SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
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Melvin Bell, Chair | Stephen J. Poland, Vice Chair
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Summary Report

Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management
Virtual Advisory Panel Meeting
October 21-22, 2020

Members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council)'s Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory Panel (AP or Panel) convened virtually on October 21 via Go To Meetings webinar to discuss topics pertaining to the conservation of fish and fish habitat and activities advancing Ecosystem Based Fishery Management (EBFM) in the region. The Panel operates on consensus therefore no motions are provided.

[NOTE: Meeting agenda and overview may be found at: https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/AgendaOverviewHabEcoAPWebOct20Rev.pdf]

Wednesday October 21, 2020 9:00 am – 12:30

The Advisory Panel (AP) was convened by AP Chair Anne Deaton (North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries; also Chair of the NC Subpanel). Chair Deaton asked that members and guests provide introductions and audio voice checks for recognition. The following AP members were present: Anne Deaton (NC; Chair), Dr. Laurent Cherubin (CIOERT-At-Large), Dr. Cynthia Cooksey (AP Panel Vice-Chair and SC Sub-panel Chair), Dr. Rene Baumstark (FL Sub-panel Chair), Dr. John Galvez (USFWS, FL), Jeff Hartzler (FL), Steve Miller (FL), Dr. David Glenn (NC), Jeff Hartzler (FL), Dr. Lisa Havel (ASMFC, At-Large), Brian Hooker (BOEM, At-Large), Thomas Jones (GA), Dr. Paula Keener (SC), Dr. Wilson Laney (NCSU, At-Large), Bob Martore (SC), Paul Medders (GA Sub-Panel Chair), Rita Merritt (NC), Patricia Murphey (NC), Laura Busch (Navy) and Dr. Steve Ross (At-Large).

Council members present included the Chair of the Council's Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Committee, Steve Poland (NC), who is also the Council Vice-Chair and Tim Griner (NC) Committee member.

Council staff present included: Roger Pugliese, Dr. Brian Cheuvront, John Carmichael, Chip Collier, Kathleen Howington and Kelly Klasnick.

FL FMRI Staff Present: Lauren Gentry, Luke McEachron, and Tina Udouj.

Guests Present: Marcel Reichert, Peter Etnoyer, Derek Sowers, Andrew Tweel, Yan Li, Lisa Wickliffe, Christine Buckel, Deena Hansen, Lora Clarke, Brad Pickens, Dawn Glasgow, Meredith Whitten, Kevin Spanik, Laura Morton, Rachel Hawes, Stacie Crowe, Robert Crimian, Ken Riley and Doug Piatkowski

NOAA Fisheries Staff Present: Michael Burton, Kevin Craig, Todd Kellison, David Dale Frank Helies, Nikhil Mehta, Dr. Chris Taylor, Fritz Rhode, and Dr Lisa Wickliffe,

Chair Anne Deaton convened the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Anne reviewed the agenda. The AP approved the agenda as modified, and reviewed the minutes from the April 2020 meeting as transcribed (Attachment 1: https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A01_HabitatEcosystemAPMinApr20.pdf)

The Advisory Panel approved amended minutes (Dr. Paula Keener had changes which she indicated she would submit to Roger) of April 2020 (Attachment 1) and the revised agenda.

The AP roll was called by Roger to permit voice recognition for the transcriber.

Chair Deaton requested public comment and there was none.

The AP moved into the presentations for the meeting's first session.

1**. NOAA Fisheries EBFM Activities for the South Atlantic Region: Deliverables Supporting FEP II Implementation** (Attachments 2-3: https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A02_Burton_SAFish%20Climate%20Vulnerability%20Assessment.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A03_Craig%20Ecosystem%20Status%20Report%20Oct20.pdf)

Description: Michael Burton, NOAA Fisheries SEFSC Beaufort Lab provided the Panel with a detailed update on the Draft South Atlantic Climate Vulnerability Analysis. He walked the AP through the entire Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) process, providing detailed examples.

Drs. Todd Kellison, and Kevin Craig, NOAA Fisheries SEFSC, Beaufort Lab provided the Panel an update on the Draft South Atlantic Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) in support of the NOAA SA EBFM Implementation Plan. Dr. Craig provided numerous and detailed examples of the metrics and the analyses that will be contained in the ESR.

Panel Member Action: AP members were excited to hear about the SE CVA and asked multiple questions. Chair Deaton confirmed that the anticipated completion date for the report is the end of December. AP members asked about future research, whether reproductive strategies for the species evaluated had been considered, and what sort of ground-truthing might eventually be conducted. Council member Poland, and AP member Laney are both part of the CVA team and explained how reproductive complexity was considered during the assessment. Chair Deaton asked if there is a plan to conduct a Habitat Vulnerability Assessment in the SE and was told that was the hope.

