

**FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
Sanctuary Advisory Council Boundary Expansion Working Group
Meeting Minutes
May 23, 2017**

Meeting Attendance Roster:

Clint Moore	Oil and Gas Industry	Present
Shane Cantrell	Fishing – Commercial	Present
Natalie Hall	Diving Operations	Present (webinar)
Jesse Cancelmo	Recreational Diving	Present (webinar)
Scott Hickman	Fishing - Recreational	Present
Buddy Guindon	Fishing - Commercial	Not Present
Adrienne Simoes-Correa	Research	Not Present
Jacqui Stanley	Education	Not Present
Charles Tyer	NOAA OLE	Not Present
Randy Widaman	Diving Operations	Present
Jake Emmert	Conservation	Present

Total member attendance: 7 of 11 members (7 of 10 voting members)

Others in attendance:

Leslie Clift, Bill Kiene, Shelley Du Puy, Sharon McBreen, Sara Moran, David Dellapenna, Bob Meize

5:15 PM – Meeting called to order by Clint Moore.

Adoption of Agenda – motion from Jesse Cancelmo, second from Randy Widaman, no discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Adoption of Minutes – will be approved at the next BEWG meeting.

5:20 PM – Public Comment

None

5:40 PM – NCCOS (National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science) Development Plan

Clint asked if any Council members know of any additional databases for NCCOS. The BEWG reviewed databases NCCOS has and wants to have. BEWG members suggested Texas Historical Commission, and Earth Science Associates, Jorge Brenner's agency The Nature Conservancy, other citizen science groups, and if Louisiana has a similar Historical Commission. Jake Emmert will contact Jorge Brenner. NCCOS should soon receive its funding to move forward with this process.

5:44 PM – Submerged Cypress Forest

Ben Raines made a documentary on the submerged cypress forest off of Mobile, Alabama, which he showed at the last SAC meeting on May 17, 2017. The documentary will be aired on PBS soon. Ben will look into designating the submerged cypress forest as a new national marine sanctuary, rather than approach FGBNMS or FKNMS again. Scott Hickman said his personal contact said the majority of the submerged cypress forest has been covered back up by sand. Scott said although it's an interesting scientific find, he does not see enough merit to justify a national marine sanctuary designation. Scott said the Alabama Charter Association does not support sanctuary protection as it is inside the Alabama Reefing Zone, and that Chris Blankenship, Director of Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, supports the protection of the wood, but does not support its designation as a national marine sanctuary. Bill shared his view that sanctuary status elevates a subject by education/outreach, and the story of the submerged cypress forest deserves to be heard. Scott said the FGBNMS focus should not be on the submerged cypress forest, and instead on the DEIS.

Clint shared information on the Marine Protected Area Center, which is now under the supervision of ONMS Director. Approximately 1,300 MPAs in the OCS of the US, over 300 are in the Gulf of Mexico, with most of them near the coastline.

6:12 PM – Assessment Matrix Process

Clint quickly reviewed the discussion on assessment matrix process from the last BEWG meeting on May 11, 2017. Discussion followed regarding how to improve the assessment matrix process. The BEWG reviewed Appendix A.2 from the DEIS, which could be additional categories to include in the criteria to be considered in an updated assessment matrix. The group discussed weighting the 5 categories that were used, as well as increasing the scoring from 1-3 to 1-5. Shane pointed out in 2007 that the Zone Priority Index, Threat Index, and Public and Sanctuary Priority categories were the categories that filtered the banks included in the 2007 SAC recommendation for sanctuary expansion. Shane commented the category of Research and Education Opportunities may be the only category from Appendix A.2 that may be needed to the updated assessment matrix. The group decided to go with scoring of 1-5 and 6 categories: 4 from the 2007 assessment matrix, and break up Public and Sanctuary Priority into 2 indices: Sanctuary Priority Index and Public Priority Index.

Scott Hickman: Zone Priority Index 10%, Structural Connectivity 30%, Threat Index 20%, Biological Connectivity 30%, and Public and Sanctuary Priority 10%.

Clint Moore: Threat Index 50%, Public and Sanctuary Priority 10%, Zone Priority Index 20%, Structural Connectivity 10%, Biological Connectivity 10%

Randy Widman: Zone Priority Index 10%, Structural Connectivity 20%, Biological Connectivity 10%, Threat Index 20%, Public and Sanctuary Priority 40%

Jesse Cancelmo: Zone Priority Index 40%, Structural Connectivity Index 20%, Biological Connectivity Index 20%, Threat Index 10%, and Public and Sanctuary Priority 10%

Shane Cantrell: Zone Priority Index 40%, Structural Connectivity Index 20%, Biological Connectivity Index 20%, Threat Index 10%, and Public and Sanctuary Priority 10%

Jake Emmert: Zone Priority Index 30%, Structural Connectivity Index 10%, Biological Connectivity Index 20%, Threat Index 30%, and Public and Sanctuary Priority 10%

The averages for the 6 BEWG members from highest to lowest: Threat Index 25%, Zone Priority Index 22.5%, Structural Connectivity 19%, Biological Connectivity 17.5%, and Public and Sanctuary Priority 16%.

The BEWG discussed goals for the group, such as conducting the NCCOS process with all the banks in Alternatives 2 and 3 over the summer, and making a recommendation including regulations to the SAC at the September meeting.

7:21 PM – Drilling Muds & Mud Systems

Bob Meize, one of Clint's colleagues, spoke to the group on drilling muds and mud systems, and in particular, the evolution of water-based drilling muds to synthetic drilling muds. Deep water wells have moved to synthetic drilling muds because the well needs an inhibitor to access the resource through the layers of geology. Synthetic drilling muds result in a lot less volume of cuttings from the well bore (50-100% reduction from water-based drilling muds), smaller plumes in the water column, and less volume on the seafloor. The synthetic drilling muds, with their hydrocarbon chains, are also more bio-available to the seafloor microbes with a quick absorption rate. Water-based drilling muds result in a much larger discharge. Synthetic drilling muds are not mandated, but are the choice of the operator, often reduce the cost of operation, and can be recycled and used again. A 3-5% increase in overall well cost would occur if zero discharge were mandated. Per well, \$250,000 increase in overall well cost for a 25,000 ft deep well would occur (\$25,000 per 1,000 ft of well). Synthetic drilling muds result in 80% less fluids going into the water, ~60% reduction of cuttings, and a reduction of toxic metals and barite because of the overall reduction in the materials lost to the environment. Bob Meize recommended 200m buffer widths. BOEM has a 500 ft. buffer on all NAZs.

Next date for BEWG is tentatively set for the last week of June, and the BEWG will be sent a Doodle poll.

8:00 Jake motioned to adjourn, Shane seconded. Meeting adjourned.