

## **Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting (Attachment 1) Oculina Outreach Update**

This overview provides highlights of recent outreach activities associated with the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area as well as the HAPC and deepwater corals.

### **Portable Educational Display for Oculina Coral - Update**

As the briefing book is being compiled, final edits are being completed for the Oculina Bank portable display layout. The portable display is designed to help increase public awareness of the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area and associated Habitat Area of Particular Concern. A draft version of the table top exhibit design was distributed to the Information and Education Advisory Panel, Coral Advisory Panel, and members of the Information and Education Committee for review and comment. The general comments were favorable and we received several helpful recommendations for minor edits to the layout. These edits are being incorporated into the overall design.

Coordination of the production of the display is being lead by Council staff working in conjunction with Karen Swanson from GH Services to design the display and coordinate with Skyline Portable Displays. The display will include a 6' portable table top paneled unit (similar to the Council's current display), two table throws, and a DVD player and monitor. The display is being designed to work as either a stand- alone unit (unmanned) or with the addition of a separate table, to accommodate staff or others using the display. We are targeting completion in time to have the display at the June meeting in Stuart, FL.

Funding for the display is being supported though a grant by NOAA Fisheries Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP). The portable display will focus on raising public awareness of the unique coral habitat area, management efforts to protect Oculina and other deepwater corals, and research efforts to assess the effectiveness of the Closed Area.

The use of a portable display as an educational tool was one of several outlined in the Outreach component of the Oculina Experimental Closed Area Evaluation Plan. The display offers flexibility as an outreach tool and would be shared between agencies and utilized at various trade (i.e., fishing/boating) shows, conferences, teacher workshops, etc.

The display will also serve to emphasize the various partner agencies involved in the conservation and management of the Oculina Experimental Closed Area, including NOAA Fisheries Service, the Coral Reef Conservation Program, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, and UNC-W National Undersea Research Center and the Smithsonian Marine Station.

Staff has been in contact with the Education Specialist at the Smithsonian Marine Station to coordinate efforts to publicize the availability of the display to teachers and other marine educators.

#### **Deepwater MPA Regulations Brochure – Update**

Final edits have been completed for the outreach publication “Regulations for Deepwater Marine Protected Areas in the South Atlantic”. This publication, produced in cooperation with SC Sea Grant includes a page with information and a map of the Oculina Bank HAPC and Experimental Closed Area.

A total of 10,000 copies of the document will be printed for distribution. If the printing schedule allows, we plan to have copies available at the June meeting. The brochure was publicized in the Spring 2009 *South Atlantic Update* newsletter and an email address established for requests.

#### **Continued Distribution of the Oculina Bank Brochures and *Revealing the Deep***

##### **DVD**

Staff continues to receive requests for both the regulation brochures and DVD and distributes as necessary.