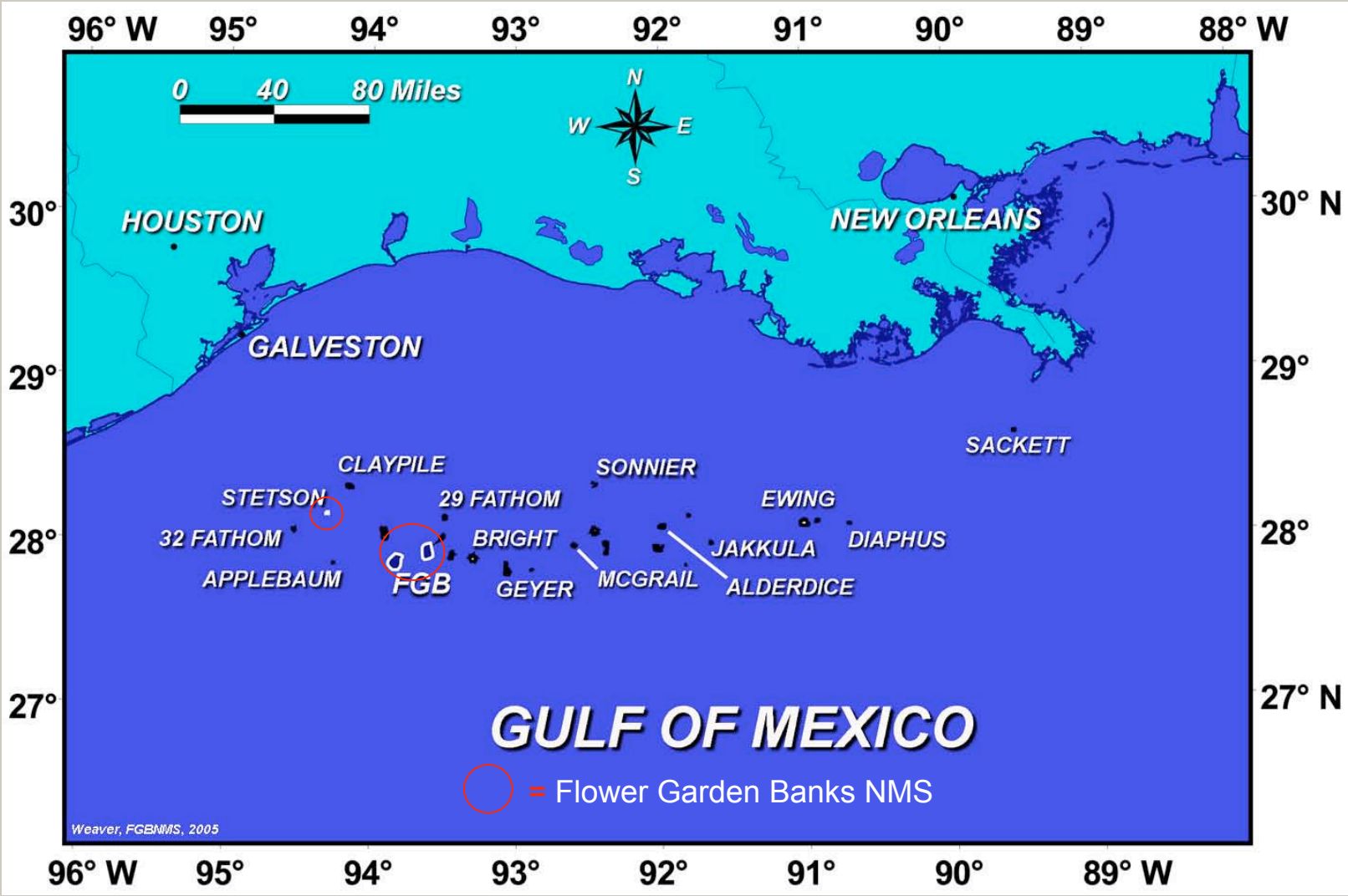
Sanctuary Advisory Council

Boundary Expansion Recommendation

December 6, 2007

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary



Reefs and Banks in the Northwestern Gulf of Mexico

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

•The FGBNMS Advisory Council formed a Boundary Expansion Working Group to evaluate other habitats and topographic features within the Gulf of Mexico for inclusion under the management and protections of the FGBNMS. Areas considered include the Stetson Bank Ring, habitats between and adjacent to East and West Flower Garden Banks and other northwestern Gulf of Mexico banks.

•The working group developed a set of six alternatives for boundary expansion.

•The Sanctuary Advisory Council considered the working group recommendation at Council meetings held on 9/27/07 and 12/6/07. On 12/6/07, the Council made a final recommendation to sanctuary management and NOAA. The Council recommended alternative 5 as the preferred alternative, with boundaries based on the sensitive habitat zone/core biological zone and a 500 m buffer.

•The preferred alternative with proposed boundaries is presented here along with the other five alternatives.

•Working group members included: Clint Moore, Ian MacDonald, John Embesi, Frank Burek, James Sinclair, Steve Gittings, and FGBNMS staff member Emma Hickerson.

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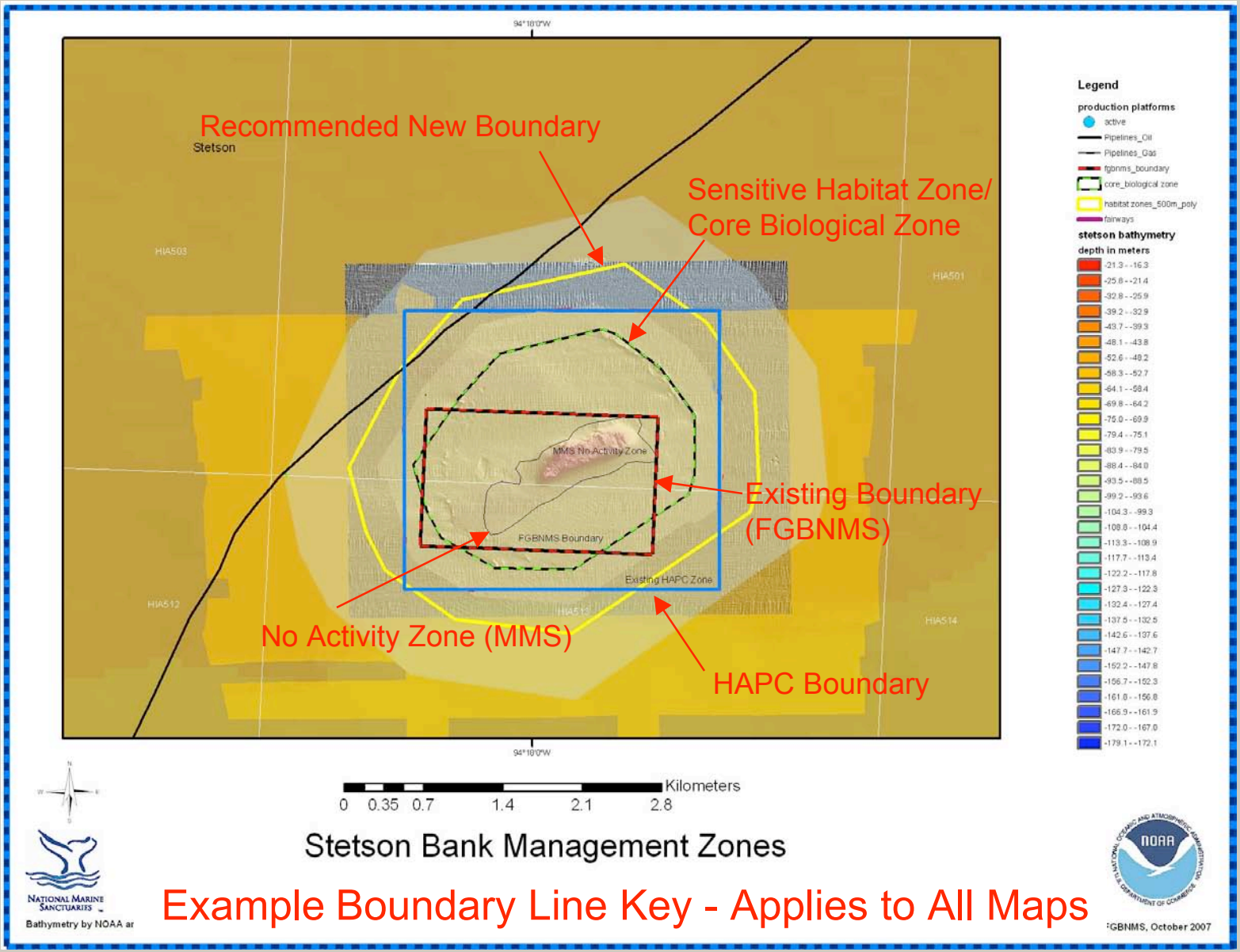

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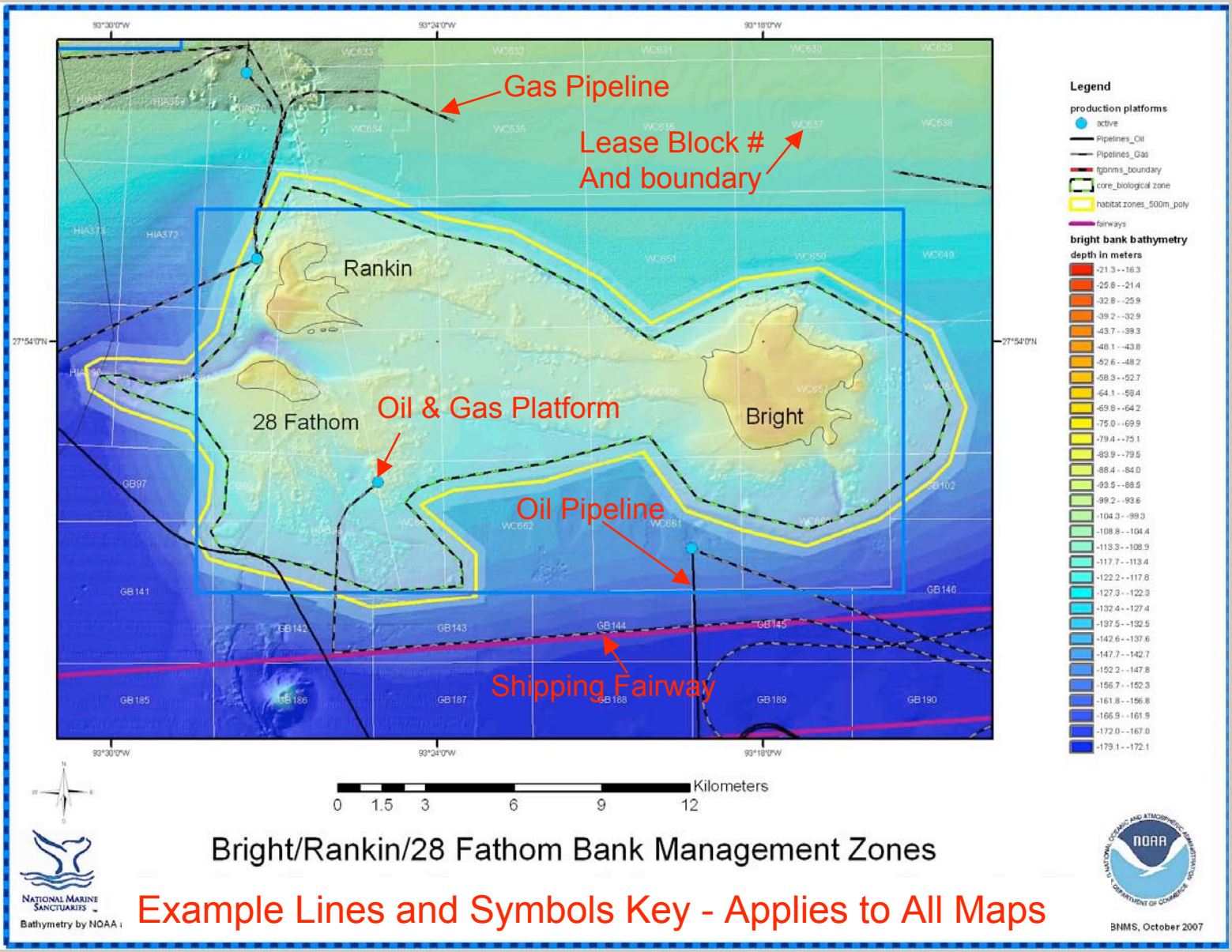

