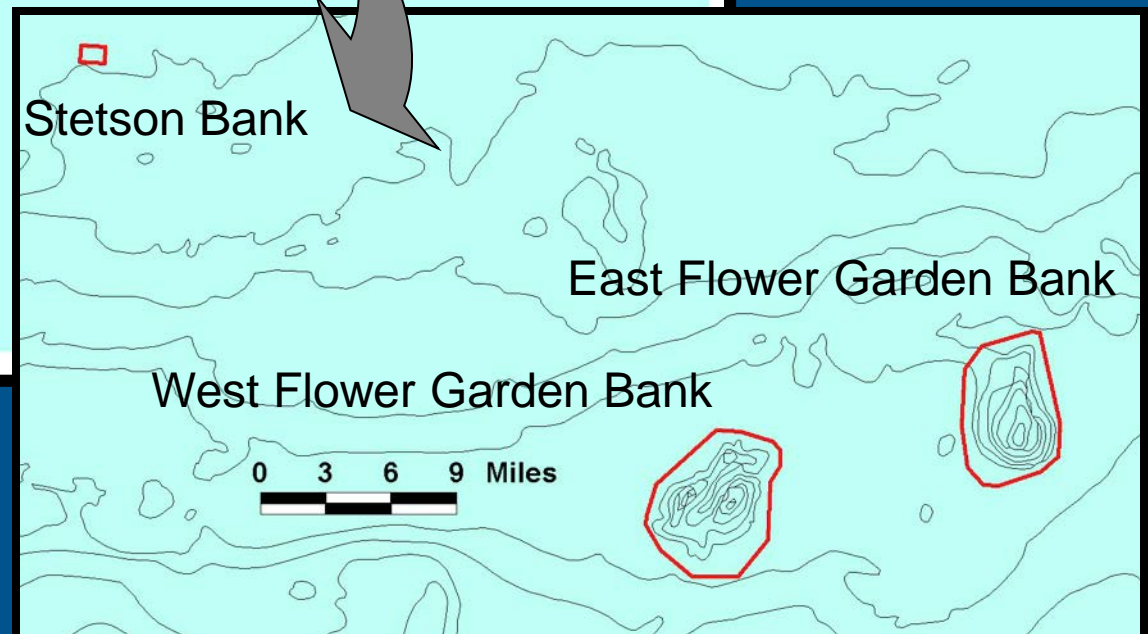
AMERICA'S UNDERWATER TREASURES



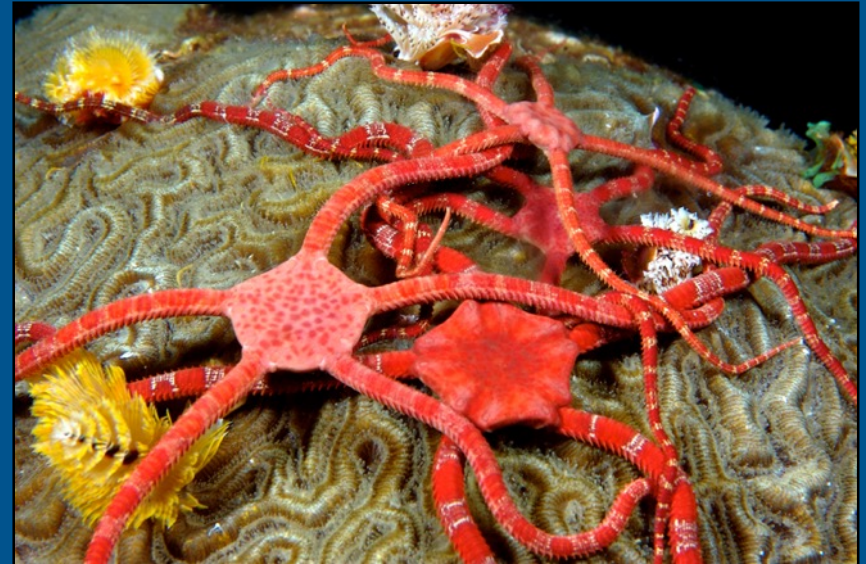
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Expansion Update



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
October 21, 2019



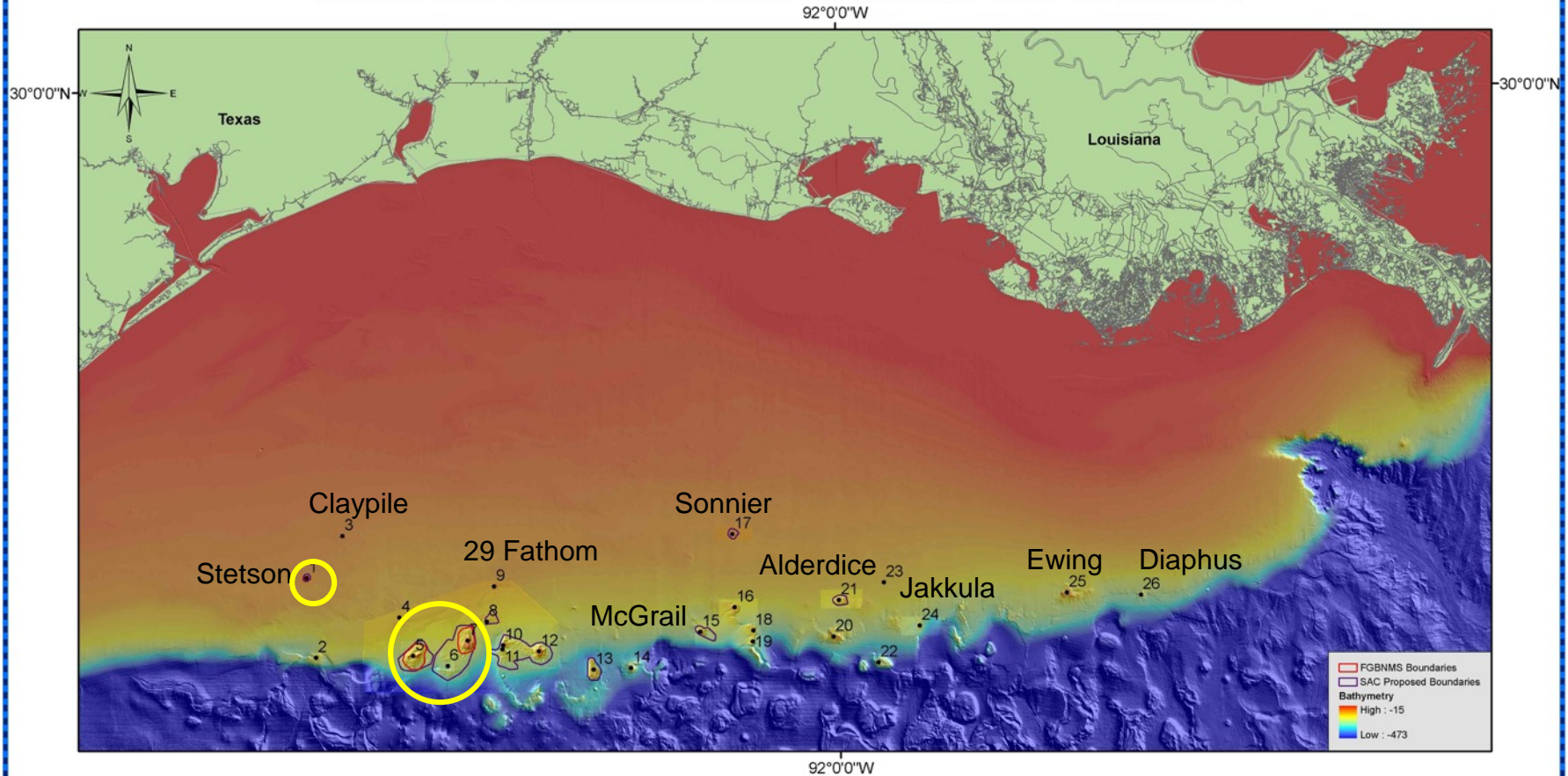
Remarkable Reefs of the Flower Garden Banks





Stetson Bank – Flower Garden Banks NMS

Reefs and Banks in the Northwestern Gulf Of Mexico



1. Stetson Bank, 2. Applebaum Bank, 3. Claypile Bank, 4. Coffee Lump Bank, 5. West Flower Garden Bank, 6. Horseshoe Bank, 7. East Flower Garden Bank, 8. MacNeil Bank, 9. 29 Fathom Bank, 10. Rankin Bank, 11. 28 Fathom Bank, 12. Bright Bank, 13. Geyer Bank, 14. Elvers Bank, 15. McGrail Bank, 16. Bouma Bank, 17. Sonnier Bank, 18. Rezak Bank, 19. Sidner Bank, 20. Parker Bank, 21. Alderdice Bank, 22. Sweet Bank, 23. Fishnet Bank, 24. Jakkula Bank, 25. Ewing Bank, 26. Diaphus Bank,

