

**FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY  
Sanctuary Advisory Council Boundary Expansion Working Group  
Meeting Minutes  
December 14, 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	Not Present
Scott Hickman	Fishing - Recreational	Present (phone)
Buddy Guindon	Fishing - Commercial	Present (phone)
Adrienne Simoes-Correa	Research	Not Present (webinar)
Charles Tyer	NOAA OLE	Present (webinar)
Randy Widaman	Diving Operations	Not Present
Jake Emmert	Conservation	Not Present

**Total member attendance:** 6 of 10 members (5 of 9 voting members)

**Others in attendance:**

Clint Moore, Shane Cantrell, Natalie Davis (webinar), Scott Hickman (phone), Buddy Guindon (phone), Charles Tyer (webinar), Leslie Clift, Shelley Du Puy, Dan Dorfman (NCCOS; National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science), and Sharon McBreen (Pew – webinar)

**5:43 PM** – Meeting called to order by Clint Moore

Adoption of Agenda – No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Adoption of Minutes – No discussion. Motion by Natalie, seconded by Shane. All in favor, motion approved.

**5:45 PM – Public comment**

None

### **5:46 PM NCCOS Presentation (Dan Dorfman)**

Dan Dorfman said his three main objectives to present at this meeting to the BEWG (Boundary Expansion Working Group) for discussion were: 1) study area; 2) conflict of uses; and 3) ecology. Three banks (Applebaum, Coffee Lump, and Clay Pile) considered not ecologically significant, were taken out of the study area. However, Dan suggested capturing the feature edge of Horseshoe Bank that had high coral density records. This data originated from the PSBF study. Buddy said this area is used for vermillion snapper (north side) and grouper (south side) fisheries. Shane commented Horseshoe Bank would be an area of contention for fishers. Horseshoe Bank does not have a designated NAZ and thus, the records within this area do not have a buffer. Alternative 3 has East and West FGB and Horseshoe Bank as one, large polygon.

Dan also suggested the buffer in the study area be 12 km. The group discussed and wanted to remain with the 10km buffer around the NAZ (no activity zone), but add in the tail of Horseshoe Bank into the study area. Clint suggested keeping East FGB (Flower Garden Bank), West FGB, and Horseshoe Bank as one polygon. The group wants to have two separate study areas: 1) East FGB, West FGB, and Horseshoe Bank (which may have different criteria); and 2) all the other banks in Alternative 3.

Dan briefed the BEWG regarding the VMS (vessel monitoring system) data he had acquired, which can then be used to populate the 10 hectare hexagons for the NCCOS analysis, instead of larger square shapes. The data will be raw, and possibly could be grouped by type of trip (commercial, charter, or recreational).

Dan wants to also request the AIS (Automatic Identification System) data, a safety service administered through the USCG (United States Coast Guard), to look at the shipping (and fishing) intensity through the proposed sanctuary expansion areas. Every vessel over 65 feet in length is required to have an AIS. Scott asked if OLE (Office of Law Enforcement) could pull data from the interceptions and vessel boardings by law enforcement on any vessels in any areas within the proposed sanctuary expansion areas. Charles responded he was uncertain what kinds of data are captured during interceptions and vessel boardings.

Dan detailed the next steps are to input the Core Sensitivity Zones designations and 500 ROV (remotely operated vehicles) dives. The criteria for the sites that should have protection can then be defined. NCCOS would then go back to the ROV dives and see which sites meet the criteria, and using the annotation tables, look at particular things such as number of species, density, or absence/presence of certain species. Researchers Tom Bright and Rusty Putt could be presented with the decision support system and asked to review.

Coral densities to be designated as ecologically significant were discussed and the group wants to set the threshold at 25 individuals per square meter, but also capture the data from 5-24 individuals per square meter that the BEWG could review. Dan is looking

for all ecological information, and received all the data collected by the R/V *Manta*, but also wants to talk to Chuck Fisher and Eric Cordez.

In January, Dan will present the two support decision systems. Clint added that the Core Sensitivity Zones are so broad and are based on rugosity and topography, that he discounts their validity. What he wants to know is ecological significant areas with the 25 coral/sq mtr. criteria. Dan proposed to continue tracking the Core Sensitivity Zones, similar to tracking the coral densities of 5-24 individuals/m<sup>2</sup>, so that these areas can be reviewed by the BEWG.

At the next meeting on January 11, a draft will be presented of the two support decision systems, and the BEWG will be asked for feedback. The final presentation will be presented again to the BEWG at the meeting on February 5, and then with the vote of approval from the BEWG, the final presentation will be shared at the SAC meeting on February 7.

Shane and Scott reiterated that Horseshoe Bank will garner lots of feedback and input from the fishing communities.

Next date for BEWG is scheduled for Thursday, January 11, and then again Monday, February 5.

**6:56 PM** Charles motioned to adjourn, Shane seconded. Meeting adjourned.