Decision Document

for

COMPREHENSIVE ECOSYSTEM-BASED AMENDMENT 3 (Coral HAPC Measures)

Amendment 7 to the South Atlantic Coral FMP
Amendment 10 to the South Atlantic Shrimp FMP

March 2012

This document is intended to serve as a SUMMARY for the actions and alternatives in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3 (CE-BA 3) that pertain to Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC). It also provides background information and includes a summary of the expected biological and socio-economic effects from these proposed management measures.

***NOTE: Decisions the Committee / Council need to make are highlighted in yellow**

Why is the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) taking Action?

Discoveries of previously uncharacterized areas of deepwater coral resources have been brought forward by the Council's Coral Advisory Panel. Recent scientific exploration has identified areas of high relief features and hardbottom habitat outside of the boundaries of existing Coral HAPCs. The Coral Advisory Panel is recommending that the Council revisit the boundaries of the Oculina HAPC, Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC, and Cape Lookout Coral HAPC to incorporate areas of additional deepwater coral habitat.

The interdisciplinary plan development team (IPT) suggests the following purpose and need for the Coral HAPC measures in CE-BA 3.

Option 1. Approve the Purpose and Need as worded.

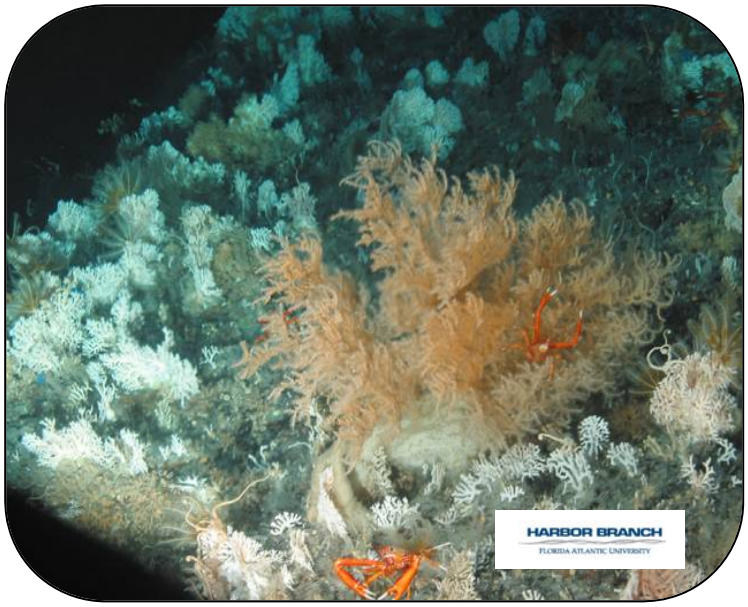
Option 2. Modify the recommended language for the Purpose and Need and approve.

Purpose for Action

The purpose of revisiting the boundaries of the Coral HAPCs in CE-BA 3 is to implement management measures for additional protections for deepwater coral ecosystems.

Need for Action

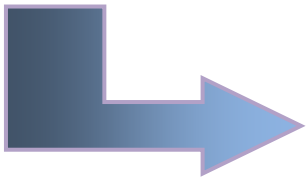
The need for action in CE-BA 3 is to address recent discoveries of deepwater coral resources.



Live Bottom Habitat on Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC.
John Reed, HBOI, FAU

What Are the Proposed Actions?

There are 3 actions being proposed in CE-BA 3 that would expand the existing boundaries of Coral HAPCs. Each *action* has a range of *alternatives*, including a 'no action alternative' and a 'preferred alternative'.



Proposed Actions in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3 (Coral HAPC measures)

1. Expand Boundaries of the Oculina Bank HAPC
2. Expand Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC to incorporate a *Lophelia* site off Jacksonville
3. Expand Cape Lookout Coral HAPC

Action 1. Expand boundaries of the Oculina Bank HAPC

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not modify the boundaries of the Oculina Bank HAPC.

The existing Oculina Bank HAPC is delineated by the following boundaries: on the north by 28°30' N, on the south by 27°30' N, on the east by the 100-fathom (183-m) contour, and on the west by 80°00' W; and two adjacent satellite sites: the first bounded on the north by 28°30' N, on the south by 28°29' N, on the east by 80°00' W, and on the west by 80°03' W; and the second bounded on the north by 28°17' N, on the south by 28°16' N, on the east by 80°00 W, and on the west by 80°03' W.

Proposed Actions in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3

1. **Expand Boundaries of the Oculina Bank HAPC**
2. Expand Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC to incorporate a *Lophelia* site off Jacksonville
3. Expand Cape Lookout Coral HAPC

Alternative 2. Modify the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC.

Sub-Alternative 2a. Modify the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC from the current northern boundary of the Oculina HAPC (28° 30'N) to 29° 43.5'W. The west and east boundaries would follow the 60 meter and 100 meter depth contour lines, respectively, as represented in the simplified polygon (**Figure 1)**.

NOTE: The Coral AP and Habitat AP endorse Sub-Alternative 2a as a preferred alternative.

Sub-Alternative 2b. Modify the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC from the current northern boundary of the Oculina HAPC (28° 30'N) to 29° 43.5'W. The west and east boundaries would follow the 70 meter and 90 meter depth contour lines, respectively, as represented in the simplified polygon (**Figure 2)**.

NOTE: The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs have developed a new alternative for consideration that is built off of Sub-Alternative 2b. Their preferred alternative is depicted in **Figure 6**.

Sub-Alternative 2c. Modify the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC from the current northern boundary of the Oculina HAPC (28° 30'N) to 29° 43.5'W. The west and east boundaries would follow the 70 meter and 100 meter depth contour lines, respectively, as represented in the simplified polygon (**Figure 3)**.

Sub-Alternative 2d. Modify the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC: from the current northern boundary of the Oculina HAPC (28° 30'N) to 29° 43.5'W. The west and east boundaries would follow the 60 meter and 90 meter depth contour lines, respectively, as represented in the simplified polygon (**Figure 4)**.

Alternative 3. Modify the western boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC from 28° 4.5'N to the north boundary of the current Oculina HAPC (28° 30'N). The east boundary would coincide with the current western boundary of the Oculina HAPC (80° W). The west boundary could either use the 60 meter contour line, or the 80° 03'W longitude (**Figure 5**).

NOTE: The Coral AP and Habitat AP endorse Alternative 3 as a preferred alternative.

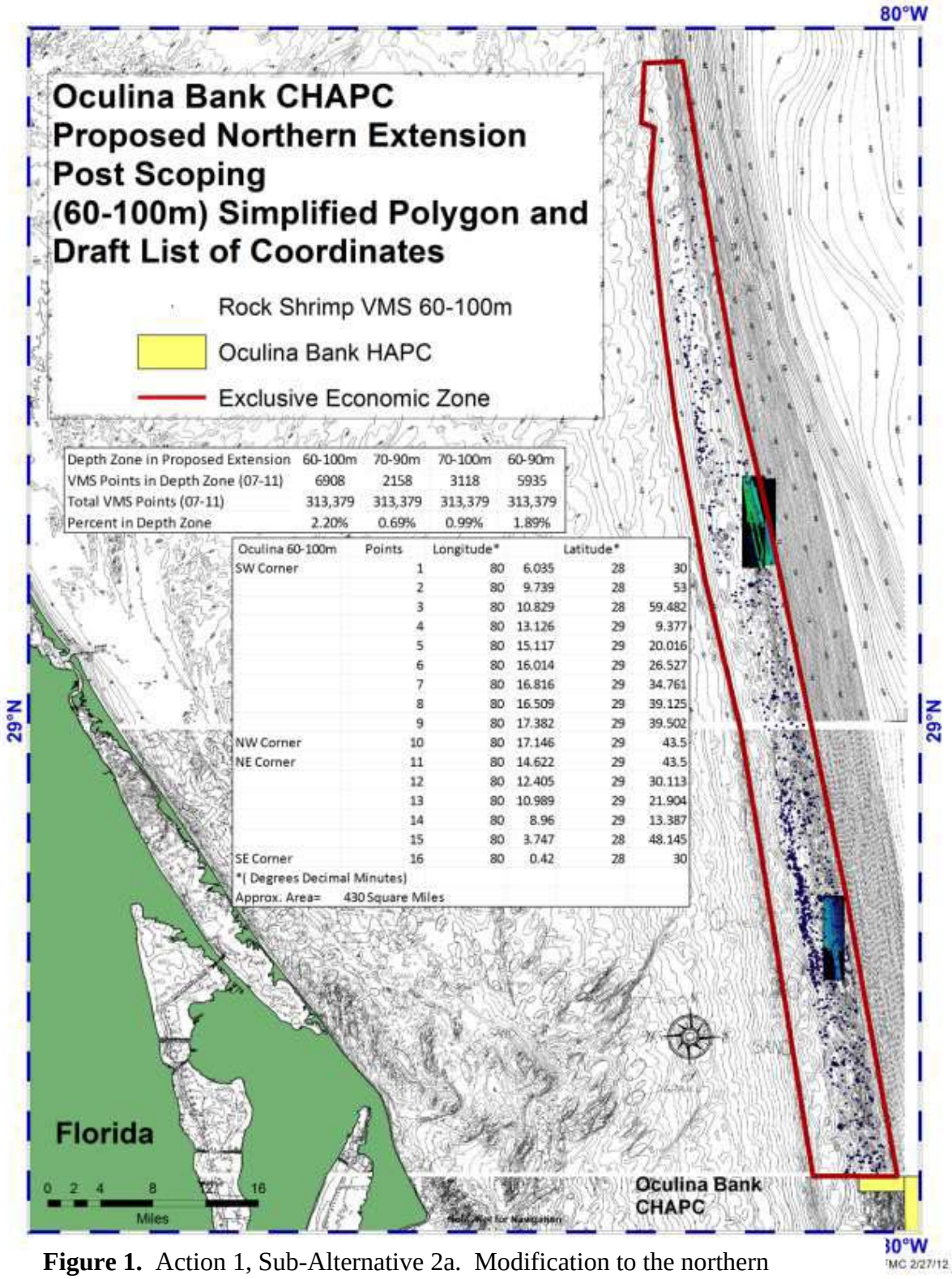
NOTE: The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs discussed that the area identified in Alternative 3 may be a candidate for a Shrimp Fishery Access Area.