AP members were also very glad to have a detailed briefing on the ESR. Members thanked Dr. Craig for the presentation and noted that some of the data gaps might be trends in fish and coral diseases, and trends in estuarine habitat quality as reflected by fish kills. Members noted that most states do track fish kills and it might be useful to include such data in the ESR. Black gill disease in penaeid shrimp was noted as one possible disease which could be tracked. It was also suggested that the SE CVA could be included as part of the ESR.

[**NOTE**: At this point in the meeting, Agenda Item 2 was skipped and moved to the second day.]

3. **South Atlantic Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) Model** (Attachments 6-10:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A06_Gentry_SSC%20EwE%20Presentation%20October%202020.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A07_EwE_SSC_%20Model_Review_WG_%20Report.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A08_Yan_EwE_Review_Presentation.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A09_McEachron_Ecopath%20with%20Ecosim%20and%20Ecospace%20ApplicationsOct20.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A10_ICES%20Report%20Workshop%20on%20operational%20EwE.pdf)

Description: Roger Pugliese provided the history of the South Atlantic Model from 2001 to the present and noted that there is a Model Team which has built the 2020 model. Lauren Gentry, FWRI EwE model team member, provided AP members an overview of the development and completion of the SA EwE ecosystem model, including a comprehensive diet matrix. Lauren solicited additional diet data from all members who had data to share. Dr. Yan Li provided the SSC/SSC Model Review Workgroup (WG) and Recommendations and noted that the Model Team had taken all of the Model Review Workgroup recommendations and revised the model to incorporate them. Overall, the WG was very impressed with the detail in the model. The model was modified based on the WG's recommendations and the model was strengthened as a result.

Following Dr. Li's presentation, the meeting was recessed for members to secure lunch.

Wednesday October 21, 2020 1:30 – 5:30 pm

The AP reconvened at 1:30 pm, and Luke McEachron, FWRI model team member, provided members an overview of applications of Ecopath, Ecosim and Ecospace. Lauren, Yan and Luke collectively provided background, detailed specifications of the model, and detailed explanations of how the model may be used.

Panel Member Action: AP members asked most questions regarding the Ecospace component of the model and how data layers are configured. Dr. Cherubin asked about the depth data in the model, and Luke explained that some interpolation is required. Members were interested in when the model would be fully calibrated and ready to use to pose "what if" questions. Luke indicated it should be fully calibrated by the end of the year, through the Ecosim component. The full model can't be totally calibrated until the AP and/or Council pose specific questions.

4. **Mapping/Characterization of South Atlantic Deep-Water Ecosystems** (Attachments 11-12, 25-26:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A11_Habitat%20AP%20SAFMC%20Sowers_Final.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A12_Etnoyer_%20Outline%20Deep-Sea%20Coral%20Research%20and%20Exploration%20in%20the%20SE%20US%20Atlantic.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A25_Standardized%20Geomorphic%20Characterization%20of.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A26_%20Crumbling%20Reefs%20and%20Cold%20water%20Coral%20Habitat%20Loss%20in%20a%20Future%20Ocean.pdf)

Description: Heather Coleman and Kasey Cantwell serve as our direct contacts with NOAA and partner deep water coral research in advancing Council priorities and providing ongoing updates to the members. They had planned to introduce and open the session but were delayed due to another meeting. Derek Sowers, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration, Center for Coastal & Ocean Mapping provided members an overview of mapping and geomorphic characterization of deep sea coral ecosystems in the South Atlantic Region followed by Peter Etnoyer, NOAA's Coastal Center for Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research who provided members a review of NOAA Deep Sea Coral Research in the Region. Derek provided the AP with detailed, three-dimensional maps of the newly surveyed areas in the South Atlantic. The big picture is that we have a nearly continuous deep-water coral area covering about 6.9 million acres. Derek noted the striking correlation between the Gulf Stream and the coral mounds.

Peter Etnoyer reviewed the operations of the SE Deep-Sea Coral Initiative. There are 30-50K annotated images, drawn from 9 new cruises since 2016, and 25 data rescues since 1998, from Harbor Branch and NMFS cruises in the past. They wrote contracts and acquired the images and put them in the national database. There are now 12-18,000 coral and sponge records in the HAPC area and beyond.

