

What we Heard:

Lessons from Public Consultation to Select the Next Area of Interest for Marine Protected Area Designation on the Eastern Scotian Shelf

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Fisheries and
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Outline

- Background
- Planning and preparation
- Consultation period
- Consultation results
- Lessons learned
- Next steps

Background

- National *Health of the Oceans* Initiative included six new *Oceans Act* MPAs in Canada
- DFO Maritimes Region to create one of those new MPAs, on the Eastern Scotian Shelf
- Consulted on three candidate sites
- Selected one of those three as the Area of Interest - St Anns Bank



MPA designation process

Step 0: Public engagement on Area of Interest selection

- **Step 1:** Select Area of Interest (AOI)
- **Step 2:** Conduct Overview and Assessment of AOI
- **Step 3:** Develop Regulatory Intent and conduct public consultation
- **Step 4:** Develop Regulatory Documents and designate the MPA
- **Step 5:** Manage Marine Protected Area

Planning and Preparation

- Developed a communications strategy
 - Outlined main messages, key players, and consultation approach
 - Reviewed these elements with ESSIM SAC
- Discussions with other governments, key stakeholders
 - Internal DFO conversations
 - Extensive pre-consultation with Province of Nova Scotia
 - Pre-consultation with Nova Scotia First Nations (through KMK)
 - Discussions with ESSIM SAC, Fisheries Roundtable, and others
- Developed supporting materials
 - Consultation Booklet (with Feedback Form)
 - 1-page Summary
 - Mailing list
 - Website

Consultation Period

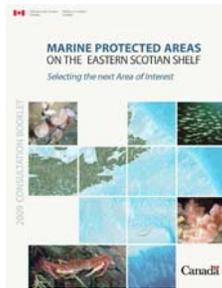
The original plan:

- 60 days (October-December 2009)
- Circulate consultation booklets
- Post all materials on web
- Collect feedback forms (paper, web, email)
- Plan meetings with key stakeholders (e.g., ESSIM SAC, Fisheries Roundtable, fishing groups, etc) and 2 public meetings
- Accommodate meeting requests

Consultation Period

What information was provided?

- Consultation booklet and website
- Background on MPAs and MPA networks
- How the 3 candidate sites were selected and what will happen next
- Ecological features of each candidate AOI
- Existing human uses
- How the sites meet the criteria for MPAs under the *Oceans Act*



Consultation Period

Initial response:

- Fishing industry
 - Criticized the process: too short, too late
 - Asked for socioeconomic information and more info on how sites were selected
- Provinces
 - Concerns with potential economic impacts (fishing and oil and gas)
- Aboriginal groups
 - Concerns with potential economic impacts on fishing but supportive of concept
- ENGOs
 - Supportive of initiative
- Other industries
 - Very little feedback early in the process
- Broader public – not engaged at this point

The First Meeting

- “I gotta have a smoke before I have a heart attack...”
- “Marty, I’m going to use you as an otter board / an anchor / throw you in the shrimp machine...”
- “I’ve been fishing since before your mom was wiping snot off your face...”
- “What the f*** are we protecting coral for anyway?...”

Consultation Period

How did we respond to concerns?

- Extended consultation period to February (to 120d)
- Provided socioeconomic profiles of each site
- Extended consultation again to May (to 213d)
- Another round of meetings on the socioeconomic profiles
- Developed potential management scenarios in response to requests for more information
- Targeted academic communities – meetings held at 4 universities
- Dropped public meetings from the plan
 - Focused on sector-specific meetings and engaging wider public through newspaper ads, website, and feedback forms

Consultation Results

Total Feedback:

- 70 meetings (half with fishing industry)
- 158 feedback forms
- 24 formal submissions
- 7 letters to the Minister
- Feedback is captured in a document entitled *What We Heard*



