

# Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in the Gulf of Mexico

**Andrew Richard, Regional Aquaculture Coordinator**

National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)

Southeast Regional Office, St. Petersburg, Florida

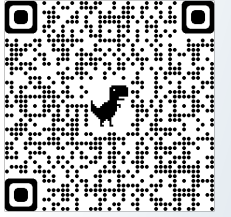
June 21, 2022

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting, Fort Myers, Florida

Habitat Protection and Restoration Committee



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# Notice of Intent (NOI)

- Formally kicks off the PEIS process, includes: purpose and need, preliminary alternatives, expected impacts, timeline, cooperating agencies
- Public comment period **Wed., June 1, 2022** through **Mon., August 1, 2022**
- Two virtual public meetings thus far (6/8 and 6/16)
- Third public meeting: **Tuesday, July 12, 2022**



**FEDERAL REGISTER**  
The Daily Journal of the United States Government



 Notice

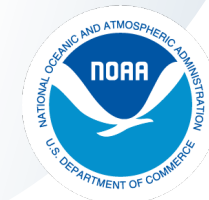
## Notice of Intent To Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Identification of Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico and To Conduct Public Scoping Meetings

A Notice by the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) on 06/01/2022



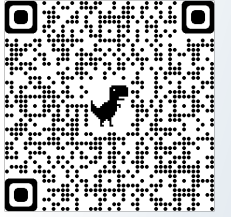
 This document has a comment period that ends in 60 days. (08/01/2022)

[SUBMIT A FORMAL COMMENT](#)



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# Cooperating Agencies



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**



**U.S. AIR FORCE**



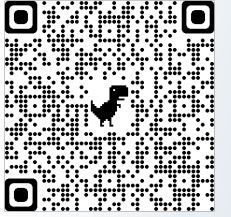
**BOEM**  
Bureau of Ocean Energy  
Management

- Other agencies providing assistance:
- 26+ interagency members team advising NOAA Fisheries throughout development of PEIS
- Goal to develop PEIS such that it informs permitting processes

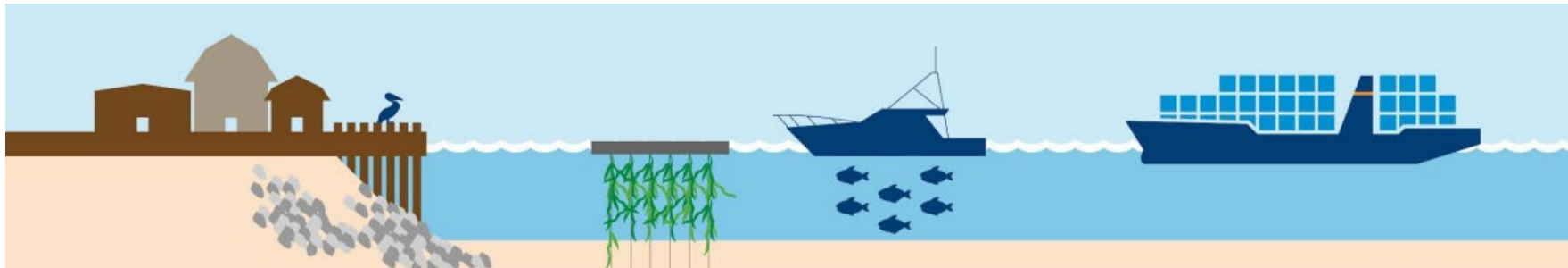


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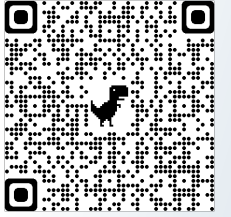
# Proposed Action



- To consider identifying one or more AOAs in federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico
- To evaluate the general impacts of siting aquaculture in potential AOA locations
- This is a planning process. No specific aquaculture activities or individual projects are being proposed or evaluated.