The Council had previously directed staff to develop options for consideration of two actions for a possible future Coral Amendment to address conservation of newly discovered extensive distribution of deep water coral and coral ecosystems and to consider a previous request by industry to provide access to an area where fishery has occasionally operated along the eastern edge of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank CHAPC established in Coral Amendment 8. To expedite consideration of the one action to create a Shrimp Fishery Access Area along the Northern extension of the Oculina Bank, the Council has asked Advisors to provide input on the issue for Council consideration by the Habitat and Ecosystem Committee during the December Council meeting, as options are being reviewed for possible scoping. The Council Chair, during the September Council meeting webinar emphasized that development of this amendment will not stop coordination and cooperation with NOAA research partners, our Habitat and Ecosystem and Coral advisors and regional partners in review and development of information that will support future consideration for conservation action to protect newly discovered deep water coral ecosystems under a possible future amendment to the Coral FMP. This session is primarily focused on that effort and the action to be considered under Coral Amendment 10 will be discussed by the members as an agenda item later in the meeting.

Panel Member Action: AP members asked about the observed coral rubble and whether there was visible evidence of damage from mobile fishing gear; the response indicated that most of the rubble observed appeared to be natural in origin. Members verified that the new discoveries constitute the largest area of continuous coral mounds known at present in the world's oceans. Members discussed the potential for soon being able to estimate species-production values for various habitats, as mapping nears completion.

Members greatly appreciated Dr. Etnoyer's presentation and all of the images previewed. All of the team's effort has been focused on corals and sponges, and not on invertebrates and/or fishes, since that is their expertise.

The AP had a general discussion regarding what could be done in the future about conservation efforts for deep water corals and sponges. Chair Deaton noted that public comment is open right now for US Ocean Mapping and Characterization Council. AP members were definitely interested in seeing an ecosystem-based management approach being taken in the management of all of these newly discovered habitats. The AP discussed the fact that Coral Amendment 10 could serve as the administrative vehicle for

additional conservation recommendations. Plans are already in place to complete work within some of the large unmapped areas in future cruises, and the mapping which has been accomplished to date goes well beyond what was originally envisioned by the Council. The AP was interested in whether any damage had been observed that might be attributable to the emplacement of fiber optic cables, but the surveys intentionally avoid such areas for safety reasons.

5. **Sand Shoals and Fish Habitat Value for Sand Mining and EFH Assessments** (Attachment 13:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A13c_Sand_Shoal_EFH_SAFMC%20Habitat_2020_Oct%20_final.pdf)

Description: Deena Hansen of BOEM, in cooperation with Dr. Chris Taylor of NOAA-NOS and Brad Pickens of UNC-Wilmington, reviewed information compiled on sand shoals and fish habitat value, and the ShoalMate tool developed to aid in review of these dredging issues. Chris noted that the demand for offshore sands has increased rapidly as nearshore resources have been depleted. Sand shoals are often designated as EFH, but the extent of the shoals is largely unknown. Brad explained the seafloor classification that had been developed, and the species modeling they had done for selected species. The work had originally been pioneered in the Gulf of Mexico, and they had applied what they learned there to the South Atlantic. An important point is that the fish community assemblages using the sand shoals are tied to estuarine wetlands. Brad concluded that the value of sand shoals to fish is highly dependent on the context. Deena reviewed ShoalMATE for the AP and noted it is an internal tool for NOAA to use in evaluating proposed dredging projects on sand shoals. It begins at the three-mile boundary and goes to 50-m depth.

Panel Member Action: AP members asked about adding species to the model (protected species were not included), about the distance to connected wetlands, and about the origin of the fish data used. Dr. Cooksey stated this is a first step and noted the model needs to be improved over time. Roger asked about the availability of the data layers and Chris indicated that some of the data are available. Dr. Cherubin noted that a good test of the EwE model might be to validate the ShoalMATE model. The AP discussed the need for, and other possible sources of, both fishery-independent and fishery-dependent data which may shed more light on the use of sand shoals.

6. **EFH Policy Statement on Beach Dredging and Filling, Beach Re-nourishment and Large-Scale Coastal Engineering** (Attachment 14-18:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A14a_%20Folly%20Nourishment%202018%20Project%20Summary.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A14b_Tweel_2018FollyNourishment_Monitoring.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A15_Assessment%20of%20Fisheries%20Species%20Time-of-Year%20Restrictions%20NC%20and%20SC.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A16_Wickliffe_Windows_10_8_2020.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A17_SAFMCComment-COE_NCDredgeWindowEA.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A18_SAFMCFinalEFHBeachPolicyMarch15.pdf)

Description: Andrew Tweel, SCDNR, gave a presentation to members on the Folly Beach Renourishment Monitoring Study. Andrew provided a detailed overview of the Folly Beach project, covering their results for the morphology of the beach, sediment grain size composition, and all faunal components from benthos, through zooplankton, to nekton, including food habits of the fish encountered in the study. They found minimal impacts to the benthic community, with no impact detected to zooplankton or foraging success of small fish. Donax was decreased at some sites.

