

**FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
HABITAT PROTECTION AND ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Jekyll Island, Georgia
March 6, 2017**

The Committee met March 6, 2017 and were provided; an overview of working drafts of FEP II Sections; an update on regional coordination supporting habitat and ecosystem tools and model development; and a presentation on NMFS Draft South Atlantic Regional Action Plan for Climate Science.

Brett Boston, Group Solutions Inc. provided an overview of the overall structure of FEP II including working drafts of FEP II Sections on South Atlantic Food Web and Connectivity, South Atlantic Climate Variability and Fisheries, Managed Species, Artificial Reefs and South Atlantic Habitats, EFH and EFH Policies and associated linkages.

Council staff provided an update on activities supporting habitat and ecosystem tool development including the EcoSpecies web-enabled species information system supporting FEP II and the regional South Atlantic ecosystem modeling effort funded by the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (SALCC). The SALCC is conducting workshops noted below to further refine the Conservation Blueprint and indicators which draw on Council conservation of EFH and managed areas, better linking to Council mandates and FEP II:

Tuesday, March 21 at the NC Botanical Gardens - 100 Old Mason Farm Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27517 (Reeves Auditorium North) 9:30am – 3:15pm

Tuesday, April 11 at the Florida Sheriff's Association Building - 2617 Mahan Dr, Tallahassee, FL 32308 9:30am – 3:15pm

Thursday, April 13 at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 4 HQ building - 1875 Century Blvd. Atlanta GA 30345 (Sam Hamilton Conference Room) 9:30am – 3:15pm

Thursday, April 27 at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries HQ building - 7870 Villa Park Drive, Suite 400, Henrico, VA, 23228 (board room) 9:30am – 3:15pm

Tuesday, May 2 at Edisto Hall, James Island County Park - 871 Riverland Dr, Charleston, SC 29412 9:30am – 3:15pm

Thursday, May 4 at the SC State Museum - 301 Gervais St, Columbia, SC 29214 (Gervais St. Room) 9:30am – 3:15pm

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith, NMFS SEFSC provided the Committee a presentation on the NMFS Draft South Atlantic Regional Action Plan for Climate Science.

No Motions were made by the Committee.

TIMING AND TASKS

MOTION #1: Move to approve timing and tasks.

- Council staff will work with writing teams to ensure FEP II Sections on Food Webs and Connectivity and Climate Variability and Fisheries track approved Executive Summaries

and associated Policy Statements. In addition, recommended revisions to other FEPII Sections provided during and subsequent to the meeting will be addressed by the Section review teams.

- Council staff will advance partner funded South Atlantic Ecosystem model development and schedule an expanded modeling team meeting in May 2017.
- Council staff will develop comments on the Draft South Atlantic Regional Action Plan for Climate Science for the Chairs consideration and submission by March 25. Members and advisors input should be provided staff by March 20.
- The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel, during their May 2017 meeting is requested to include an agenda item on international Sargassum conservation efforts and new potential threats. The Panel will also review and complete a new draft EFH Policy Statement on Artificial Reefs for Council consideration for approval in June.
- Council staff will draw on expertise on the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel, writing and technical teams and regional partners to initiate development of a concise implementation strategy for FEP II building on approved policies developed for FEP II.

APPROVE BY COUNCIL