Alternative 4. Allow for transit through the Oculina Bank HAPC based on recommendations by the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel:

- Consult CFR §622.35 (i)(2) for reference to stowing gear and transit (pertains to marine protected areas but language can be adopted and altered accordingly to be applicable to deepwater shrimp).
- If transit is allowed through the HAPC, request that industry increase ping rate for vessel monitoring systems (VMS).
- Stowing of gear is recommended by the LE AP instead of corridors for transiting Oculina Bank HAPC, in addition to speed restrictions (no less than 5 knots). In the event minimal speed is not sustainable, vessel must communicate to appropriate contact.

NOTE: The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs endorse a transit provision through the Oculina Bank HAPC as a preferred alternative and recommend a modified version of Alternative 4 that would include a revision to the language for stowage of gear: Stowing means doors in racks and nets out of water.

DECISION: Selection of multi-preferred alternatives for Action 1 is possible. Select a preferred alternative(s) for Action 1.

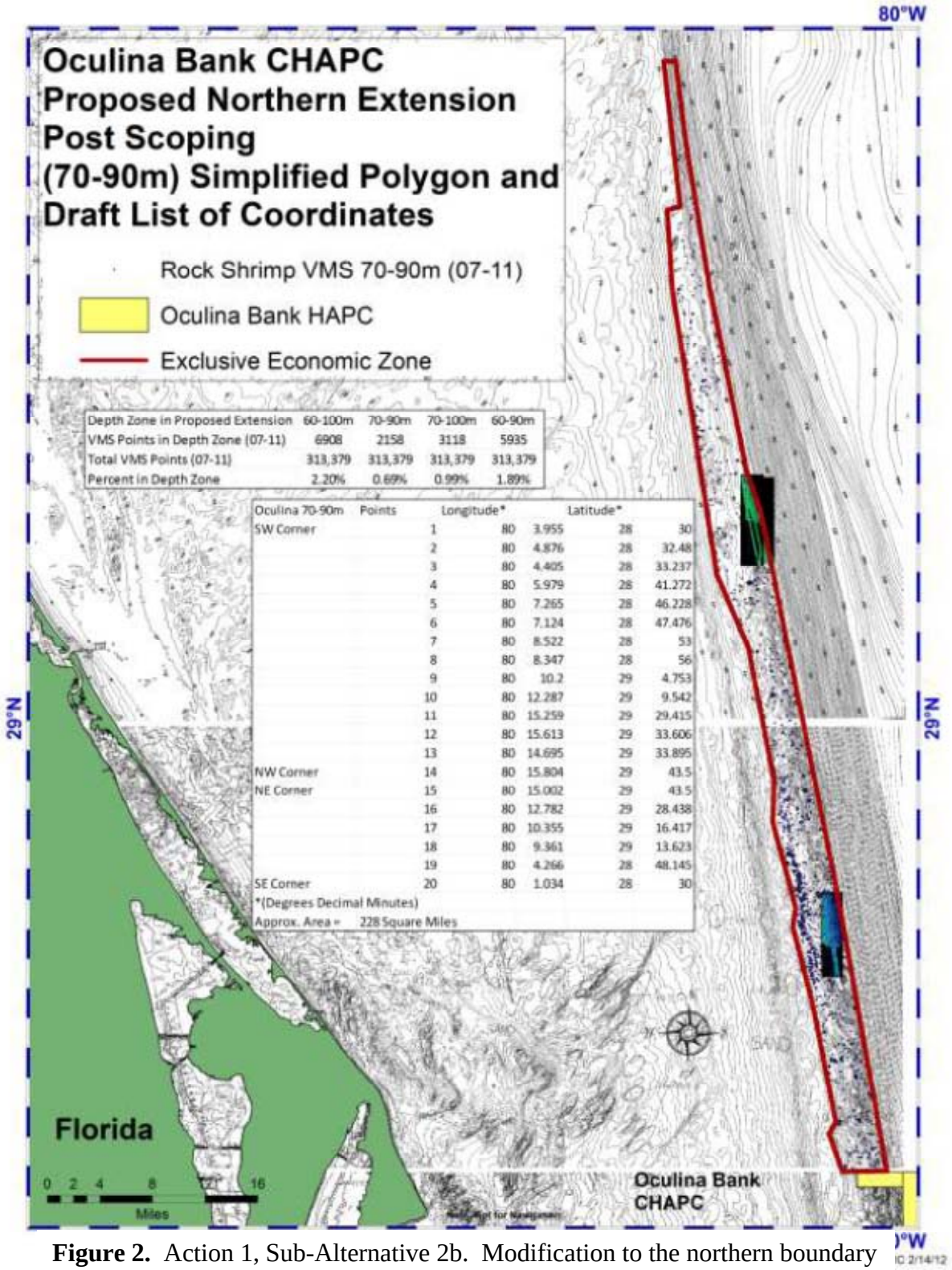


Depth Zone in Proposed Extension	60-100m	70-90m	70-100m	60-90m
VMS Points in Depth Zone (07-11)	6908	2158	3118	5935
Total VMS Points (07-11)	313,379	313,379	313,379	313,379
Percent in Depth Zone	2.20%	0.69%	0.99%	1.89%

Oculina 60-100m	Points	Longitude*		Latitude*	
SW Corner	1	80	6.035	28	30
	2	80	9.739	28	53
	3	80	10.829	28	59.482
	4	80	13.126	29	9.377
	5	80	15.117	29	20.016
	6	80	16.014	29	26.527
	7	80	16.816	29	34.761
	8	80	16.509	29	39.125
	9	80	17.382	29	39.502
NW Corner	10	80	17.146	29	43.5
NE Corner	11	80	14.622	29	43.5
	12	80	12.405	29	30.113
	13	80	10.989	29	21.904
	14	80	8.96	29	13.387
	15	80	3.747	28	48.145
SE Corner	16	80	0.42	28	30

*(Degrees Decimal Minutes)
Approx. Area= 430 Square Miles

Figure 1. Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2a. Modification to the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC. In this northern zone, the west and east boundaries would follow the 60 meter and 100 meter depth contour lines, as represented in the simplified polygon.