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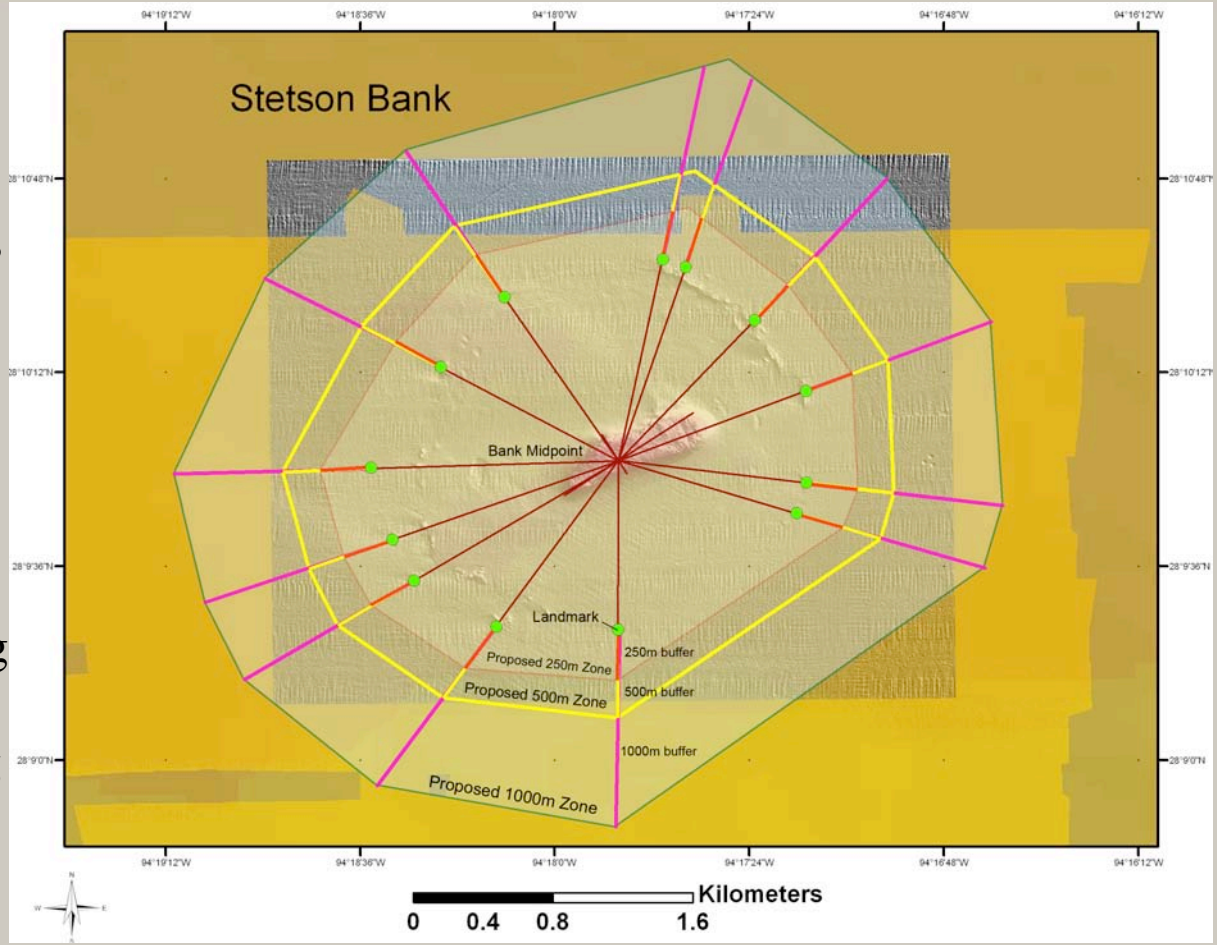
Boundary Selection Criteria

Based on:

- Seafloor topography
- Ground-truthing using ROV's and submersibles
- Prominent features defined as topography greater than 3m in vertical relief and 25m in diameter.
- Boundary of core biological zones developed by identifying outermost series of prominent features as landmarks, forming the vertices of an irregular polygon.



- Buffer zones developed from the outer landmarks of the core polygon, radiating from an approximate midpoint of the bank.

Working Group assessed:
250m, 500m, and 1000m buffers.
Proposed 500m buffer.

The following maps summarize the Sanctuary Advisory Council's recommendation for boundary expansion, as of 12/6/07:

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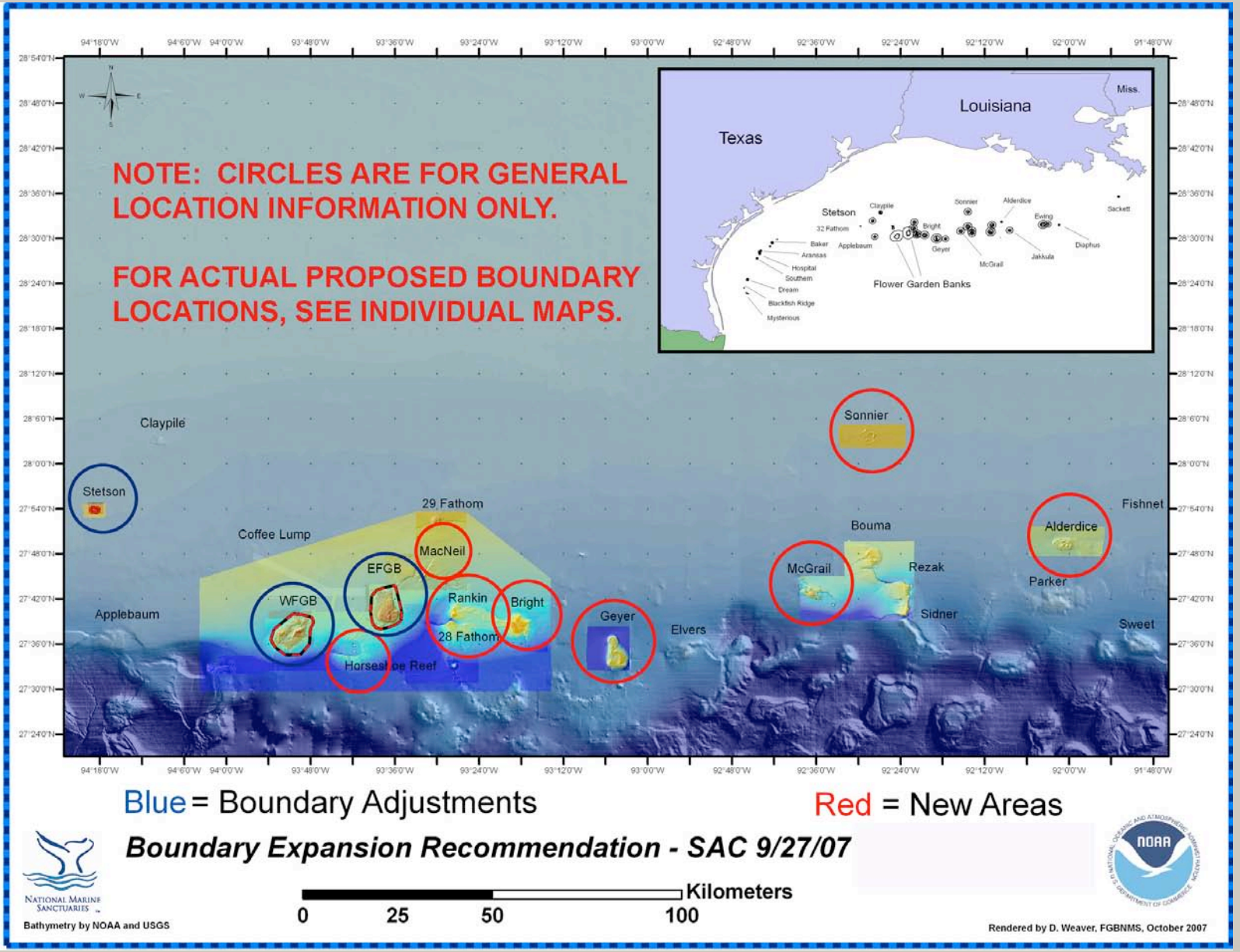

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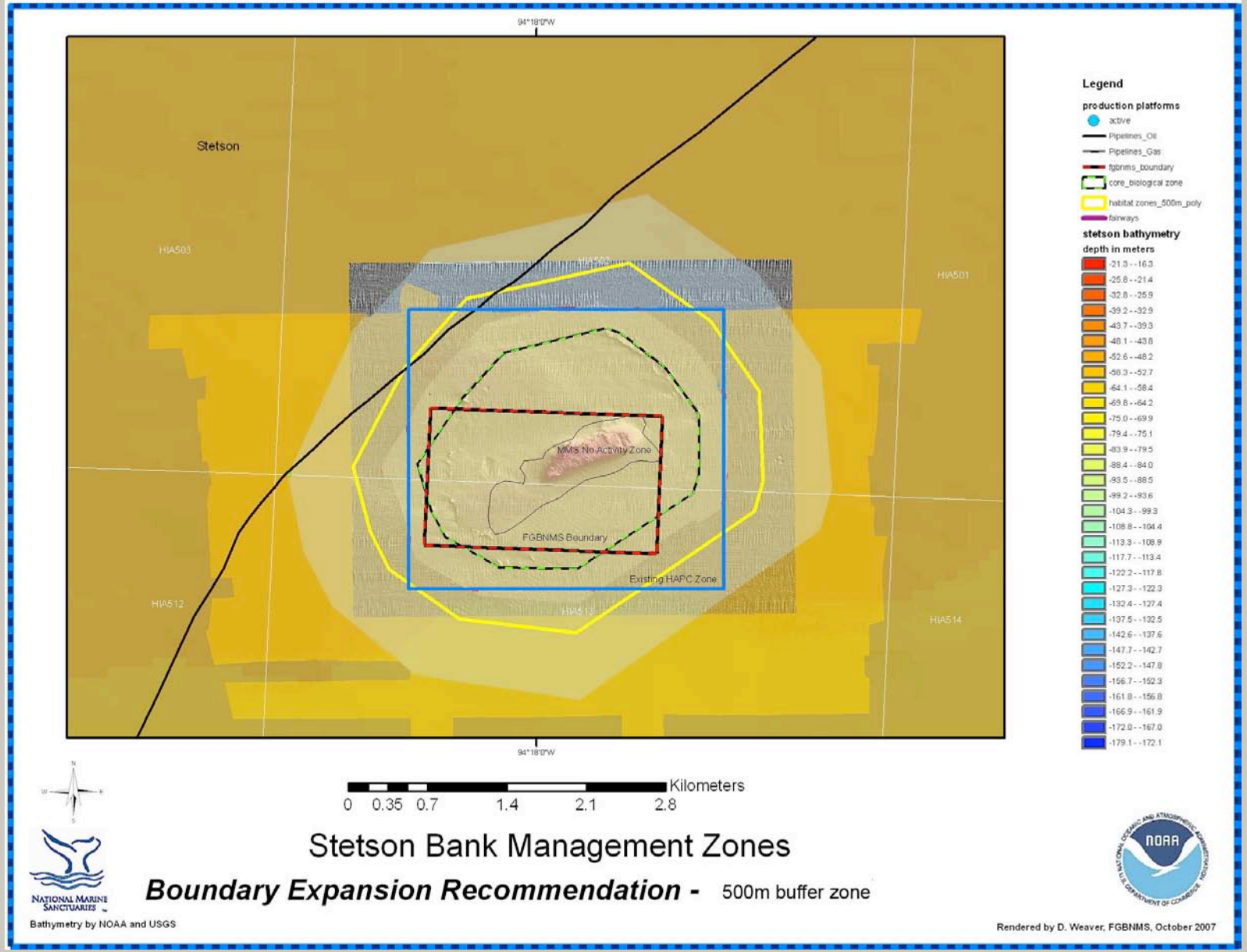

