



## **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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### **Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel Meeting Report**

**November 14-15, 2012**

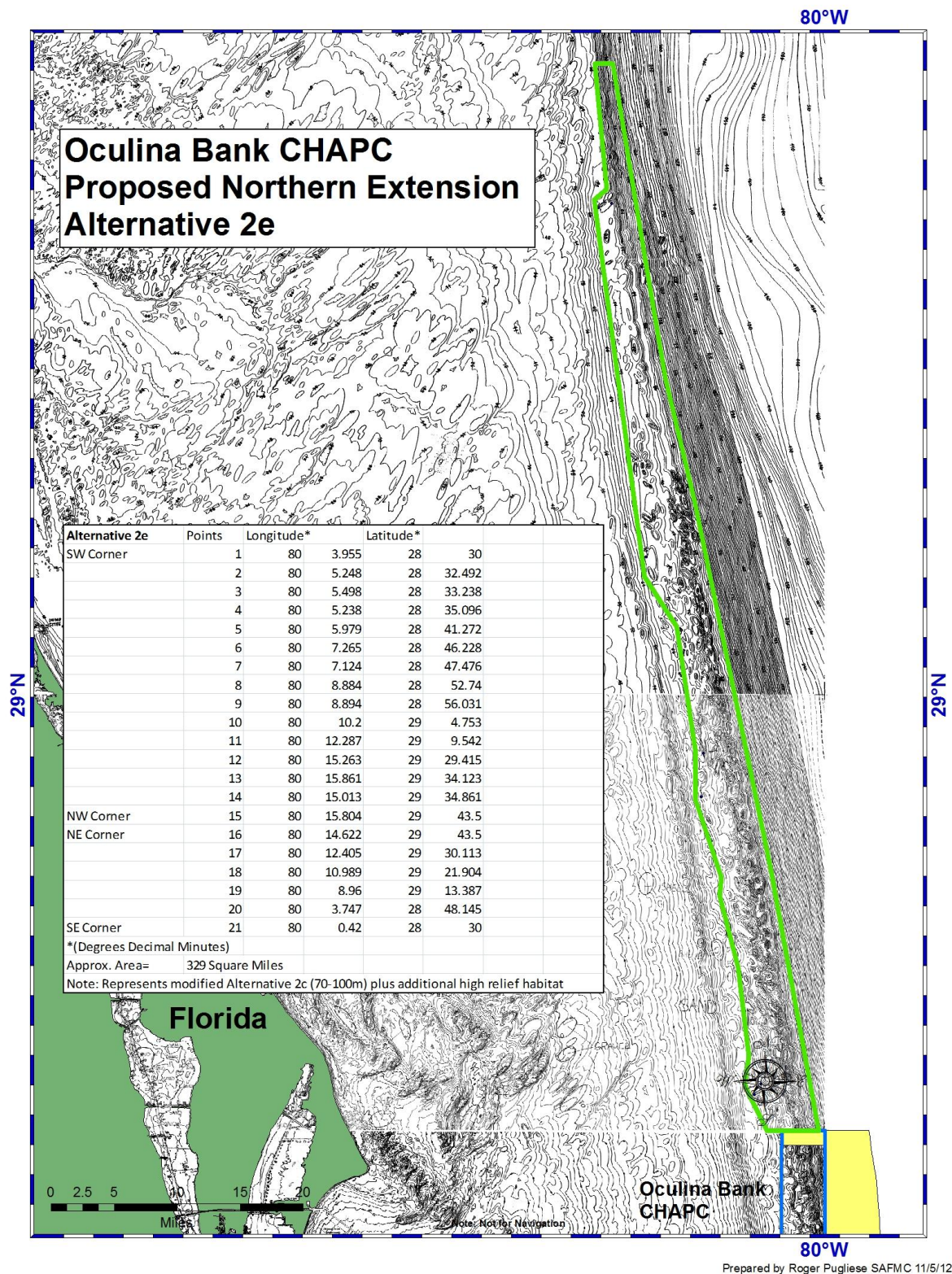
**DoubleTree by Hilton Guest Suites  
181 Church Street, Charleston, South Carolina**

The Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel met November 14-15 2012 in Charleston South Carolina. The meeting was conducted in five sessions 1) Habitat Conservation Associated with Coral Amendment 7, 2) Other Council Management and Conservation Actions, 3) EFH Policy Refinement and Conservation Recommendations 4) Habitat Advisory Panel Activities and 5) Ecosystem Tools and Regional Coordination.