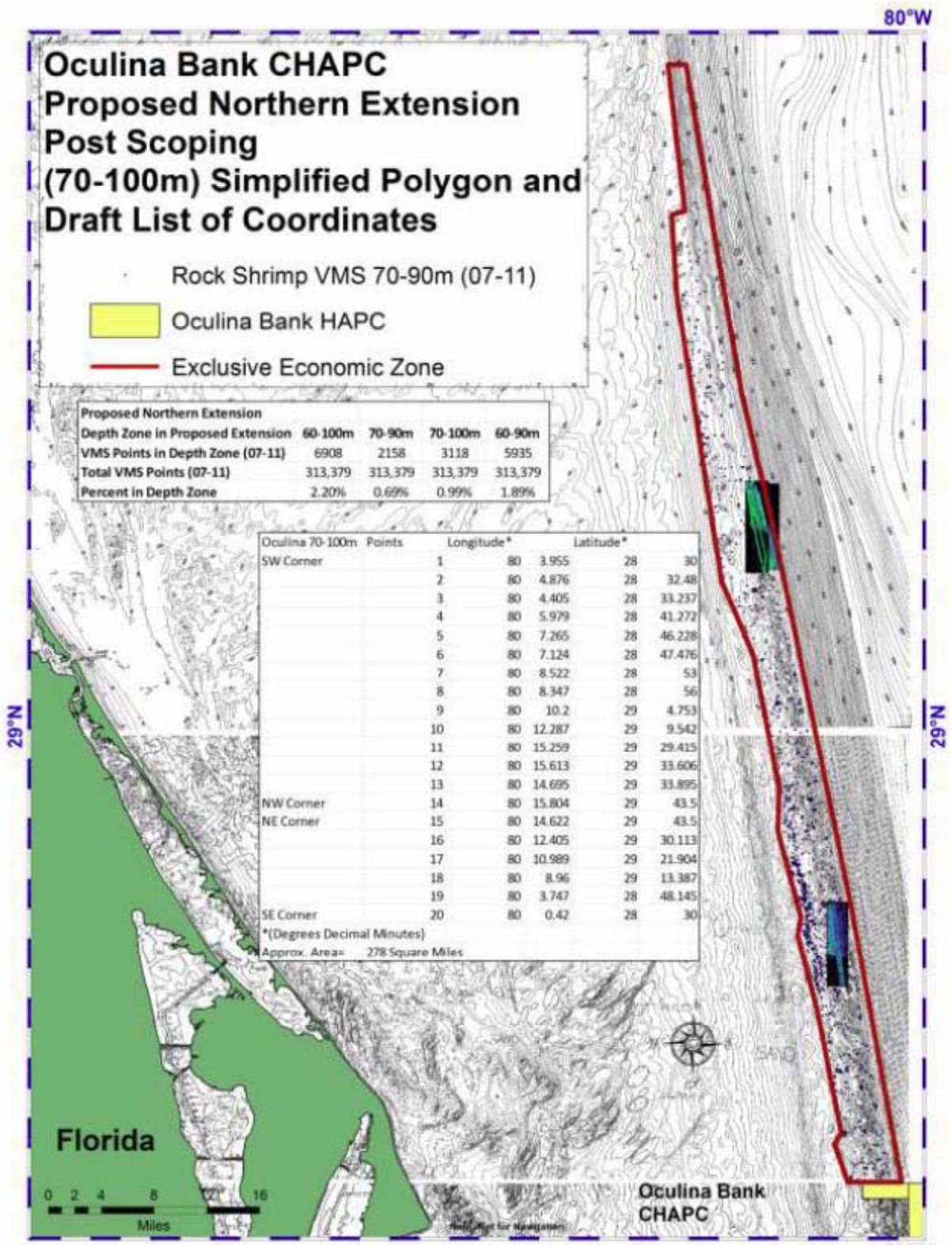


Depth Zone in Proposed Extension	60-100m	70-90m	70-100m	60-90m
VMS Points in Depth Zone (07-11)	6908	2158	3118	5935
Total VMS Points (07-11)	313,379	313,379	313,379	313,379
Percent in Depth Zone	2.20%	0.69%	0.99%	1.89%

Oculina 70-90m	Points	Longitude*		Latitude*	
SW Corner	1	80	3.955	28	30
	2	80	4.876	28	32.48
	3	80	4.405	28	33.237
	4	80	5.979	28	41.272
	5	80	7.265	28	46.228
	6	80	7.124	28	47.476
	7	80	8.522	28	53
	8	80	8.347	28	56
	9	80	10.2	29	4.753
	10	80	12.287	29	9.542
	11	80	15.259	29	29.415
	12	80	15.613	29	33.606
	13	80	14.695	29	33.895
NW Corner	14	80	15.804	29	43.5
NE Corner	15	80	15.002	29	43.5
	16	80	12.782	29	28.438
	17	80	10.355	29	16.417
	18	80	9.361	29	13.623
	19	80	4.266	28	48.145
SE Corner	20	80	1.034	28	30

*(Degrees Decimal Minutes)
Approx. Area = 228 Square Miles

Figure 2. Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2b. Modification to the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC. In this northern zone, the west and east boundaries would follow the 70 meter and 90 meter depth contour lines, as represented in the simplified polygon.



Proposed Northern Extension				
Depth Zone in Proposed Extension	60-100m	70-90m	70-100m	60-90m
VMS Points in Depth Zone (07-11)	6908	2158	3118	5935
Total VMS Points (07-11)	313,379	313,379	313,379	313,379
Percent in Depth Zone	2.20%	0.69%	0.99%	1.89%

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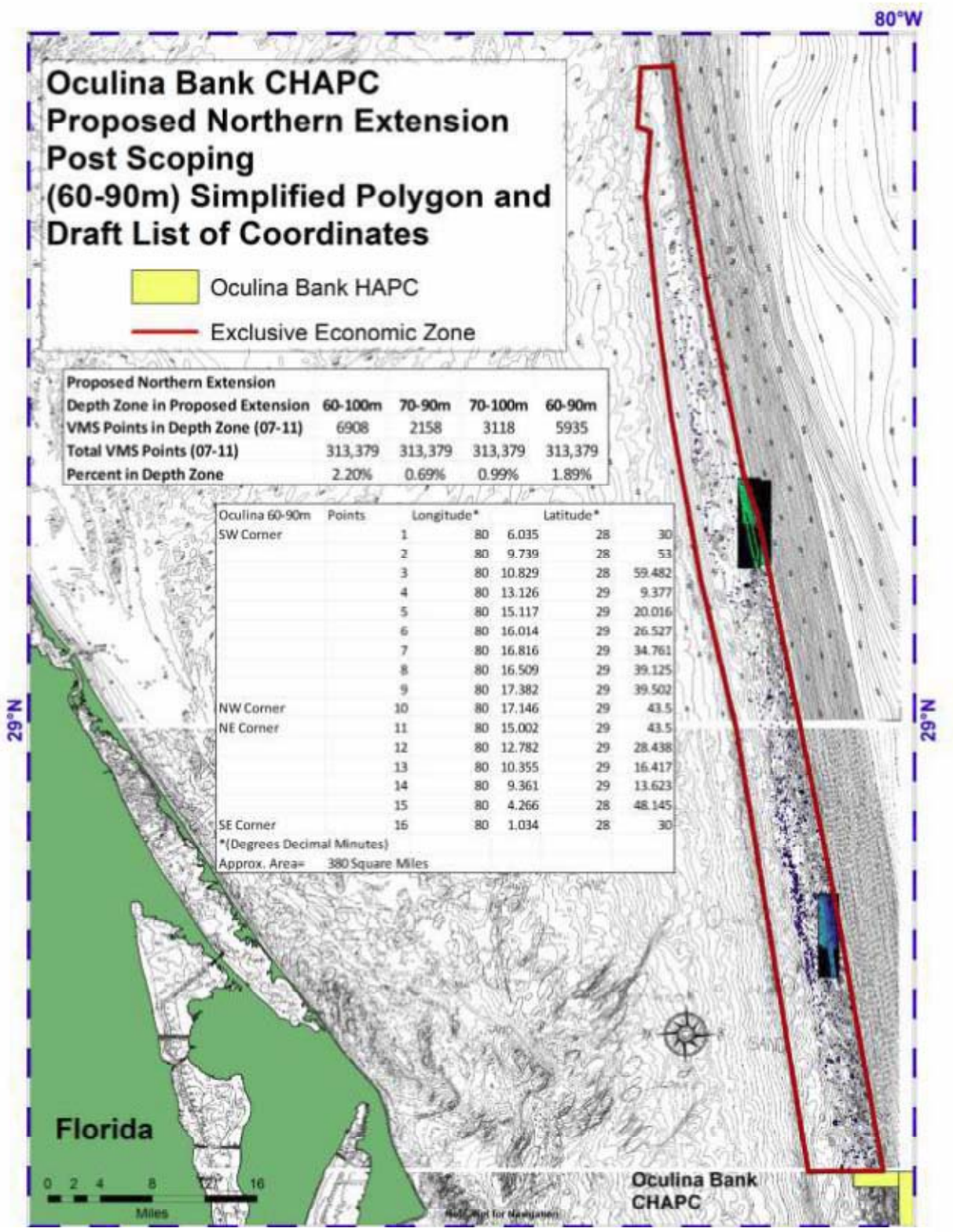
	16	80	12.405	29	30.113
	17	80	10.989	29	21.904
	18	80	8.96	29	13.387
	19	80	3.747	28	48.145
SE Corner	20	80	0.42	28	30

*(Degrees Decimal Minutes)
Approx. Area= 278 Square Miles

Figure 3. Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2c. Modification to the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC. In this northern zone, the west and east boundaries would follow the 70 meter and 100 meter depth contour lines, as represented in the simplified polygon.



