

OVERVIEW

Marine Protected Areas Committee June 21, 2001

Issues to be addressed at this meeting are (1) review of comments received during the public scoping process, including the May 8-10, 2001 AP meeting; (2) decision on whether or not to continue with the consideration of MPAs; (3) discussion on approach for moving forward, if necessary; and (4) approve/modify the "shopping list" of potential MPA sites, if necessary.

Review of Scoping Comments Package

During April and May 2001 the Council held a series of nine scoping meetings on using marine protected areas in the South Atlantic. In addition, the MPA AP met from May 8-10, 2001. The purpose of the scoping and AP meetings was to suggest sites the Council should consider analyzing if they choose to move forward with the consideration of MPAs. The scoping meetings were held on:

April 16, 2001 in Morehead City, NC
April 18, 2001 in Wrightsville Beach, NC
May 1, 2001 in Atlantic Beach, FL
May 2, 2001 in Ft. Pierce, FL
May 3, 2001 in Islamorada, FL
May 9, 2001 in North Charleston, SC
May 14, 2001 in Myrtle Beach, SC
May 15, 2001 in Brunswick, GA
May 16, 2001 in Richmond Hill, GA

The deadline for submitting written comments was May 21, 2001. These comments are included in the Scoping Comments Package that has been distributed to the Council. Comments received after May 21, 2001 are being compiled and will be available for viewing at the meeting.

Options for moving forward with the consideration of MPAs

(Please see attached letter to Secretary Evans from the Council Chairs (Attachment 1) and news release from the Bush Administration (Attachment 2) for developments on Executive Order 13158.)

Option 1: Continue to move forward with the consideration of marine protected areas (timeframe and approach to be considered below).

Option 2: Do not move forward with the consideration of marine protected areas.

Option 3: Other possible options?

Approach and timing for moving forward with MPAs

Option 1: Adopt the MPA Advisory Panel's recommendation that the Council in developing MPAs, do so with the understanding that there will be two rounds of public hearings and as a component of the public hearings there should also be regional working groups formed.

If this approach is adopted the timing would follow the approximate timeline as outlined below:

June 2001: Revise "shopping list" as appropriate for initial analysis by staff and the Habitat, Coral, Snapper Grouper, Law Enforcement and MPA Advisory Panels at their August 28-30, 2001 meeting in Charleston, SC.

September 17-21, 2001 Council Meeting (Charleston, SC): Revise list of areas based on preliminary analysis by staff and advisory panels for development of an options paper.

December 3-7, 2001 Council Meeting (Wrightsville Beach, NC): Approve options for first round of public hearings.

Spring 2002: The first round of public hearings would be held beginning in March to gather information from the public on the specific sites to expand on the staff's analysis. It is the intent that during the two rounds of public hearings staff will arrive at the public hearing location the day before the meeting. Staff would be able to conduct outreach at local docks, marinas, clubs, etc. There are multiple reasons for this outreach effort: 1) to explain what the SAFMC is and the role it plays in fishery management, particularly with MPAs; 2) help dispel misinformation that can derail the Council's efforts; and 3) be able to answer questions in an informal, face-to-face manner, thereby building rapport with the public. At the request of the MPA Committee Chair staff is also evaluating holding informal meetings the evening before the public hearing to further give the public a chance to ask questions and obtain current and correct information.

Summer/Fall 2002: The final round of public hearings would be held. At this time the public would be presented with the final options and complete analysis of any sites proposed.

The MPA Advisory Panel will review both rounds of public hearing comments prior to the Council taking action.

The Council could reach a final decision in September or December 2002.

Option 2: Other possible options?

Review of "shopping list" of potential MPA sites gathered through the 2001 scoping process

(Please see attached May 31, 2001 memo and list)

Option 1: Approve list of recommended sites to go forward for further analysis by staff and the Habitat, Coral, Snapper Grouper, Law Enforcement and MPA Advisory Panels.

Option 2: Revise list of recommended sites. This modified list will go forward for further analysis by staff and the Habitat, Coral, Snapper Grouper, Law Enforcement and MPA Advisory Panels.

Option 3: Other possible options?