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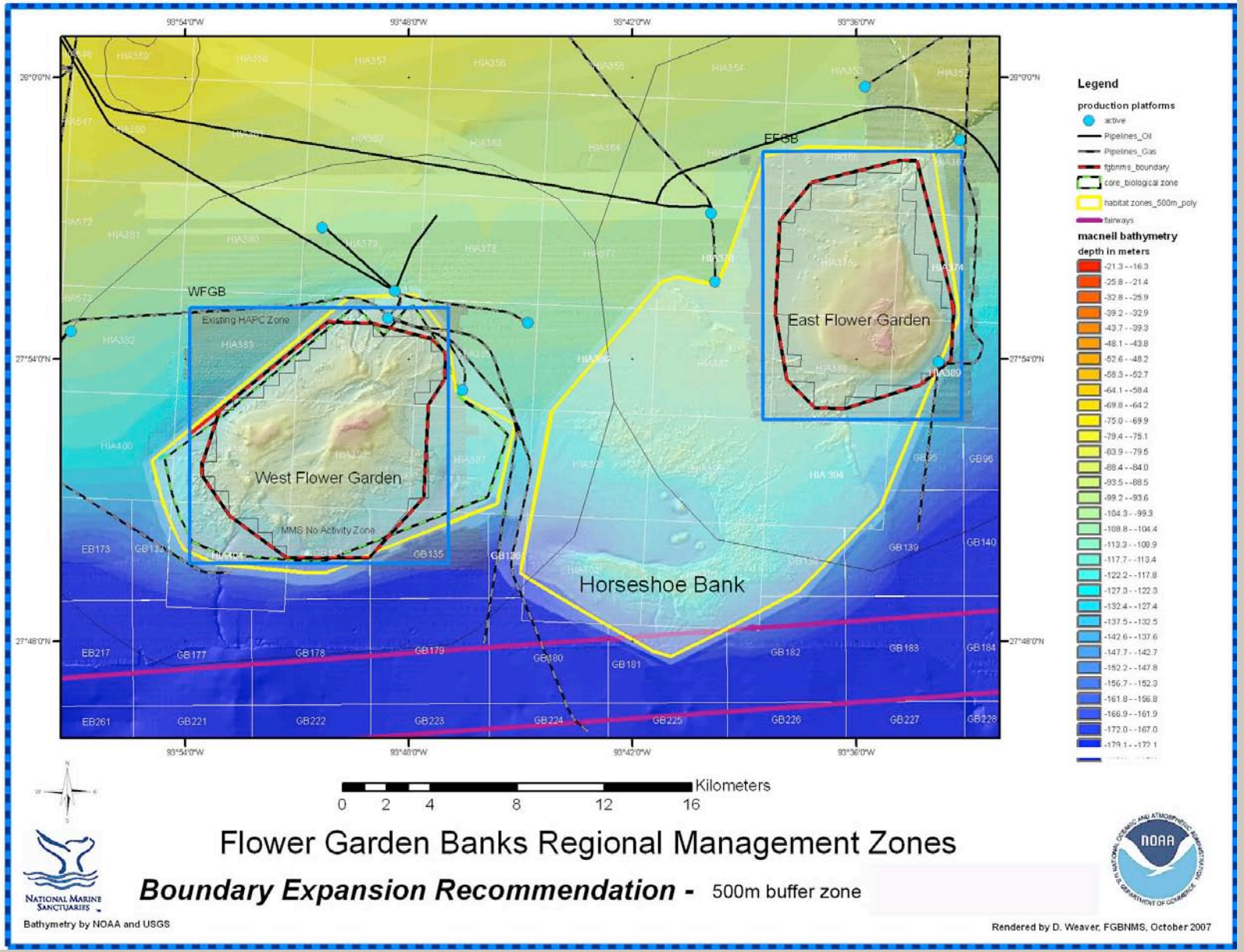

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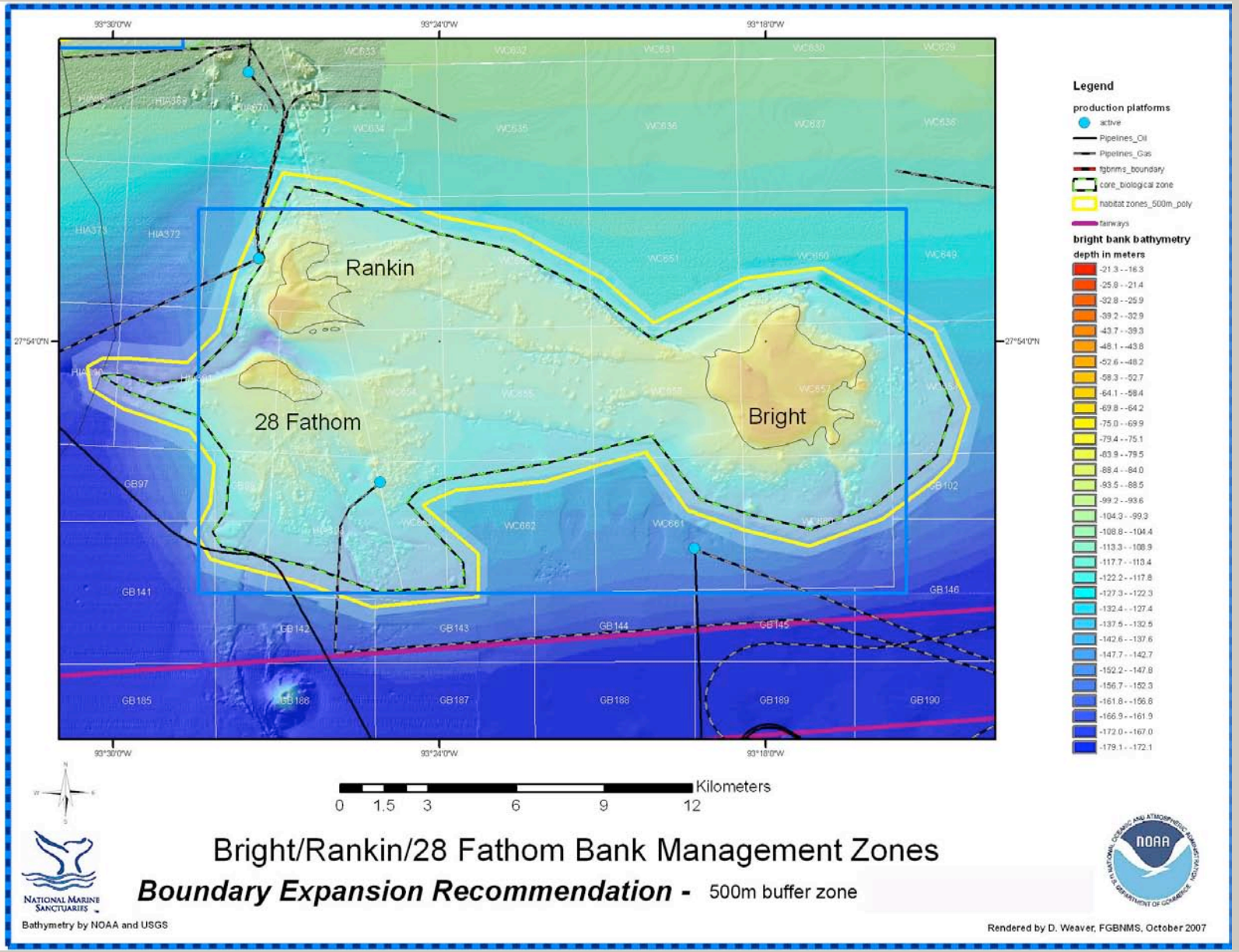

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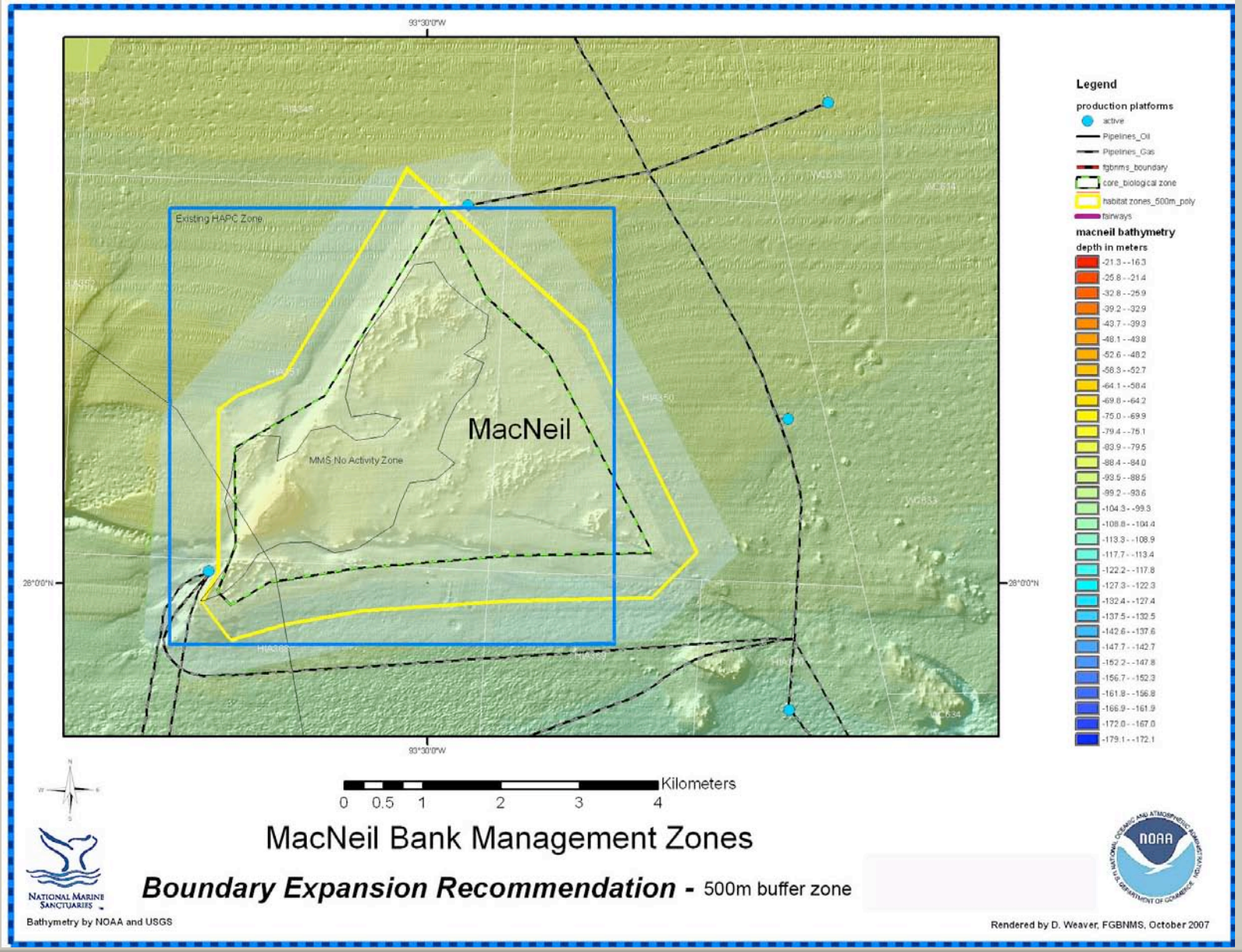

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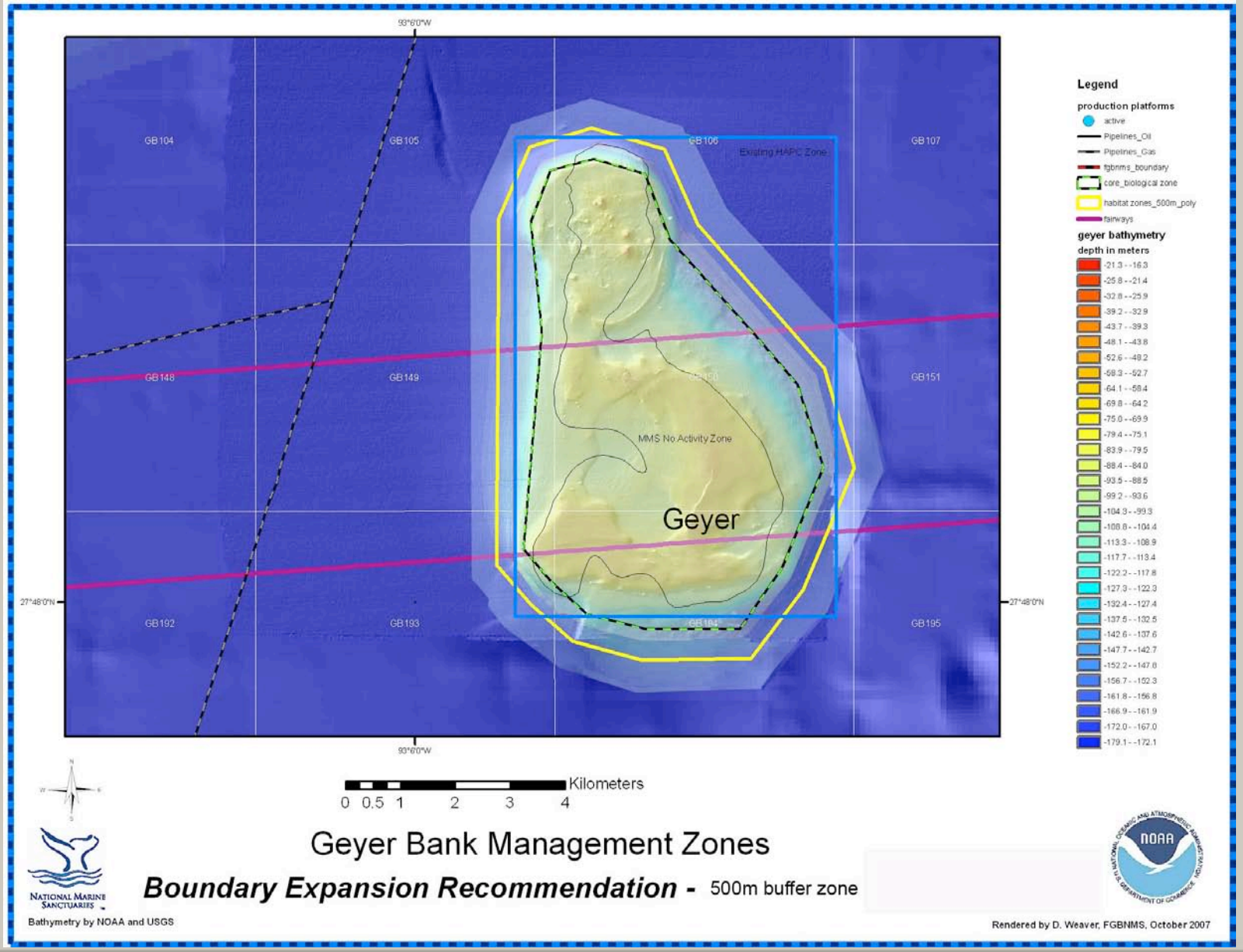