Proposed Northern Extension				
Depth Zone in Proposed Extension	60-100m	70-90m	70-100m	60-90m
VMS Points in Depth Zone (07-11)	6908	2158	3118	5935
Total VMS Points (07-11)	313,379	313,379	313,379	313,379
Percent in Depth Zone	2.20%	0.69%	0.99%	1.89%

Oculina 60-90m	Points	Longitude*		Latitude*	
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	6	80	16.014	29	26.527
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	12	80	12.782	29	28.438
	13	80	10.355	29	16.417
	14	80	9.361	29	13.623
	15	80	4.266	28	48.145
SE Corner	16	80	1.034	28	30

*(Degrees Decimal Minutes)

Approx. Area= 380 Square Miles

Figure 4. Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2d. Modification to the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC. In this northern zone, the west and east boundaries would follow the 60 meter and 90 meter depth contour lines, as represented in the simplified polygon.

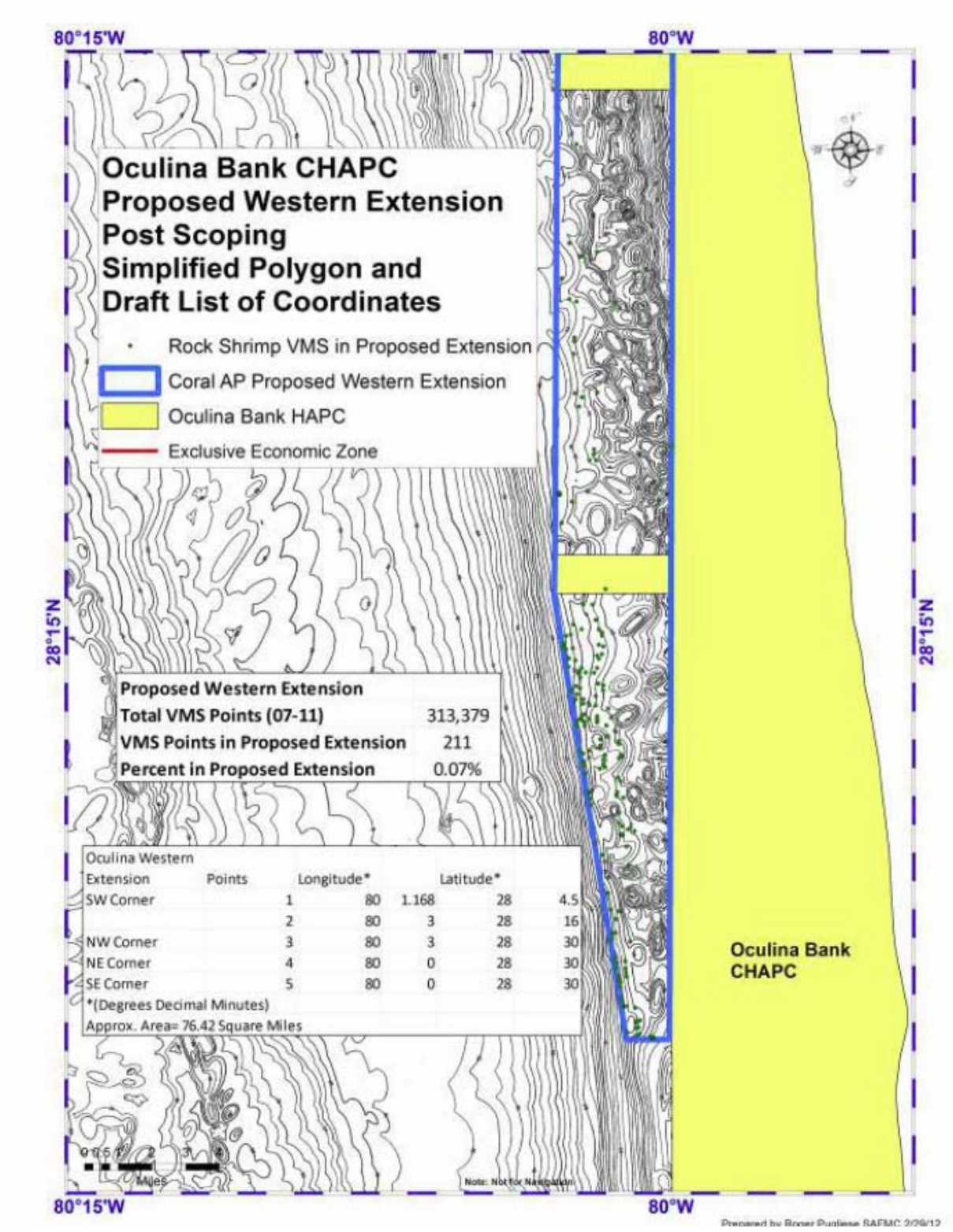

Figure 5. Action 1, Alternative 3. Modification to the western boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC. The west boundary would follow the 80° 03'W longitude between 28° 30'N and 28° 16'N which is the western border of the Oculina HAPC satellite regions, and would follow the 60 meter contour as represented in the simplified polygon.

CE-BA 3 IPT Recommendations for Action 1:

- Remove Alternative 4 under Action 1 and designate this as a separate Action. Suggested wording for the transit provision action:

Action 2. Implement a transit provision through the Oculina Bank HAPC.

> **Alternative 1 (No Action)**. Do not implement a transit provision through Oculina Bank HAPC. Currently, possession of rock shrimp in or from the area on board a fishing vessel is prohibited.
>
> **Alternative 2.** Allow for transit through the Oculina Bank HAPC. When transiting the Oculina Bank HAPC, gear must be stowed in accordance with CFR Section 622.35 (i)(2). Vessels must maintain a minimum speed of 5 knots while in transit through the Oculina Bank HAPC. In the event minimal speed is not sustainable, vessel must communicate to appropriate contact.
>
> Option 1. Adopt IPT recommendation for removing Alternative 4 from Action 1, modifying the language and designating this as a separate Action.
> Option 2. Modify the IPT recommendation.

Rationale:
The IPT is recommending the Council consider a transit provision as a separate action item in the event additional criteria are added to such a measure (specific gear stowage requirements separate from what is identified in CFRs; including an increase in VMS ping rate, etc.). Including this provision as a separate action item would make the management measure more clear.

***CFR § 622.35 (i)(2):**
(2) For the purpose of paragraph (i)(1) of this section, transit means direct, non-stop progression through the MPA. Fishing gear appropriately stowed means–
(i) A longline may be left on the drum if all gangions and hooks are disconnected and stowed below deck. Hooks cannot be baited. All buoys must be disconnected from the gear; however, buoys may remain on deck.
(ii) **A trawl or try net may remain on deck, but trawl doors must be disconnected from such net and must be secured.**
(iii) A gillnet, stab net, or trammel net must be left on the drum. Any additional such nets not attached to the drum must be stowed below deck.
(iv) Terminal gear (i.e., hook, leader, sinker, flasher, or bait) used with an automatic reel, bandit gear, buoy gear, handline, or rod and reel must be disconnected and stowed separately from such fishing gear. A rod and reel must be removed from the rod holder and stowed securely on or below deck.
(v) A crustacean trap, golden crab trap, or sea bass pot cannot be baited. All buoys must be disconnected from the gear; however, buoys may remain on deck.

