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NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture



Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth

Executive Order focuses on:

- Regulatory reform to maximize commercial fishing
- Seafood Trade
- The expansion of sustainable U.S. seafood production through more efficient and transparent aquaculture permitting



Aquaculture Aspects of the Executive Order

Many of the Executive Order actions allow federal agencies to build on our existing efforts to foster sustainable marine and freshwater aquaculture.

Implementation and responsibility for implementation is across the federal agencies involved with aquaculture including USACE, USDA/APHIS, and EPA



E.O. Section 6: Removing Barriers to Aquaculture Permitting.

- Possible Army Corps of Engineers nationwide permits:
 - Finfish, Seaweed, and multi-species
- NOAA is designated at the lead agency for NEPA when a project:
 - Requires environmental review or authorization by two or more agencies
 - Requires an environmental impact statement (EIS)
 - Is located outside of the waters of any State or Territory and within the exclusive economic zone of the United States
- All cooperating and participating agencies shall cooperate with the lead agency and all individual agency decisions shall be recorded in one ROD, unless the project sponsor requests that agencies issue separate NEPA documents.
- EIS development must be completed in 2 years



E.O. Section 8: Improving Regulatory Transparency for Aquaculture

- Within 240 days prepare and place prominently on the appropriate NOAA webpage a single guidance document that:
 - describes the Federal regulatory requirements and relevant Federal and State agencies involved in aquaculture permitting and operations; and
 - identifies Federal grant programs applicable to aquaculture siting, research, development, and operations.
 - The Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of NOAA, shall update this guidance as appropriate, but not less than once every 18 months.



E.O. Section 9: Updating National Aquaculture Development Plan

- Within 180 days, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture shall assess whether to revise the National Aquaculture Development Plan, in order to strengthen our domestic aquaculture production and improve the efficiency and predictability of aquaculture permitting, including permitting for aquaculture projects located outside of the waters of any State or Territory and within the exclusive economic zone of the United States.



E.O. Section 10: Promoting Aquatic Animal Health

- Within 30 days appropriate Federal and State officials shall consider whether to terminate the 2008 National Aquatic Animal Health Plan and to replace it with a new National Aquatic Animal Health Plan.
- Any new National Aquatic Animal Health Plan shall be completed, consistent with applicable law, within 180 days.
- If adopted, the Plan shall subsequently be updated, not less than once every 2 years, by the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, other appropriate Federal officials, and States, as appropriate.



E.O. Section 7: Aquaculture Opportunity Areas

- The Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with other appropriate Federal officials, appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, and in coordination with appropriate State and tribal governments, shall:
 - Within 1 year of date of E.O., identify at least two geographic areas containing locations suitable for commercial aquaculture.
 - Within 2 years of identifying each geographic area, complete a PEIS for each to assess the impact of siting aquaculture facilities there.
 - Each of following 4 years, identify two more geographic areas and complete PEIS within 2 years.



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How will we identify AOAAs?

We will use a combination of:

- NCCOS siting analysis results & mapping tools
- Stakeholder input (Councils, Commissions, public)
- Interagency coordination





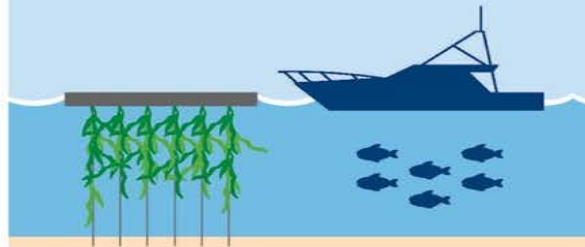
What is an Aquaculture Opportunity Area?

Aquaculture Opportunity Areas show high potential for commercial aquaculture. A science and community-based approach to identifying these areas helps minimize interference with other enterprises, account for current fishing patterns, and protect the ecosystem.

AOAs will expand economic opportunities in coastal and rural areas, and increase our nation's seafood security.

AOAs use the best available science to find appropriate spaces for sustainable aquaculture.

AOAs minimize interactions with other users, such as shipping, fishing, and the military.



Assessment and Use of AOAs

Stakeholder input is essential in the design and location of AOAs and NOAA expects these areas will be shaped through a public process that allows constituents to share their community and stewardship goals, as well as critical insights.

AOA size, exact location, and farm types will be determined through spatial analysis and public input to expand sustainable domestic seafood production while minimizing potential user conflicts. Farms will still need to go through the permitting process and environmental reviews.



