

FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
Sanctuary Advisory Council Boundary Expansion Working Group
Meeting Minutes
June 29, 2017

Meeting Attendance Roster:

Clint Moore	Oil and Gas Industry	Present
Shane Cantrell	Fishing – Commercial	Present
Natalie Hall	Diving Operations	Present (webinar)
Jesse Cancelmo	Recreational Diving	Not Present
Scott Hickman	Fishing - Recreational	Present
Buddy Guindon	Fishing - Commercial	Present
Adrienne Simoes-Correa	Research	Not Present
Jacqui Stanley	Education	Not Present
Charles Tyer	NOAA OLE	Present
Randy Widaman	Diving Operations	Not Present
Jake Emmert	Conservation	Not Present

Total member attendance: 7 of 11 members (7 of 10 voting members)

Others in attendance:

Leslie Clift, Bill Kiene, G.P. Schmahl, Emma Hickerson, Morgan Kilgour (webinar), Sharon McBreen, (webinar), Mark Zanowicz (webinar)

5:30 PM – Meeting called to order by Clint Moore.

Adoption of Agenda – motion from Buddy Guindon, second from Shane Cantrell, no discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Adoption of Minutes – motion from Shane Cantrell, second from Charles Tyer to approve May 11 minutes. Discussion followed. Clint said as Chair of every meeting of the 2007 BEWG, he does not recall the discussion of buffer zones including turtle behaviors. He remembers he and James Sinclair advocated 250 meters (m) or less at the time, while Emma advocated 1000m, and a compromise of 500 m was reached. He also noted the BOEM NTL 2009-G39 calls for only a 152 m (500 feet) buffer from the NAZ (no activity

zone) boundaries. Emma commented that meeting minutes from the 2007 BEWG could be shared to the present BEWG. Emma recalls the 500 m was the compromise the 2007 BEWG came up with, and does not recall discussing 250 m or James Sinclair's input. G.P. recalls Emma presenting the sea turtle information, and the discussion of sea turtles' home ranges. Discussion ended. Shane Cantrell made a motion to adopt May 11th and May 23rd minutes, seconded by Buddy Guindon. All in favor, motion approved.

5:45 PM – Public comment

None

5:46 PM Review and discussions of NCCOS project status and plans

Randy Clark submitted a summary of the NCCOS proposal and the BEWG discussed this document. Clint asked G.P. asked about the Marxan tool and how it will assist the FGBNMS expansion process. Marxan is a geographic based program developed in Australia that was used for the Great Barrier Reef. The program takes a lot of information and using weighted criteria, develops boundaries that meet the designated criteria and helps support a quantitative decision. For example, BOEM's seismic anomalies dataset will be added into the NCCOS process. Clint asked G.P. to follow up with Randy to see if other models exist that elevate economic, social, and cultural impacts, beyond what Marxan does, to an equal level to that of biological sensitivity and conservation exists.

FGBNMS Marissa Nuttall is working on a directory/inventory of GIS layers and when finalized, will be provided to NCCOS. FGBNMS is also guiding NCCOS to data sources, and will be meeting with them the first week of August. Clint asked GP to invite all BEWG members to participate in all meetings and teleconferences with NCCOS during the process, and he agreed.

Scott Hickman asked about whether the Sanctuaries Act supersedes Magnuson-Stevens the way it was described during recent testimony from NOAA chief Dr. Lautenberg. GP commented that it is not that clear, because the Sanctuaries Act directs them to coordinate regulations with Fisheries Management Councils. However, NMSA does allow sanctuaries to supersede Magnuson-Stevens, such as in the Florida Keys, for example.

6:18 PM Review and discussion of new multi-beam maps of Elvers & Parker Banks and further discussion of criteria for boundaries

The project to obtain new bathymetric maps for Elvers and Parker Banks was funded by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation with at least two trips thus far. The recent data still needs to be fine-tuned, because of high seas attenuating some of it. The group discussed the possibility of using the "bio-clutter" data from the existing bathymetric datasets to look at fish populations, but it is not technically possible. FGBNMS is working on the core biological zones for Elvers and Parker Banks and will provide these datasets to NCCOS for their process, by the end of 2017. A cruise to

conduct data for the gap on the NE side of Elvers Bank is being scheduled for the future. Bathymetric data collection is complete for Parker Bank. Backscatter was collected on both banks, which will lend information on carbonate substrates. Some of the NAZ boundaries differ from the 85m contour lines, based on the new bathymetric data obtained.

7:00 PM Begin development of a framework of regulatory options and stakeholder preferences

The group discussed the timeline and potential obstacles that could slow the process. Under the new Executive Order, FGBNMS awaits BOEM's full accounting of known reserves and undiscovered/contingent reserves including geographic locations. FGBNMS will also consult with Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) on their recommendations, and if boundaries are changed according to their recommendations, then GMFMC will need to re-analyze.

Morgan Kilgour with GMFMC explained Marxan modeling and how GMFMC has used it. Oil and gas platforms are not currently considered Essential Fish Habitats and therefore would not be included in Habitats of Particular Concern. Buddy suggested FGBNMS should leave leeway for adaptive management, especially as more information is learned on fish aggregations and congregations at oil and gas platforms and at other areas in the Gulf of Mexico. Clint said in 2016, 2 platforms were added and 189 were removed. With 2,100 platforms left, at least half will be gone in about 10 years and fishing efforts will turn to the banks instead. Scott & Buddy said they already are. The group continued to discuss the decommissioning of oil and gas platforms.

G.P. expressed again that he hopes the group starts formulating how and what the BEWG will recommend beyond the boundaries, regulations, and number of banks, but now focuses on the criteria for NCCOS to look at.

Clint will poll the SAC to see if they have any recommendations for datasets for NCCOS to procure or use.

7:30 PM Continue development of assessment matrix and its processes

Tabled.

Next date for BEWG is tentatively set for the last week of August, and the BEWG will be sent a Doodle poll.

7:50 PM Buddy motioned to adjourn, Scott seconded. Meeting adjourned.