

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
STUART, FL
WEDNESDAY JUNE 10, 2009

The Ecosystem-Based Management Committee met the morning of Wednesday, June 10, 2009. The Committee received reports from staff on changes to the Comprehensive Ecosystem-based Amendment 1 to address NEPA concerns raised by the Southeast Regional Office. Staff also summarized comments from NOAA General Counsel. A discussion took place to address concerns raised by NOAA GC and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement regarding the number of waypoints that define the boundary of the proposed Stetson-Miami Terrace CHAPC. SERO staff presented alternatives to define the CHAPC boundary with a significantly smaller number of waypoints. The Committee then received a presentation of options included in the developing Comprehensive Ecosystem-based Amendment 2 and guidance was provided to staff on actions and alternatives. Presentations were given on the Governor's South Atlantic Alliance and ecosystem coordination activities by R. Boyles and R. Pugliese, respectively.

The following motions were approved by the committee:

Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1

MOTION 1: Amend the language in Action 1, Preferred Alternative 2, to include the language below:

Preferred Alternative 2. Establish Deepwater Coral HAPCs in one or more of the areas described in sub-alternatives 2a-2e. Within the CHAPCs possession of coral species and the use of all bottom damaging gear would be prohibited; including bottom longline, trawl (bottom and mid-water), dredge, pot or trap, or the use of an anchor, anchor and chain, or grapple and chain by all fishing vessels.

Approved by Committee

1 objection

MOTION 2: Move forward with the identified waypoints for the western boundary of the deepwater CHAPC; that we substitute the reference to the already established EEZ waypoints for the eastern boundary; and that Law Enforcement and the affected fisheries' APs, Habitat AP, Coral AP and the environmental NGOs work together to examine the feasibility of reducing the number of waypoints for the western boundary in the next or a subsequent amendment to the Comprehensive Ecosystem-based Plan.

Approved by Committee

Comprehensive Ecosystem-based Amendment 2

MOTION 3: Change Action 4 to modify the Coral FMP to permit harvest of the invasive orange cup coral.

Approved by Committee

MOTION 4: Send letter to EPA regarding the PCS project in North Carolina.

Approved by Committee

The following guidance and recommendations on CE-BA 2 were provided to staff:

- Include alternatives to reduce the octocoral quota.
- Consider GMFMC's involvement when considering separation of the octocoral quota.
- Consider need to develop ACLs for harvested coral species.
- Include action to establish ACLs for octocorals in CE-BA 2 and remove from Comprehensive ACL amendment.
- Include intermediate alternatives to reduce the quota in Action 2.
- Recommendation to include alternative to prohibit harvest in Action 1.
- Develop alternatives under Action 3 to specify level of harvest for proposed species (ACL).
- Consider alternatives to allow harvest of one of the two proposed species in Action 3.
- Conduct an evaluation of habitat impacts from "deep-dropping" and gear used in the wreckfish fishery and then consider if management action is needed.