

environmental assessment; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is considering a request to expand the boundary of the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Narragansett Bay NERR or the Reserve) and is soliciting comments from the public on the proposed boundary expansion. The public is also invited to comment on the draft environmental assessment for the proposed boundary expansion.

DATES: Comments must be received at the appropriate address (see **ADDRESSES**) on or before April 14, 2021.

ADDRESSES: The draft environmental assessment describing the proposed boundary expansion can be downloaded or viewed at coast.noaa.gov/czm/compliance/. The document is also available by sending a written request to the point of contact identified below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

Electronic Submission: Submit all electronic public comments by email to Adrienne.Harrison@noaa.gov.

Mail: Submit written comments to Patmarie S. Nedelka, Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East-West Highway, N/ORM, 10th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Comments submitted by any other method or after the comment period may not be considered. All comments are part of the public record and may be publicly accessible. Any personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name or address) submitted voluntarily by the sender may also be accessible. NOAA will accept anonymous comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Adrienne Harrison of NOAA's Office for Coastal Management on contract with Lynker Inc, by email at Adrienne.Harrison@noaa.gov, phone at 603-862-4272, or mail at: Patmarie S. Nedelka, Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East-West Highway, N/ORM, 10th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, as lead agency for managing the Narragansett Bay NERR, has requested approval to expand the reserve's geographic boundary by adding 1 new parcel to the existing approved boundary. Pursuant to 15 CFR 921.33(a), NOAA may require public notice, including notice in the **Federal Register** and an opportunity for

public comment, before approving a boundary or management plan change. In addition, boundary changes involving the acquisition of properties not listed in the reserve's management plan or final environmental impact statement require public notice and the opportunity for comment. Since the Little Property parcel was not evaluated in the reserve's original environmental impact statement, NOAA has developed an environmental assessment to analyze the effects of the requested change, and is publishing notice of the availability of this assessment for public review and comment.

II. NOAA Proposed Action and Alternatives

NOAA is releasing a draft environmental assessment, prepared in accordance with section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C), and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508). NOAA's proposed action would be to approve a change in the boundary of the Narragansett Bay NERR to add 1 parcels to the current boundary.

The draft environmental assessment identifies and assesses potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed boundary expansion, and identifies a preferred alternative and a no action alternative. The preferred alternative would add 1 parcels to the reserve's boundary, which would result in a net increase in size of 103 acres. As a result, NOAA believes the proposed boundary expansion would (1) fill in a gap in the Narragansett Bay NERR near the center of Prudence Island, (2) provide a more encompassing area for the Reserve's research, monitoring, and education programs, and (3) provide an opportunity for more coordination and integrated ecosystem management that would help the Reserve attain its mission of practicing and promoting coastal and estuarine stewardship through innovative research and education, using a system of protected areas. Therefore, NOAA prefers the proposed boundary expansion over the no action alternative.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1451 *et seq.*; 15 CFR 921.33.

Keelin S. Kuipers,

Deputy Director, Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2021-05285 Filed 3-12-21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-NK-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Review of Nomination for Lake Erie Quadrangle National Marine Sanctuary

AGENCY: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In May 2020, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration requested written comments to facilitate ONMS review of the nomination for Lake Erie Quadrangle National Marine Sanctuary (NMS). NOAA requested relevant information as it pertains to the 11 national significance criteria and management considerations that NOAA applied to evaluate the Lake Erie Quadrangle NMS nomination for inclusion in the national inventory of areas that NOAA may consider for future designation as a national marine sanctuary. NOAA has synthesized the information gathered through the public process, completed an internal analysis, and the ONMS Director has made a final determination that the Lake Erie Quadrangle NMS nomination will remain in the inventory beyond the February 22, 2021 expiration date.

DATES: This determination took effect on February 22, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Ellen Brody, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator, 4840 South State Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108 or at ellen.brody@noaa.gov, 734-741-2270, and at <https://nominate.noaa.gov/nominations/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ellen Brody, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator, 4840 South State Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108 or at ellen.brody@noaa.gov, 734-741-2270.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background Information

In 2014, NOAA issued a final rule establishing the sanctuary nomination process (SNP), a process by which communities may submit nominations of areas of the marine and Great Lakes environment for NOAA to consider for designation as a national marine sanctuary (79 FR 33851). The final rule establishing the SNP included a five-year limit on any nomination added to the inventory that NOAA does not advance for designation. The nomination for Lake Erie Quadrangle NMS was accepted to the national

inventory on February 22, 2016, and was scheduled to expire in February 2021.