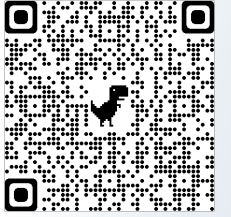
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# Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

- Meet the directives of Executive Order 13921
- **To utilize a science-based approach to inform offshore marine aquaculture planning**
- Find areas that could be suitable for multiple future offshore aquaculture projects
- Address interests and concerns regarding offshore aquaculture siting
- Address the increasing demand for seafood
- Promote American seafood competitiveness, food security, economic growth while also sustaining and conserving marine resources





# Public Comment and Involvement

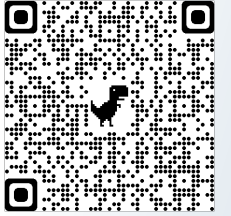
- Public Scoping Comment Period: 60-days (begins June, 1, 2022)
- Public comment deadline is **Monday, August 1, 2022**
- NOAA Fisheries will publish a public scoping summary
- Draft PEIS: At least 45 day public comment period
- Final PEIS will include a Response to Comments

***The PEIS is a planning document - stakeholder input is critically important to shaping its scope***



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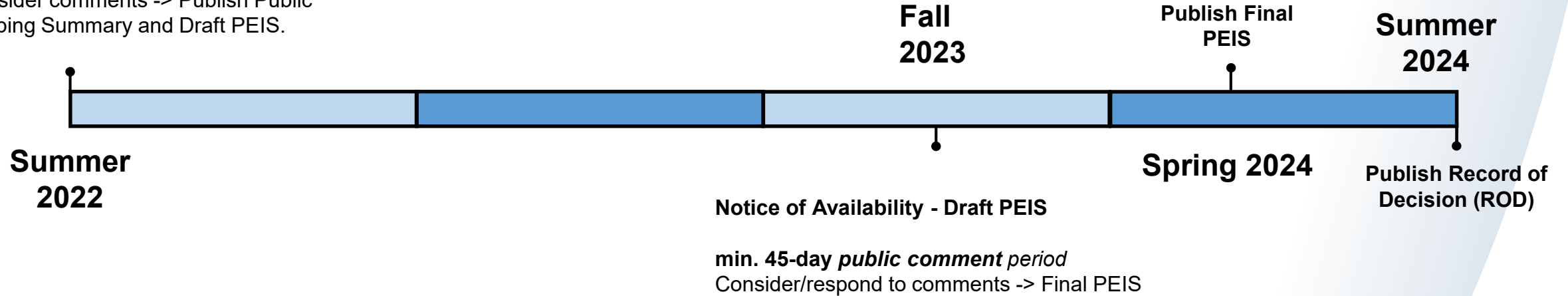
# Timeline



Notice of Intent - Gulf of Mexico AOAs

**60-day public scoping *comment period***

Consider comments -> Publish Public Scoping Summary and Draft PEIS.



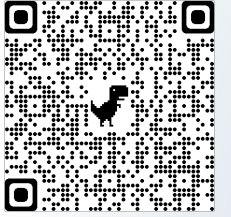
***The PEIS is a planning document and stakeholder input is critical***