#### **Session I: Habitat Conservation Associated with Coral Amendment 7**

Presentations were provided on Mapping, Habitat Characterization and Species use of Oculina and Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern by John Reed with the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute /FAU, the Benthic Complexity and Diversity of Deepwater Habitat by Cynthia Cooksey with NOAA, Charleston Laboratory, and the Status of Coral Amendment 7 Options Paper by Gregg Waugh and Anna Martin. New Alternatives developed in response to the Joint Coral and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel meeting recommendations were reviewed by panel members. Members approved the following motions modifying the recommendations approved during the May 2012 Webinar:

**MOTION #1: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF ALTERNATIVE 2E**  
Approved by Habitat AP

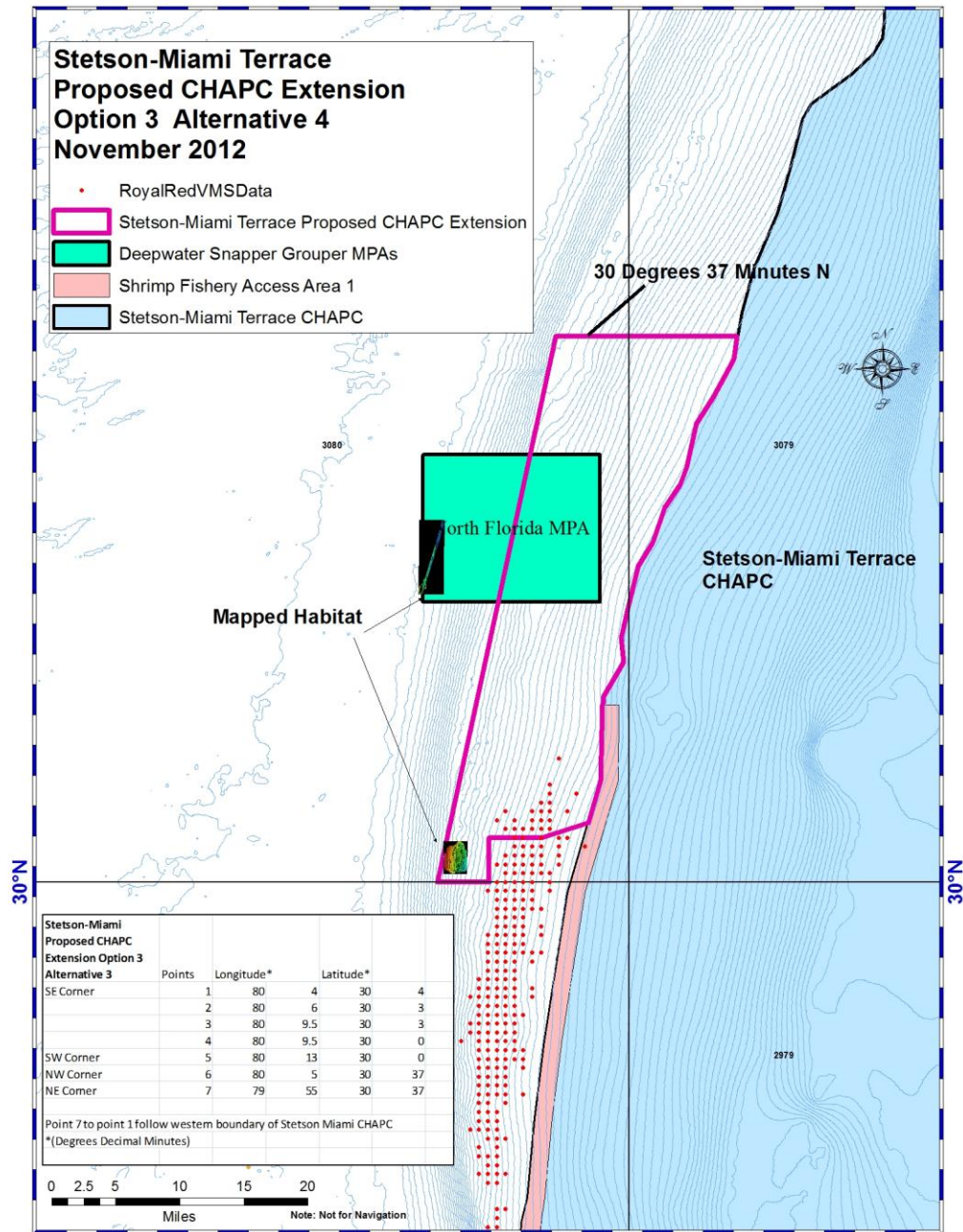


Alternative 3 – no change



MOTION #2: DO NOT CREATE A FISHERY ACCESS AREA UNTIL AFTER THE REASSESSMENT IN 2014  
APPROVED BY HABITAT AP

MOTION #3: ADOPT NEW ALTERNATIVE 4 FOR OPTION 3  
APPROVED BY HABITAT AP



Prepared by Roger Pugliese SAFMC 11/11/12

## **Session II: Other Council Management and Conservation Actions**

The Panel was updated on the Council deliberation on the need to address reorientation of existing deepwater MPAs for protection of speckled hind and Warsaw grouper. Panel members received a presentation by John Reed developed in cooperation with Andy David NMFS SEFSC on the research associated with shelf edge deepwater MPAs to characterize the ecosystem using ROV and multi-beam mapping. The presentation provided the members with the present state of knowledge of habitat characterization and species utilization of the designated MPAs. Further review by the Panel will be in response to Council action and if alternatives are developed for consideration.

## **Session IV: Habitat Advisory Panel Activities for 2013**

This session, moved up in the agenda, focused on while member will continue to provide input on habitat associated management consideration what other activities during 2013 would support the Council broader mandates for habitat conservation and ecosystem based management.