Permitting Still Required for AOAs

- The federal and state permitting and authorization requirements are the same within AOAs as anywhere else.
 - Aquaculture operations proposed within an AOA would be required to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations (e.g., Clean Water Act, Rivers and Harbors Act, Endangered Species Act [ESA], essential fish habitat under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act).
- Potential impacts to protected species and habitats will be considered at multiple points in the process.
- Identifying AOAs is an opportunity for proactive stewardship to use best available global science-based guidance on sustainable aquaculture management, and support the “triple bottom line” of environmental, economic, and social sustainability.



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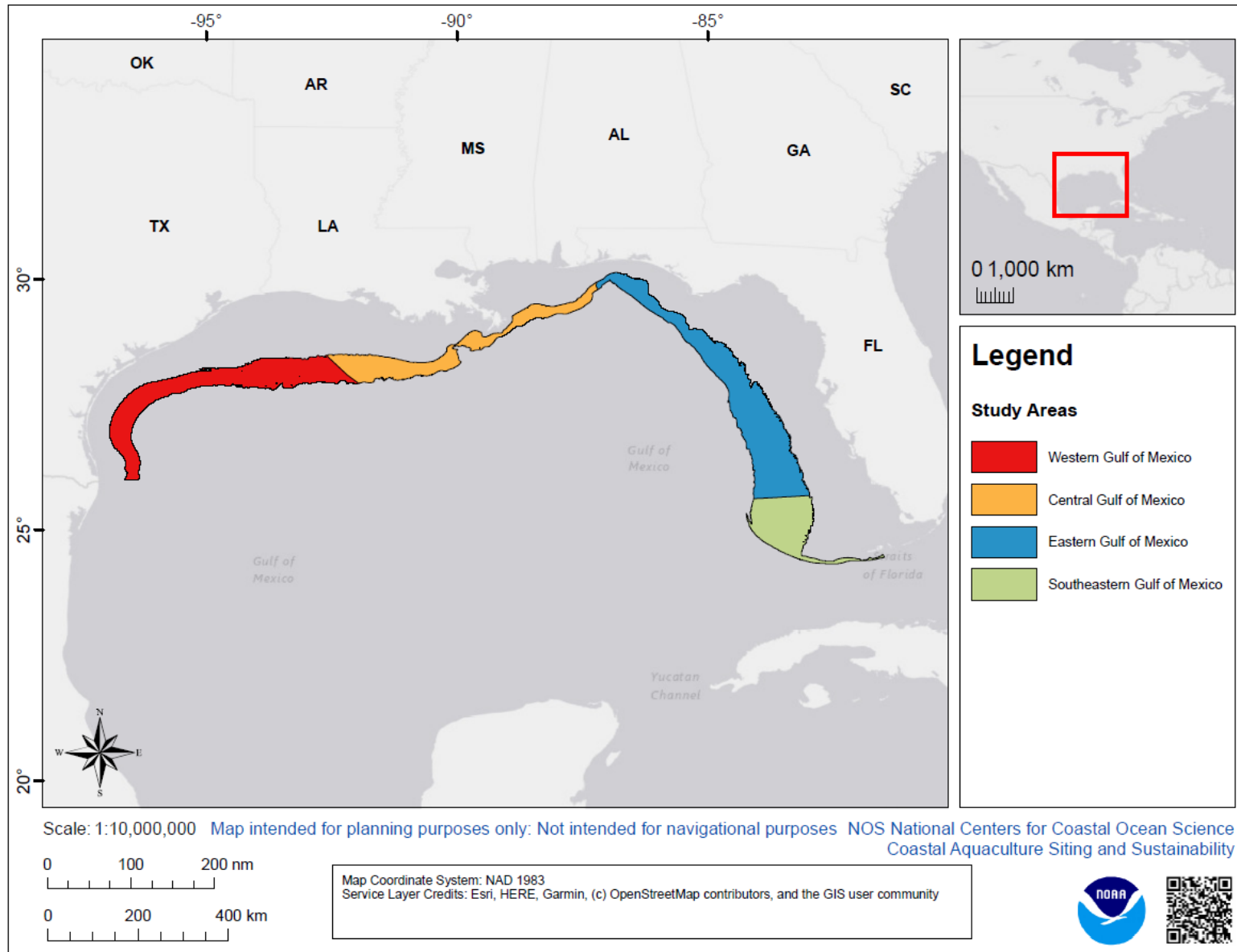
First Two Aquaculture Opportunity Areas under Executive Order on Seafood

- Southern California and in the Gulf of Mexico have been selected for science-based evaluation and development of the first two AOAs
- These selections were based on the already available spatial analysis data and current industry interest in developing sustainable aquaculture operations in the region.
- For the past several years, the Gulf of Mexico and southern California have been areas of interest for domestic aquaculture producers with potential farmers pointing to the areas' access to ideal ocean conditions, access to markets, and established shorebased infrastructure.