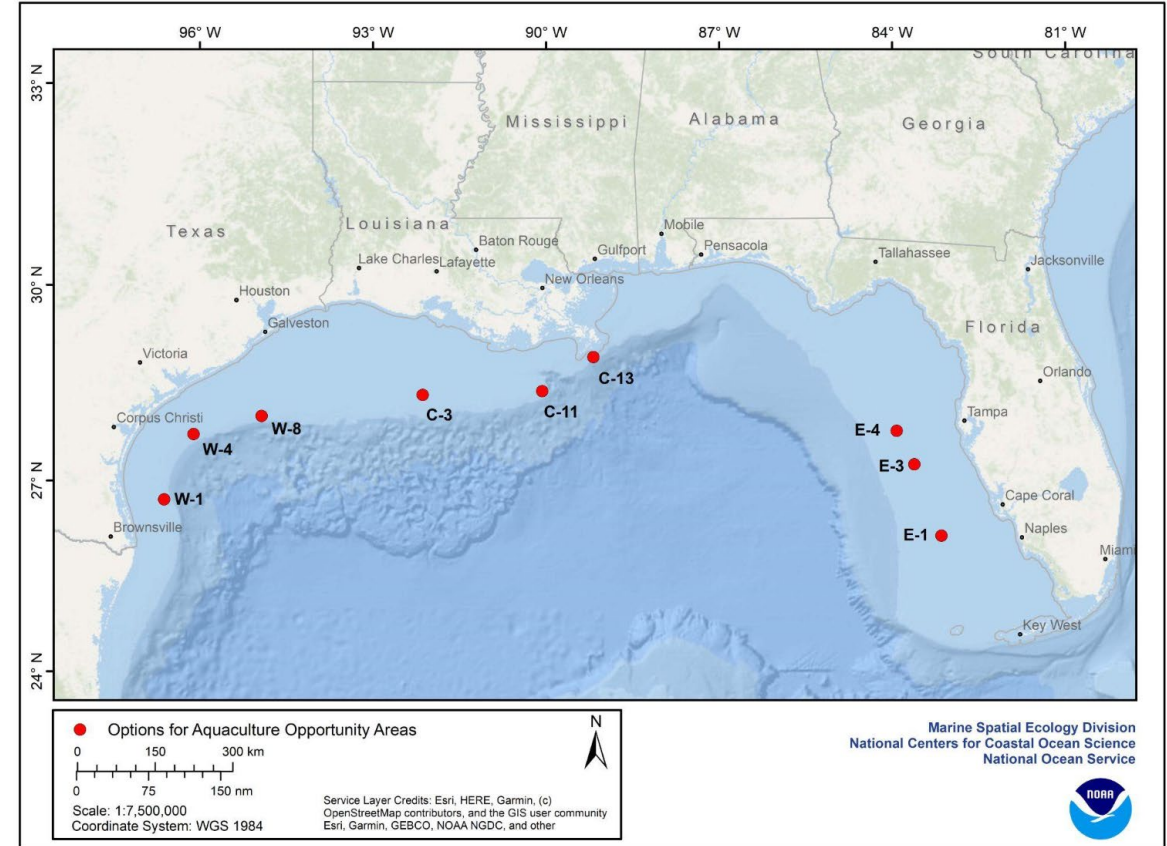
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# Preliminary ideas for alternatives to consider in the PEIS: nine Atlas locations