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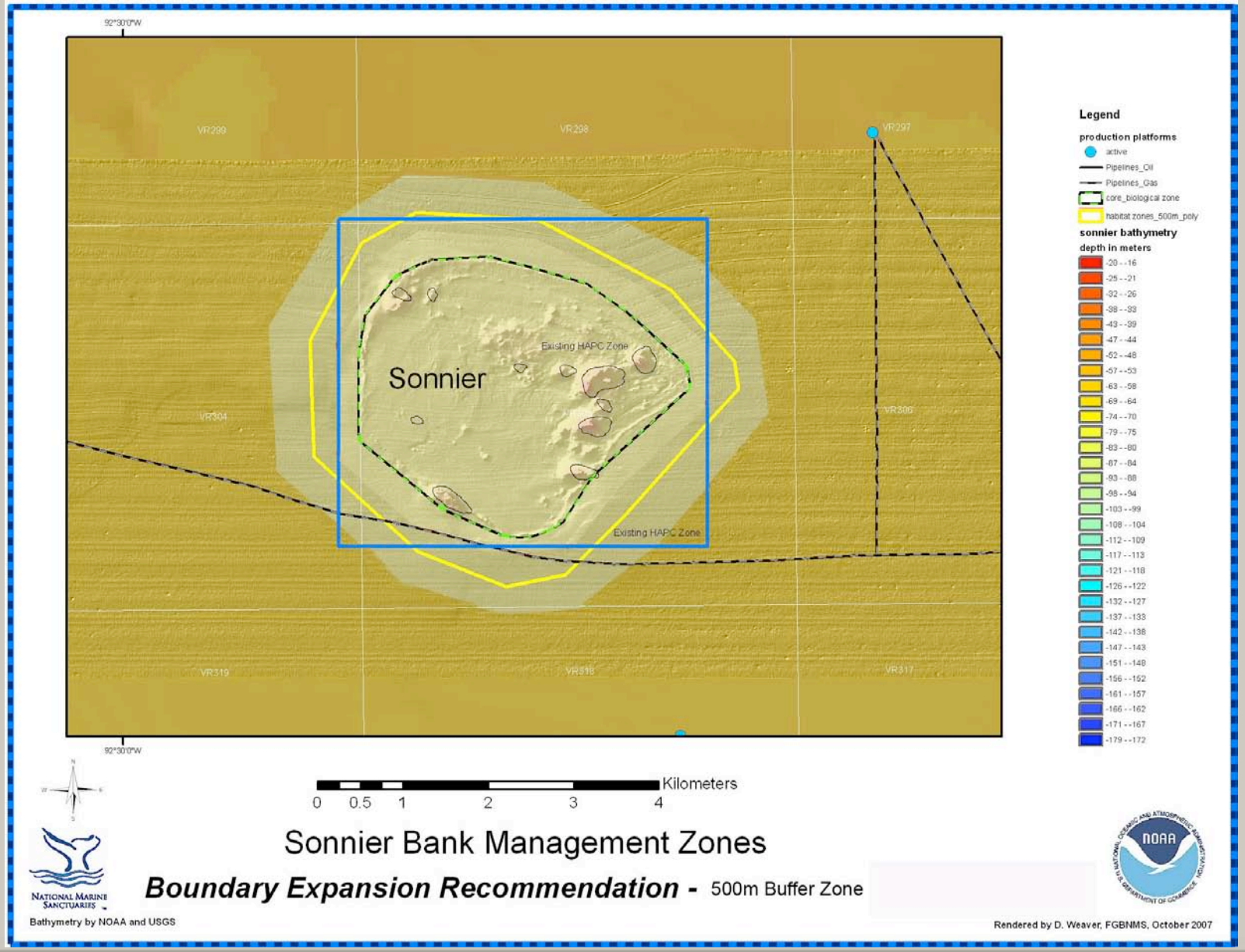

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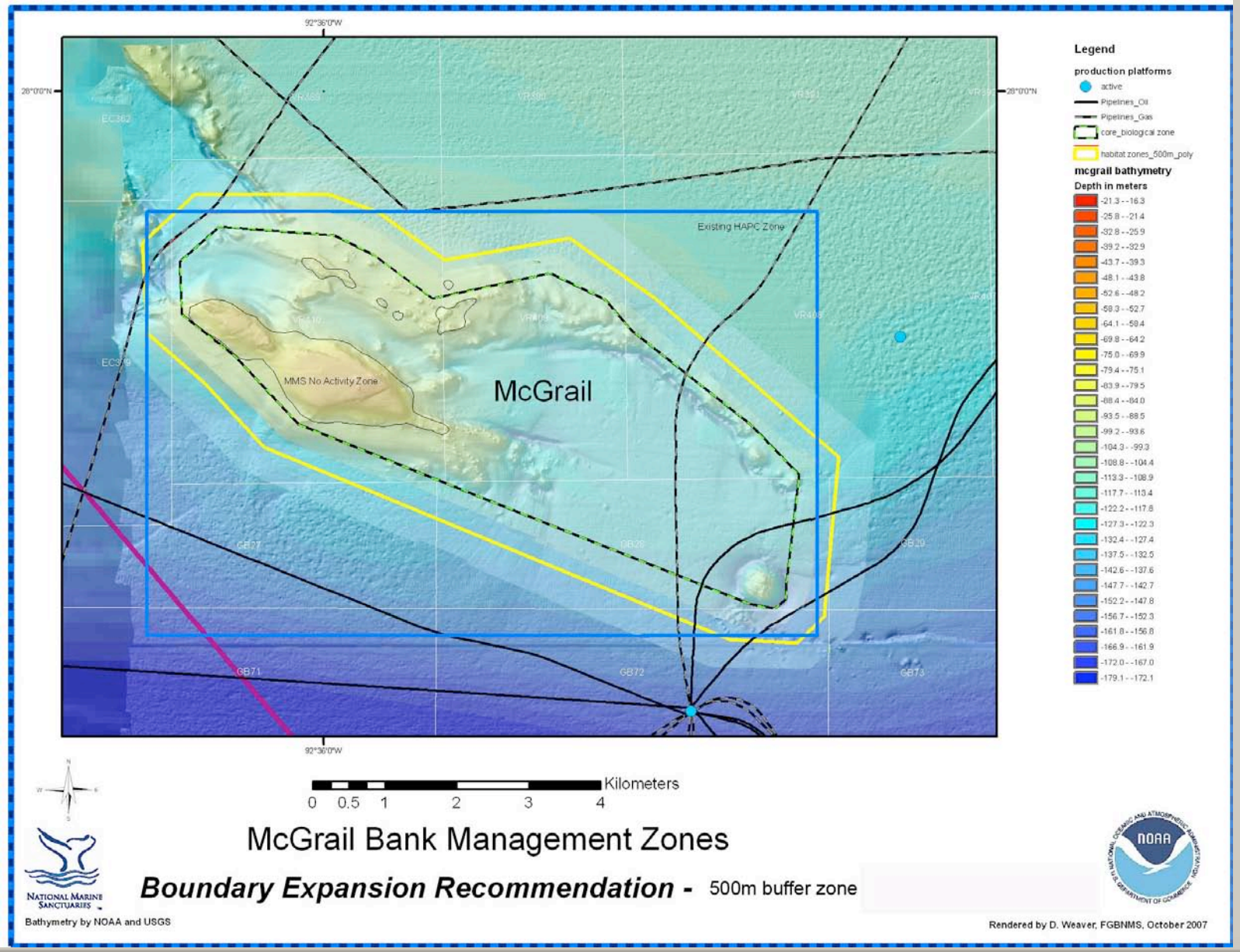

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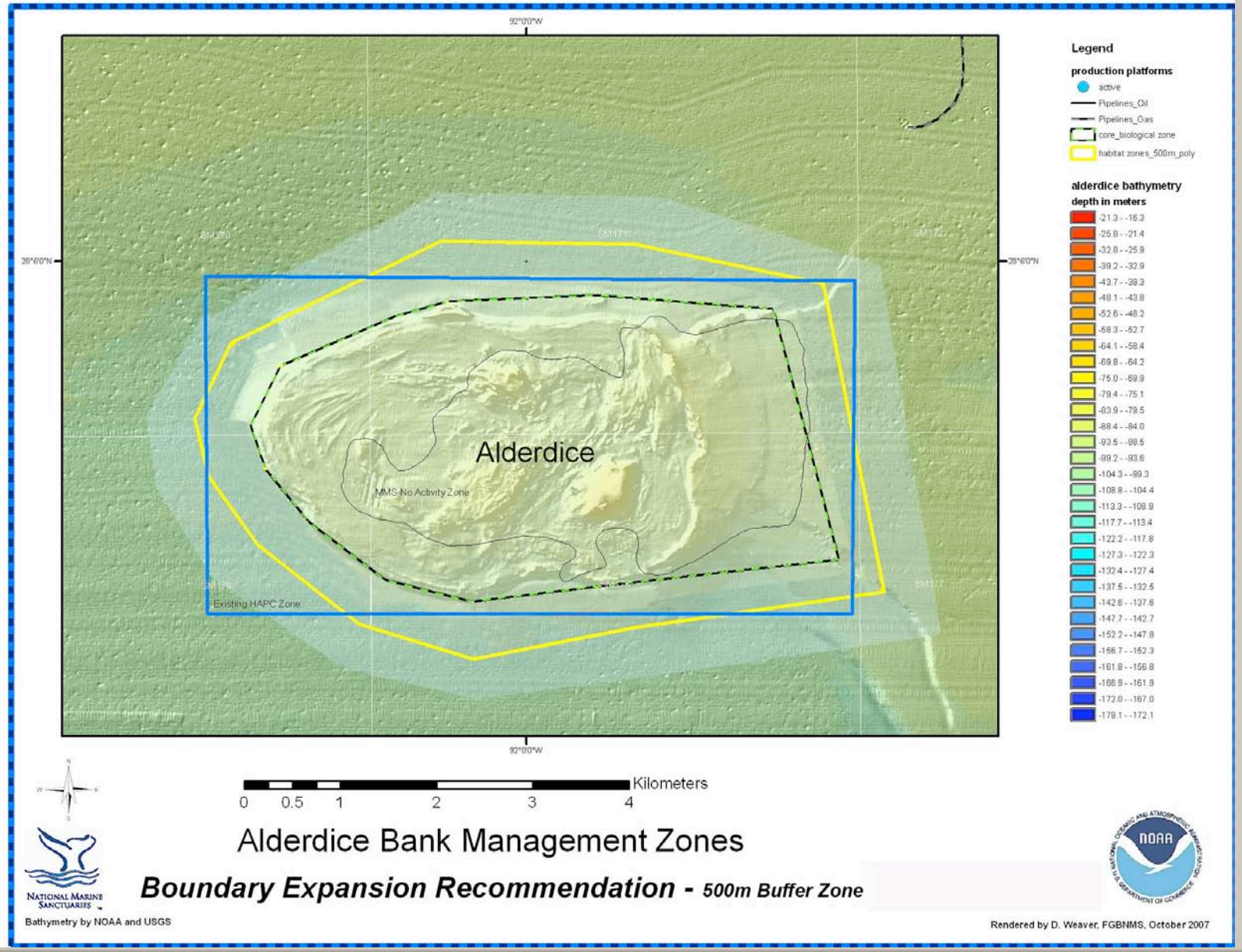

The Sanctuary Advisory Council recommendation for boundary expansion incorporates the following four active oil and gas platforms:

West FGB:	HIA384 - Offshore Shelf LLC
East FGB:	HIA389A - W&T Offshore
Rankin:	HIA371 - Tarpon Operating & Development WC663 - ATP A&G

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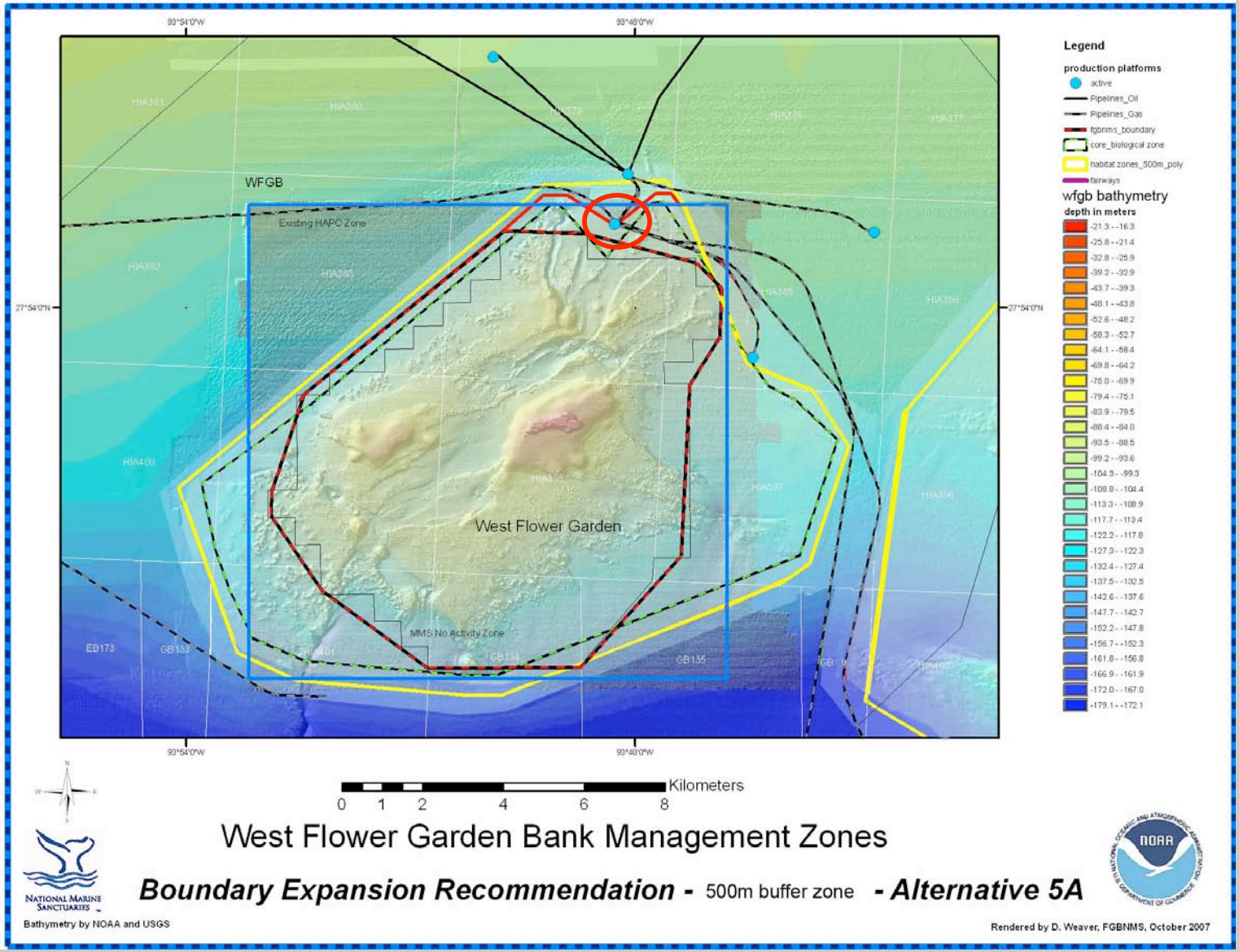

Oil & Gas Infrastructure:

HIA384 Offshore Shelf LLC

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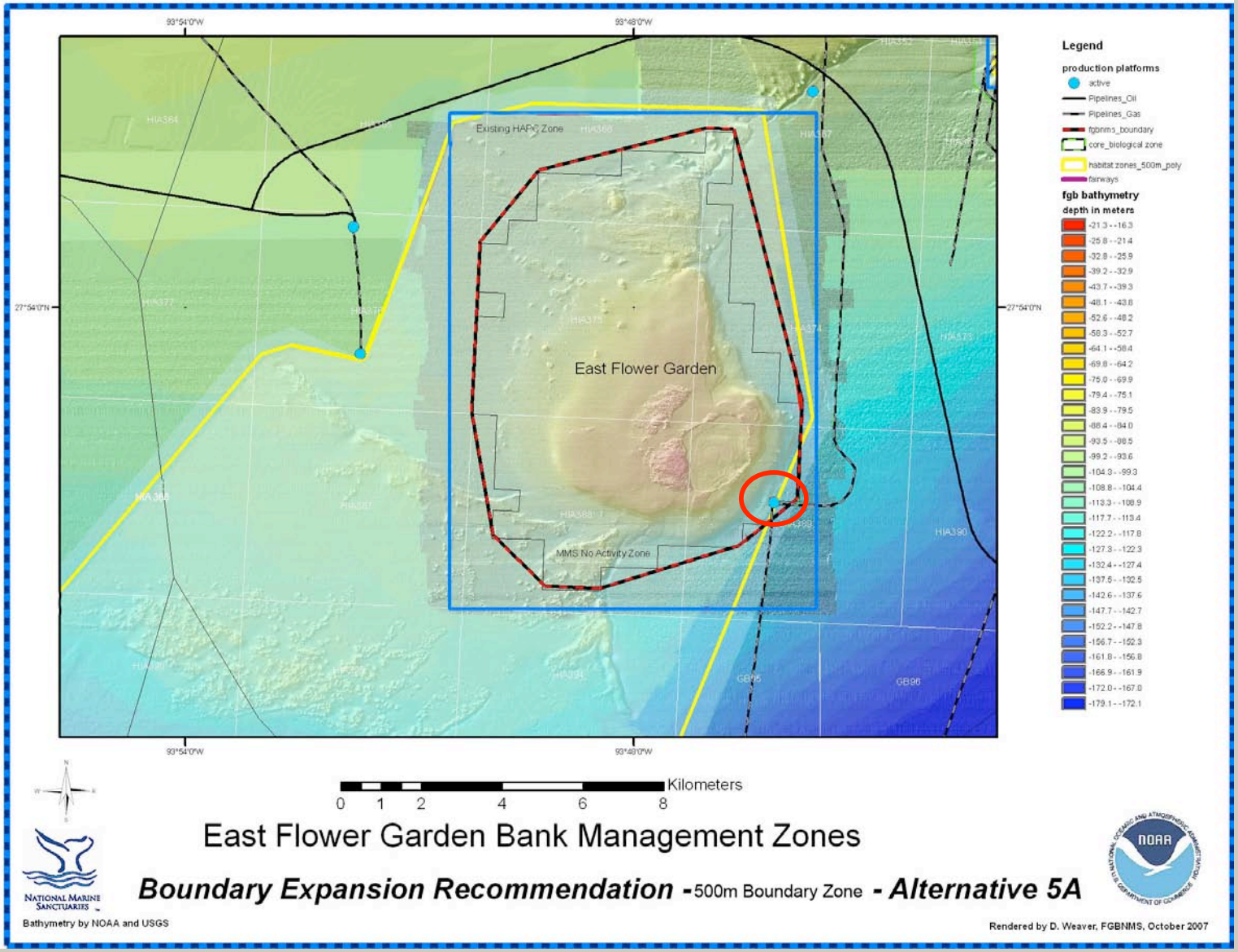

Oil & Gas Infrastructure:

HIA389A
W&T OFFSHORE

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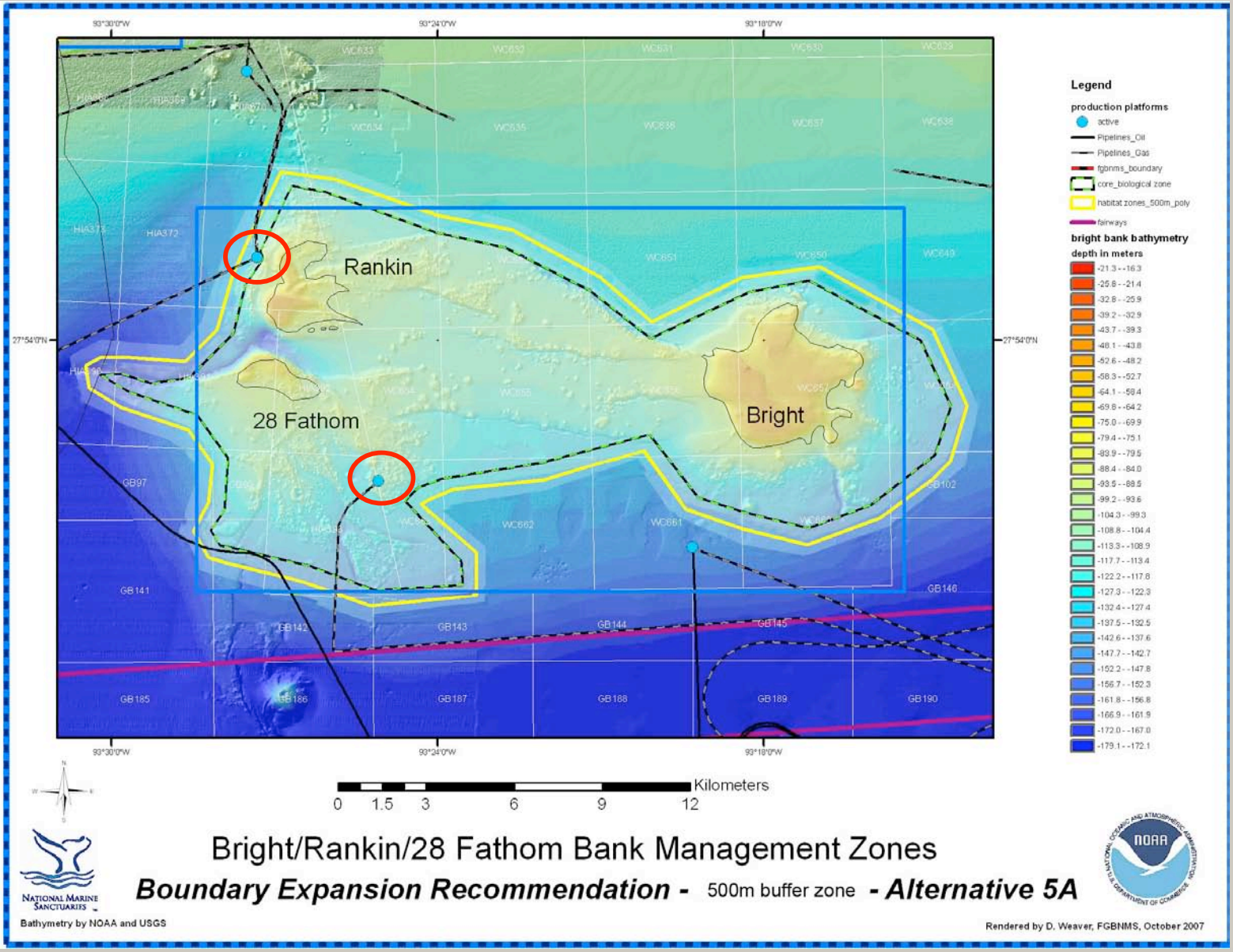

Oil & Gas Infrastructure:

HIA371 TARPON OPERATING AND DEVELOPMENT

&

WC663 ATP OIL AND GAS IN

The following is a summary of the six alternatives considered by the Sanctuary Advisory Council. The SAC recommended alternative 5 to NOAA/FGBNMS.

