

Restoration Blueprint

An Effort to Restore Critical Marine Habitats in the Florida Keys

Consultation with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council



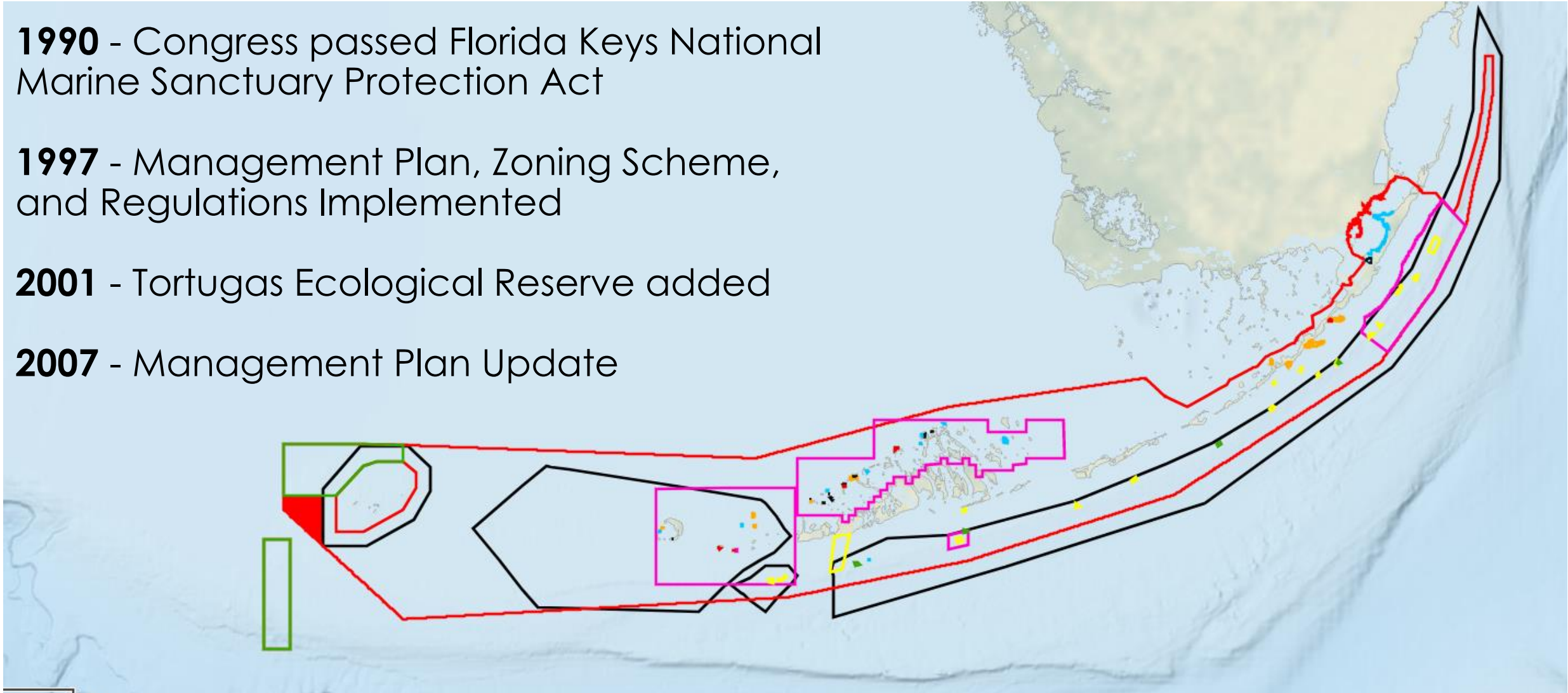
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

1990 - Congress passed Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Protection Act

1997 - Management Plan, Zoning Scheme, and Regulations Implemented

2001 - Tortugas Ecological Reserve added

2007 - Management Plan Update



Blue Economy of Florida Keys NMS

Tourism

5.5 million visitors in 2018

Boating

4.5 million boaters per annum

Diving and Snorkeling

1.62 million divers and snorkelers per annum

Commercial Fishing

79% of the catch from the sanctuary is processed in Monroe County

Recreational Fishing

2.4 million people fish in FKNMS each year



Economic Impact of Residents and Visitors



A Healthy Florida Keys Ecosystem Provides:

\$4.7 Billion

Monroe County
economy

5.5 million

Visitors

60%

of Monroe County
economy

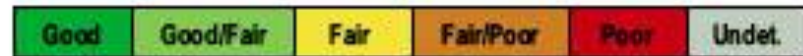
Natural Resources in the Florida Keys

The Future of the Florida Keys Marine Environment is at Risk



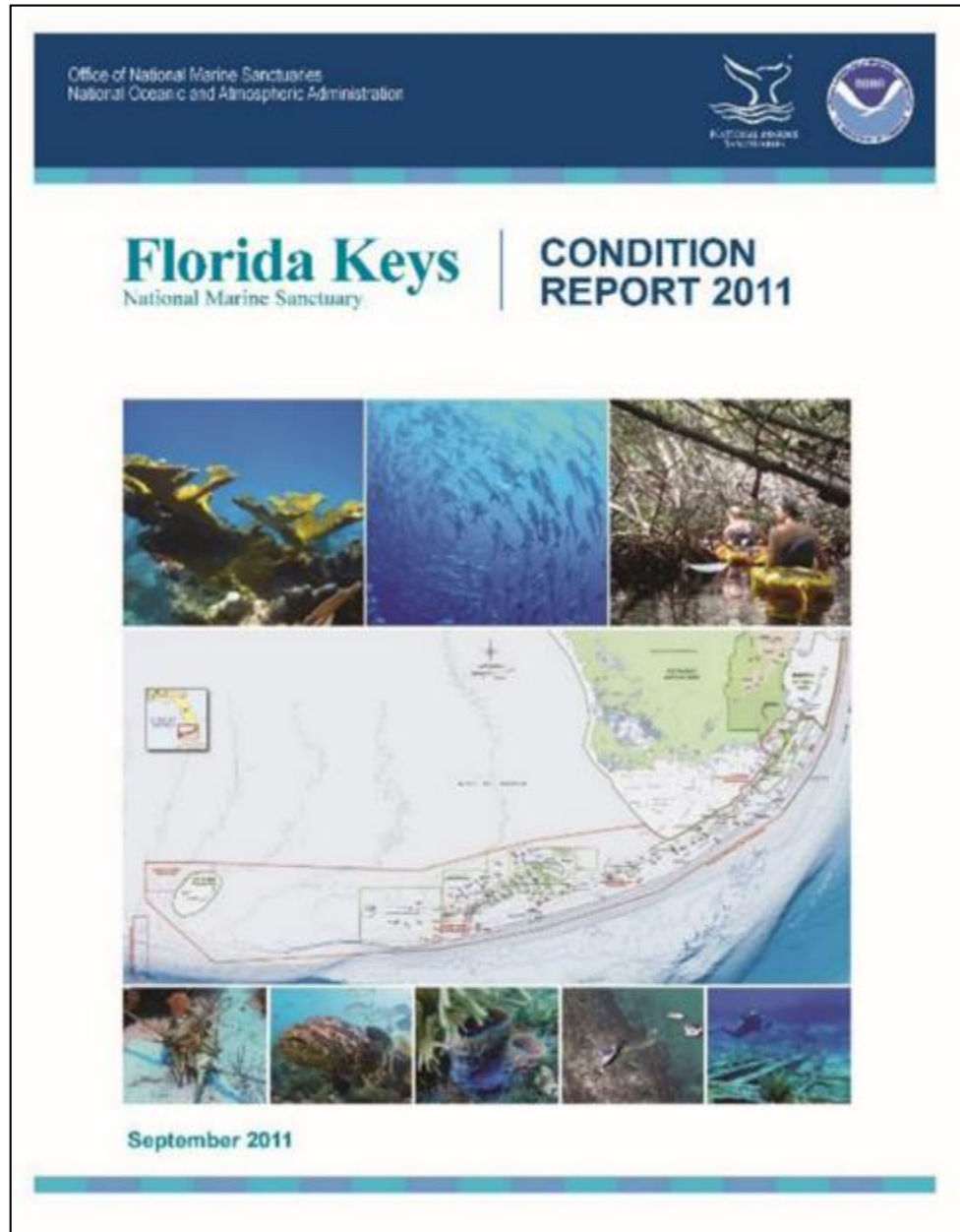
Resource Report Card

Brought attention to natural resource declines

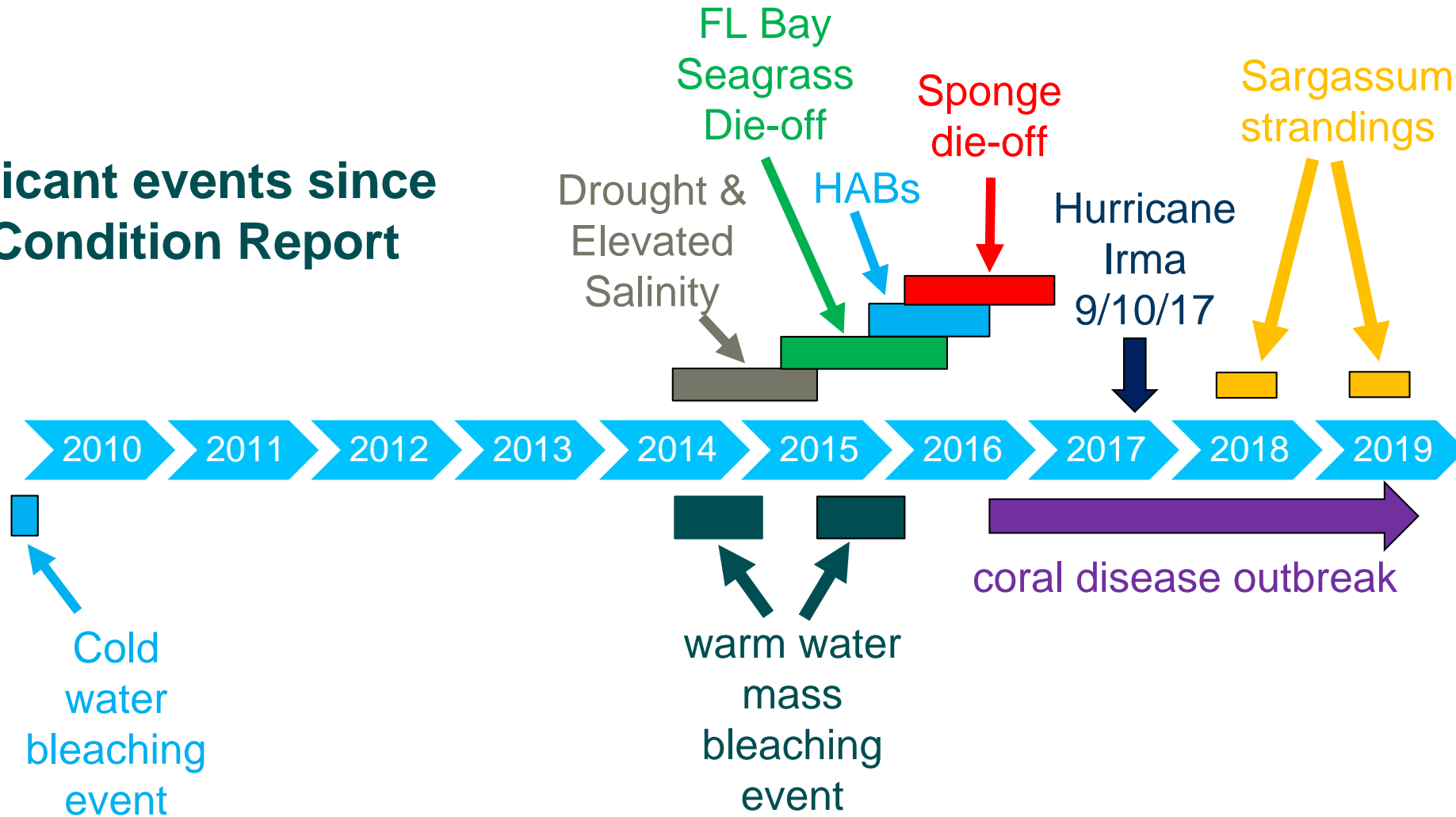


Trends:

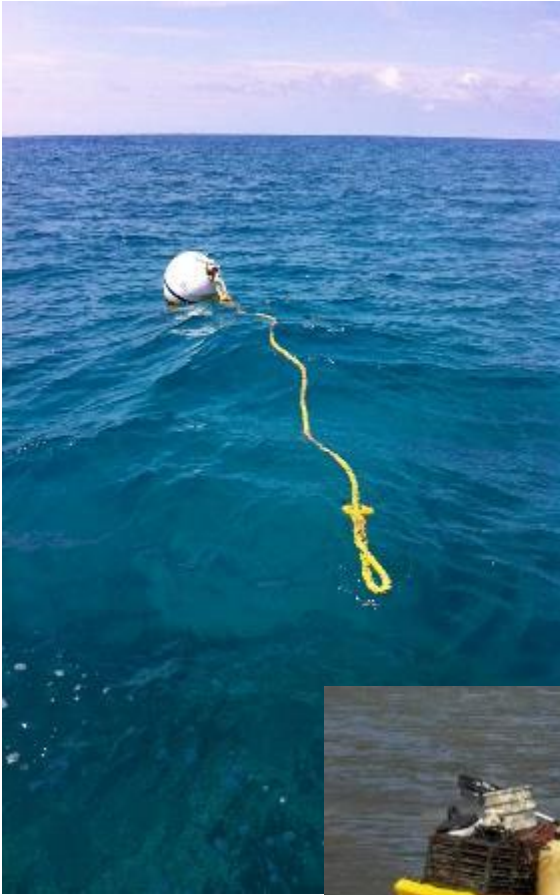
- ▲ Conditions appear to be improving.
- Conditions do not appear to be changing.
- ▼ Conditions appear to be declining.
- ? Undetermined trend.
- N/A Question not applicable.



Significant events since 2011 Condition Report



Local action to enhance resilience



Why Create a Blueprint?



Healthy Florida Keys

A healthy Florida Keys marine ecosystem is the foundation for a strong economy.

Natural Resources

Numerous stressors are putting the future of the Florida Keys marine environment at risk.

Planning for the Future

We need a plan that addresses the threats to our marine environment and helps us maintain the natural resources that are key to our economy.

Community-led Effort

Sanctuary Advisory Council



50 Council Members +
35 Community Members



70 Public Meetings +
> 1,500 Public Comments



200 Recommendations
to Superintendent



Sanctuary Advisory Council Goals:

Improve biological diversity; restore and enhance natural systems

Facilitate public and private resource use compatible with resource protection



Sanctuary Advisory Council Working Groups

Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection

9 advisory council and 10 community members

- Evaluate existing Wildlife Management Areas and recommend new areas to further protect seagrass and critical shallow water habitats.

Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration

11 advisory council and 4 community members

- Identify specific areas for active coral reef ecosystem restoration.

Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves, Sanctuary Preservation Areas, and Wildlife Management

7 advisory council and 9 community members

- Recommend new or modified ecological reserves to ensure protection of a diversity of resources:
 - Spawning aggregations
 - Full suite of marine flora and fauna (i.e., seabird, marine mammal, turtles, seagrass, soft corals, hard corals)

Agency Coordination

Florida State Agencies

- DEP
- FWC Commissioners
- SHPO
- Governor and Cabinet

NOAA Fisheries

Fishery Management Councils

- South Atlantic FMC
- Gulf of Mexico FMC

Agency Partners

- DOI (USFWS, BOEM, NPS)
- Navy
- USCG



Fishery Management Council Consultation Opportunity

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act – Purposes and Policies

NMSA Section 301(b) – Purpose and Policies

- * Identify, designate, and manage the sanctuary system
 - * Build and strengthen the sanctuary system
 - * Enhance nation-wide public awareness
 - * Enhance understanding of ecosystem processes
 - * Facilitate compatible human use in sanctuaries
 - * Strengthen global protection of marine resources
-

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act – Procedures for Designation and Implementation

NMSA **Section** **304(a)(5) –** **Fishing** **Regulations**

- * Provide appropriate Regional FMC opportunity to prepare draft regulations for fishing
 - * Council may draft regulations or determine regulations are not necessary
 - * Council action must fulfill NMSA purposes and policies and goals and objectives of designation
 - * Use national standards of Magnuson-Stevens Act as guidance
 - * If Council declines, determination is rejected or, fails to act in timely manner, Secretary shall prepare fishing regulations
 - * Cooperate with other fishery management authorities
-

Proposed Action

Applicable to South Atlantic Fishery Management Council jurisdiction

Proposed Action

Alternatives

No Action

Range of Reasonable Alternatives (3)