- Include total area of expansion with each sub-alternative identified for the HAPC expansions.
  Sub-Alternative 2a = 430 square nautical miles.
  Sub-Alternative 2b = 228 square nautical miles.
  Sub-Alternative 2c = 278 square nautical miles.
  Sub-Alternative 2d = 380 square nautical miles.
  Alternative 3 = 76 square nautical miles.

  Option 1. Adopt IPT recommendation to include square nautical miles of HAPC expansions in sub-alternatives.
  Option 2. Modify the IPT recommendation.

Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panels (APs) Recommendations for Action 1:

The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs met jointly on April 20, 2012 in Charleston, South Carolina. They had several recommendations for the Coral HAPC measures in CE-BA 3.

Northern extension of Oculina Bank HAPC (Action 1, Alternative 2 and range of sub-alternatives that follow): the APs are in support of the No Action Alternative, but have developed an additional alternative for the Council to consider. The new alternative (depicted in **Figure 6**) is their preferred measure for a northern extension. This alternative builds off of what is identified in Action 1, Sub-alternative 2b. The recommendation of the APs is based on a modified set of points collected from various captains that have fished the area for decades.

Option 1. Adopt Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs recommendation for a northern expansion of Oculina Bank HAPC as an alternative under Action 1.
Option 2. Modify the APs recommendation.

Western extension of Oculina Bank HAPC (Action 1, Alternative 3): The APs suggest that the area within the proposed extension of the western boundary might be a candidate for a shrimp fishery access area because there are historical rock shrimp production areas within this proposed extension.

New alternative for the existing Oculina Bank HAPC: The APs are interested in development of a shrimp fishery access area from the north end of the Oculina Bank HAPC, following the 90-100 meter contour to the west and the 140 meter contour to the east, to the south end of the Oculina Bank HAPC. This would connect highly productive rock shrimp bottom south of the Oculina Bank HAPC to that which exists to the north of the HAPC. The proposed modification to the existing boundary is identified in **Figure 6**.

Option 1. Adopt Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs recommendation for a new alternative (under Action 1 or a new Action) that would modify the existing Oculina Bank HAPC.
Option 2. Modify the APs recommendation.

Transit provision: The APs recommend a modified version of Alternative 4 for transiting through Oculina Bank HAPC. The transit provision should include revisions to stowage of gear: Stowing means doors in racks and nets out of water. Vessels maintain a minimum speed of 5

knots. In the event minimal speed is not sustainable, vessel must communicate to appropriate contact.

Option 1. Adopt Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs recommendation for a modified Alternative 4 (transit provision through Oculina Bank HAPC.)
Option 2. Modify the APs recommendation.

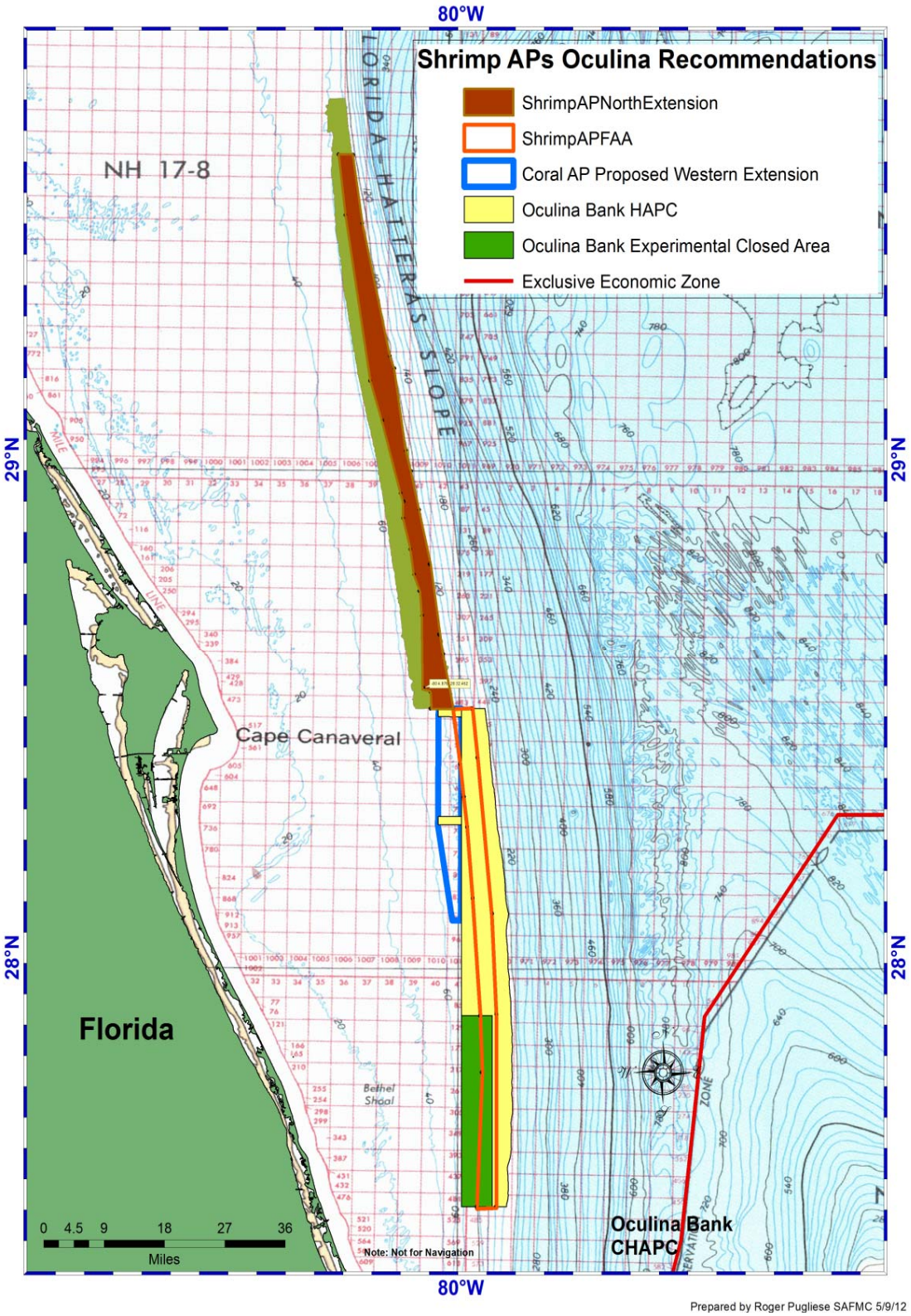

Figure 6. Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel recommendations for Oculina Bank HAPC extensions.

Coral AP Recommendations for Action 1:

The Coral AP met on May 9-10, 2012 in Charleston, South Carolina. They refined recommendations on the Coral HAPC measures in CE-BA 3.

The Coral AP endorses Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2a as a preferred measure. They also endorse Alternative 3 as a preferred measure. The AP discussed that establishing the northern boundary along the 60 and 100 meter depth contour lines (west and east, respectively) would protect the most amount of coral resources that are not contained within the current HAPC boundary. This inclusion would allow substrate to recover while conserving hardbottom habitat. The recommendation was based on NOAA bathymetric charts showcasing the original reef tract, and ground-truthed using multibeam surveys and ROV dives during explorations in 2011.

Habitat AP Recommendations for Action 1:

The Habitat AP met via webinar on May 15, 2012. The Habitat AP endorses Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2a as a preferred measure. They also endorse Alternative 3 as a preferred measure.

Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Recommendations for Action 1:

The SSC reviewed CE-BA 3 measures during their April 3-5, 2012 meeting in Savannah, Georgia. They discussed that it was still early in the process and they deferred their specific input on the Coral HAPC measures until the associated APs and others weigh in on this issue. The SSC discussed that it is easier for fishermen to keep track of a closed area if it follows depth contours as opposed to straight lines.

Law Enforcement AP Recommendations for Action 1:

The Law Enforcement AP reviewed CE-BA 3 measures during their March 5, 2012 meeting in Savannah, Georgia. They discussed that recommendations for area closures (MPAs, HAPCs) follow as closely to latitude/longitude as possible. They recommend the Council refer to previous recommendations for area closures (boxes). They offered suggestions for what a transit provision could entail, and this has been identified in Action 1, Alternative 4.

What Are the Expected Effects for Action 1?

Biological:
Alternative 2, associated sub-alternatives and **Alternative 3**, propose increasing the size of the Oculina Bank HAPC and extending the prohibitions to a larger area. As the size of the Oculina Bank HAPC is increased, the biological benefit increases for the coral in the area, including *Oculina*, the species that use the bottom substrate as habitat, and for the rock shrimp populations in the HAPC. Information is needed on the amount of harvest from these areas to compare what the biological impacts might be.