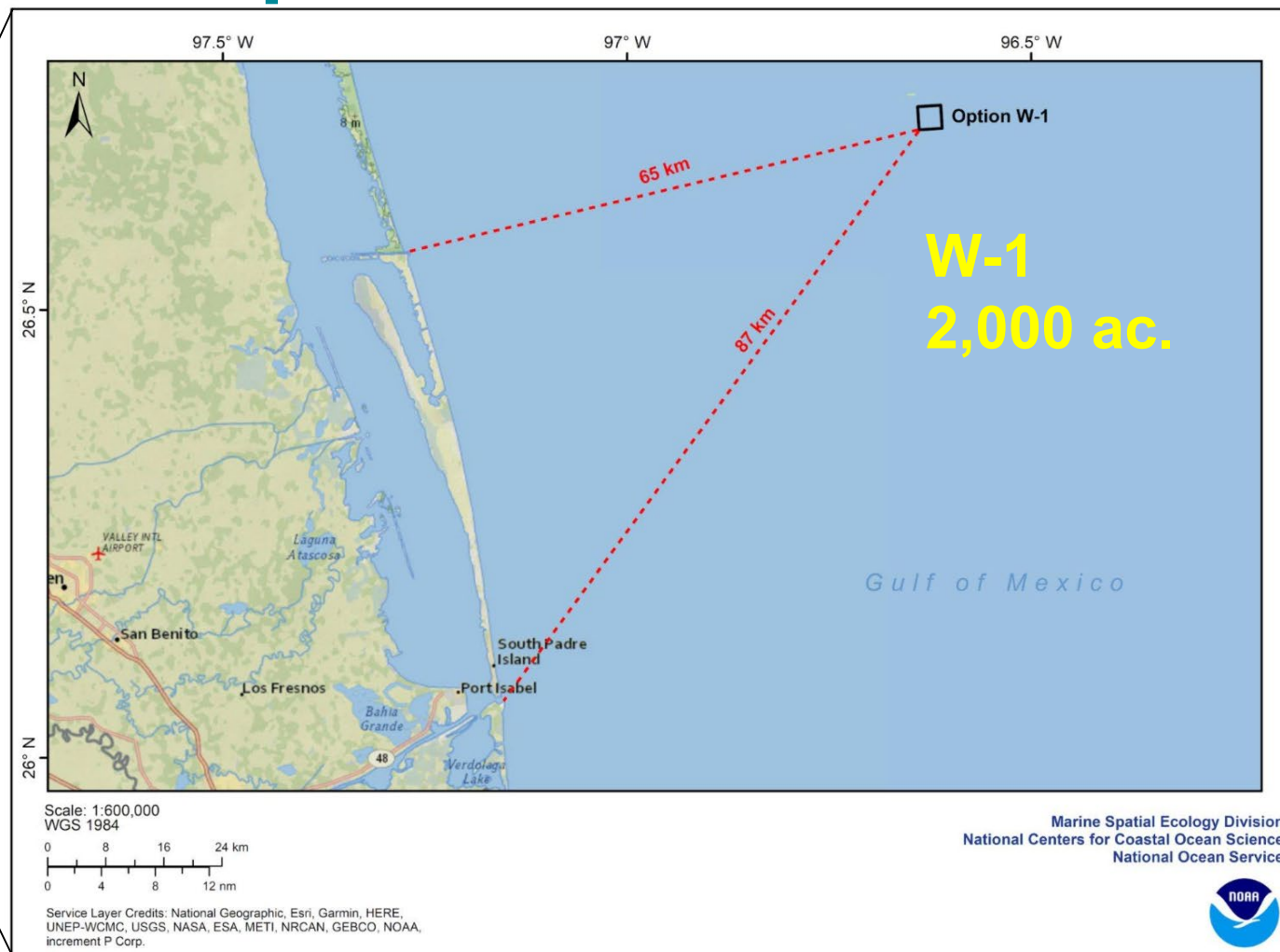
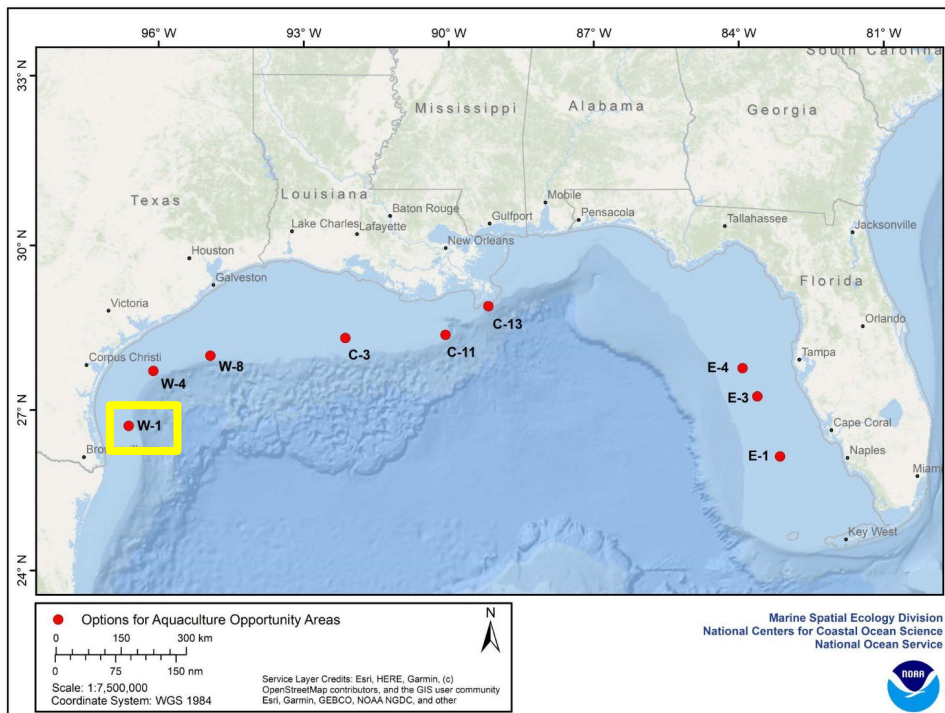


- NMFS will determine the number and scope of alternatives explored and select the locations to be evaluated in the draft PEIS informed by the comments received during this public scoping period.
- **No Action Alternative:** What would be the effects if this planning process never took place?