On November 13, 2019, NOAA issued a document (84 FR 61546) to clarify procedures for evaluating and updating a nomination as it approaches the five-year mark. The clarified procedure ensures the inventory contains nominations that remain relevant and responsive to the 11 SNP national significance criteria and management considerations (“SNP Criteria”). The 11 SNP Criteria can be found at <https://nominate.noaa.gov>.

On January 12, 2021, NOAA issued a request for public comments on this nomination (86 FR 2384). NOAA requested relevant information pertaining to the 11 SNP Criteria that NOAA applied to evaluate the Lake Erie Quadrangle NMS nomination for inclusion in the national inventory of areas that NOAA may consider for future designation as a national marine sanctuary. No public comments were received during this public comment period, however, the nominator did provide additional information which NOAA has used in evaluating the nomination. In analyzing this material, particular attention was given to new scientific information about the national significance of natural and cultural resources, as well as increases or decreases in the threats to resources originally proposed for protection, and changes to the management framework of the area. NOAA also assessed the level of community-based support for the nomination from a broad range of interests.

Following NOAA’s review of information provided regarding the nomination’s merit for remaining on the inventory after five years, it was determined that new information shows: There are still significant threats to the area; it is still an area of national significance; and, there is still broad community support for the nomination remaining on the inventory of possible designations, among other criteria that the nomination still continues to meet. Therefore, the ONMS Director has determined the nomination for the Lake Erie Quadrangle NMS should remain on the inventory. NOAA is not proposing to designate Lake Erie Quadrangle NMS or any other new national marine sanctuary with this action. This notice serves to inform the public of this decision to extend the nomination on the inventory.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*

John Armor,

Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2021–05284 Filed 3–12–21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–NK–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XA930]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a four-day meeting via webinar of its Standing, Reef Fish, and Socioeconomic Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC).

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 30 to Friday, April 2, 2021, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., EDT.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will take place via webinar; you may register by visiting www.gulfcouncil.org and clicking on the SSC meeting on the calendar.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 4107 W Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348–1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ryan Rindone, Lead Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; ryan.rindone@gulfcouncil.org, telephone: (813) 348–1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Tuesday, March 30, 2021–Thursday, April 1, 2021; 9 a.m.–12 p.m., EST

Meeting will begin with Introductions and Adoption of Agenda. The Committees will review the Great Red Snapper Count (GRSC) Project, including: The Review Terms of Reference; summary presentations about the GRSC including but not limited to study design and sampling approaches; statistics and data analysis; and results. The SSC will be provided with the independent consultant’s initial findings. The first portion of the meeting will end with consultant and SSC deliberations on the GRSC Project.

Thursday, April 1, 2021–Friday, April 2, 2021; 1 p.m.–12 p.m., EST

The Committees will then begin the SSC meeting portion of the webinar with the Approval of Verbatim Minutes and Meeting Summary: January 5–7, 2021 webinar meeting; Scope of Work; Selection of SSC Representative for the April 12–15, 2021 Gulf Council Meeting via webinar.

Friday, April 2, 2021; 1 p.m.–5 p.m., EST

The Committees will then review the GRSC-informed Catch Analysis from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC); and then the Red Snapper Interim Analysis including but not limited to the National Marine Fisheries Service Bottom Longline fishery-independent index. The SSC will determine BSA and make new overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations for Gulf of Mexico red snapper, as appropriate.

Lastly, the Committees will receive public comment; and discuss any Other Business items.

Meeting Adjourns

The meeting will be broadcast via webinar. You may register for the webinar by visiting www.gulfcouncil.org and clicking on the SSC meeting on the calendar.

The Agenda is subject to change, and the latest version along with other meeting materials will be posted on www.gulfcouncil.org as they become available.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Scientific and Statistical Committees for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions of the Scientific and Statistical Committee will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council’s intent to take-action to address the emergency.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: March 10, 2021.

Tracey L. Thompson,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2021–05303 Filed 3–12–21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P