0 30 60 90 120 150 Kilometers

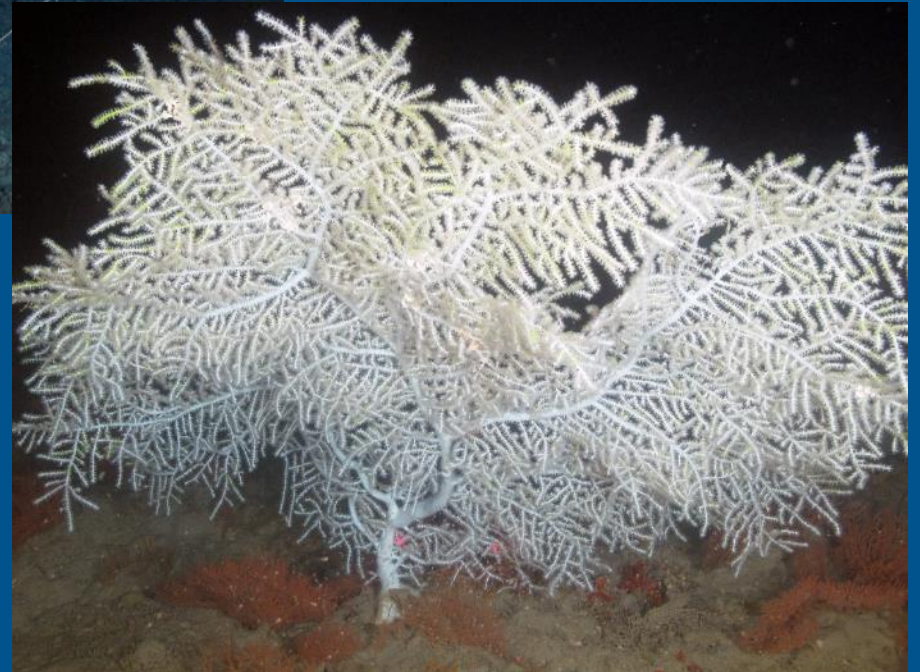
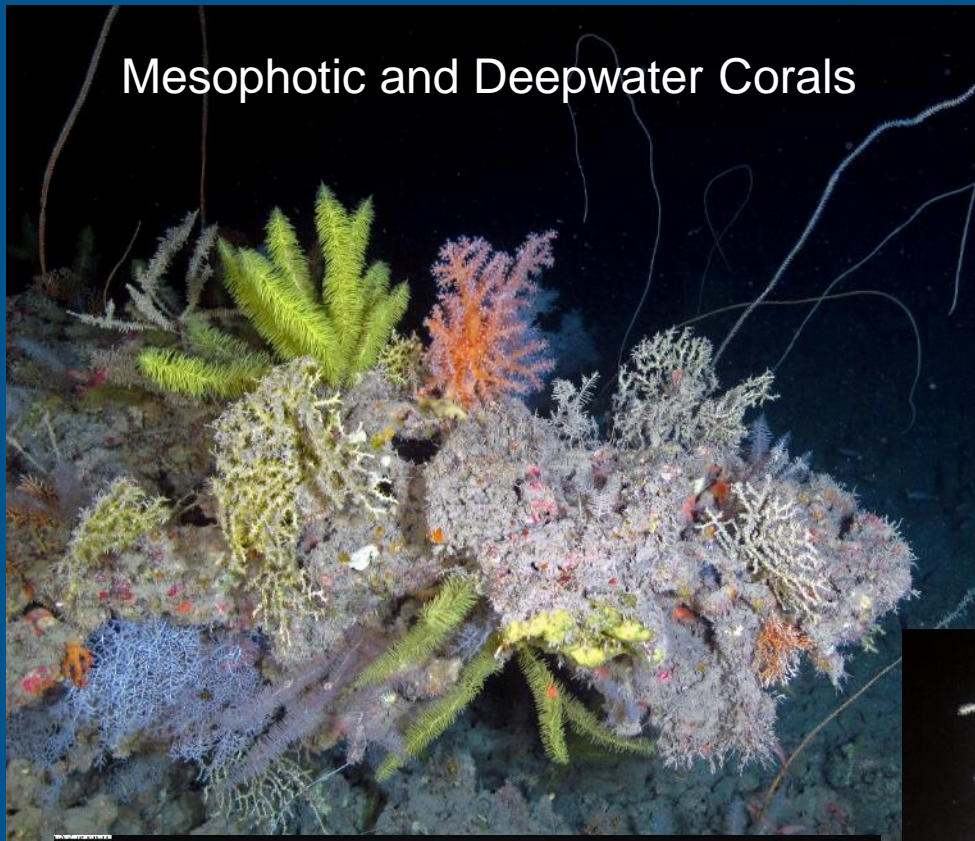
Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

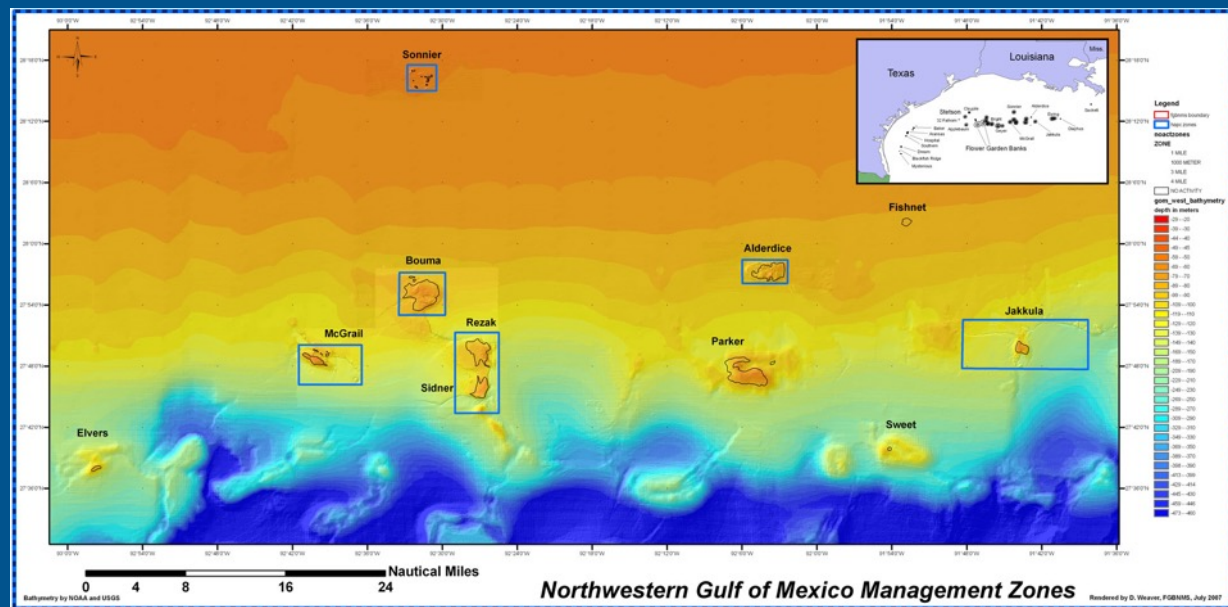
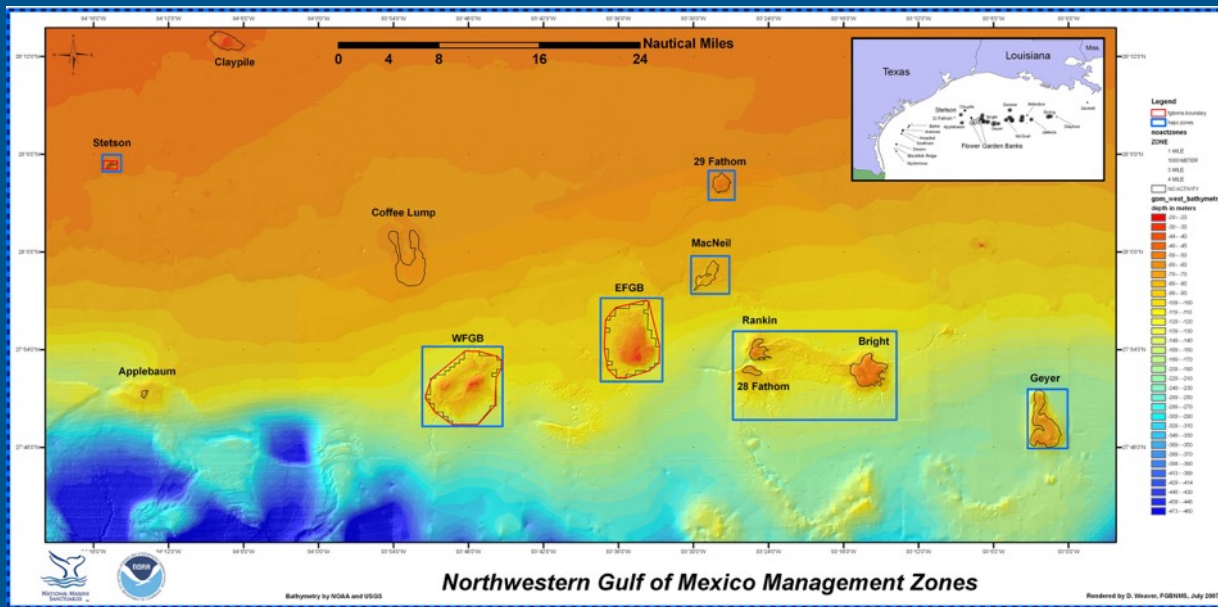
M. Nuttall, FGBNMS, July 2010



Reefs and Banks of the Northwestern Gulf of Mexico

Mesophotic and Deepwater Corals



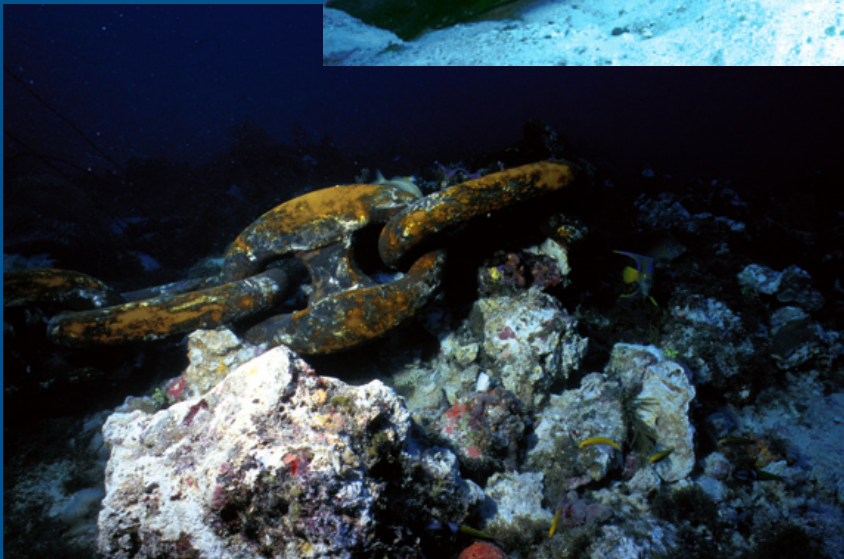


Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) – 2006

Large Vessel Anchoring

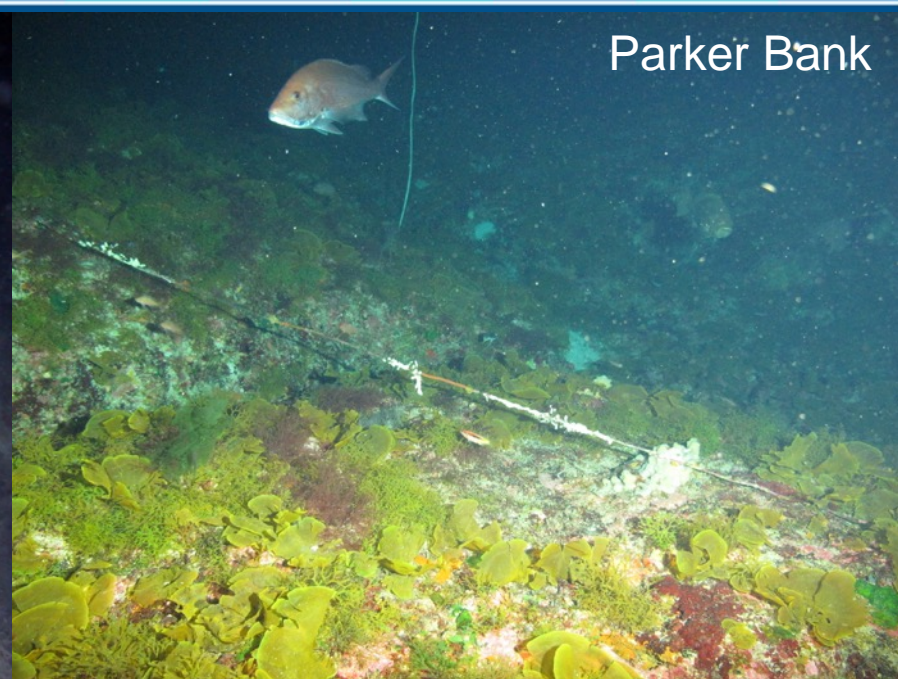


Dry Tortugas, Florida





Stetson Bank



Parker Bank



Alderdice Bank



Horseshoe Bank

Fishing / Anchor Impacts – FGBNMS Expansion Areas



FEDERAL REGISTER

The Daily Journal of the United States Government

0

Sign in Sign up

Proposed Rule

Revisions of Boundaries for Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary; Intent To Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement

