

Overview

Law Enforcement Committee

Renaissance Orlando Airport Hotel
5445 Forbes Place
Orlando, FL

The Committee will: (A) receive briefings from NOAA OLE and the USCG on enforcement activity in the deepwater MPAs, (B) review the three nominees for the 2011 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award, and (C) address issues under Other Business as needed.

A. Enforcement in the South Atlantic Deepwater MPAs (*Attachments 1 & 2*)

As the Council prepares to consider establishment of Marine Protected Areas to address discard mortality of speckled hind and warsaw grouper, frequent questions have arisen on the enforceability of existing MPAs (Oculina Experimental Closed Area and Deepwater MPAs). While the Council has been very aware of the difficulties in enforcing regulations in remote MPAs in the region (*Attachments 1 & 2*), the same challenges remain today. The Law Enforcement Committee will receive a briefing from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard on enforcement activity that has taken place in the region's MPAs in recent years.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

B. Law Enforcement Officer of the Year 2011 (*Attachments 3-5*)

Nominees from each of the region's enforcement agencies were submitted to the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP) during April 2012. The intent is to select a deserving Law Enforcement Officer of the Year to receive an award from the Council at the September 2012 meeting in Charleston. The LEAP considered all of the nominations and selected three nominees to pass along to the Law Enforcement Committee for their consideration. The LEAP did not rank the nominees.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review nominations and make a recommendation to the Council for a LEOY award recipient for calendar year 2011.

C. Other Business

Mutton snapper aggregate to spawn during the full moon of May in waters off the Florida Keys. The "mutton spawn" is an annual event marked by derby-style conditions as fishermen (commercial and recreational) take advantage of the abundance of fish during this time. The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and many fishermen have expressed their concern over this practice and requested that management action be undertaken to

minimize impact to the stock. NOAA OLE agents have approached Council staff in the past and did so again recently to pass along complaints from the public and concerned fishermen (see *Attachment 6*).

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.