ALTERNATIVE 1

No action

ALTERNATIVE 2

Modify existing boundaries for East and West Flower Garden Banks, and Stetson Bank through actions creating boundaries based on:

A. Sensitive Habitat Zone/Core Biological Zone
or
B. HAPC boundary

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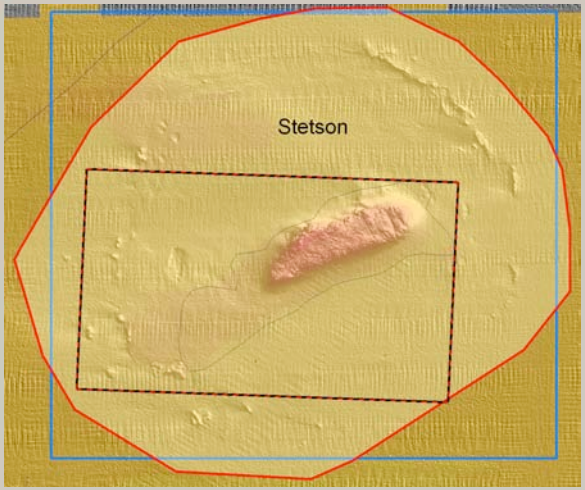

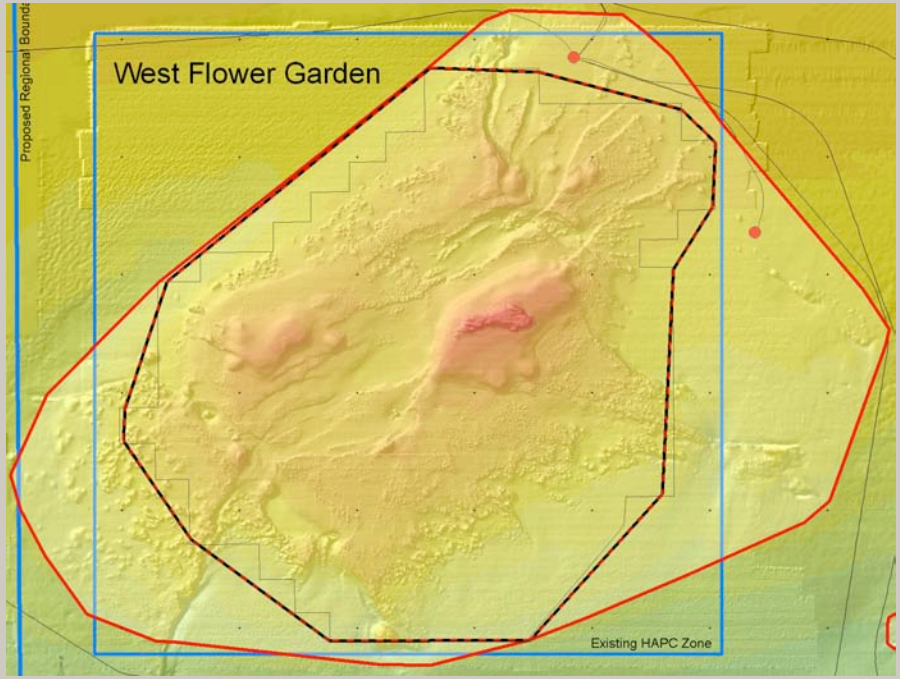

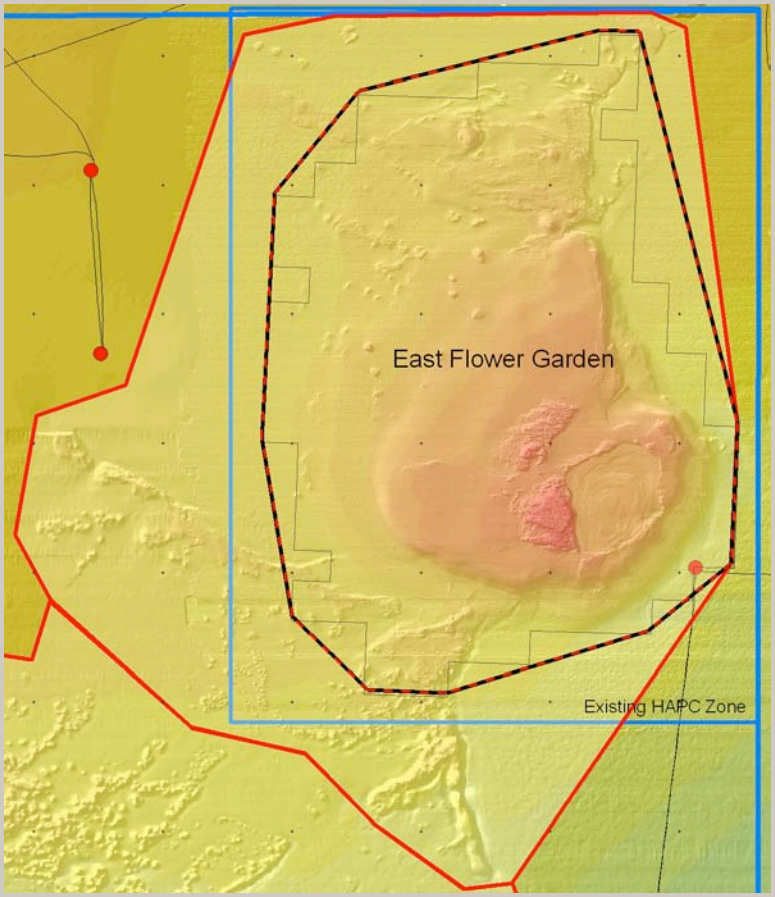

ALTERNATIVE 2

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 2, plus:

Modify existing boundaries to East and West Flower Garden Banks to include Horseshoe Reef, through actions creating boundaries based on either:

A. Sensitive Habitat Zone/Core Biological Zone encompassing EFGB, WFGB, and Horseshoe Reef

or

B. Rectangular boundary encompassing EFGB, WFGB, and Horseshoe Reef

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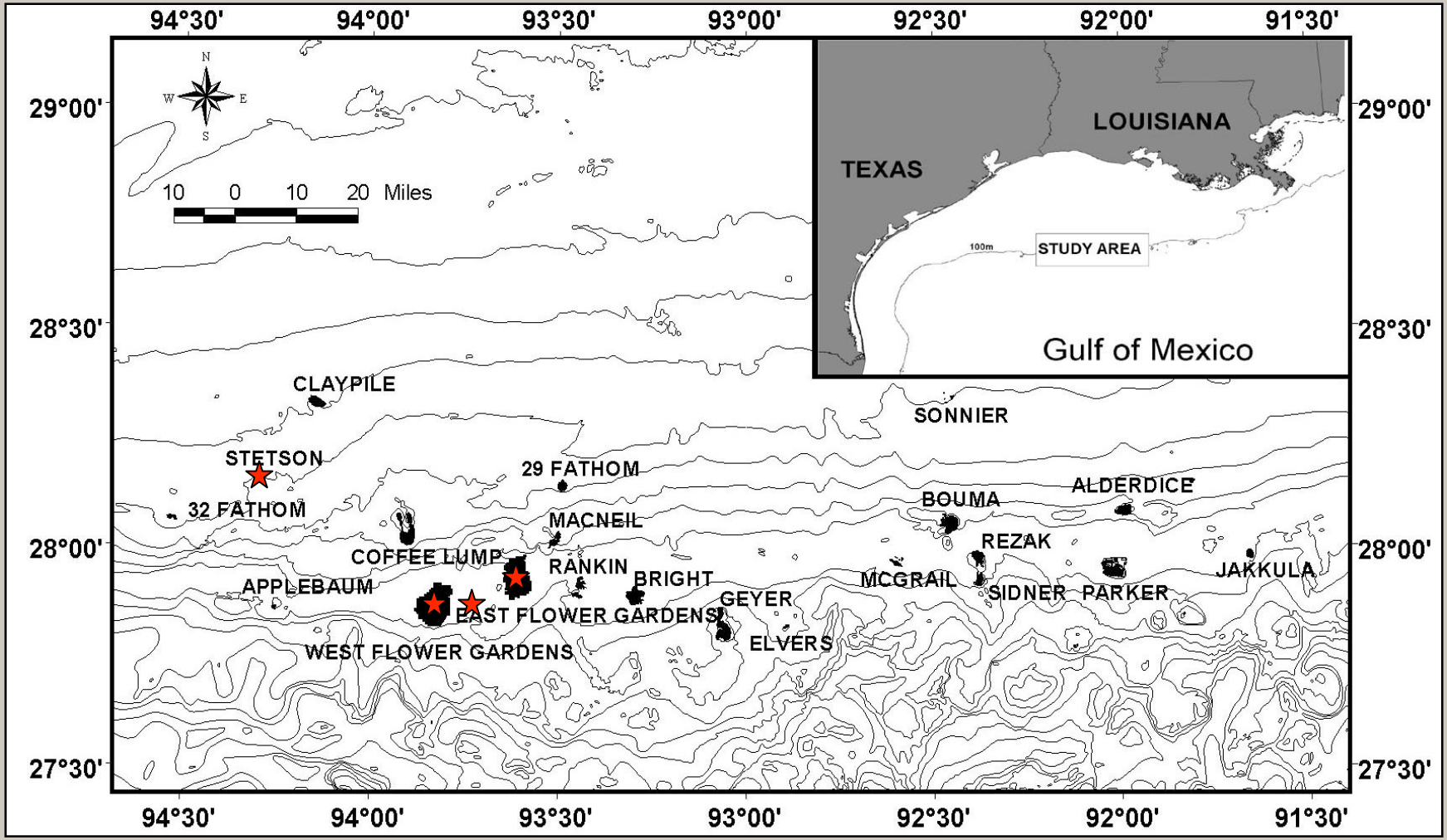

ALTERNATIVE 3

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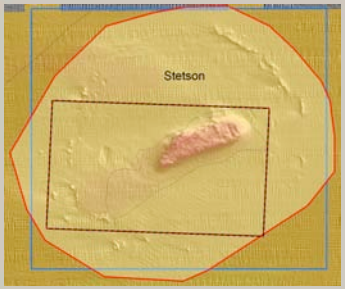

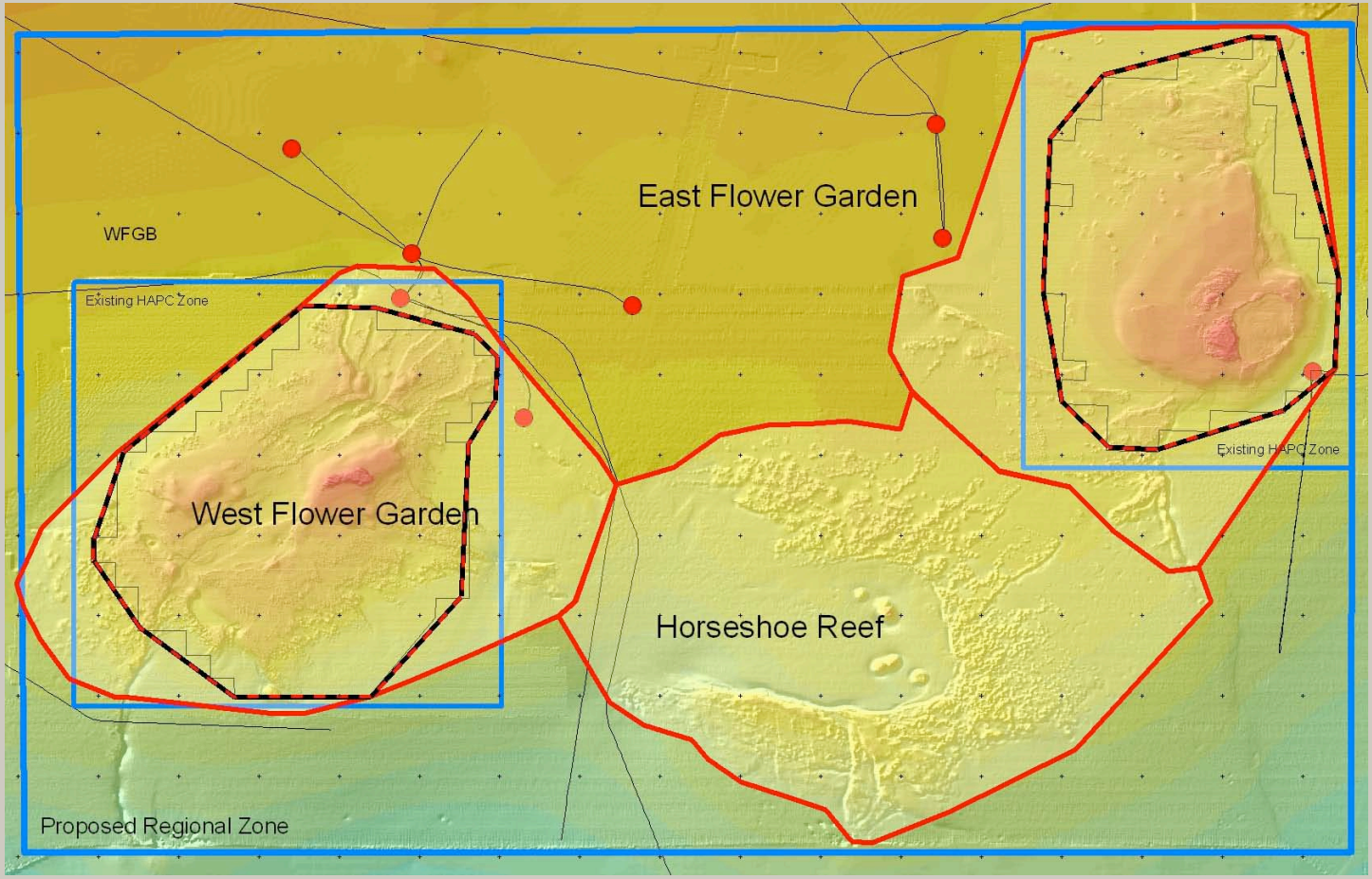

ALTERNATIVE 3

ALTERNATIVE 4

Alternative 3, plus:

Create Sanctuary boundaries to include priority areas:

- McGrail Bank
- Geyer Bank
- Bright Bank
- Sonnier Bank
- Alderdice Bank

Through actions creating boundaries based on either:

A. Sensitive Habitat Zone/Core Biological Zone
or
B. HAPC boundaries, with the exception of Bright Bank, see proposed alternate boundaries.