**Panel recommendation: Continued development and refinement of habitat policy statements and development of a southeast (South Atlantic) coastal report card which would focus on fish and fish habitat.** This effort would keep things on track with the 5 year Essential Fish Habitat review and next iteration of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan.

The Panel identified an initial workgroup of members to work with Pace Wilber and Roger Pugliese to facilitate the development.

**Panel Recommendation: Continued work on refinement of EFH and EFH-HAPC designations and map products associated with them as prescribed by the EFH review conducted in 2011.**

## **Session III: EFH Policy Refinement and Conservation Recommendations**

This Session was conducted as a breakout sessions associated with three focus questions 1) identify any missing and obsolete policies, 2) identify major elements and 3) establish workgroups to prepare new policies.

Amber Whittle led the review of the Aquaculture and SAV habitat policies. Priscilla Wendt led the Beach Nourishment and Two Invasive Species policy statements reviews and Panel member representatives for the USFWS led the Energy and Water Flow policy statement reviews. Pace Wilber and Roger Pugliese will further coordinate with breakout session group leaders on identification of recommended actions to further facilitate further policy development and refinement during 2013.

## **Session V: Ecosystem Tools and Regional Coordination**

Panel members received a presentation on Introducing the SAFMC Regional Habitat and Ecosystem Atlas by Tina Udouj with FWRI. Since 2003, Tina Udouj has collaborated with Roger Pugliese on Council staff in the development of a comprehensive regional Council online GIS. The new Atlas system and web services also developed in collaboration with FWRI, keeps the Council on the cutting edge of mapping and online technology application. The Service makes maps, feature and attributes available to many clients. The present map services encompassed by the Atlas include Essential Fish Habitat, Fisheries, Managed Areas, habitat, Multi-beam Bathymetry, and Nautical Charts.