Panel Member Action: AP members were able to share some sources of information with Andrew regarding past studies which may be of interest in terms of providing a past baseline of fish abundance at Folly Beach (Larry DeLancy MS work), and also in terms of studies done in other locations (Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge on the North Carolina Outer Banks, work done by Dr. Bob Dolan and Refuge Biologist Dennis Stewart). Dr. Cooksey noted that the observed minimal impacts in this study may have been due in part to the fact that the deposition did miss a high-recruitment period.

The meeting was recessed for the day at 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 22, 2020, 9:00 a.m.-12:23 p.m.

Chair Deaton convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked Dr. Wickliffe to give her presentation which we had deferred the previous afternoon. Anne noted that following this presentation, she would like to hear from the states regarding the pressure they are receiving for year-round sand deposition.

Description: Lisa Wickliffe, NOAA Beaufort Lab, made a presentation to members on the recent publication "An Assessment of Fisheries Species to Inform Time-of-Year Restrictions for North Carolina and South Carolina". Lisa reviewed their study area, in NC and SC. She defined the work moratoria employed in each state and how they work, and the activities they cover. Lisa addressed the extent of sand deposition on beaches in NC, as well as hardened shorelines, and military action zones. She noted that the same beach dredge and fill activities occur in SC as well although perhaps not to the same extent as in NC. The document covers 13 invertebrate and fish species that occur in NC and SC. One of the species that they addressed is Atlantic Sturgeon and Lisa addressed it in detail, noting that the data from the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruises had allowed them to construct a "heat map" of Atlantic Sturgeon abundance during the winter for the areas offshore NC and VA. Lisa noted that they prepared a spatiotemporal table to help to define closure windows.

Panel Member Action: AP members greatly appreciated the work done by Lisa and her colleagues to document the information on the 13 species and to document the need for environmental dredging windows. Brian Hooker asked Lisa if they were planning to put together similar documents for other states, and/or update this document; it will depend on funding availability. Paula noted that she appreciated all of the information and noted that it does provide a great baseline and she would support updating it regularly.

7. **BOEM Research and Energy Development** (Attachment 19:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A19_HookerBOEM_Atl%20Renewable%20Energy%20Update%20Oct20.pdf)

Description: Brian Hooker, BOEM representative on the AP, provided members with an update on research and energy development activities in the South Atlantic with a focus on the Renewable Energy Program and recent advances in the Kitty Hawk Offshore Wind Project. The South Atlantic High-

Resolution Aerial Wildlife Surveys is ongoing. Brian shared the numbers of detections from that survey. They anticipate a final report in 2021.

Panel Member Action: AP members were interested in the impact of the recent Presidential Executive Order on lease sales, which affects wind leases as well as oil and gas. Brian indicated that those projects which were able to complete lease agreements and/or other ongoing requirements before the end of the calendar year may be able to proceed.

8. **Updates – Coral Amendment 10** (Attachments 20-22:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A20_PuglieseCoralAmend10PresSept20.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A21_NCCOS-TM-244_Wagner_2018.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A22_Coral-Amendment-8_-Final-Nov-26-2013.pdf)

Description: Roger Pugliese provided members an overview of the issue and action under consideration for Coral Amendment 10 to address a previous request by the Rock Shrimp industry to provide access to a narrow area along the eastern edge of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank CHAPC established in Coral Amendment 8. He provided a detailed explanation of the request for modification of the closed area boundary, and detailed maps which depicted the area involved. Some very small percentage (less than two percent) of trawling for Rock Shrimp had taken place in part of the area, prior to the establishment of the CHAPC.

Panel Member Action: AP members generally expressed concerns regarding modification of the existing boundary. Dr. Laney noted that given the proximity to the CHAPC boundary, given the low percentage of historical effort in the area, and given the fact that there is some "low relief" coral habitat in the area, he questioned the need to open the area. Dr. Baumstark noted that historical perspective should be considered. He agreed with Wilson on his comment. Several other members noted the need to define "low relief" and to put the area in proper context. Dr. Cooksey stated she would be the odd one out, and advocate for supporting the fishing industry where we can. The AP had an extensive discussion of the historical extent of fishing in the area, corridor widths, and the desire to provide a buffer zone adjacent to coral pinnacles. Trish Murphey recommended that Roger attempt to secure VMS data for before and after the establishment of the CHAPC. She noted that if the area was reopened, and therefore represented "new" ground for fishing, it could be heavily used. John Ellis suggested that if we can look at the effort data, we should perhaps consider narrowing the area in those areas which were lightly fished. Roger noted that the points that had been raised are important for consideration by the council. He noted that it will be important to hear from the industry. Rita agreed that socioeconomic concerns are not the purview of the Habitat AP, but she felt that we should at least consider them. The AP requested that Roger keep them informed with regard to any Council action on this item, and especially with respect to future opportunities to put additional conservation measures in place for the additional area of continuous coral pinnacles.