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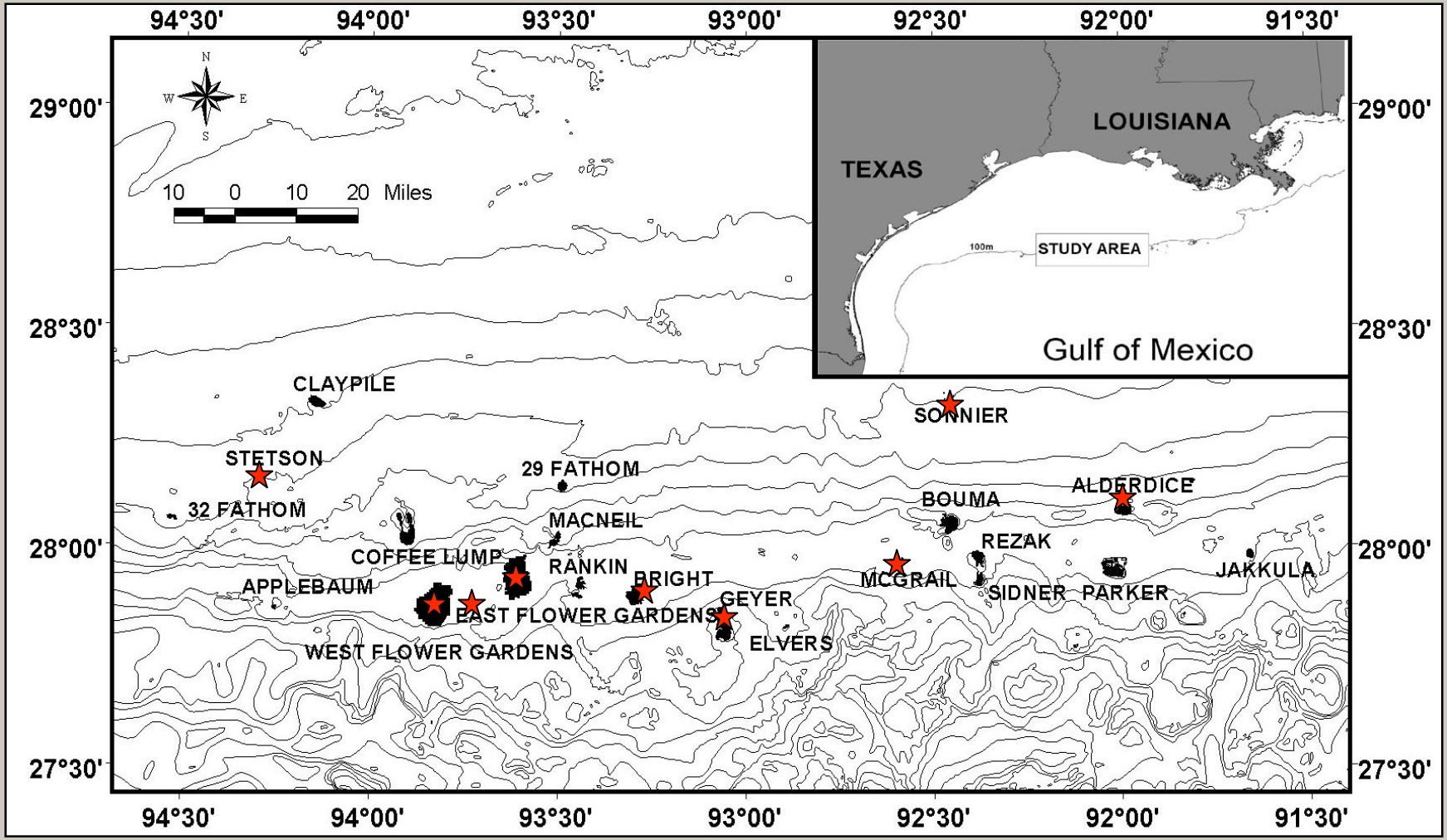

ALTERNATIVE 4

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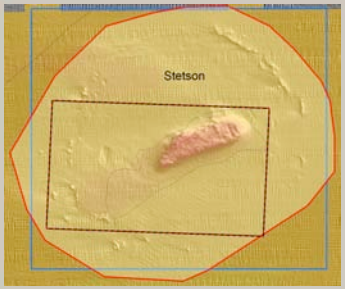
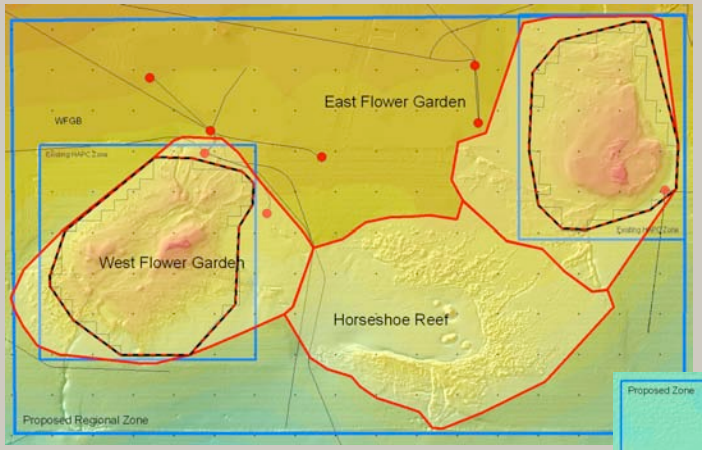
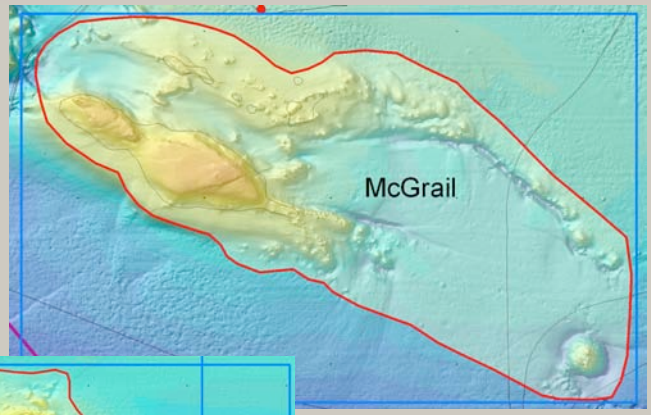
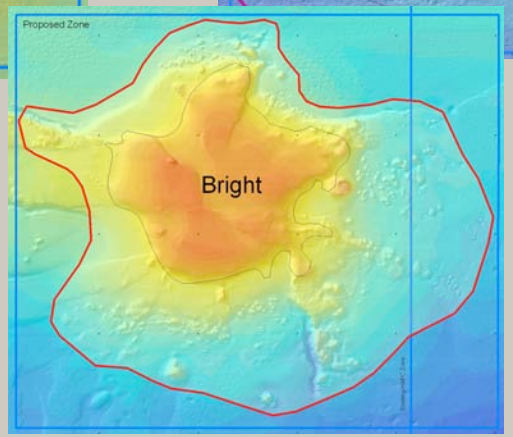
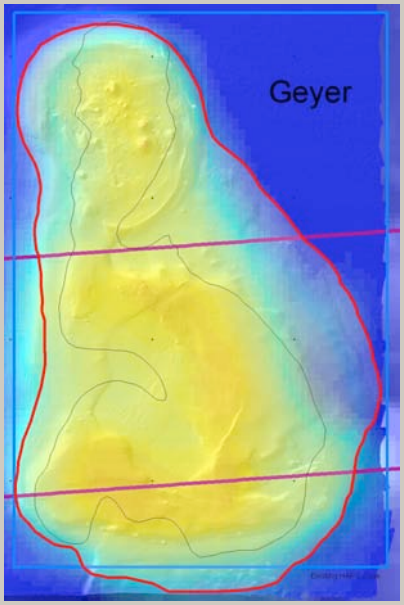


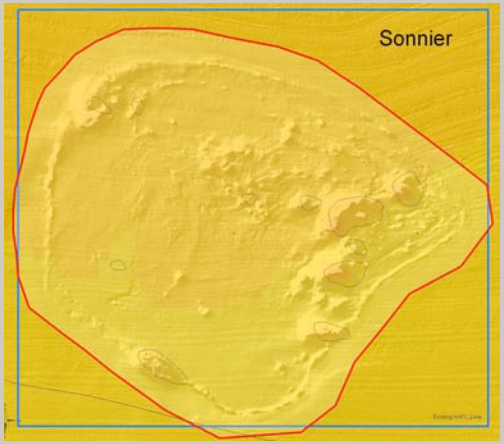


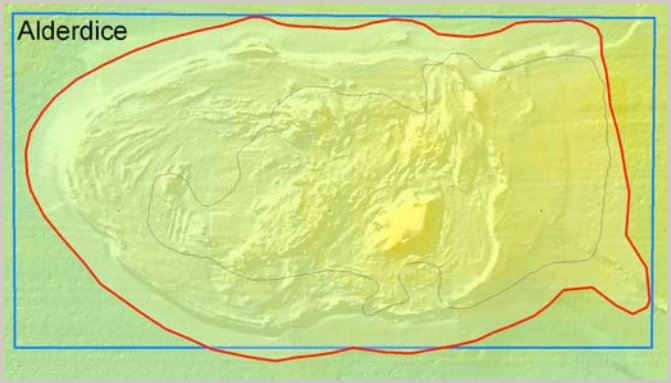




ALTERNATIVE 4







ALTERNATIVE 5 - Recommended by Advisory Council

Alternative 4, plus:

Create Sanctuary boundaries to include:

- MacNeil Bank
- Rankin Bank *
- 28 Fathom Bank *

Through actions creating boundaries based on either:

A. Sensitive Habitat Zone/Core Biological Zone
or
B. HAPC boundaries

- SHZ and HAPC for Rankin and 28 Fathom Bank are connected to Bright Bank
- SAC proposed irregularly shaped boundaries around the Sensitive Habitat Zone