A Proposed Rule by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on 02/03/2015



Federal Register Vol. 80, No. 22 / February 3, 2015

“Notice of Intent” – Public Scoping / Draft EIS

Public Comment period closed: April 6, 2015





DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT: SANCTUARY EXPANSION
VOLUMES I & II



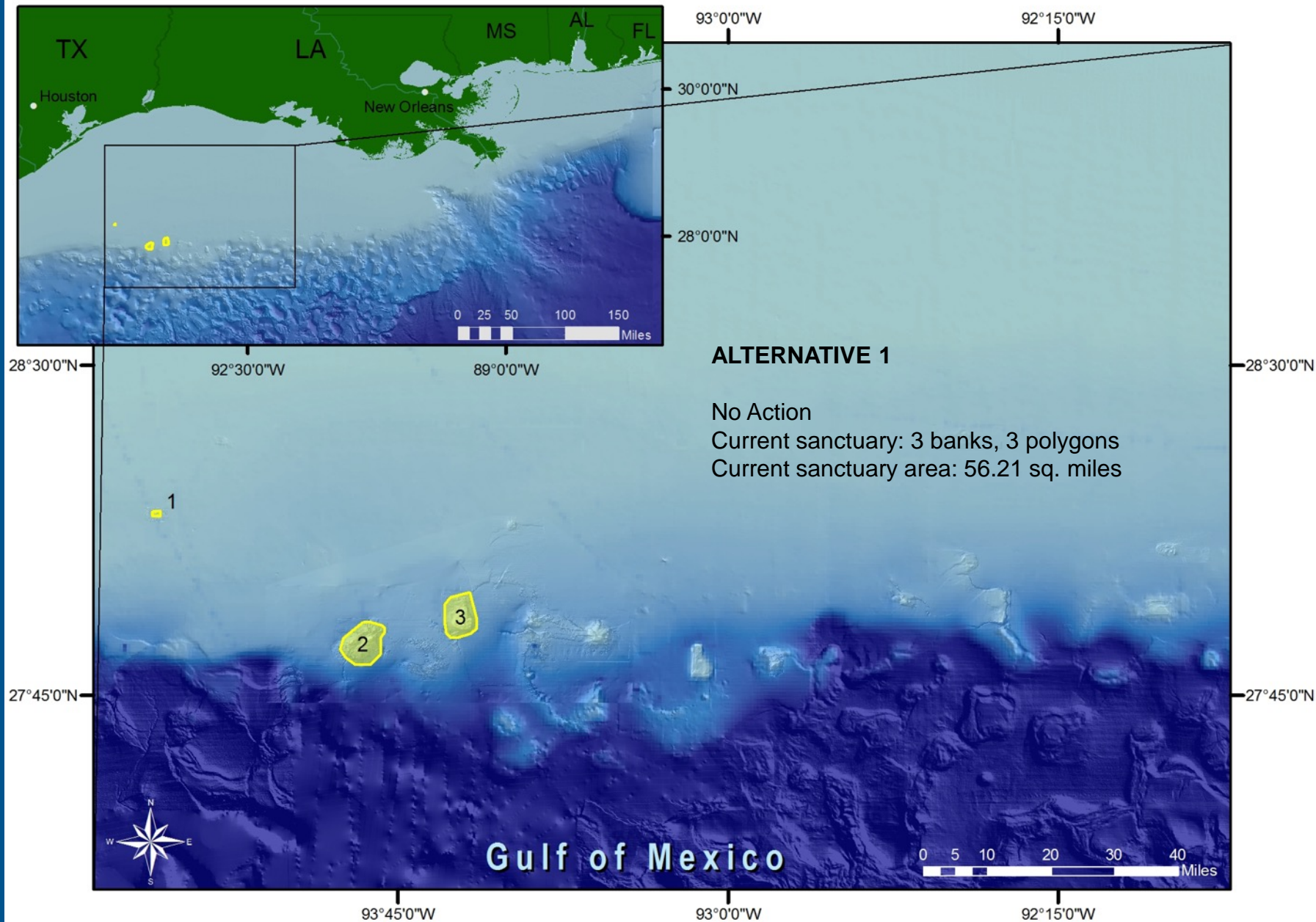
June 2016

<http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>

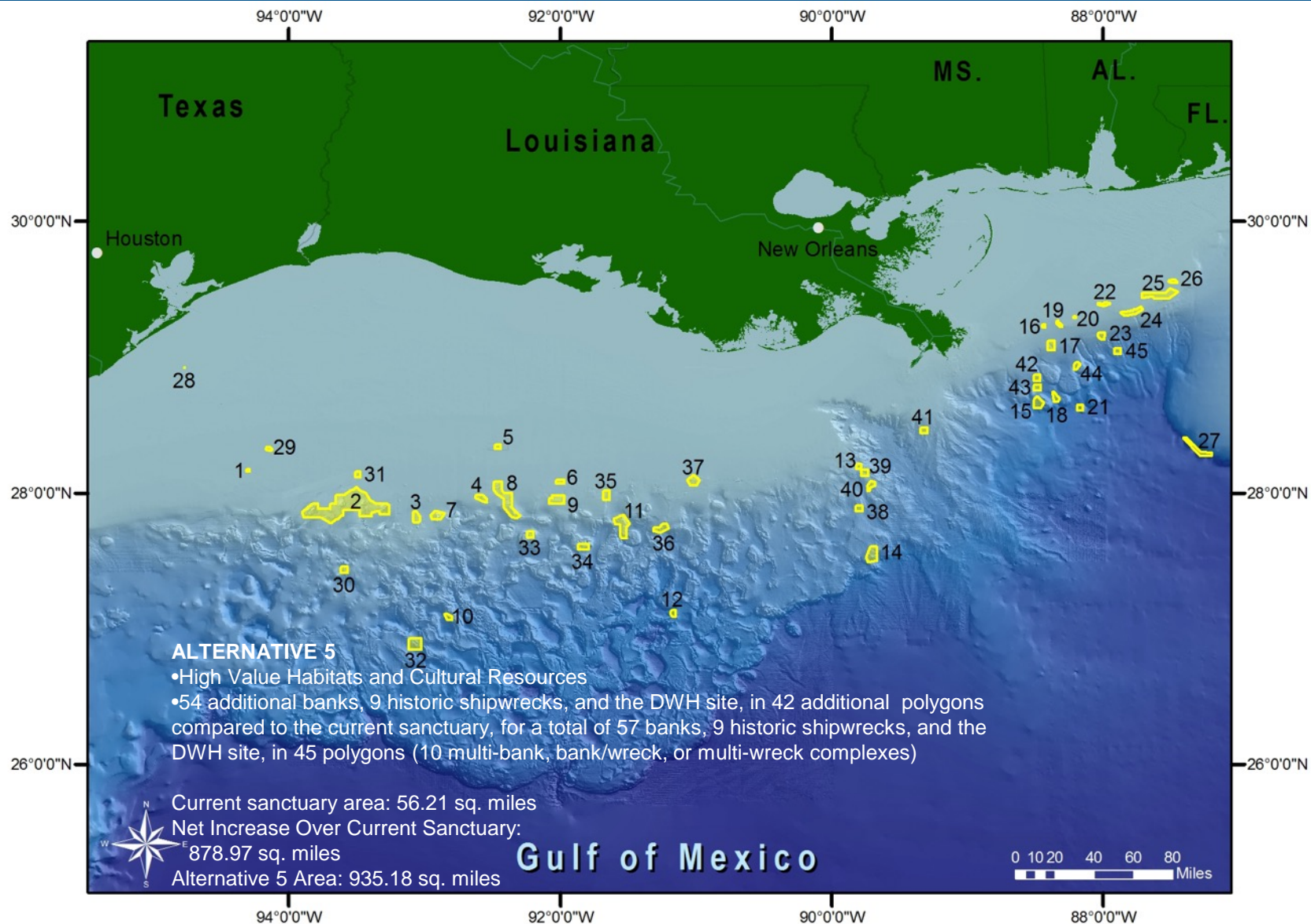
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT
SANCTUARY EXPANSION