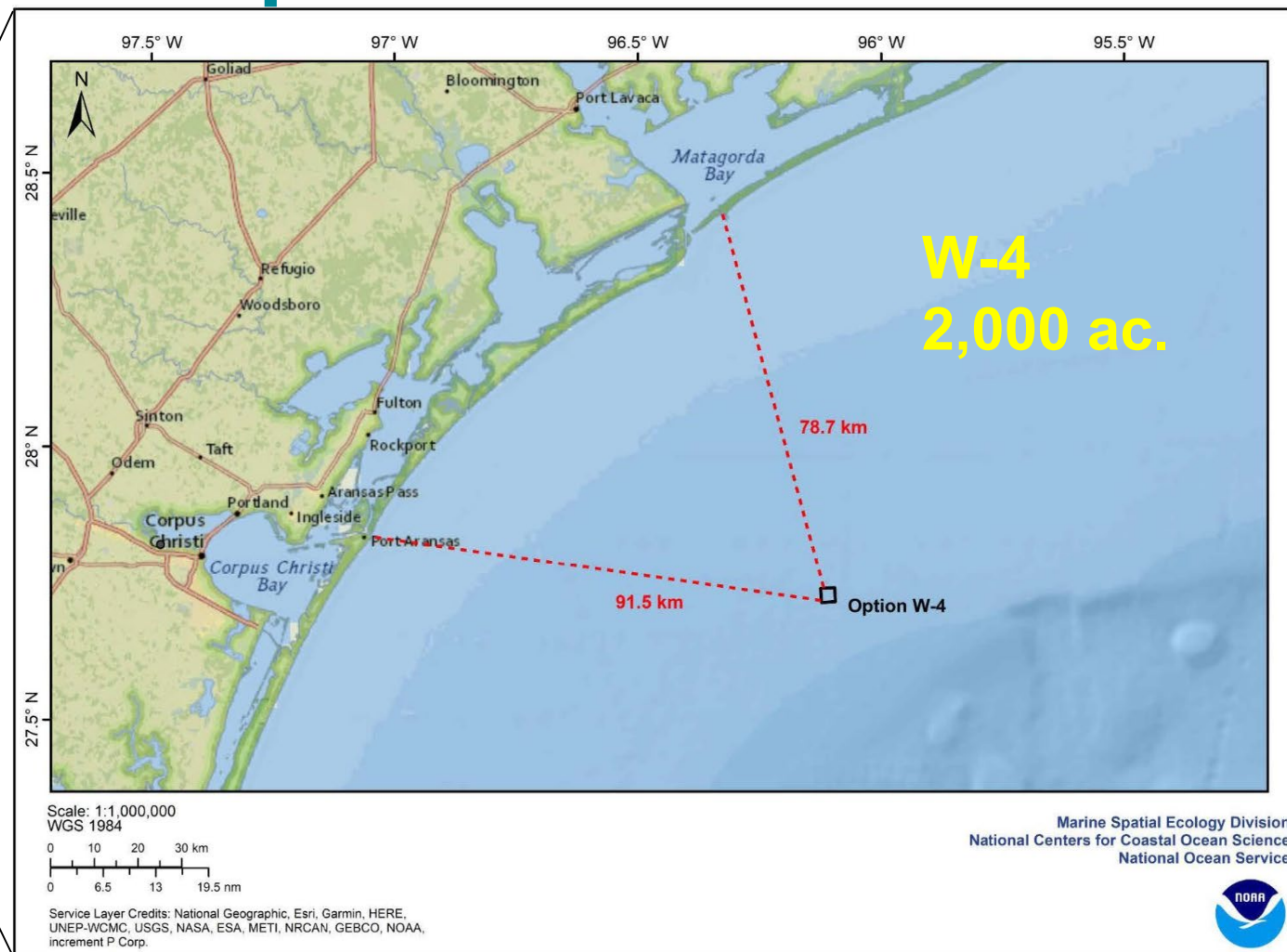
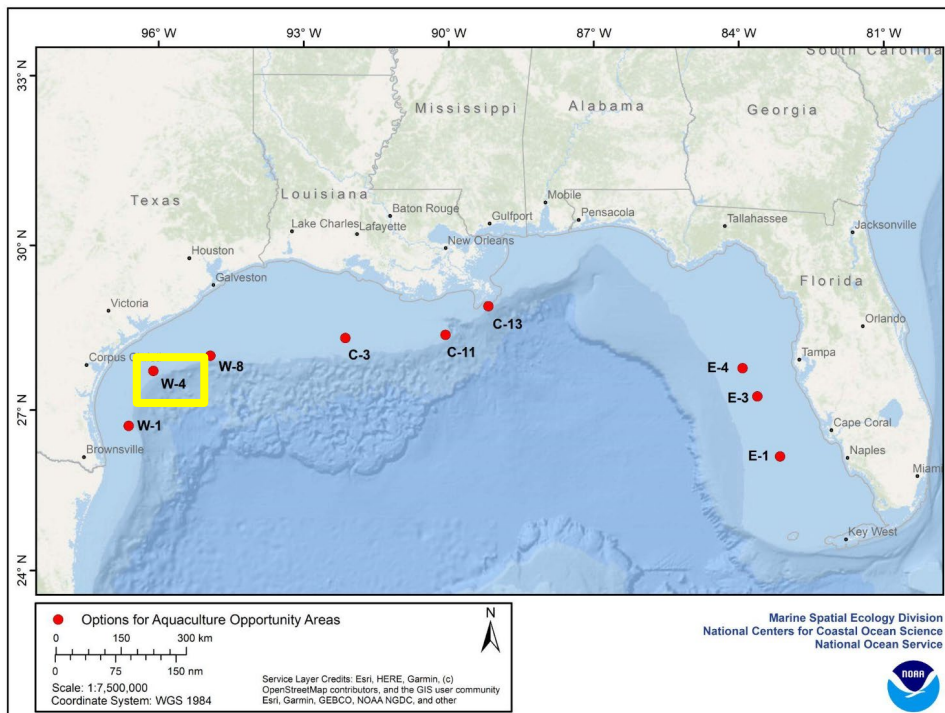