Alternative 3 is agency preferred

Alternative Components

Management Plan activities

Boundary expansion

Sanctuary-wide regulations

Marine zones & zone specific regulations



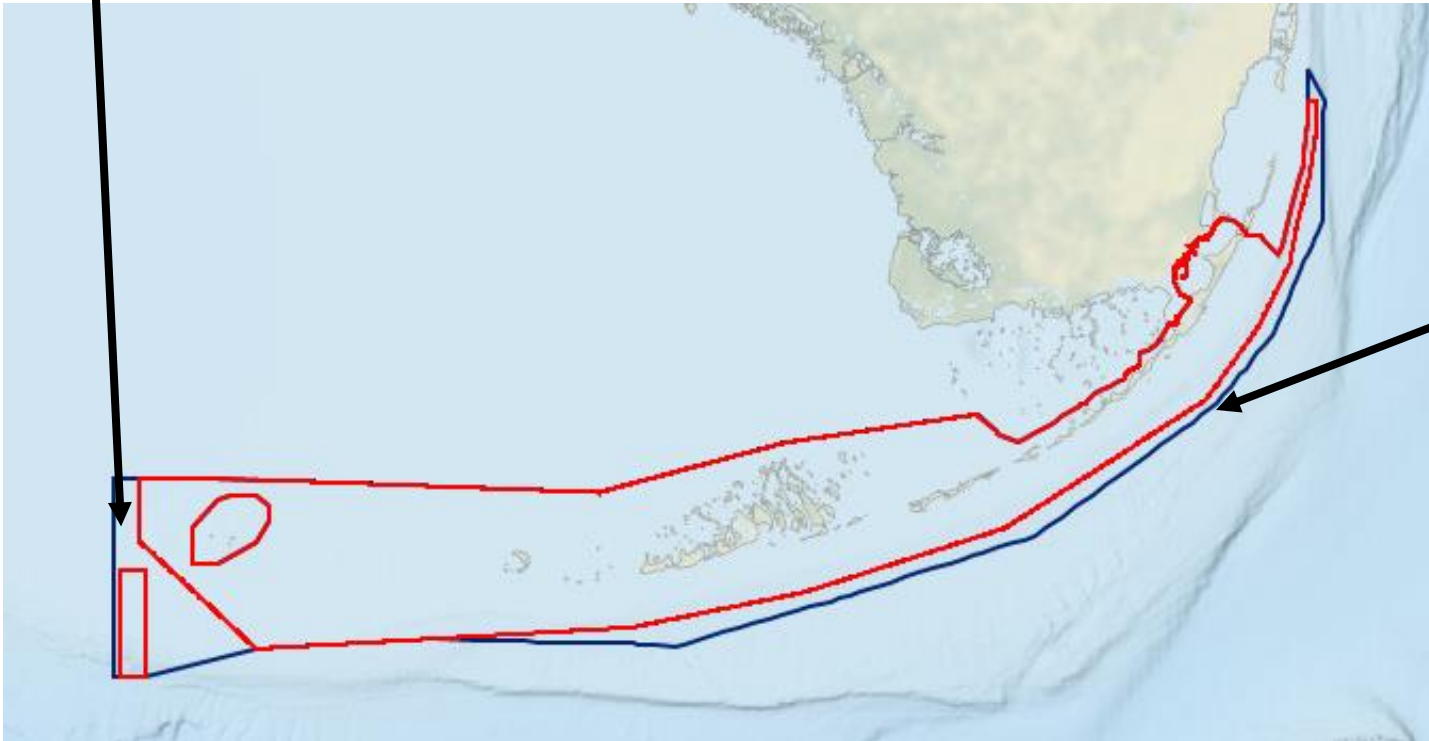
Sanctuary Boundary



Sanctuary Boundary Expansion

Alternatives 2 & 3 (preferred)

Connectivity- Tortugas



Consistent regulation- Expand boundary to include areas already closed to large vessel traffic

Sanctuary-wide Regulations



Sanctuary-wide Regulations

Status quo and proposed clarifications underlined



Traditional fishing means those commercial or recreational fishing activities that were customarily conducted within the sanctuary prior to its designation as identified in the environmental impact statement and management plan (EIS/MP) for this sanctuary, as managed by the appropriate federal (National Marine Fisheries Service in coordination with South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council) and state (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) agencies.

Traditional fishing does not include use of novel or new gear types to catch species that were fished by other means as identified in the EIS/MP; does not include use of gear types (modified or not) identified in the EIS/MP to catch species those gear types were not originally intended to catch; or does not include use of gear or harvest of species outside of the seasons/time of year identified in the EIS/MP.

Sanctuary-wide Regulations

Status Quo – no change throughout alternatives

(4) *Discharge or deposit of materials or other matter.* (i) Discharging or depositing, from within the boundary of the Sanctuary, any material or other matter, except:

(A) Fish, fish parts, chumming materials, or bait used or produced incidental to and while conducting a traditional fishing activity in the Sanctuary;

Marine Zone Boundaries & Regulations



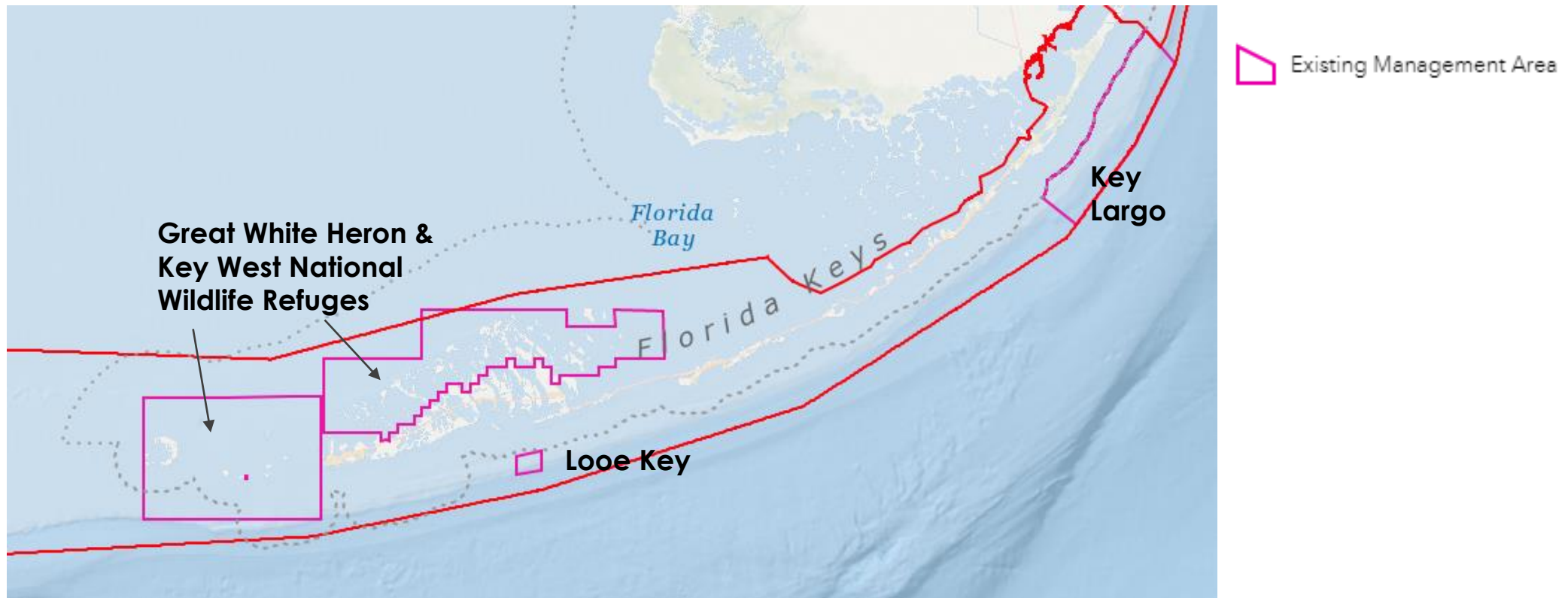
Marine Zones

- Individual zone types provide different levels of protection
- Blueprint proposes new zones to address persistent threats to resource health, protect a range of habitat types, and facilitate restoration