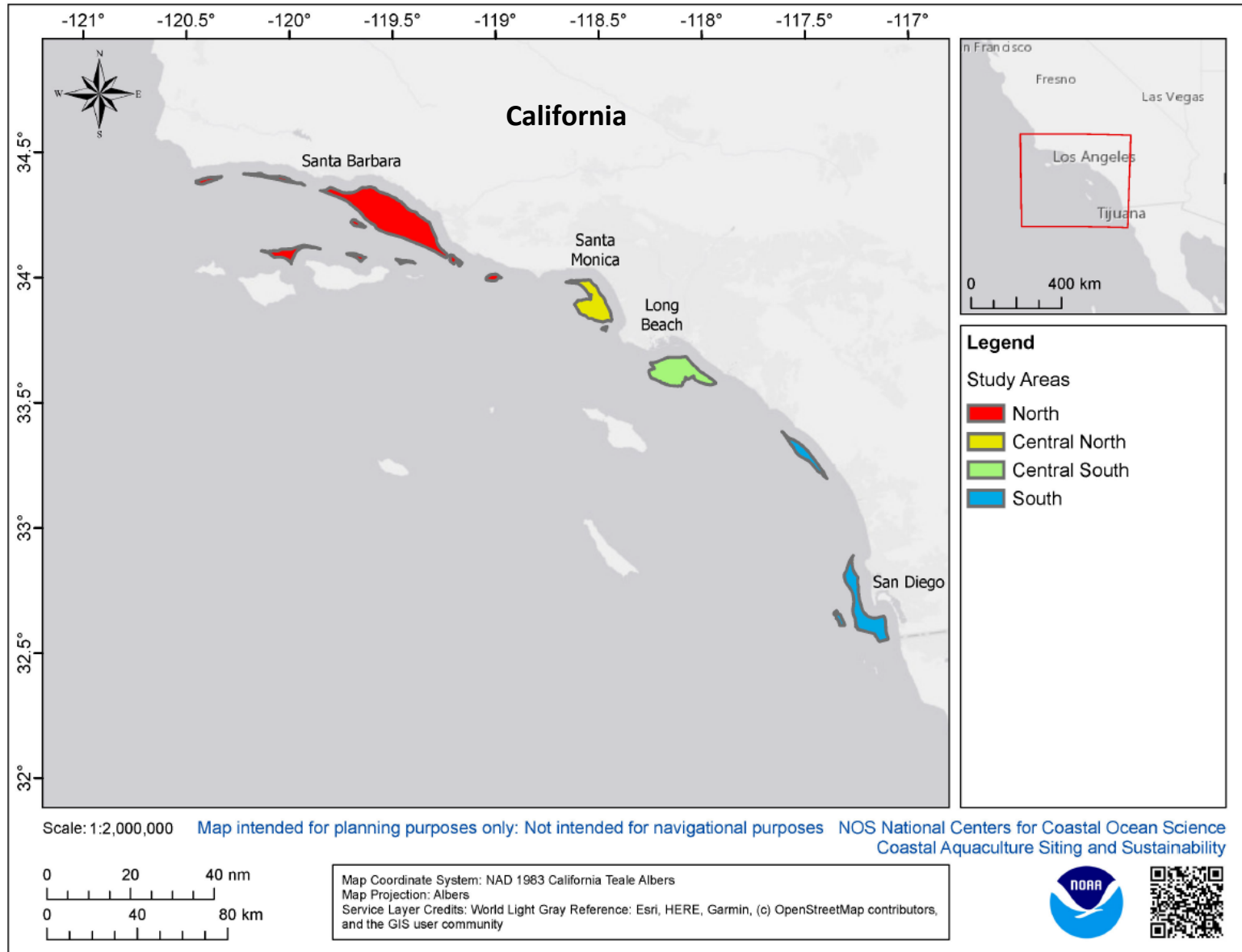


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Draft Gulf of Mexico Study Areas



Draft Southern California Study Areas



AOA Year 1 Steps

now



May 7, 2021

What:

Convene implementation teams

NCCOS siting analysis

Early public/stakeholder outreach – introduce AOA concept

Public Notice: request input on siting in 2 initial areas AND national to begin thinking about where to focus for next 8

Outreach at FMC meetings, coordination with federal agencies, states, and tribes

NCCOS draft “Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas”

Combine public input and the Atlas to identify appropriate AOAs



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Discussion



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