Economic:

Social:
Closed areas can have significant negative social effects on fishermen if any fishing grounds are no longer open to harvest. Fishermen would need to fish other areas in order to maintain operations, which may result in user conflicts or overcrowding issues. Additionally, increased economic costs associated with travel to other fishing grounds could affect crew employment opportunities on vessels. Long-term social benefits may be associated with the long-term biological benefits of closed areas, as long as the closures are appropriately selected and include a periodic evaluation of effectiveness.

Action 2. Expand Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC to incorporate a *Lophelia* site off Jacksonville

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not expand the boundaries of the Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC.

The existing Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC is delineated by the coordinates identified in CFR §633.35 (n)(iii).

Alternative 2. Expand Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC in the area west of the existing boundary approximately by the 200 meter depth contour between latitude 30°45.0' to the north and latitude 29°52.0' to the south (**Figure 7**).

Proposed Actions in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3

1. Expand Boundaries of the Oculina Bank HAPC
2. **Expand Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC to incorporate a *Lophelia* site off Jacksonville**
3. Expand Cape Lookout Coral HAPC

NOTE: During their May meeting, the Coral AP recommended a revised version of Alternative 2 (depicted in Figure 9) and endorsed the revised boundary delineation as a preferred alternative. The Habitat AP also endorsed the revised version of Alternative 2 as a preferred alternative.

Alternative 3. Modify the Coral AP recommendation for expanding the Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC to include area of mapped habitat within the expansion, and exclude areas of royal red fishery activity based on VMS data (**Figure 8**).

NOTE: The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs endorse Alternative 3 as a preferred measure, with the inclusion of a disabled vessel provision.

DECISION: Select a preferred alternative for Action 2.

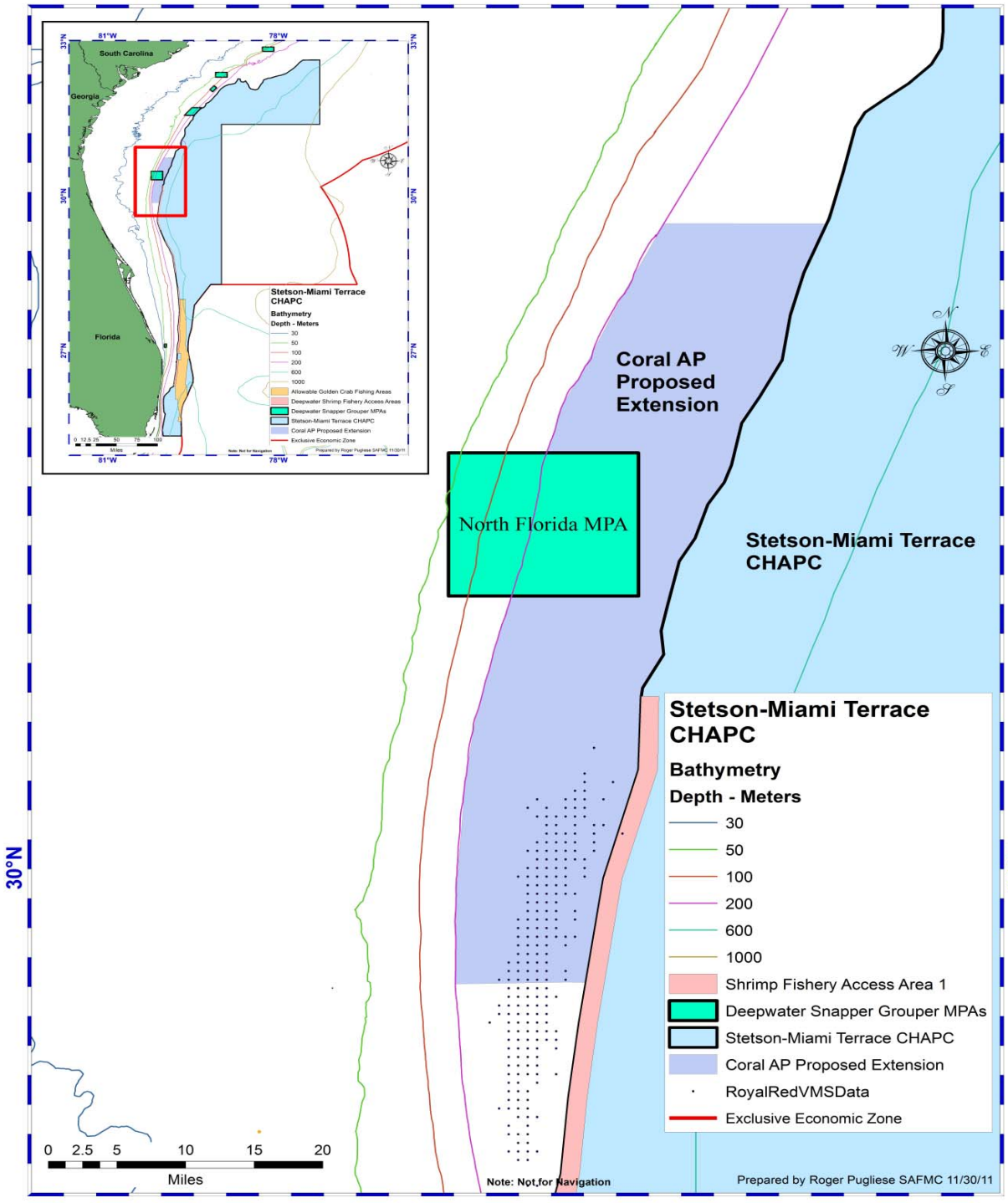

Figure 7. Action 2, Alternative 2, the Coral Advisory Panel's original proposed expansion of the Stetson-Miami Terrace HAPC western boundary.