Existing Management Areas

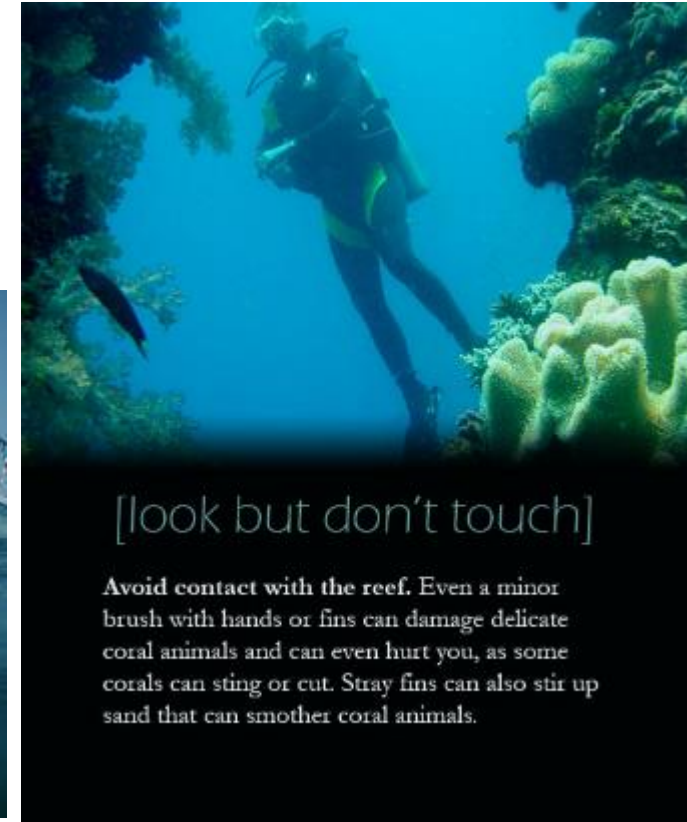
Areas that were already established when FKNMS was designated in 1990
Proposed name update from “Existing Management Areas”



Sanctuary Preservation Area

Manage activities to separate conflicting use and protect habitats

Regulations: prohibit discharge, fishing, touching or anchoring on coral



[look but don't touch]

Avoid contact with the reef. Even a minor brush with hands or fins can damage delicate coral animals and can even hurt you, as some corals can sting or cut. Stray fins can also stir up sand that can smother coral animals.

Conservation Area

Status Quo: Ecological Reserves and Special Use Areas

Most protective zone type - protect range of habitats, facilitate research

Regulations: transit only (without a valid sanctuary permit)