# Atlas AOA Option W-1



Map of location W-1 (2,000 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 35 nmi east of Port Mansfield Channel, Texas

# Atlas AOA Option W-4



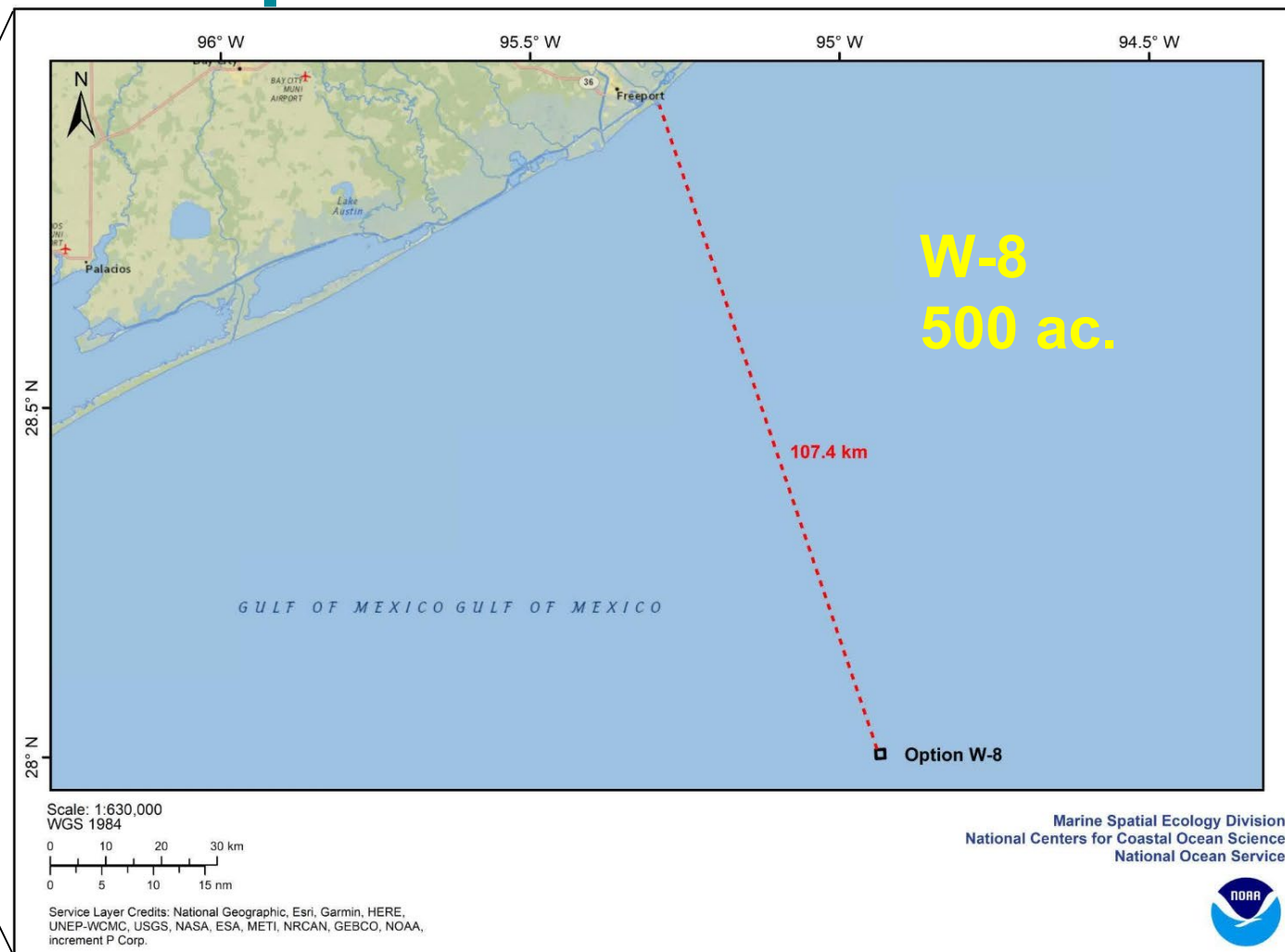