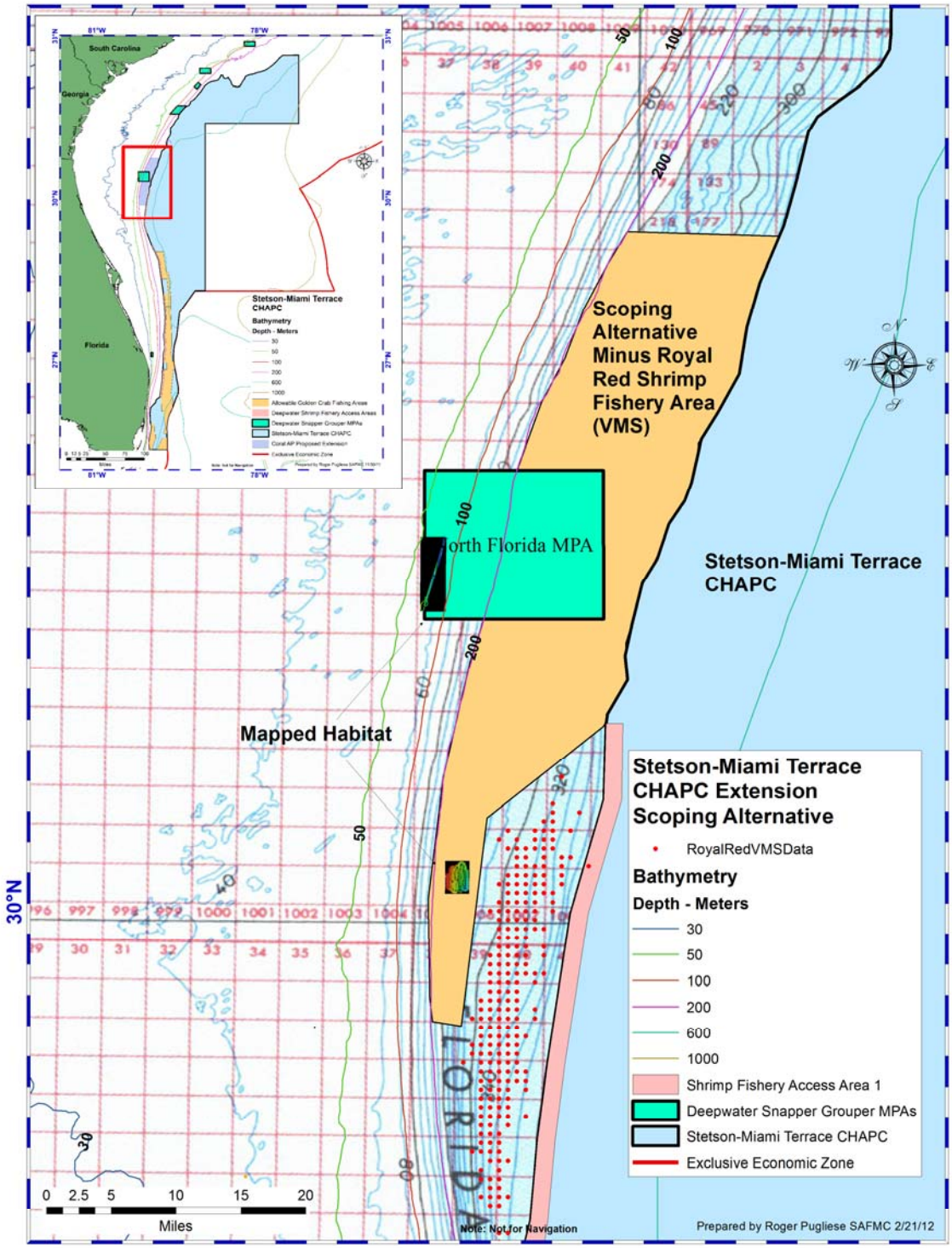

Figure 8. Action 2, Alternative 3, modifications to the Coral AP's original recommendation for expanding the Stetson-Miami Terrace CHAPC based on suggestions from shrimp industry representatives during the CE-BA 3 public scoping process. This figure includes area of mapped habitat within the Coral AP's original proposed extension and excludes areas of royal red fishery activity based on VMS data.

CE-BA 3 IPT Recommendations for Action 2:

- Reword the language of Action 2 to read:

Action 2. Expand boundaries of the Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC.

Option 1. Adopt IPT recommendation for the revised wording of Action 2.
Option 2. Modify the IPT recommendation for the wording of Action 2.

Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs Recommendations for Action 2:

The APs recommend Action 2, Alternative 2 as a preferred measure for extension of Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC, with the addition of a disabled vessel provision. With the proximity of the open trawlable areas adjacent to the existing HAPC and the proposed extension, the APs discussed the importance of a disabled vessel provision to avoid penalty if communication to the appropriate contact is initiated when in distress.

Coral AP Recommendations for Action 2:

The Coral AP revisited their previous recommendation for expansion of the Stetson-Miami Terrace HAPC (**Alternative 2**). They recommend the Council consider an additional alternative, identified in **Figure 9** that would include known (mapped) benthic habitat, and exclude those areas where habitat has not been found. This recommendation is also based on high resolution bathymetry from the Navy indicating high relief mounds in proposed extension southern boundary. The western limit of the expanded zone remains as stated in Alternative 2 (following the 200 meter depth contour).

Note: This AP recommendation abuts the existing Shrimp Fishery Access Area 1 and would require the Council to modify this deepwater shrimp access provision designated in CE-BA 1.

Option 1. Adopt Coral AP recommendation for the revised Action 2, Alternative 2, as depicted in Figure 9.
Option 2. Modify the AP recommendation.

Habitat AP Recommendations for Action 2:

The Habitat AP endorsed the Coral AP's recommendation for a new alternative (**Figure 9**). They expressed an interest in protecting newly discovered areas of deepwater coral habitat.

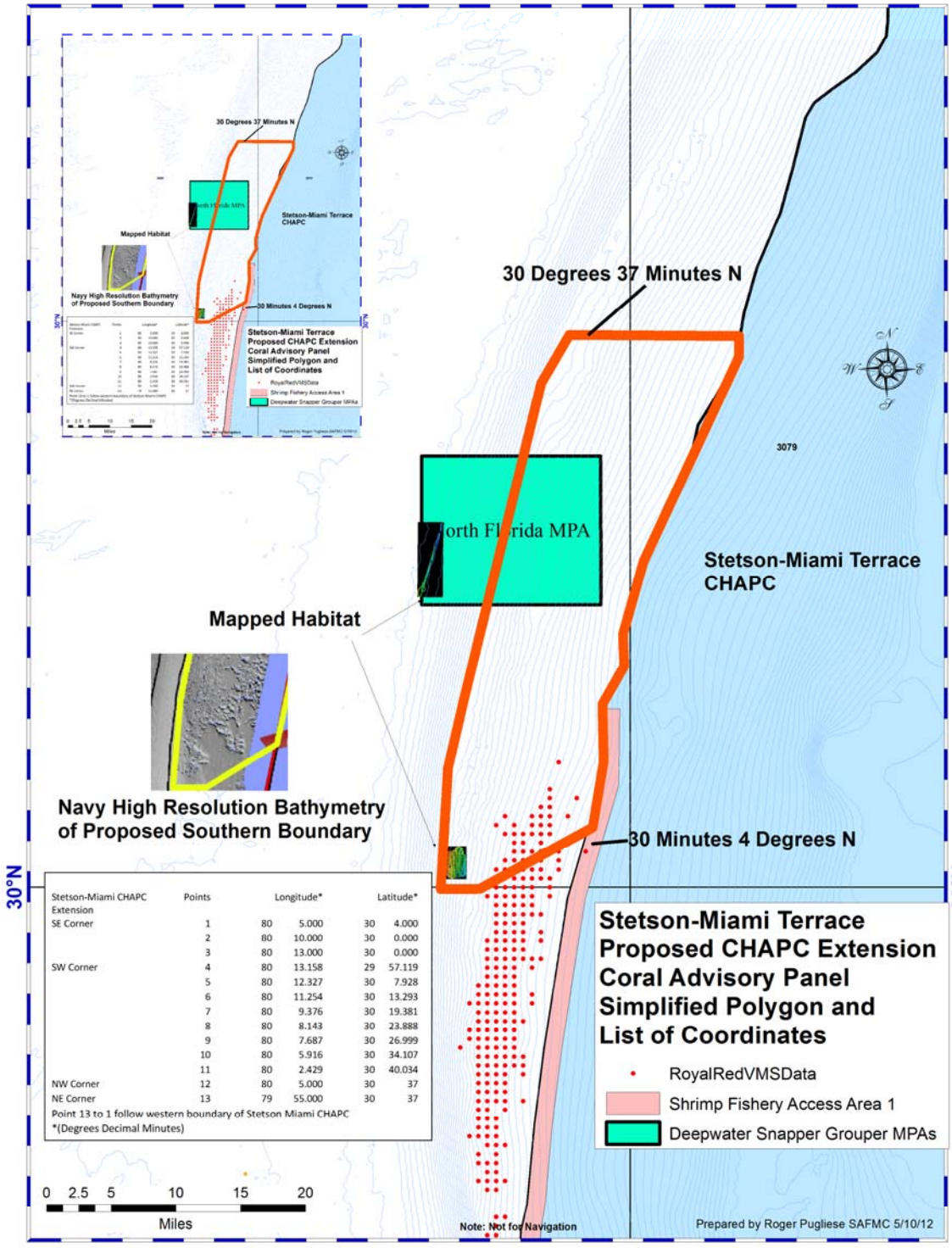

Figure 9. Coral AP's recommendation for modification of Action 2, Alternative 2.

What Are the Expected Effects for Action 2?

Biological:
The Stetson Miami Terrace Coral HAPC (60,937 square kilometers, 23,528 square miles) is the largest of the five deepwater Coral HAPCs implemented through the Comprehensive Ecosystem Based Amendment 1 (CE-BA 1). **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 3** would be expected to result in positive biological impacts to the deepwater coral habitat in these areas. Given the slow growth of deepwater corals, any impacts would be expected to result in long-term biological losses of deepwater coral habitat as well as the species that utilize this habitat. Under these alternatives, habitats within the Stetson-Miami Terrace proposed Coral HAPC expansion would be protected from damaging fishing gear such as bottom longline, which would have positive biological impacts on the species in the area. Damage inflicted by bottom tending gear, anchors, chains, and grapples is not limited to living coral and hardbottom resources but extends to disruption of the balanced and highly productive nature of the coral and live/hardbottom ecosystems.

Economic:

Social:
Closed areas can have significant negative social effects on fishermen if any fishing grounds are no longer open to harvest. Fishermen would need to fish other areas in order to maintain operations, which may result in user conflicts or overcrowding issues. Additionally, increased economic costs associated with travel to other fishing grounds could affect crew employment opportunities on vessels. Long-term social benefits may be associated with the long-term biological benefits of closed areas, as long as the closures are appropriately selected and include a periodic evaluation of effectiveness.

