

**SUMMARY OF THE
STANDING SSC
CONFERENCE CALL PORTION REGARDING
GENERIC AQUACULTURE AMENDMENT
JULY 26, 2007**

ATTENDEES:

Members:

Standing SSC

Dr. Walter Keithly, Chair
Mr. Doug Gregory, Jr., V. Chair
Dr. Chuck Adams
Dr. Luiz Barbieri
Mr. Harry Blanchet
Dr. Benjamin Blount
Dr. George Guillen
Dr. Michael Jepson
Dr. Albert Jones
Dr. Will Patterson
Dr. Joe Powers
Dr. Elbert Whorton

Staff

Wayne Swingle
Rick Leard
Steven Atran
Trish Kennedy

Council

Joe Hendrix

Others

Dr. Bill Lindberg
Dennis Heinemann

After the Standing and Special Reef Fish SSC reviewed some gag grouper data, the Standing SSC began a review of the Public Hearing Draft of the Generic Aquaculture Amendment. Instead of reviewing the action items and alternatives individually, Dr. Keithly asked that members present any comments or recommendations on the amendment.

Dr. Jones stated that the document overall was well prepared; the number of alternatives were reasonably presented; and all alternatives were adequately supported with rational. Many other SSC members concurred with his comments.

Dr. Lindberg referenced figure 5.1.1.7 Sediment Types, and pointed out that the hardbottom area in the Northeastern Gulf was under-represented. Mr. Blanchet indicated that was true for the western areas also.

Dr. Jepson raised concern that the cumulative impacts of all items in Gulf had not been adequately addressed. Those items should include not only aquaculture, but LNG facilities, oil and gas structures, artificial reef structures, and methods to harvest wave and wind energy.

Dr. Blount believed there should be more discussion on the transition of changes in attitudes of fishermen as they convert from a fishing lifestyle to an aquaculture lifestyle; as had occurred with the scallop fishermen in Cedar Key Florida. Dr. Keithly noted that

commercial fishermen will still be allowed to fish and that the aquaculture program did not require a reduction in commercial fishing.

Dr. Blount suggested expanding the discussion of concerns that the catch of wild caught fish is not adequate enough to meet the increasing demand for fish.

Dr. Blount referred to Action 7 – Buffer Zones, and recommended adding discussion about the impacts both positive and negative that if there was a buffer zone around the facility then there would be a positive benefit to the facility but a perceived negative benefit due to user conflict.

Dr. Patterson referenced figure 5.1.1.7 Sediment Types and noted that the data was from the mid 1980s and there was more to be added to the figure. In the big bend area to Desoto Canyon there was much more hard bottom, shelf edge, and low profile bottom. He added that the document's text did not discuss the sedimentary geology very well and there was much more data available than was used.

He suggested that through the permitting process that benthos sidescanning could be required to determine the impacts on the bottom of the proposed site.

Mr. Blanchet concurred with Dr. Patterson and added there was more hard bottom in the western Gulf than indicated in the figure. He noted there was sidescan data held by the oil and gas industries that may be available.

He also referenced figure 5.1.3-2 Artificial Reef Zones and Locations and noted that there were too many oil and gas structures indicated on the figure than were actually in existence, particularly to the east of the Mississippi River.

Dr. Patterson referenced Section 6.0 Environmental Consequences and thought the description was very good but not enough discussion was included on feeding up the food web. He suggested adding more discussion on the forage basis at low trophic levels for those fish at high trophic levels. Also, more discussion should be included on the source of food, suggesting the use of a document by Naylor, et. al.

Mr. Atran commented that the Ecosystem SSC would be addressing forage fish at their next modeling workshop.

The SSC made no motions on the Aquaculture Amendment.

The conference call adjourned at 12:20 p.m.