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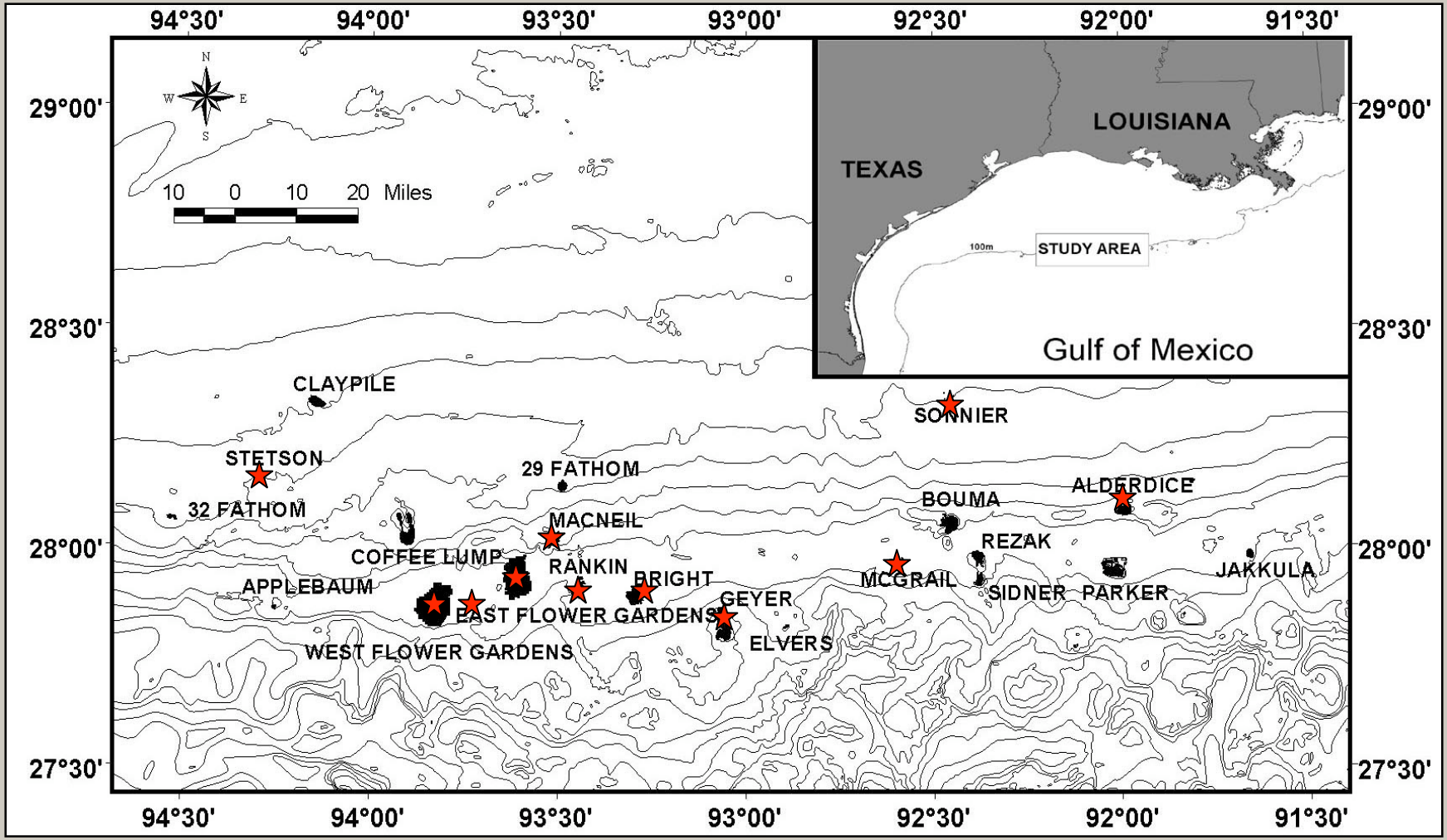

ALTERNATIVE 5 - Advisory Council Recommendation

ALTERNATIVE 6

Alternative 5, plus:

Create Sanctuary boundaries to include all HAPC reefs and banks including:

- 29 Fathom Bank
- Bouma Bank
- Rezak Bank
- Sidner Bank
- Jakkula Bank

Through actions creating boundaries based on either:

A. Sensitive Habitat Zone
or
B. HAPC boundaries

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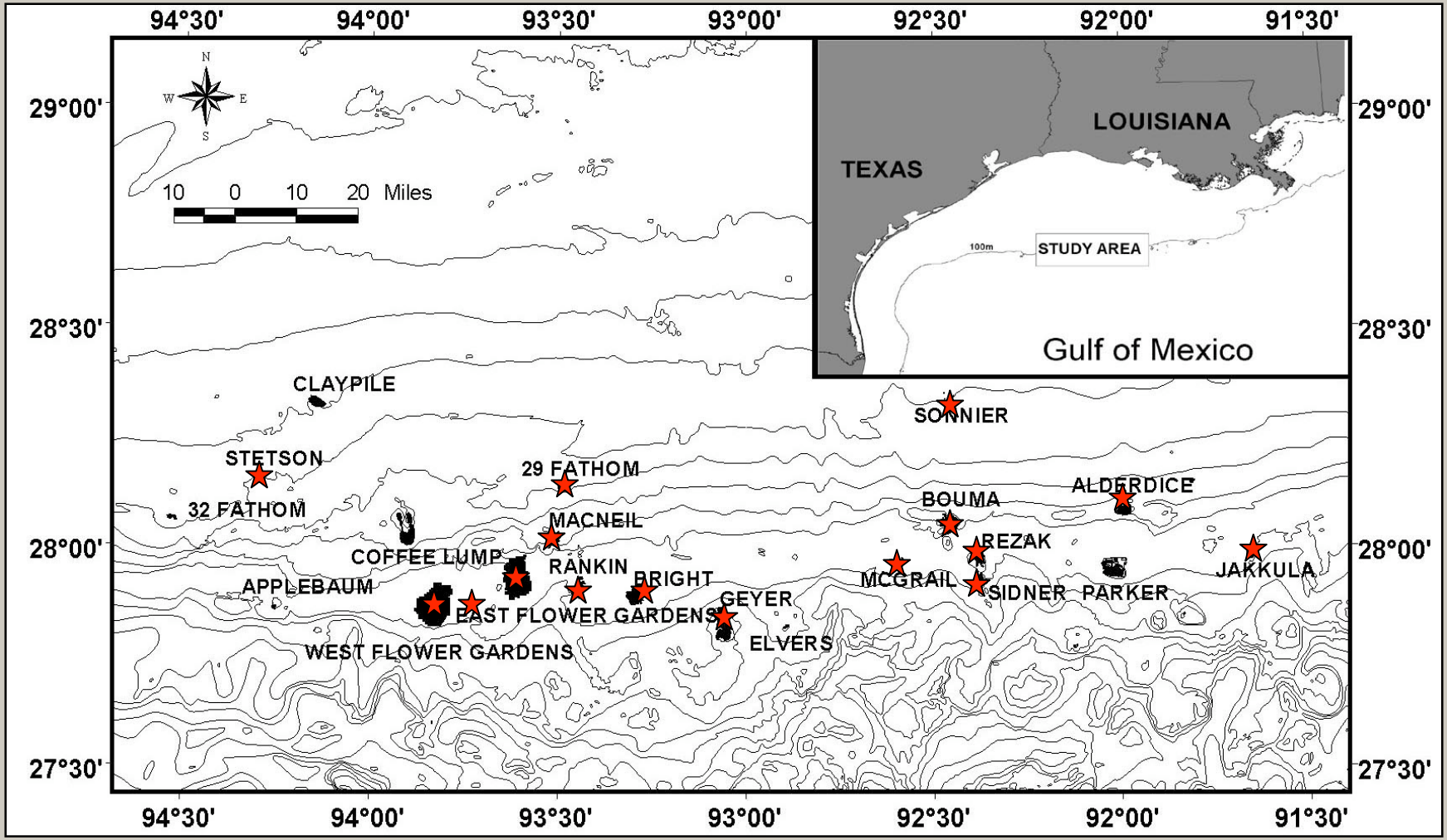

ALTERNATIVE 6

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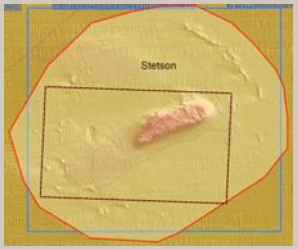
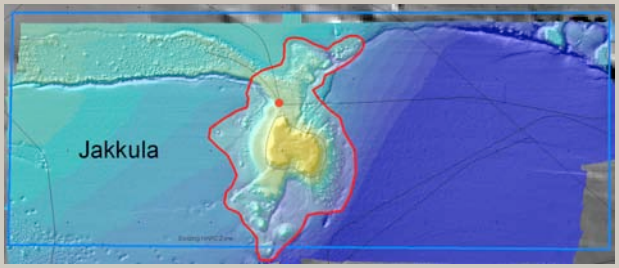
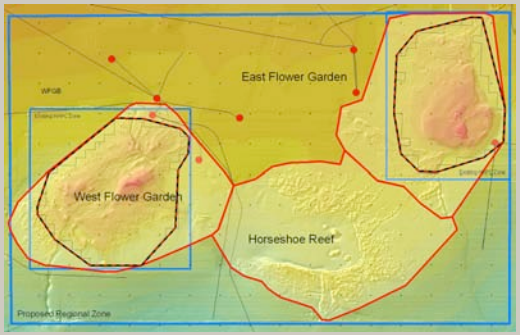
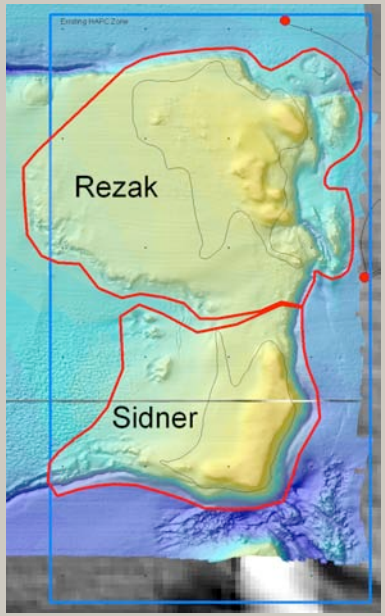
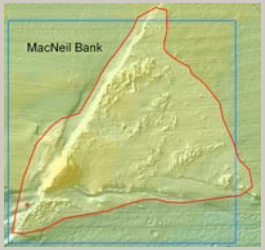
ALTERNATIVE 6

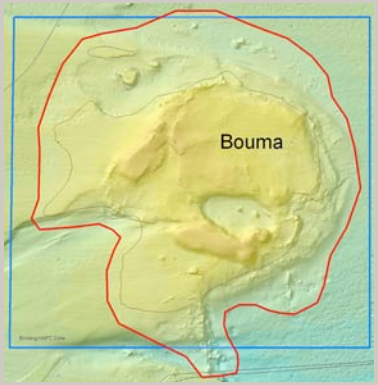


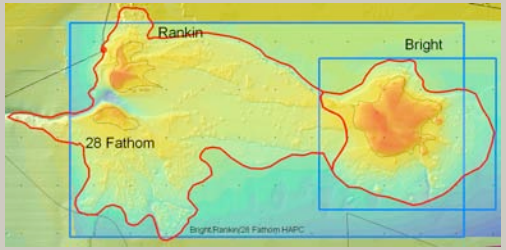


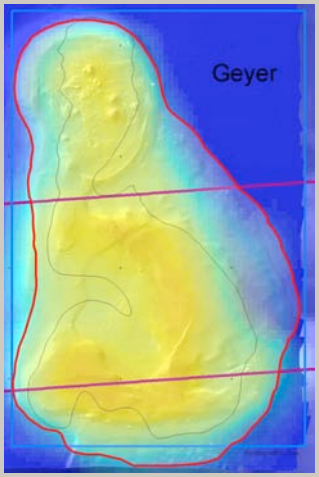


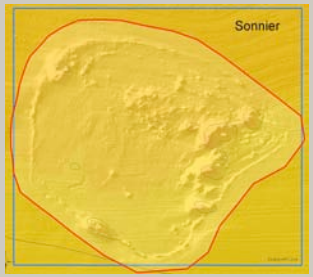


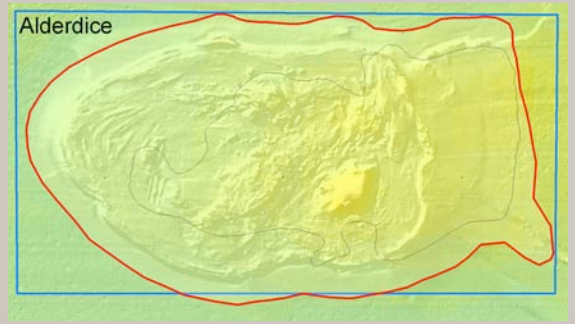


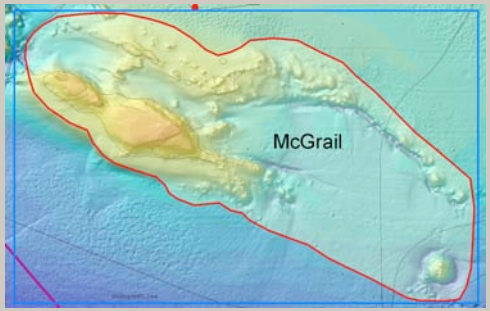












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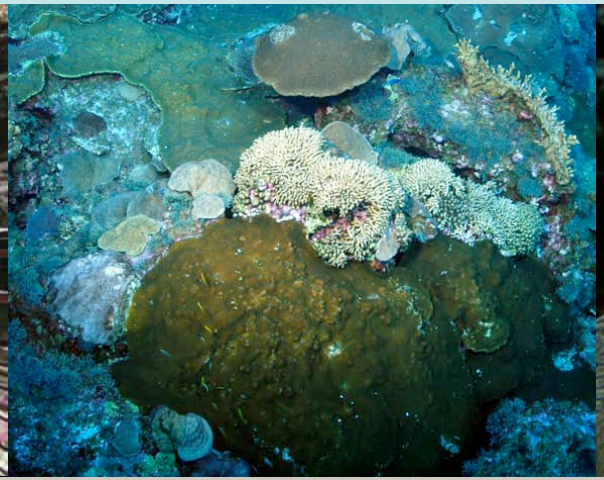
More Info: **http://flowergarden.noaa.gov**

Or contact: **fgbmanagementplan@noaa.gov**