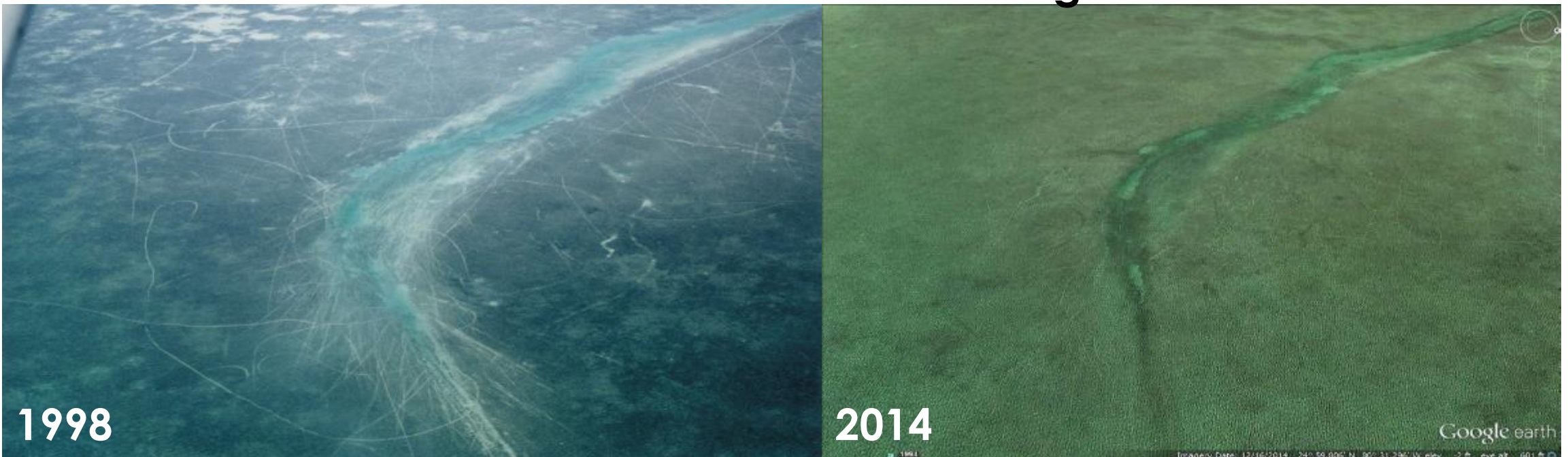


Wildlife Management Area

Restrict vessel operations to protect seagrass and hardbottom habitat

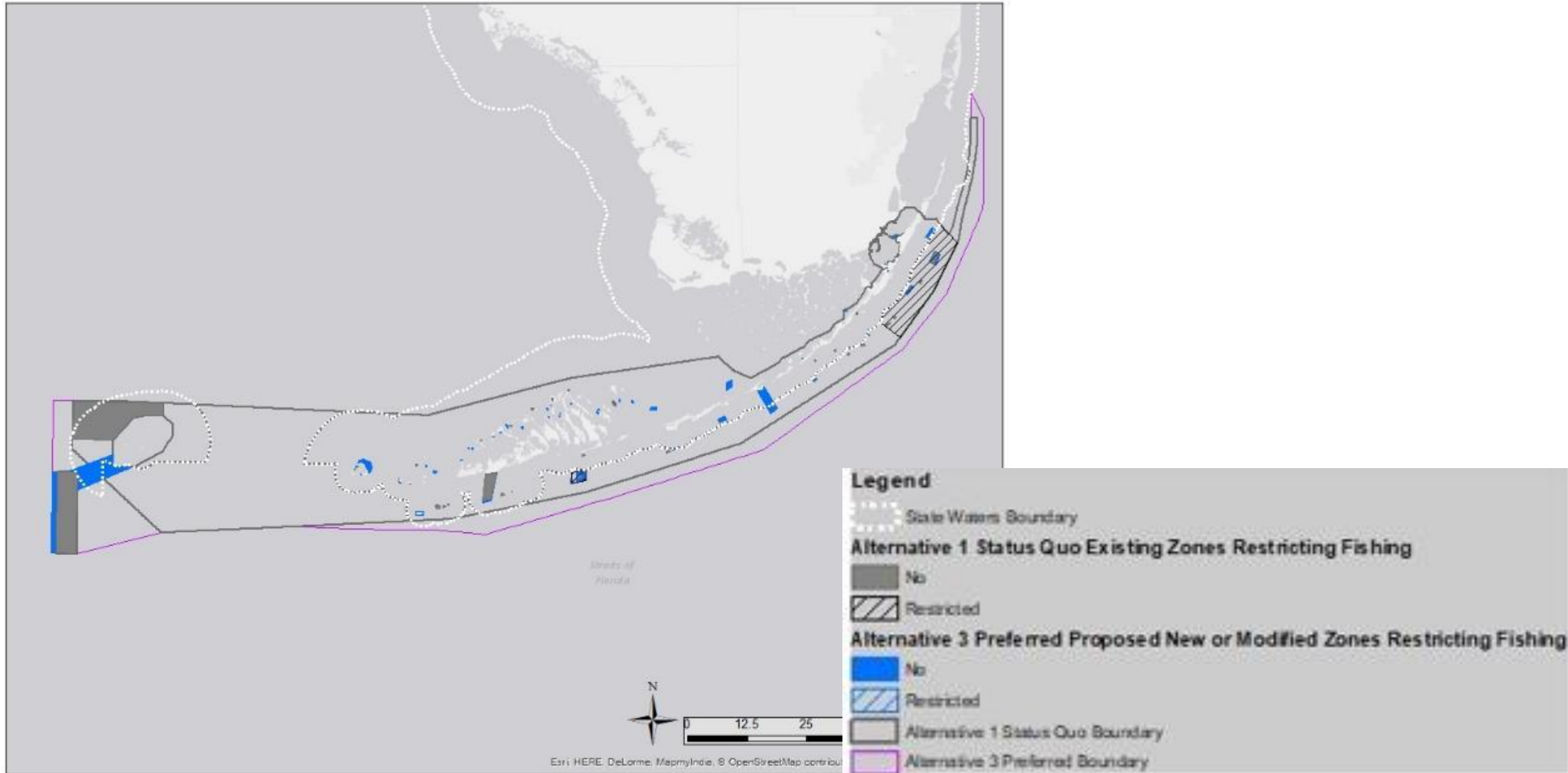
Regulation Options: no anchor, idle speed/no wake, no motor, no entry