DATE OF RELEASE:
June 10, 2016

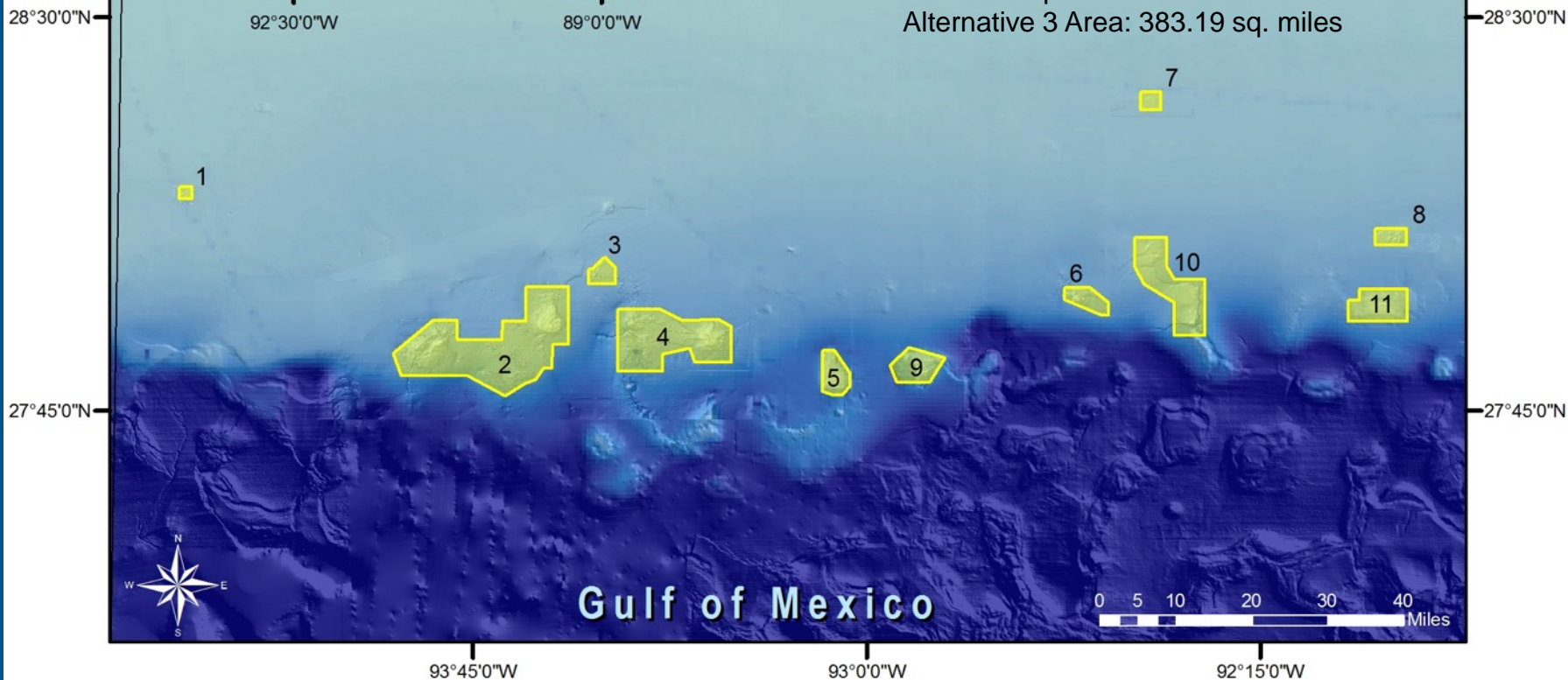
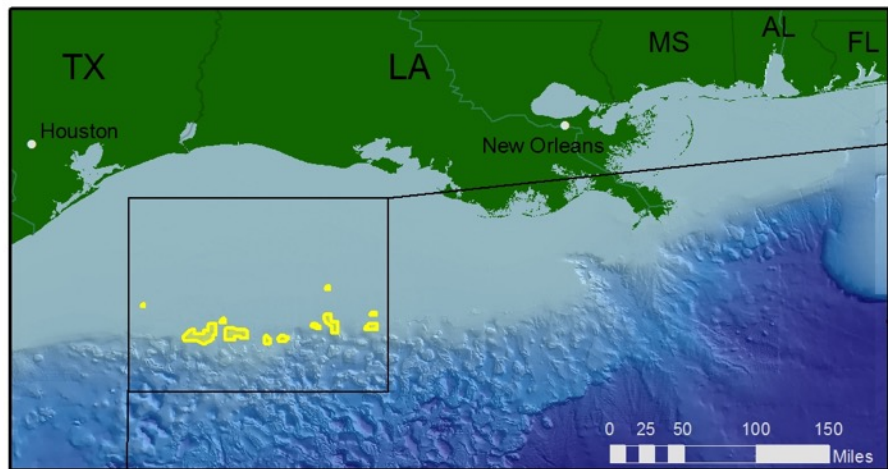
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:
June 10 – August 19, 2016



1. Stetson Bank; 2. West Flower Garden Bank; 3. East Flower Garden Bank



1. Stetson Bank; 2. West Flower Garden Bank, East Flower Garden Bank, Horseshoe Bank, MacNeil Bank, Rankin Bank, 28 Fathom Bank and Bright Bank; 3. Geyer Bank; 4. McGrail Bank; 5. Sonnier Bank; 6. Alderdice Bank; 7. Elvers Bank; 8. Bouma Bank, Bryant Bank, Rezak Bank, Sidner Bank, Tresslar Bank and Antoine Bank; 9. Parker Bank; 10. Hidalgo Basin Rim; 11. Assumption Dome; 12. St. Tammany Basin Rim; 13. Henderson Ridge North; 14. Henderson Ridge South; 15. Biloxi Dome, R. E. Lee* and U166*; 16. Mountain Top; 17. Viosca Knolls West; 18. Gloria Dome and Deepwater Horizon*; 19. Alabama Alps, 36 Fathom Ridge; 20. West Addition Pinnacles; 21. Dauphin Dome; 22. Shark Reef, Double Top, Triple Top; 23. Viosca Knolls East; 24. Ludwick-Walton and West Delta Mounds; 25. Yellowtail, Cat's Paw, Roughtongue, Corkscrew; 26. Far Tortuga; 27. Desoto Canyon/West Florida Escarpment; 28. USS Hatteras*; 29. Claypile Bank; 30. Galvez/Frye Basins Ridge; 31. 29 Fathom Bank; 32. Monterrey Wrecks*; 33. Tunica Mound; 34. Jeanerette Dome; 35. Jakkula Bank; 36. Penchant Basin Rim; 37. Ewing Bank; 38. Henderson Ridge Mid-South; 39. GulfOil*; 40. Henderson Ridge Mid-North; 41. GulfPenn*; 42. Whiting Dome; 43. Mardi Gras*; 44. Horn Dome; 45. Anona*



ALTERNATIVE 3

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

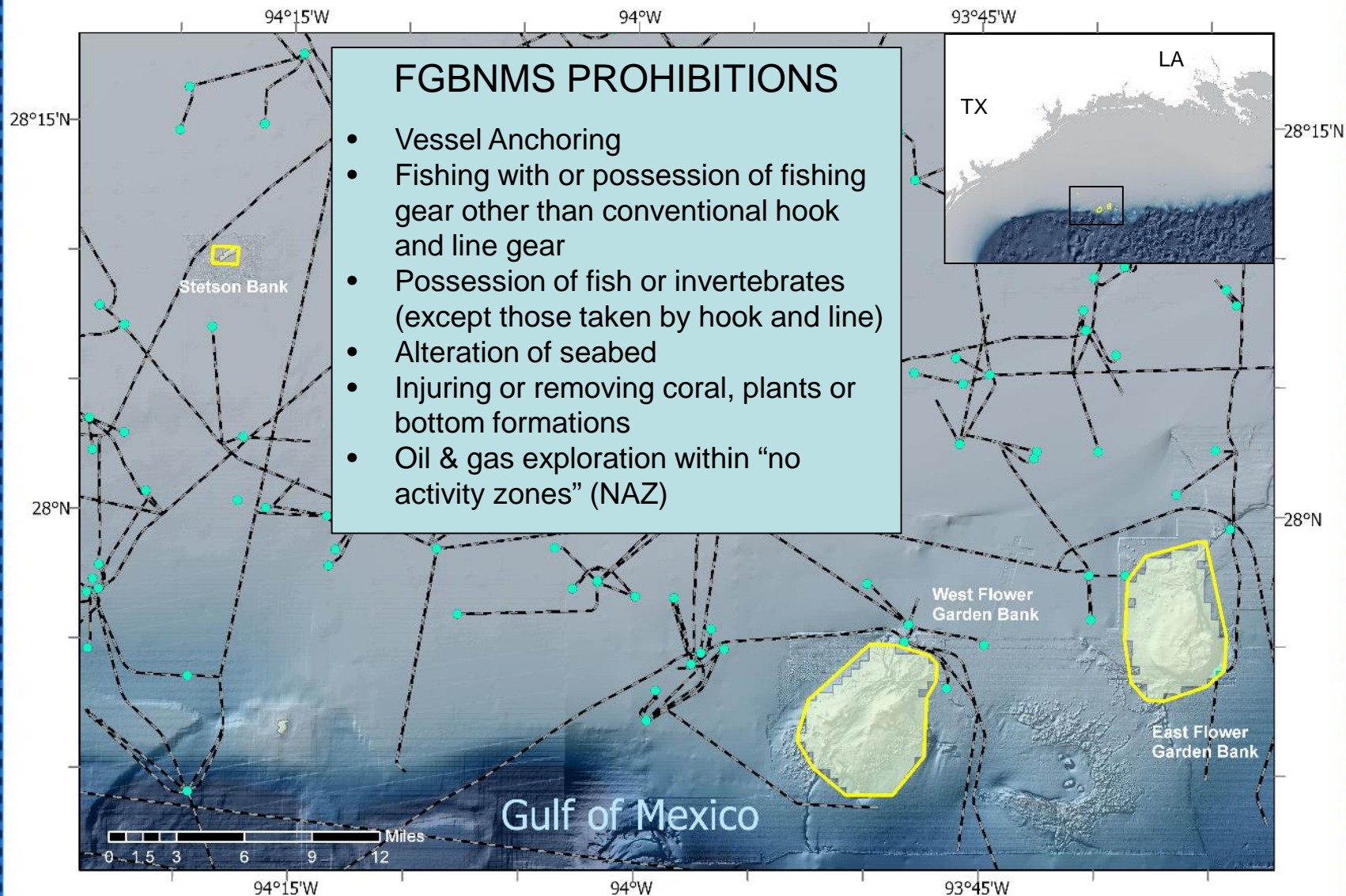
- 15 additional banks in 8 additional polygons
- Including current sanctuary locations, a total of 18 banks, in 11 polygons (3 multi-bank complexes).