Consultation Results

The candidate Areas of Interest

- Initially, many stakeholders were either supportive of all three or not supportive of any
- Most common concerns were about the potential negative economic impacts on commercial fishing activities and associated coastal communities
- Some stakeholders proposed other sites, particularly the Haddock Box

Consultation Results

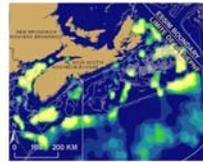
The candidate Areas of Interest

- More concern was expressed over the Misaine Bank & Eastern Shoal and Middle Bank candidate AOIs (mostly due to commercial fishing)
- Misaine Bank & Eastern Shoal and the northern portion of St Anns Bank are considered prospective for oil and gas
- St Anns Bank received the most direct support



Consultation Results

MPAs and MPA networks



Results of preliminary MPA network analysis for the Maritimes Region (DFO 2011).

- Concern about potential impacts on future oil and gas investment in the region
- General concern about concentration of protected areas in eastern Nova Scotia
- Many fishing industry groups were generally opposed to MPAs and questioned their effectiveness, given other sustainability measures in the industry
- Support for MPAs and MPA networks was expressed by all ENGOs; most Aboriginal groups; most academics; certain government agencies; and a few industry groups

Consultation Results

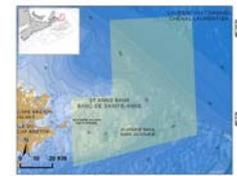
Feedback form results

- 89% support the establishment of new MPAs in Canada
- 70% support the establishment of any of the three candidate AOIs
- 30% either oppose the selection of one of the candidate AOIs or do not support nor oppose any of the candidates.
- 66% were students, 10% were fish harvesters, and the remaining 24% comprised of retirees, academics, government workers, professionals, NGO workers and others.

Consultation Results

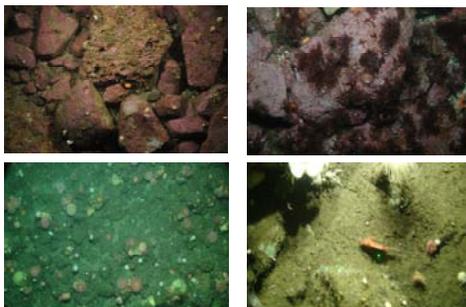
Recommended selection of the St Anns Bank candidate AOI to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

- Clear alignment with *Oceans Act* criteria for MPA establishment
 - Highly diverse
 - Important to depleted groundfish populations
 - Contains corals and sponges
 - Endangered leatherback turtle foraging area
 - Wide range of migratory fish and marine mammals
- Direct support from some First Nations, some fishing groups, academics, ENGOs, others
- Area with lowest potential economic impact



St Anns Bank Area of Interest Announced by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans June 8th, 2011

The St Anns Bank AOI



Lessons Learned

About the consultation process

- Doing our homework helped us know our audiences and understand the context
- Need to clearly communicate the consultation process, how the feedback will be used, and next steps
- Must allow sufficient time for meaningful dialogue
 - 2-3 meetings needed with each key player (at a minimum)
- Proactively engage key players early and talk to them often
- Try to meet in a range of settings (home v. away, multi-lat v. bi-lat)
- Take into account capacity of stakeholders to participate

Lessons Learned

Moving forward with MPAs and MPA networks

- At what stage should stakeholders be involved?
 - From many, clear desire to be involved earlier in the process
 - But also, some mixed messages – why not wait until you know which site you want?
- Need to provide more clarity on “what it will mean”
- It’s all about relationships:
 - Significant time is required to build trust with influential individuals
 - Worst critics can become strongest supporters

Next Steps

For the St Anns Bank Area of Interest

- High level of interest in staying informed and involved in the AOI establishment process
- The MPA establishment process has begun, which includes establishing a multi-stakeholder advisory body
- Conservation objectives, management options, and regulatory intent are developed with advice from this group
- Broader public consultation occurs at several steps in the designation process

Questions and discussion