Tavernier Key No Motor zone
before & after zoning

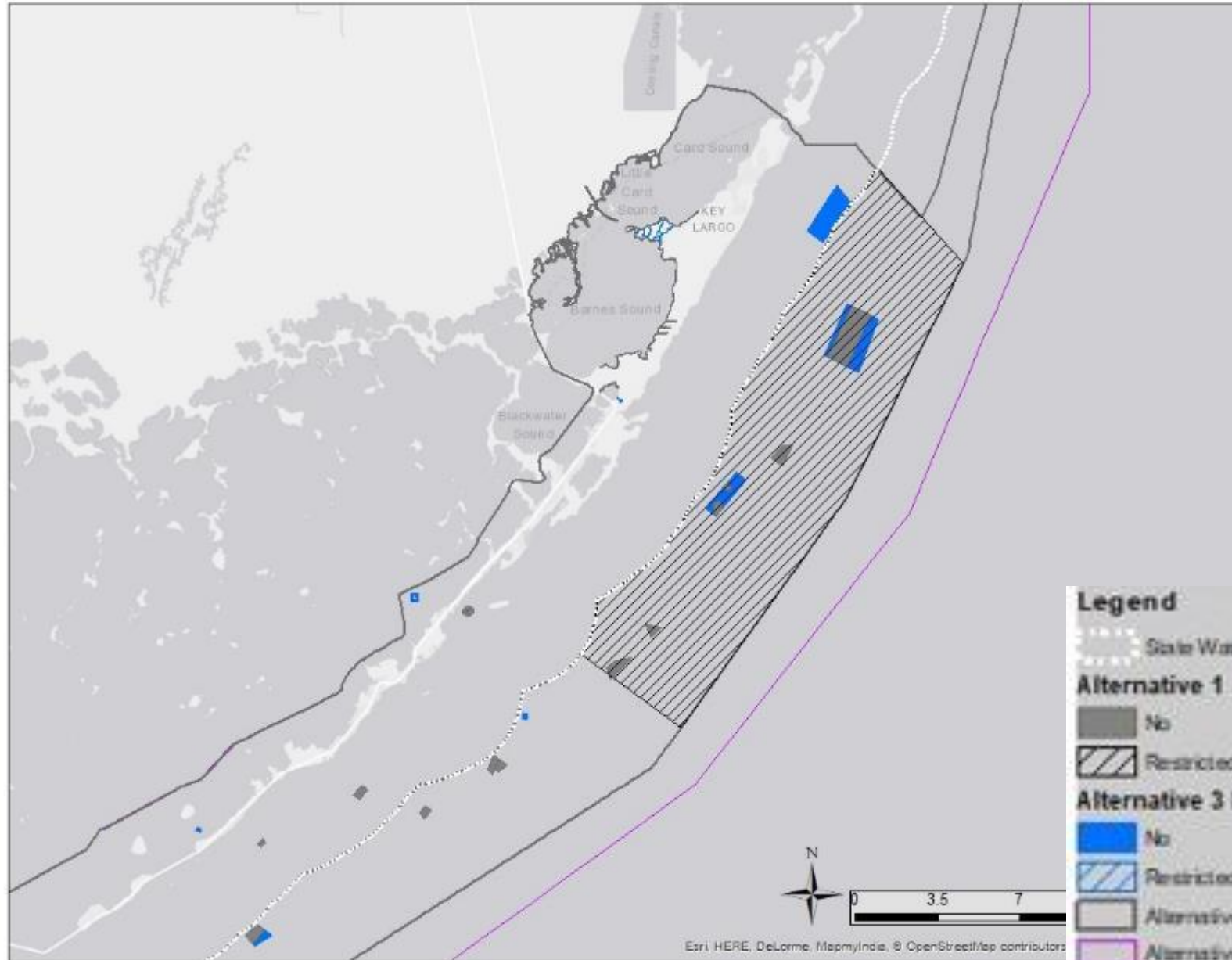


Photos: Curtis Kruer; Florida Keys Shallow Water Boating Impact Analysis and Trends Assessment - Mapping Summary Report, March 2017

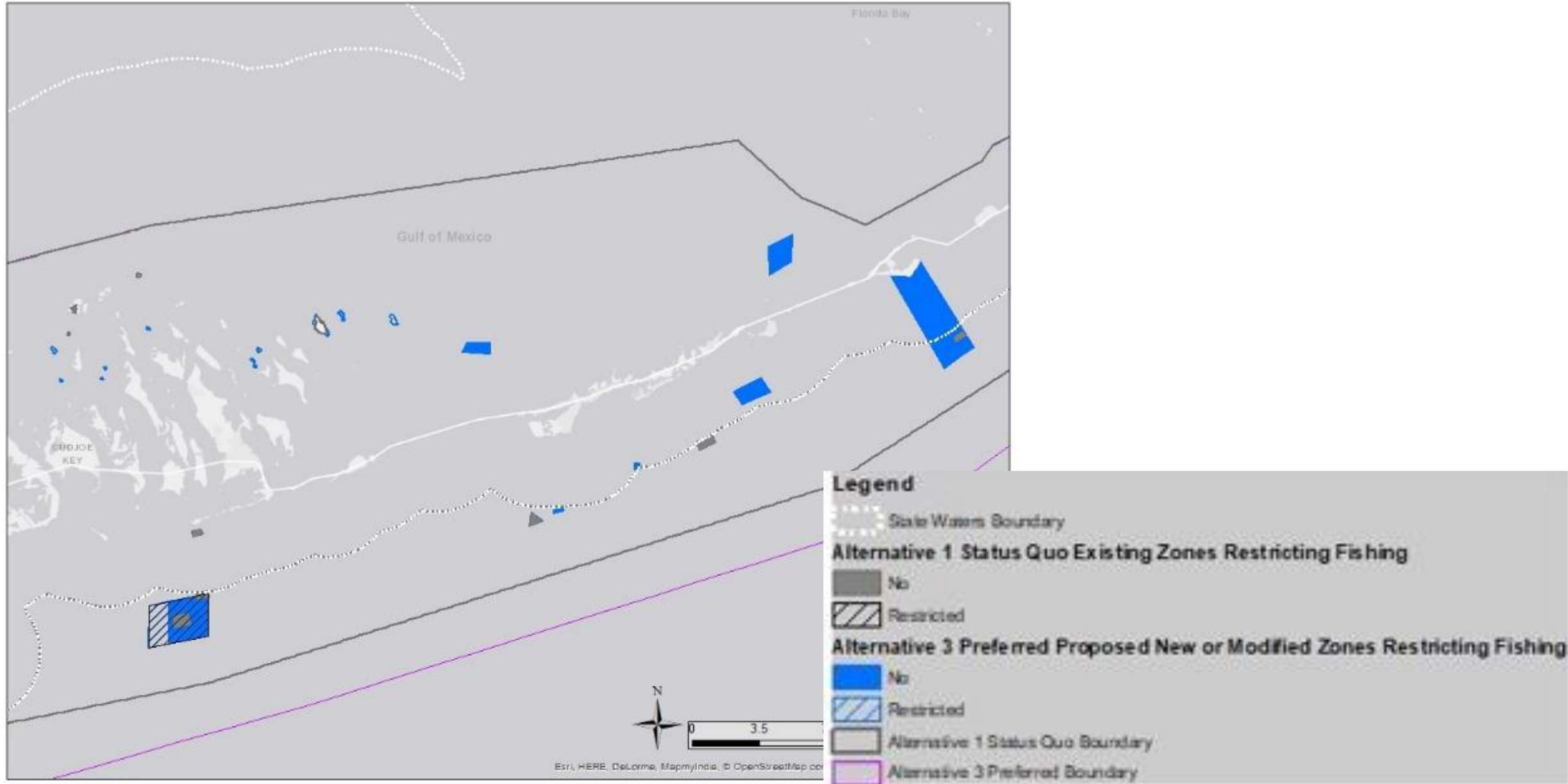
Marine Zones: Status Quo & Preferred



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Marine Zones: Status Quo & Preferred



Marine Zones: Status Quo & Preferred



Marine Zones: Sanctuary Preservation Area

General approach across alternatives

Alternative 1 - Status Quo

Existing SPA regulations* prohibit:

- Discharge, touching coral, certain anchoring restrictions;
- Fishing, possessing marine life except:
 - Baitfishing allowed by permit in all SPAs
 - Catch and release trolling allowed in some SPAs: Conch, Alligator, Sombrero, and Sand Key SPAs

Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 propose to:

- Eliminate:
 - Baitfishing Permits
 - Catch and release trolling
- Add:
 - Idle Speed/No Wake
 - No Anchor

*For full text of existing regulations see: 15 CFR 922 Subpart P

Management Plan

Management Approach

GOAL 1: Improve our Understanding of Sanctuary Resources, Ecosystem Services, and their Value to the Florida Keys Economy.