Action 3. Expand Cape Lookout Coral HAPC

Proposed Actions in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3

1. Expand Boundaries of the Oculina Bank HAPC
2. Expand Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC to incorporate a *Lophelia* site off Jacksonville
3. **Expand Cape Lookout Coral HAPC**

Alternative 1. (No Action) Do not modify the boundaries of the Cape Lookout CHAPC.

The existing Cape Lookout Coral HAPC is identified by the following coordinates:

Latitude	Longitude
34°24'37"	75°45'11"
34°10'26"	75°58'44"
34°05'47"	75°54'54"
34°21'02"	75°41'25"

Alternative 2. Extend the northern boundary to encompass the area identified by the following coordinates (**Figure 10**):

Latitude	Longitude
34°24.6166'	75°45.1833'
34°23.4833'	75°43.9667'
34°27.9'	75°42.75'
34°27.0'	75°41.5'

NOTE: The Coral and Habitat APs endorse Alternative 2 as a preferred.

The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs did not endorse a preferred alternative.

DECISION: Select a preferred alternative for Action 3.

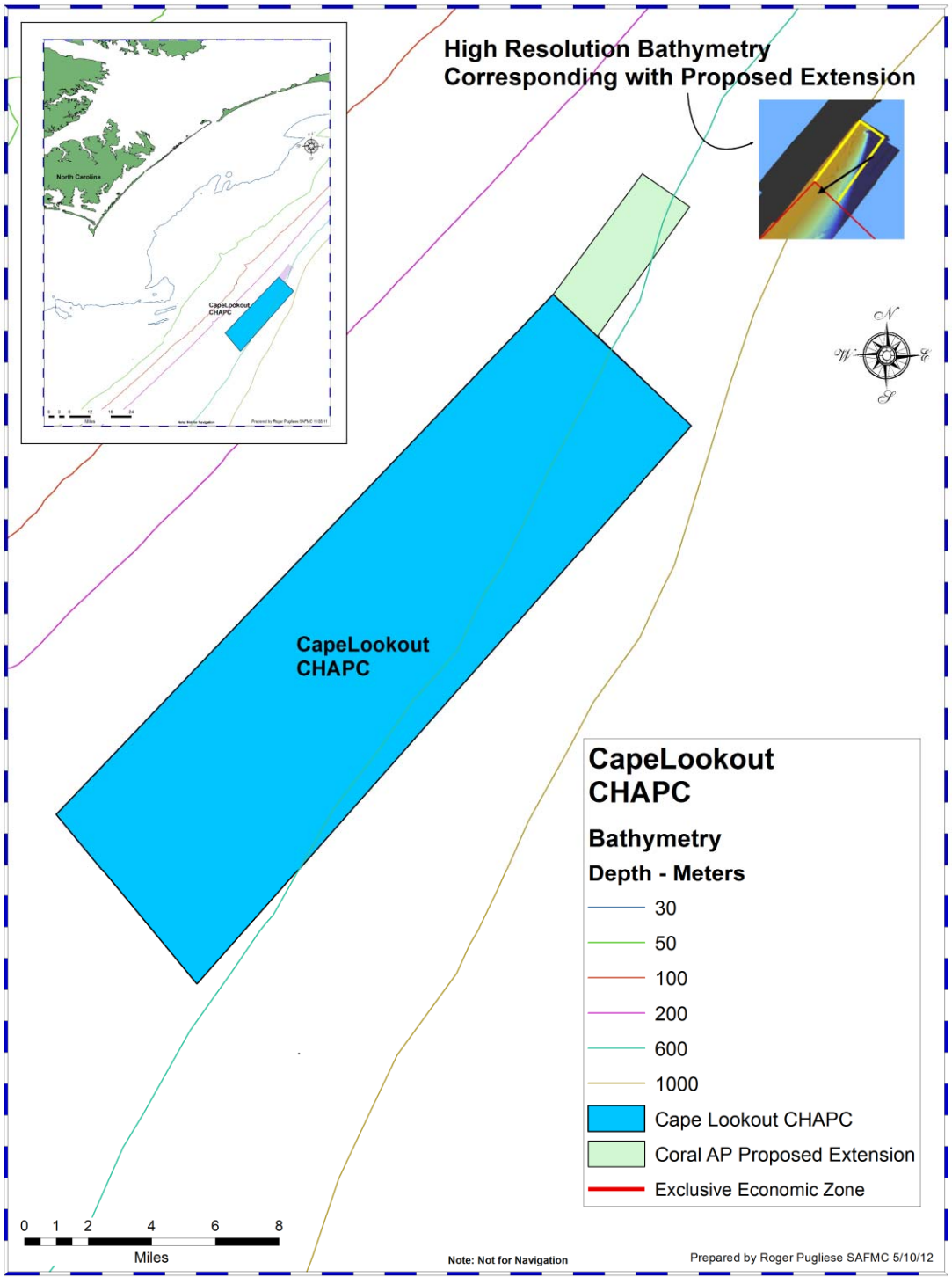

Figure 10. Action 3, Alternative 2. Coral Advisory Panel's proposed expansion of the Cape Lookout Coral HAPC northern boundary.

CE-BA 3 IPT Recommendations for Action 3:

- Reword the language of Action 3 to read:

Action 3. Expand boundaries of the Cape Lookout Coral HAPC.

Option 1. Adopt IPT recommendation for the revised wording of Action 3.
Option 2. Modify the IPT recommendation for the wording of Action 3.

Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs Recommendations for Action 3:

The APs discussed Action 3 but no specific recommendations were made for this measure.

Coral AP Recommendations for Action 3:

The Coral AP endorsed Alternative 2 as their preferred measure. This would incorporate an area of newly discovered deepwater coral *Lophelia* habitat northern of the existing boundary.

Habitat AP Recommendations for Action 3:

The Habitat AP endorsed Alternative 2 as their preferred measure for this Action.

What Are the Expected Effects for Action 3?

Biological:
Alternative 1 (No Action) would not modify the coordinates for the Cape Lookout Coral HAPC. This Coral HAPC was implemented through the Comprehensive Ecosystem Based Amendment 1 (SAFMC, 2009). The northernmost area of the Cape Lookout C HAPC contains the most extensive coral mounds off North Carolina. The main mound system rises vertically nearly 80 meters (262 feet) over a distance of about one kilometer (0.62 miles). Sides and tops of these mounds are covered with extensive *Lophelia pertusa*. The area proposed for modification, and identified in **Alternative 2,** is an extension of the northern system, and would add approximately 8 nautical square miles to the existing Coral HAPC. The second area within Cape Lookout Coral HAPC contains mounds that rise at least 53 meters (174 feet) over a distance of about 0.4 kilometers (0.2 miles). They appear to be of the same general construction as the northern Bank, built of coral rubble matrix that had trapped sediments. Extensive fields of coral rubble surround the area.

Economic:

Social:
Closed areas can have significant negative social effects on fishermen if any fishing grounds are no longer open to harvest. Fishermen would need to fish other areas in order to maintain

operations, which may result in user conflicts or overcrowding issues. Additionally, increased economic costs associated with travel to other fishing grounds could affect crew employment opportunities on vessels. Long-term social benefits may be associated with the long-term biological benefits of closed areas, as long as the closures are appropriately selected and include a periodic evaluation of effectiveness.

Public Hearing Dates and Locations

Public Hearings will be held from 4 – 7 p.m.

August 9, 2012 Hilton Key Largo Resort 97000 South Overseas Highway Key Largo, Florida 33037 Phone: 305-852-5553	**August 8, 2012** Doubletree Hotel 2080 N. Atlantic Avenue Cocoa Beach, Florida 32931 Phone: 321-783-9222
August 7, 2012 Jacksonville Marriott 4670 Salisbury Road Jacksonville, Florida 32256 Phone: 904-296-2222	**August 6, 2012** Richmond Hill City Center 520 Cedar Street Richmond Hill, Georgia 31324 Phone: 912-445-0043
August 14, 2012 Hilton Garden Inn Airport 5265 International Boulevard North Charleston, SC 29418 Phone: 843-308-9330	**August 16, 2012** Hilton New Bern Riverfront 100 Middle Street New Bern, North Carolina 28560 Phone: 252-638-3585

Option 1. Approve the Coral HAPC actions in CE-BA 3 for public hearings.
Option 2. Review the Coral HAPC actions in CE-BA 3 at the September 2012 meeting before approving for public hearings.