Current sanctuary area: 56.21 sq. miles

Net Increase Over Current Sanctuary:
326.98 sq. miles

Alternative 3 Area: 383.19 sq. miles

1. Stetson Bank; 2. West Flower Garden Bank, East Flower Garden Bank and Horseshoe Bank; 3. MacNeil Bank; 4. Rankin Bank, 28 Fathom Bank and Bright Bank; 5. Geyer Bank; 6. McGrail Bank; 7. Sonnier Bank; 8. Alderdice Bank; 9. Elvers Bank; 10. Bouma Bank, Bryant Bank, Rezak Bank and Sidner Bank; 11. Parker Bank



FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



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



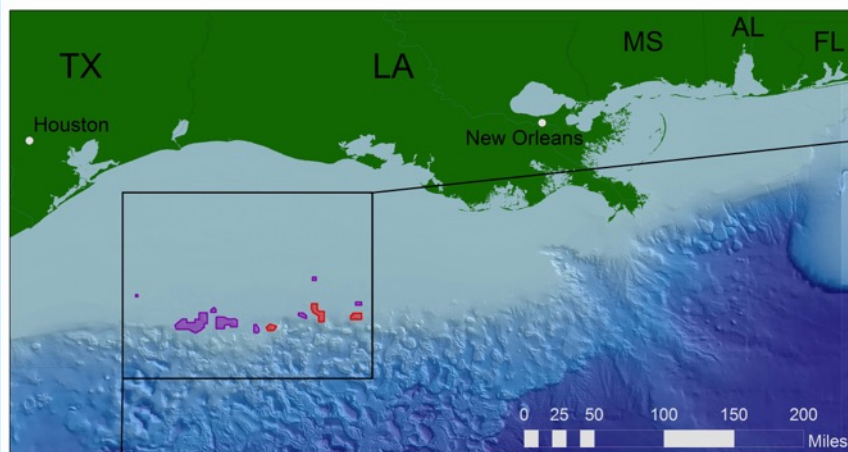
This is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA15NMF4410011.

Recommendations from GMFMC on Fishing Regulations

GMFMC Recommendation – November 2016

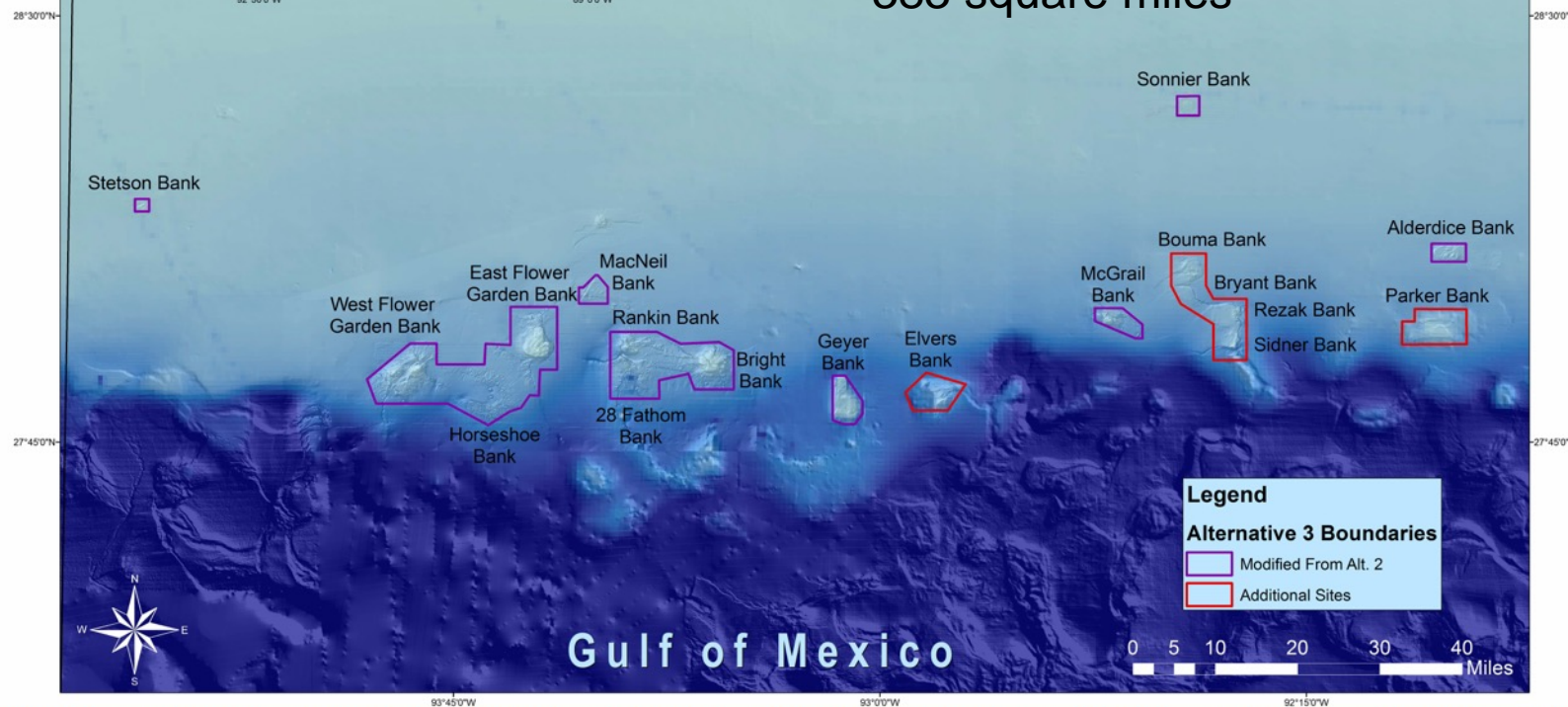
- Establish a “Tiered Approach” for application of fishing regulations based on designated BOEM “No Activity Zones” (NAZ):
 - Within NAZ – Conventional hook and line only (including Bandit rigs), No bottom tending gear, No anchoring (i.e. current FGBNMS regulations)
 - Outside NAZ - Allow historical fishing practices and anchoring in soft sediment with a FGBNMS endorsement

