

Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting (Attachment 4)

Oculina Outreach Update

This overview provides highlights of recent outreach activities associated with the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area as well as the HAPC and deepwater corals.

Outreach coordinated with 2008 research and monitoring cruises:

Beginning in early 2008, staff began coordinating with partners to plan outreach activities associated with two separate research cruises scheduled during the Spring of 2008 to the Oculina Bank. The research cruises included a mapping cruise planned aboard the NOAA Ship *Gordon Gunter* home ported in Pascagoula and a separate but similarly scheduled habitat restoration research cruise utilizing the NASA Ship *Liberty Star*. Both ships were scheduled to work offshore in the Oculina Bank area the last week of March and early April 2008. Staff was involved in several conference calls and planning sessions involving logistics and outreach efforts associated with both cruises.

Outreach plans included hosting cruise information and daily web logs from the research vessels on the SAFMC web site. In addition, staff coordinated closely with the PI for the mapping cruise, Andy Shepard, Director of the NOAA Undersea Research Center (NURC)/UNC-W to schedule a VIP/Media cruise to the *Gordon Gunter* while the ship was offshore of Cape Canaveral. The VIP/Media cruise involved partnering with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Law Enforcement Division, NOAA Office for Law Enforcement (OLE), and the use of the Patrol Vessel *C.T. Randall*. Unfortunately, due to equipment problems on the *Gordon Gunter* involving the ship's radar, the mapping cruise (and associated outreach efforts) had to be cancelled. However, plans are already underway for a 2009 mapping cruise and all partners have expressed a continued interest in coordinating outreach efforts. The SAFMC web site continued to host the research efforts and daily log postings from the *Liberty Star*.

<http://www.safmc.net/HabitatManagement/DeepwaterCorals/OculinaBank/ExpeditionsandExplorers/tabid/134/Default.aspx>

2008 Deepwater Coral Teacher's Workshop

The Council sponsored the 2008 Deepwater Coral Teacher Workshop held Saturday, April 19, 2008 at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute in Ft. Pierce, Florida. The one-day accredited workshop targeted high school teachers and other educators from along the central and southeastern coast of Florida and emphasized research and monitoring, law enforcement, and outreach efforts associated with the conservation and management of deepwater corals, focusing on the Oculina Bank. A total of 30 participants registered to participate and 23 educators attended the workshop. The workshop included facilitators John Reed from HBOI, Andy Shepard, NURC/UNC-W, Jocelyn Karaszia NOAA Fisheries, SA Richard Chesler, NOAA OLE, and Dr. Sandra Brooke, Ocean Research and Conservation Association. The workshop also included a guided tour of the Smithsonian Marine Station in Ft. Pierce and their recently opened Oculina Bank exhibit.

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Workshop participants received notebooks with lesson plans, background materials and DVDs, including the Council's *Revealing the Deep*. In addition, they received "goodie" tote bags with materials donated from various agencies and organizations to use within their classrooms. Council intern Ashley Fontaine, a marketing student at the College of Charleston, was responsible for registration, compiling the workshop materials, and securing donated items for the teacher goodie bags. He also created a workshop evaluation form, participated in the workshop at HBOI, and used the teacher workshop as the focus of his internship work recently completed this spring.

Evaluations for the workshop were overwhelmingly positive with all participants finding the workshop informative, well-paced, and materials useful for their classrooms. The facilitators received excellent ratings. Representative comments include: "Perfect itinerary! Having representatives of the different areas to give a presentation was very effective." "Best workshop I've been to." "I feel more teachers need to be reached to get the message out." "It was great to have the actual researchers present to field questions and present." The evaluations also provided comments and recommendations for future workshops, including a tour of the HBOI facility.

As part of the workshop funding, an additional 2,500 Oculina Bank regulations brochures were purchased and continue to be distributed. A sample notebook, goodie bag and copies of the evaluations forms will be available at the June meeting.

2008 NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Proposal

An outreach component has been added to the 2008 NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Funding Proposal submitted by the Council. Funding has been requested for a portable display highlighting the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area and continued outreach activities associated with research and monitoring cruises, including partnership with FWC, NOAA OLE and others to highlight law enforcement efforts and partners such as HBOI, NOAA Fisheries, NURC/UNC-W to continue the DWC Teacher Workshops.

2008 National Marine Educator's Association Annual Conference

<http://www.nmeaweb.org/savannah2008/>

Working with Cristin Ryan, Marine Educator from the Smithsonian Marine Station, Council staff will participate in the 2008 NMEA annual conference scheduled for July 21-24, 2008 in Savannah, GA. Staff will co-present a paper on efforts to protect the Oculina Bank as part of the International Year of the Reef session of the conference.

GPS software for identification of the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area

Council staff is working with intern Gregg Swanson to identify GPS software manufacturers targeting fishermen and determine how the Oculina Bank ECA is currently marked on various electronic charts. This information will be helpful in determining if changes need to be made for determining the OECA and help in identification of future MPAs by electronic chart manufacturers.