9. **Southeast Seafloor Mapping Prioritization Project** (Attachments 23-23b:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A23_Buckel_Seafloor%20Mapping%20Prioritization%20SE_Overview.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A23b_SE_US_prioritization_Results_Buckel.pdf)

Description: Christine Buckel, NCCOS Marine Spatial Ecology Division, gave a presentation to members on the Southeast Seafloor Mapping Prioritization project. The rationale for the project is to improve seafloor habitat mapping coordination in the SE Region. Christine noted that the mapping is more than just habitat mapping. The seafloor mapping aids the Blue Economy, navigation and commerce, sustainable resource management, and wise ocean stewardship. Christine noted that they had invited 43 organizations to participate in the project, and 25 of them participated. Christine noted that there is a NOAA Technical Report in preparation due out next month.

Panel Member Action: AP members thanked Christine for her presentation. Dr. Laney noted that he has told students that we know more about the details of the moon's surface, than we do about the seafloor, and Christine confirmed that she shared that belief. AP members were interested in seeing all bathymetric data combined into seamless map coverage, and also in seeing the securing of better bathymetric data for inshore shallow estuarine areas. Several AP members will be following up with Christine to secure additional information and also to encourage making obtaining bathymetric data for inshore areas higher priority.

10**. Briefings** (Attachment 24:

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A24_Bahamian%20Oil%20Spill%20Summary%20Aug%2020.pdf)

Description: Dr. Marcel Reichert, SCDNR MRRI briefed the members on the impact of COVID -19 on fishery independent research activities in the region and provided an update on development of the SA-SEAMAP /SECOORA data management system. Roger Pugliese provided members a briefing on the Hurricane Dorian Bahamian Oil Spill and on recent activities of the CCC Habitat Workgroup including a NOAA Fisheries Science Center/ Habitat Workshop.

Panel Member Action: AP members received the briefings and were especially pleased with the transfer of the SEAMAP database to the SECOORA data management system. They also appreciated the briefing on the Equinor/STATOIL spill in the Bahamas, and the information regarding improving coordination with the NMFS Science Centers which the CCC Work Group is encouraging.

Chair Deaton noted that the last item on our agenda is Item 2, which we had deferred from the previous day.

2**. FEP II Implementation and Strategic Planning** (Attachments 4-5:
https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A04_SAFMC%20FEP%20II%20Two%20Year%20Roadmap%20Update%20Oct%209%2020.pdf

https://safmc.net/download/BB%20HabitatEcosystem%20AP%20Oct20/A05_%20EFHEBFMAppendix%20_April%202019.pdf)

Description: Roger facilitated a brief discussion of an update to FEP II Implementation Plan Two Year Roadmap reviewing and refining information on State, Federal and regional partner activities addressing priority actions. He had created a spreadsheet, which had been reviewed by Anne, Cindy and Wilson. Roger suggested that the best way to proceed, given the time, is for AP members to review the sheet and provide comments.

Panel Member Action: Members will review the spreadsheet and provide feedback to Roger and Anne. Roger asked that any changes come back to him by next Friday (October 30). Roger noted that ultimately, he would like this to be an online tool embedded in the dashboard, and that would enable it to evolve over time. Roger suggested that next year, we can take a look to see what other things can be added, or remain, or be taken off the list. We need to consider creating a document that lays out in a distinct way how all the systems are connected. Roger asked that we think about that as we move forward into the future.

Anne asked for any other business. There was none. Anne asked for an update on the Florida Keys Restoration Plan. Rene indicated that he will have to give us an update via e-mail. Roger asked that Rene ping the FKNMS to put their representative back on the AP. Rene noted that there is a new science coordinator. Anne noted that Rene can brief us at the next AP meeting.

Steve Poland expressed his appreciation for the AP's comments and participation. He noted that other Council members had been on the call during the last couple of days. The AP feedback is valued by the Council as they make their decisions.

Anne noted that the next Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel meeting will be in April 2021. She thanked everyone for their participation.

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.