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Expansion: Alternative 3



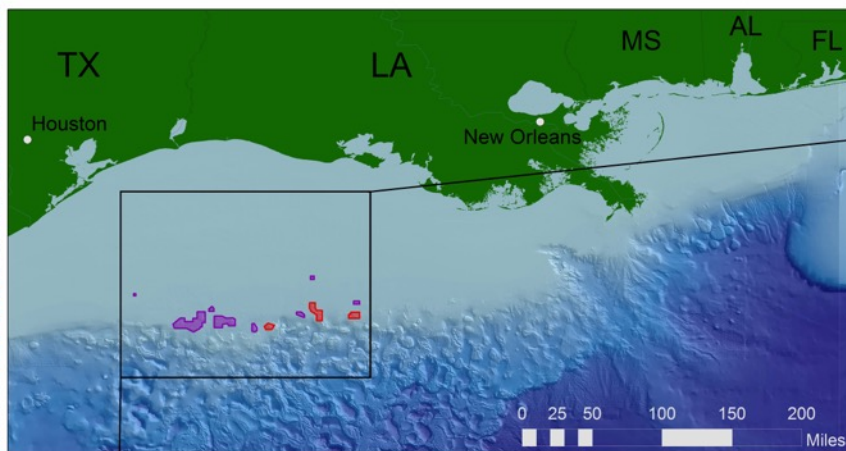
2016 DEIS
NOAA Preferred Alternative

15 Reefs and Banks
11 Polygons
383 square miles



Legend
Alternative 3 Boundaries
Modified From Alt. 2
Additional Sites

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Expansion: Alternative 3



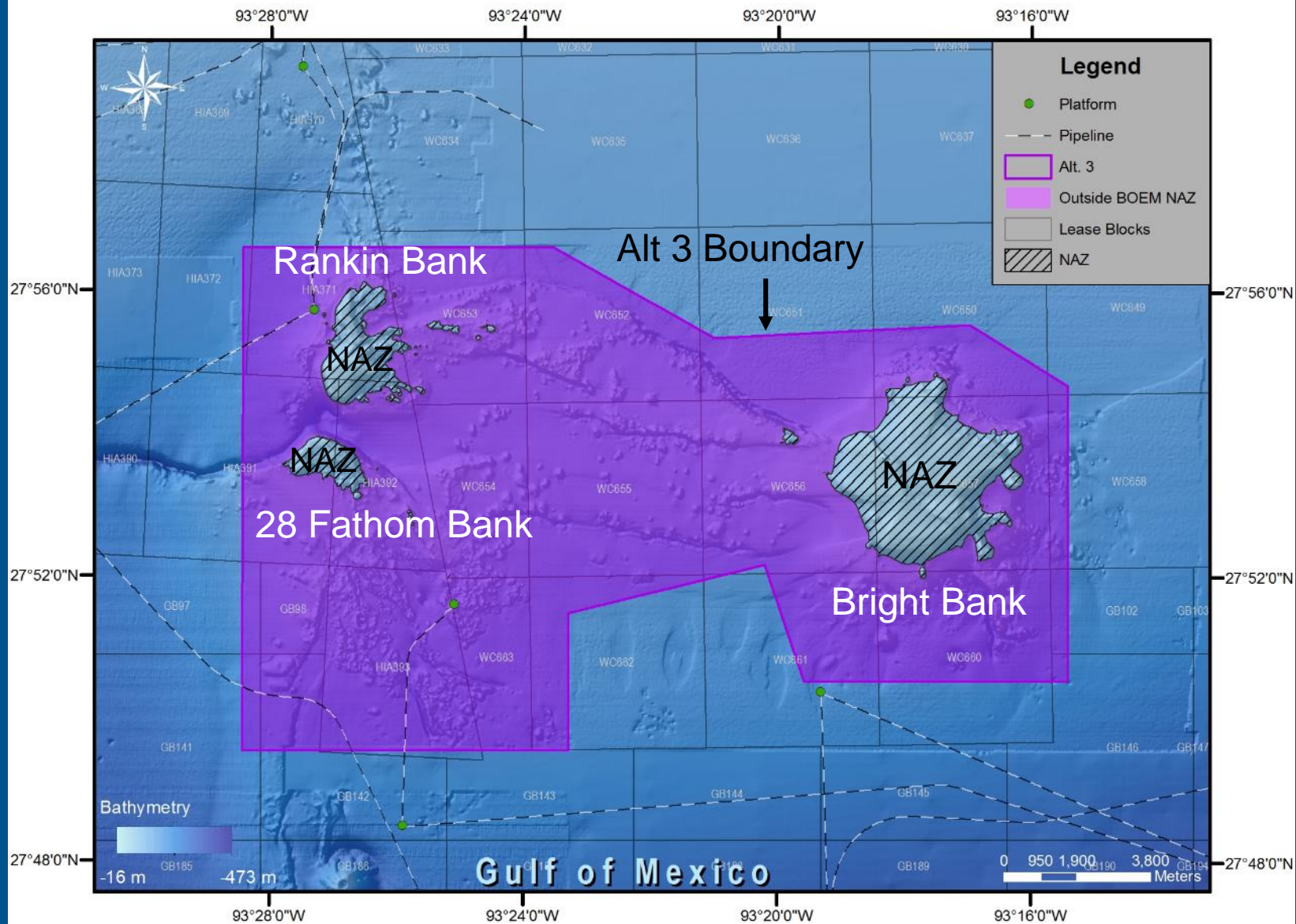
2016 DEIS
NOAA Preferred Alternative

15 Reefs and Banks
11 Polygons
383 square miles



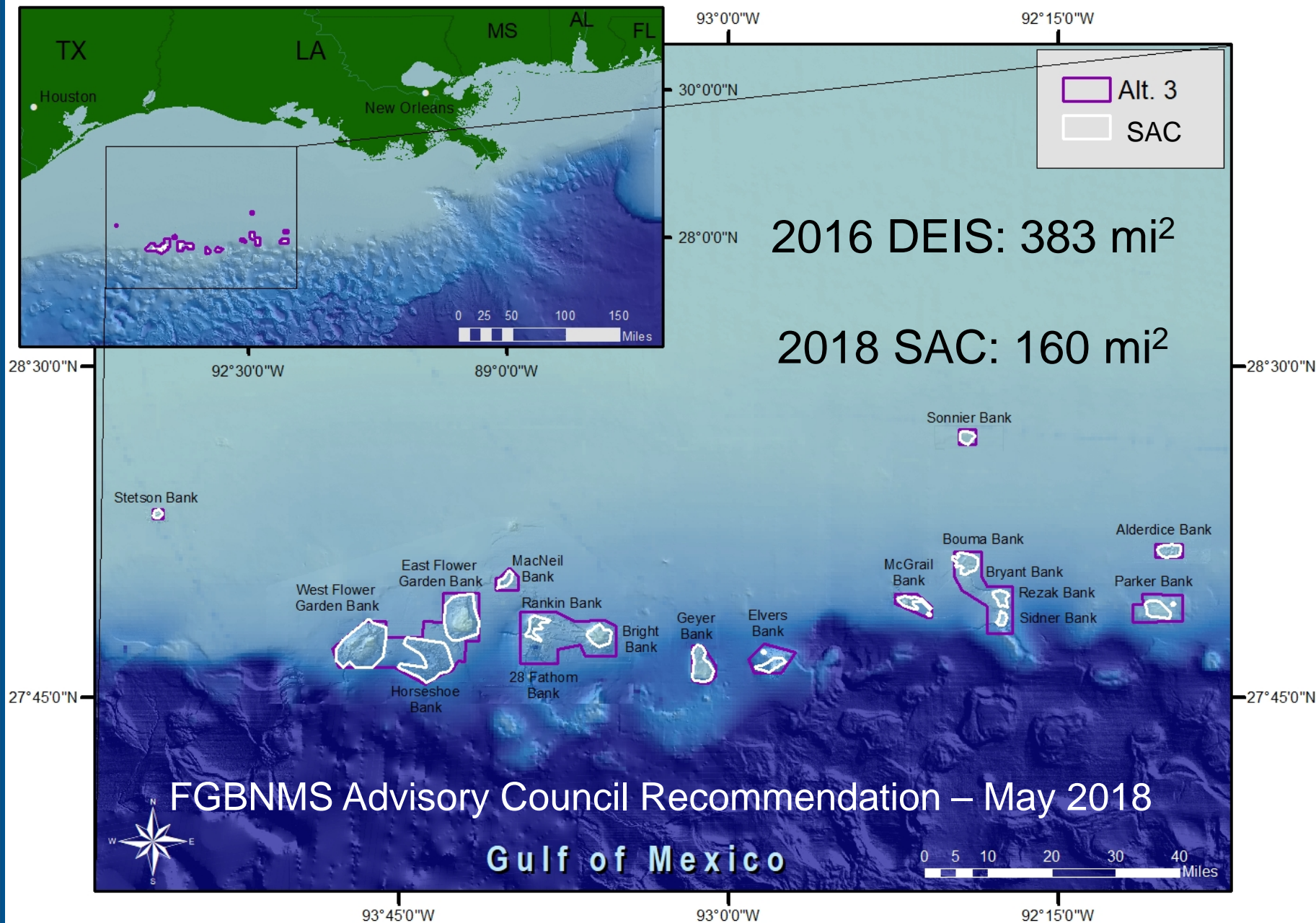
BOEM Management Zones: Bright Bank Complex

Area Outside BOEM NAZ: 47917 Acres





Boundary Expansion Working Group – May 2018





Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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

4107 West Spruce St Suite 200
Tampa, Florida 33607 USA
Phone: 813.348.1630 • Toll free: 888.833.1844 • Fax: 813.348.1711
www.gulfcouncil.org

November 7, 2018

006730NOV2019

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

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

Dear Mr. Schmahl:

Thank you for your presentation on the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) Advisory Council's (SAC) recommendation for sanctuary expansion at the August 2018 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting. The Council requested that its staff provide a summary of the fishing activity in the areas recommended by the SAC, as these boundaries were markedly different from the boundaries in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on which the Council had previously provided recommendations. The Council supports the new SAC boundaries for the FGBNMS expansion and would also recommend an alternative set of fishing regulations to go along with these modifications. The Council's original fishing regulations recommendations for the proposed area used a tiered approach for the DEIS preferred alternative 3. These recommendations no longer seem sensible when applied to the new SAC recommended areas. Thus, this letter provides the Council's recommendations on fishing regulations for the areas outlined by the SAC.

The Council recommends that the current fishing regulations of the FGBNMS extend into the expanded area; however, with one major exception, that is spearfishing in the expanded area be allowed. This recommendation is consistent with the SAC recommendations. The Council still recommends related endorsements for fishing in the sanctuary, anchor restrictions, and placement of mooring buoys. Lastly, the Council discussed the use of bandit rig gear in the FGBNMS and some members advise that the FGBNMS investigate the potential impact that the weights used in bandit-rig fishing could have on coral.

The Council appreciates the opportunity to provide the FGBNMS with comment and your participation in the Council process. Should the FGBNMS move forward with preferred alternative 3 outlined in the DEIS, the Council maintains its recommendations in the letter dated November 8, 2016 for that alternative.

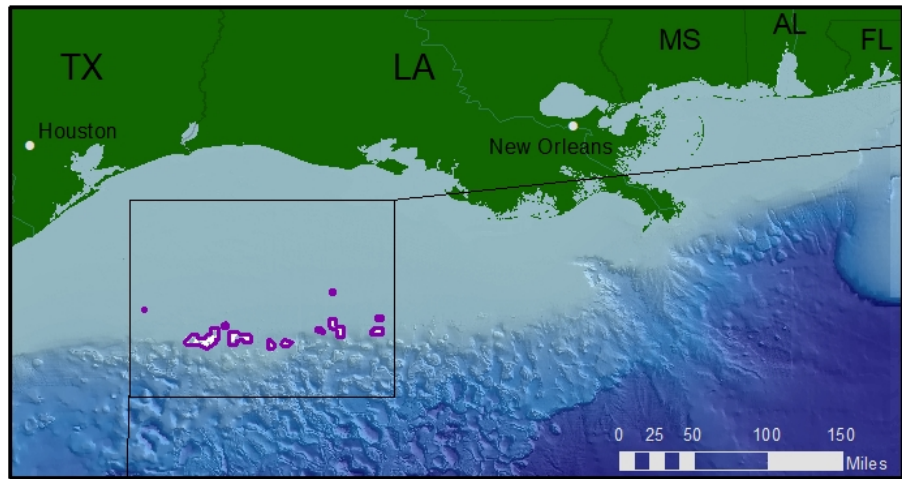
Sincerely,

Tom Frazer, Ph.D.
Council Chairman

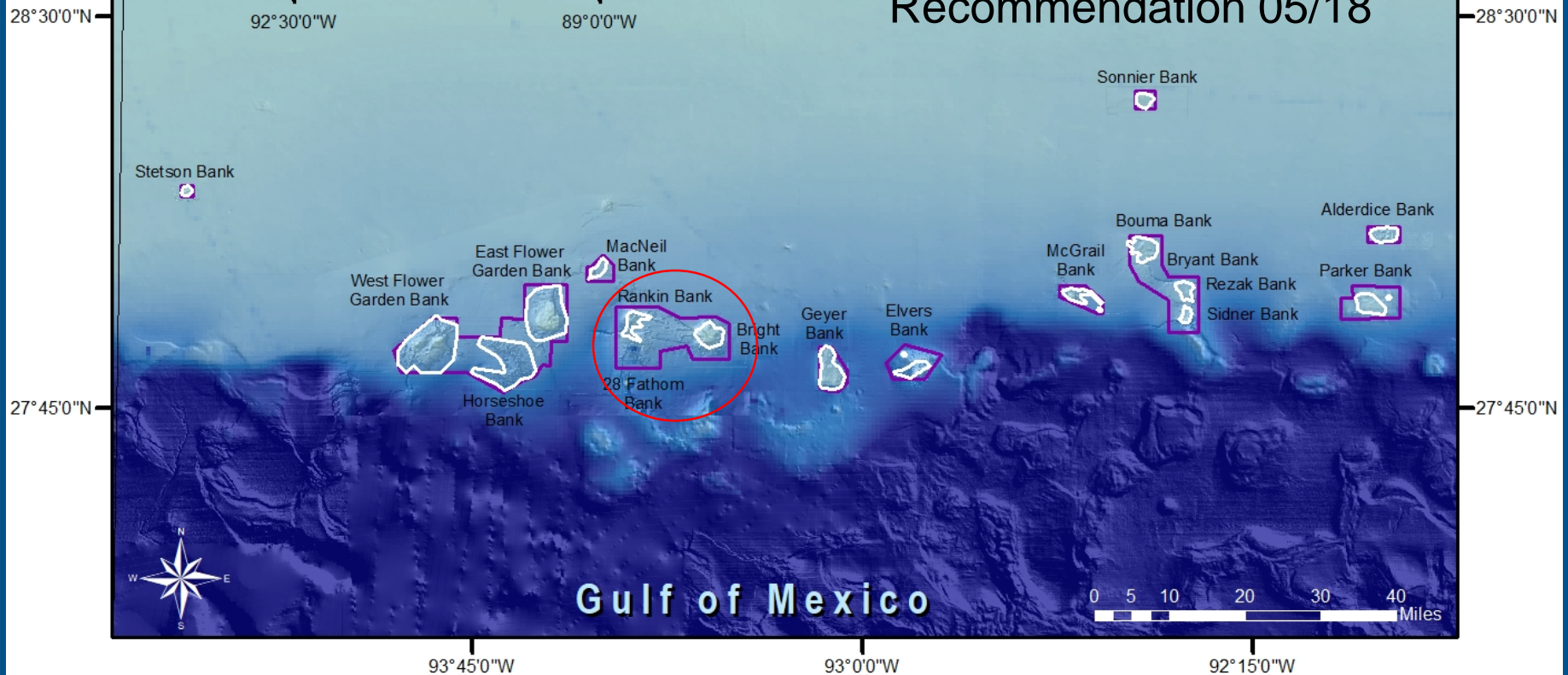
cc: Gulf Council
Council staff
Sanctuary leadership