GOAL 2: Maintain or Improve the Condition of Sanctuary Resources and, where possible, Restore Ecosystem Structure and Function.

GOAL 3: Maintain or Increase Efforts to Reduce Threats to Sanctuary Resources and Manage Human Uses and Associated Impacts.

GOAL 4: Increase Awareness and Support for FKNMS and its Resources.

GOAL 5: Advance and Support Collaborative and Coordinated Management.



Summary of Alternatives

NOAA's Preferred Alternative:

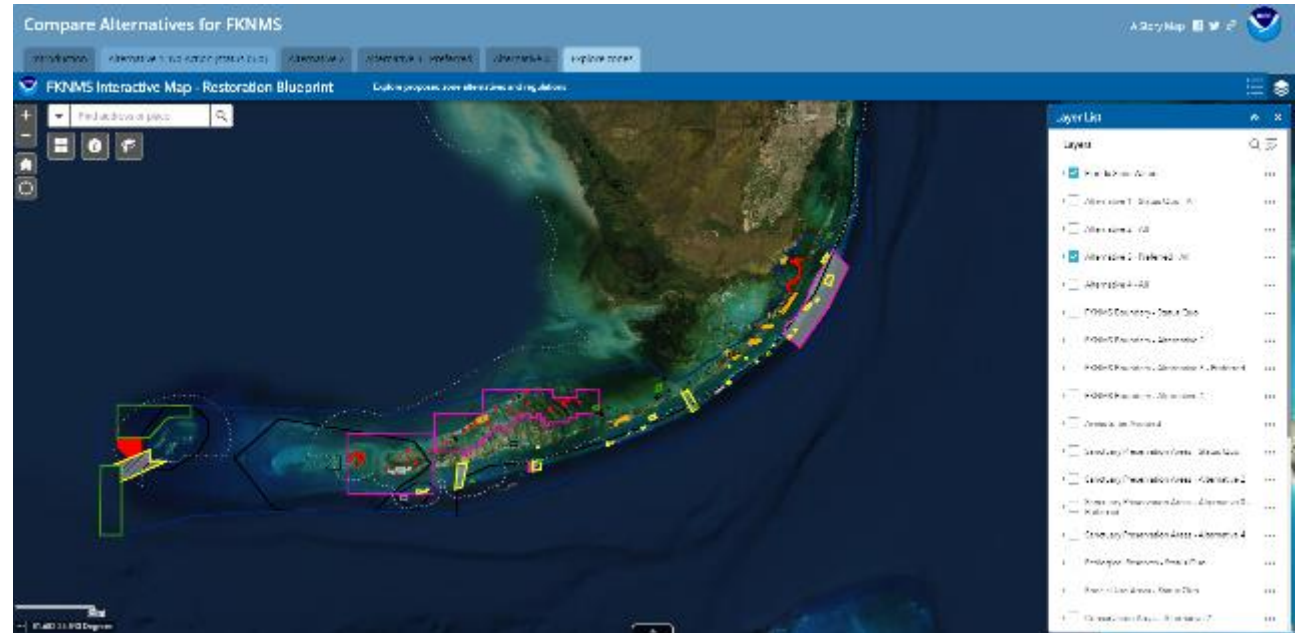
- 1. Expand the sanctuary boundary:**
 - protect connected habitats
- 2. Update sanctuary-wide regulations:**
 - be consistent with state regulations
 - provide additional authority to address threats to sanctuary resources
- 3. Modify and create new marine zones:**
 - provide targeted habitat protections
 - protect additional habitat types
 - protect wildlife including ESA listed coral species
 - facilitate research and restoration
 - manage human uses and impacts
- 4. Revise the management plan:**
 - advance understanding
 - improve sanctuary resource condition
 - reduce threats and impacts
 - enhance stewardship
 - advance collaboration and partnership



Restoration Blueprint Information Tools

Dedicated webpage at floridakeys.noaa.gov/blueprint

Interactive Map will be available to explore alternatives



Fishery Management Council and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Sessions

Date	Meeting Type	Engagement opportunity	Location
September 16	GMFMC Coral SSC, Coral AP, Shrimp AP	Presentation, Q&A, Discussion	Tampa, FL
October 2	GMFMC Reef Fish AP	Presentation, Q&A, Discussion	Tampa, FL
October 2	FWC Commission Meeting	Presentation, Q&A	Cape Canaveral, FL
October 10	SAFMC Snapper Grouper AP	Presentation, Q&A, Discussion	Webinar
October 21	GMFMC Meeting	Presentation, Q&A	Galveston, TX
October 22	SAFMC Ecosystem Habitat Protection AP	Presentation, Q&A, Discussion	St. Petersburg, FL
October 29	SAFMC Shrimp, Coral, Dolphin/Wahoo, and Mackerel/Cobia APs	Presentation, Q&A, Discussion	Webinar
December 2-6	SAFMC Meeting	Presentation, Q&A	Wilmington, NC
December 11-12	FWC Commission Meeting	TBD, Public Comment likely	TBD
January 27	GMFMC Meeting	Discussion/recommendation	New Orleans, LA

Advisory Council and Public Information Sessions

Date	Meeting Type	Public engagement opportunity	Location
September 23	Public Information Session	Written Q&A; Written Comment	Key West
September 30	Public Information Session	Written Q&A; Written Comment	Marathon
October 7	Public Information Session	Written Q&A; Written Comment	Tavernier
October 15	Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting	Written and Oral Public Comment	Key West
October 28	Public Information & Comment Opportunity	Written Q&A; Oral Public Comment	Miami
November 4	Public Information & Comment Opportunity	Written Q&A; Oral Public Comment	Ft. Myers
November 6	Public Comment Opportunity	Written and Oral Public Comment	Marathon (TBD)
December 10	Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting	Written and Oral Public Comment	Islamorada

Public Comment Period:
Submit public comments:

August 20, 2019 through January 31, 2020
www.regulations.gov



THANK YOU

Insert Image