- Support new SAC boundaries
- Previous recommendation of “tiered approach” no longer appropriate
- Current FGBNMS fishing regulations should extend to new areas
- Exception for spearfishing in expanded areas
- Investigate impacts of weights for bandit rig fishing

Revised recommendation - November 2018

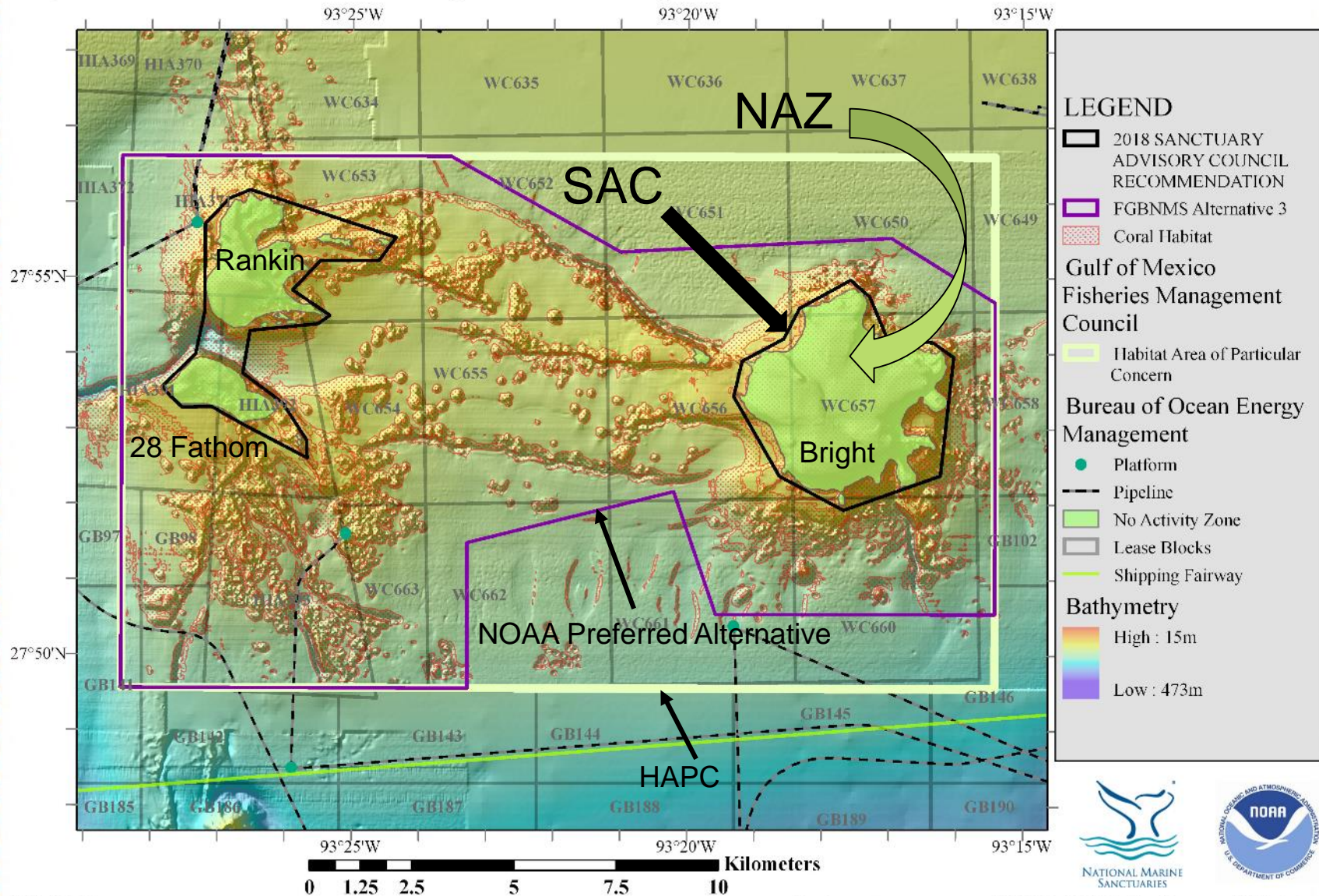


FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation 05/18





2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Bright Bank Complex



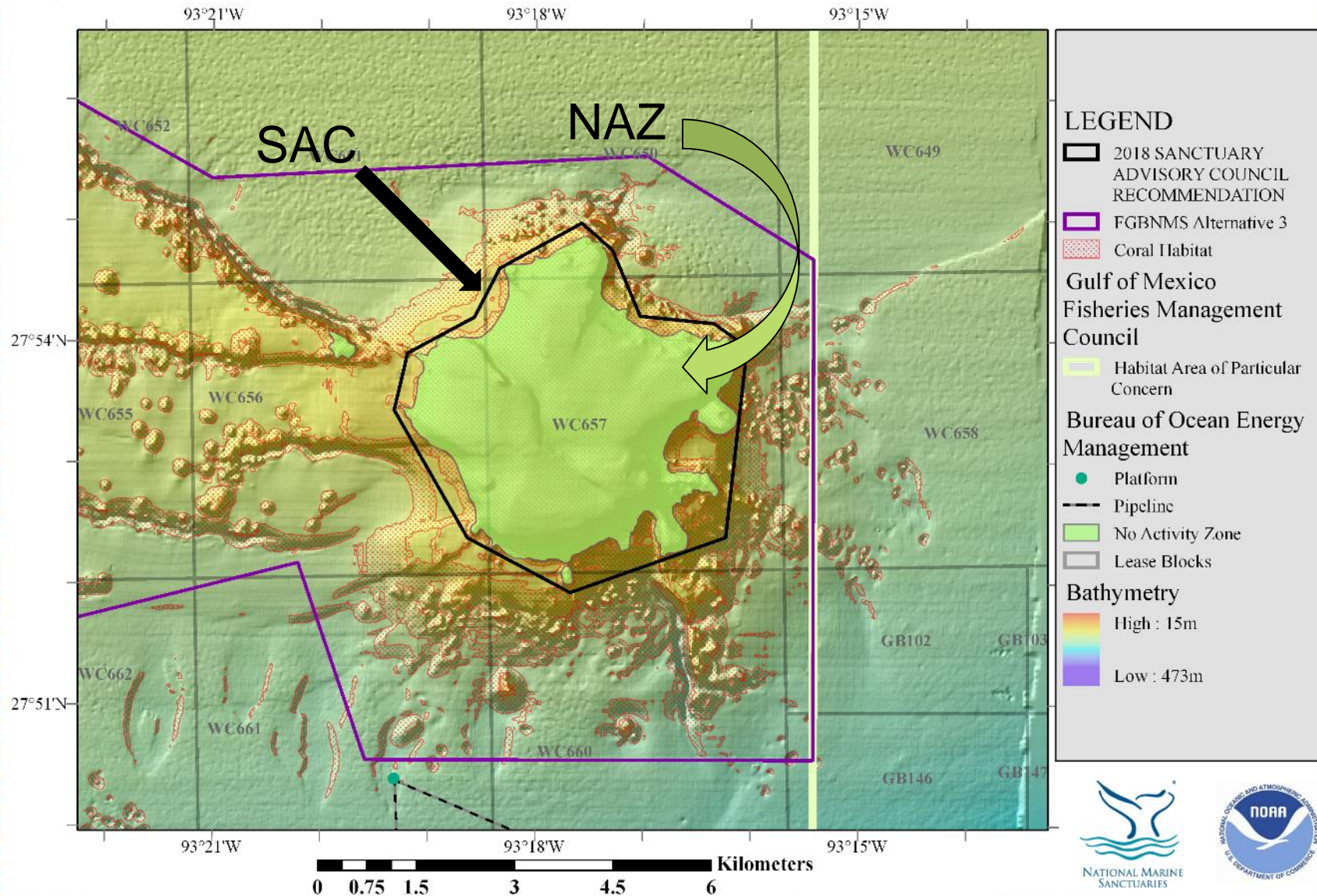
July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA





2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Bright Bank

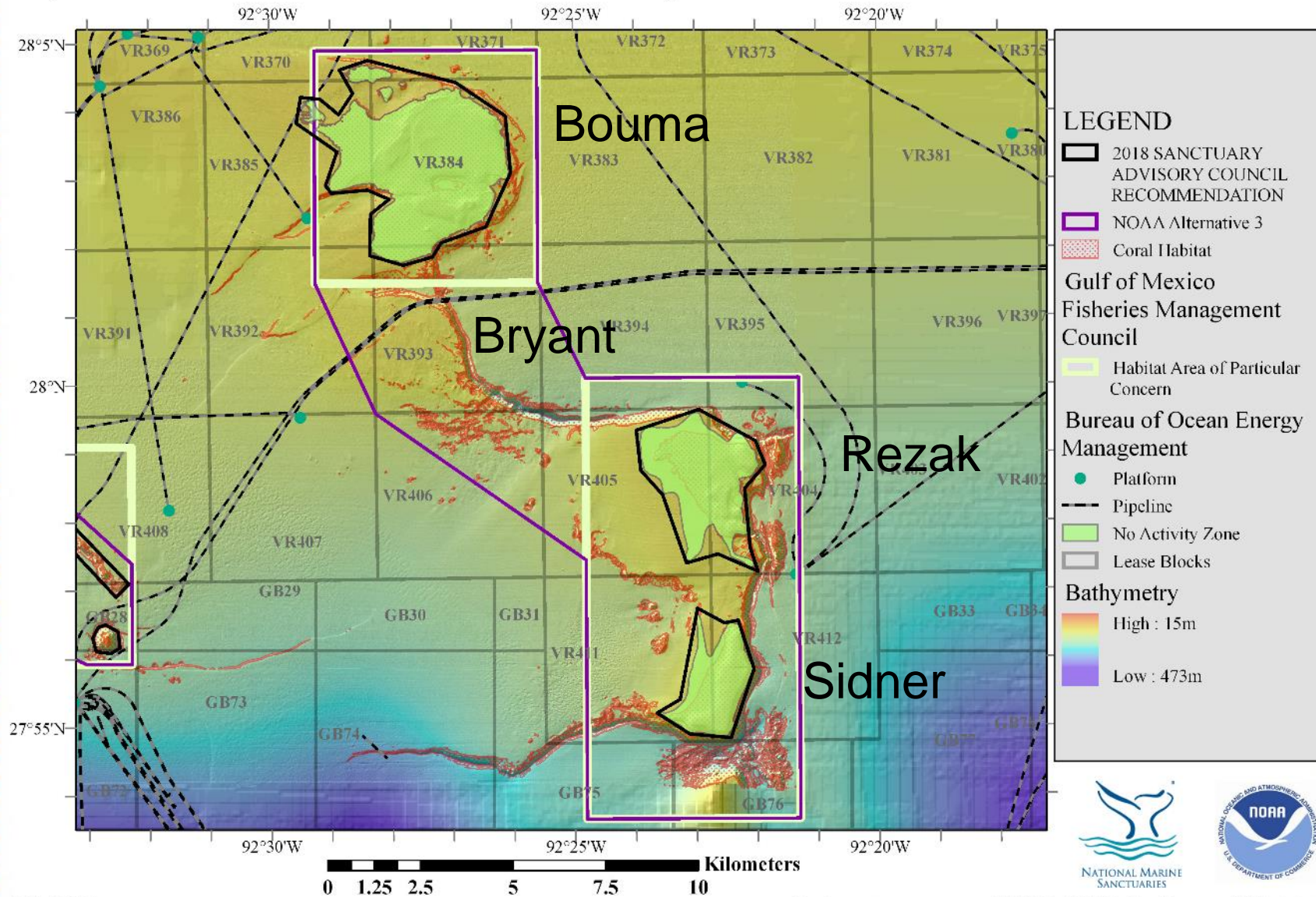


July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA



2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation Bouma Bank Complex

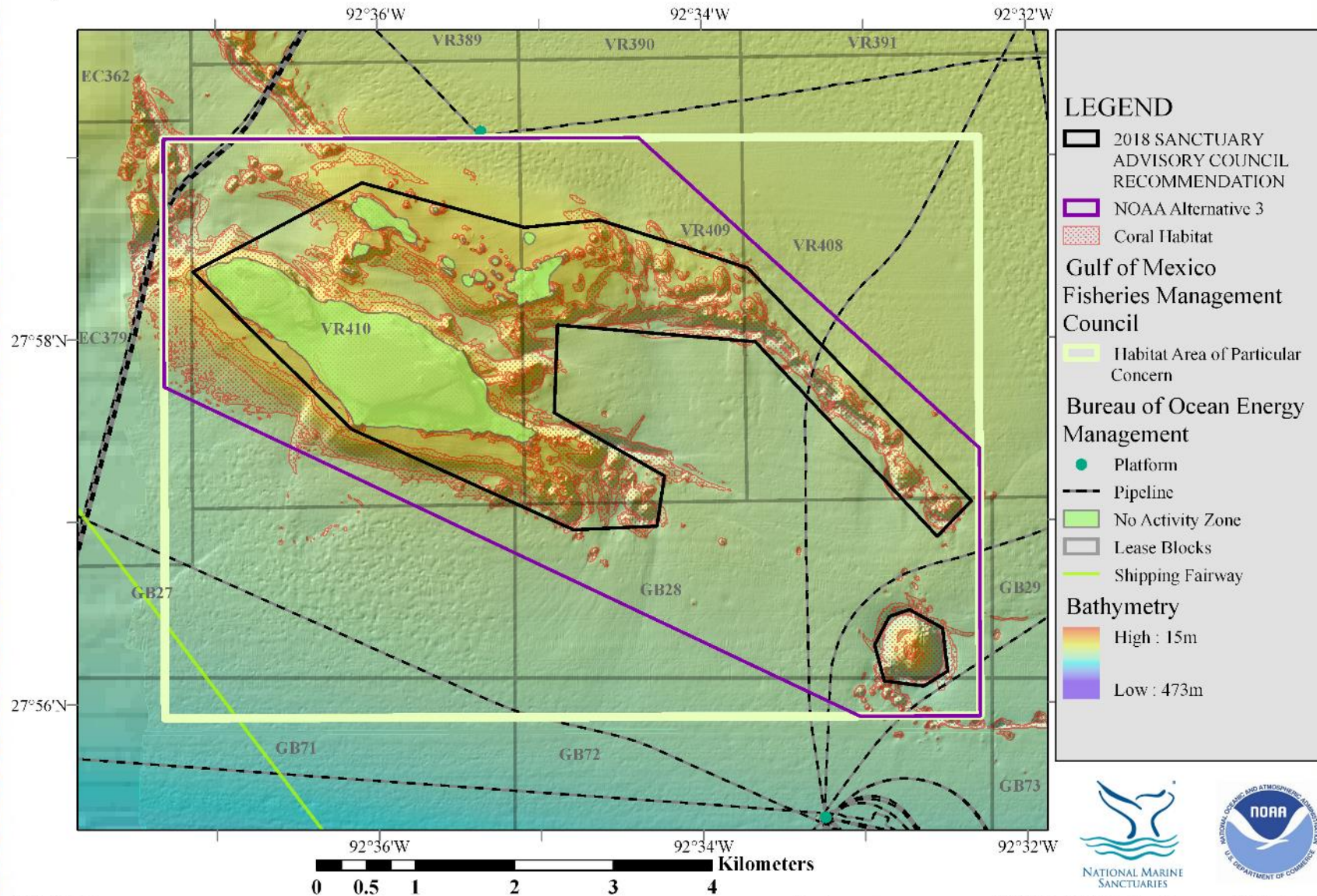


July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA

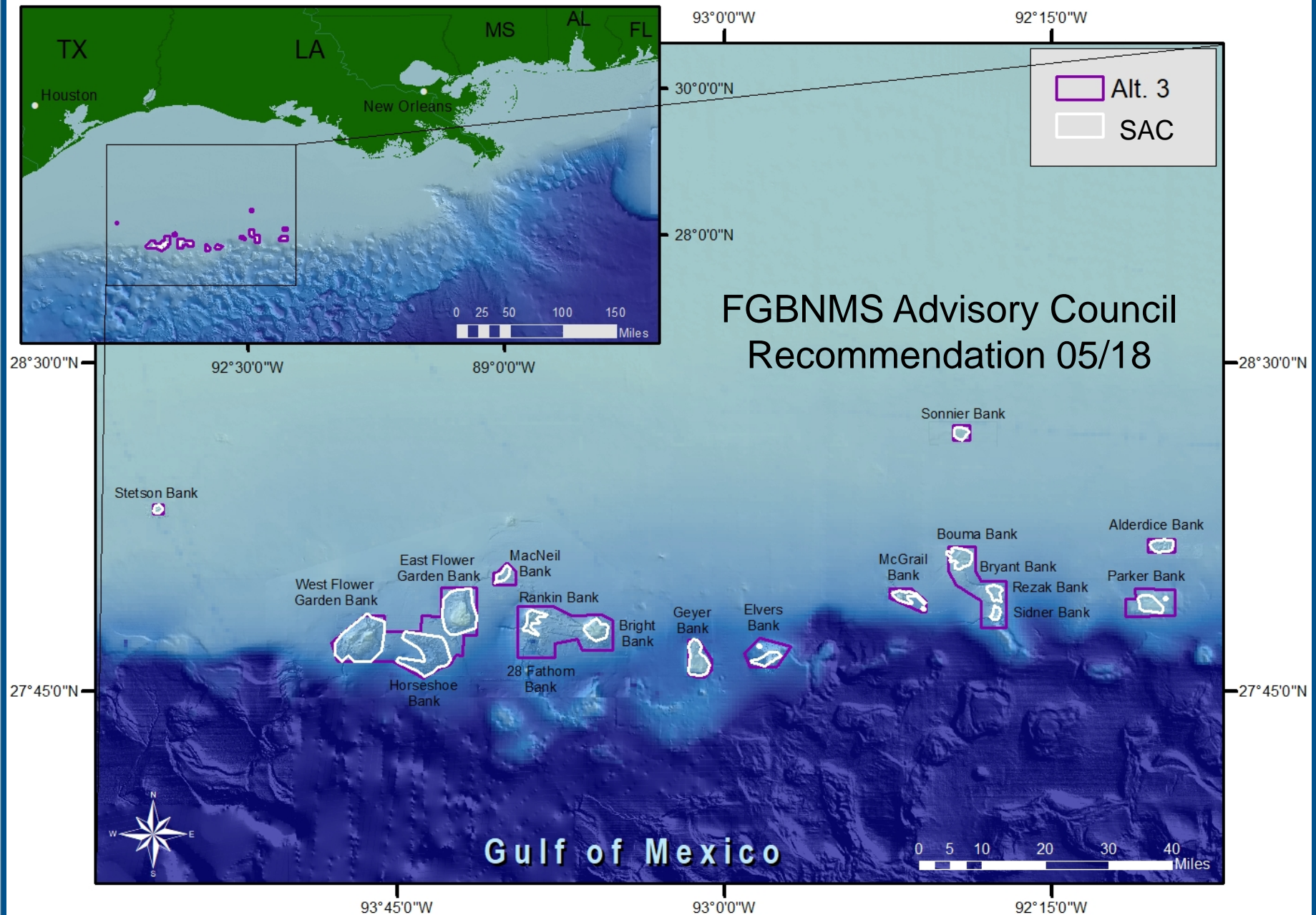


2018 FGBNMS Advisory Council Recommendation McGrail Bank



July 2018

Bathymetry courtesy of USGS, UNH, Gardner and NOAA



FGBNMS Expansion

- “Notice of Proposed Rulemaking” – In Review
- 60 day Public Comment period with two Public meetings (Houston TX / New Orleans LA)
- Review / analysis of public comment and any new information.
- Publish Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
- Publish Final Rule (boundaries/regulations)

National Marine Sanctuaries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES

FLOWER
GARDEN BANKS

<http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>