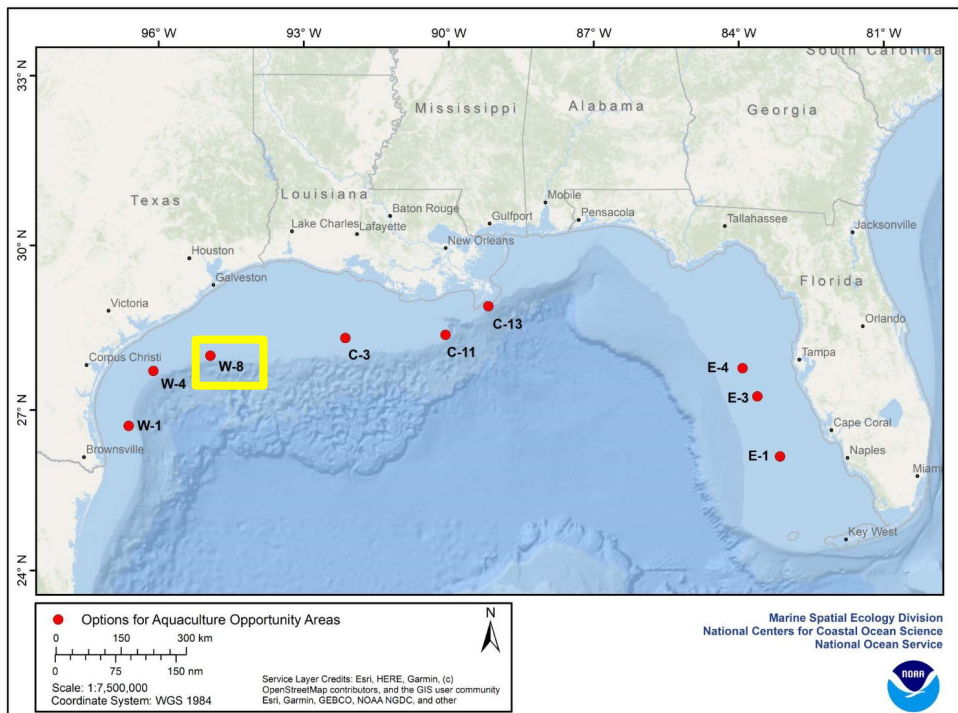
Map of location W-4 (2,000 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 50 nmi southeast of Port Aransas, Texas.



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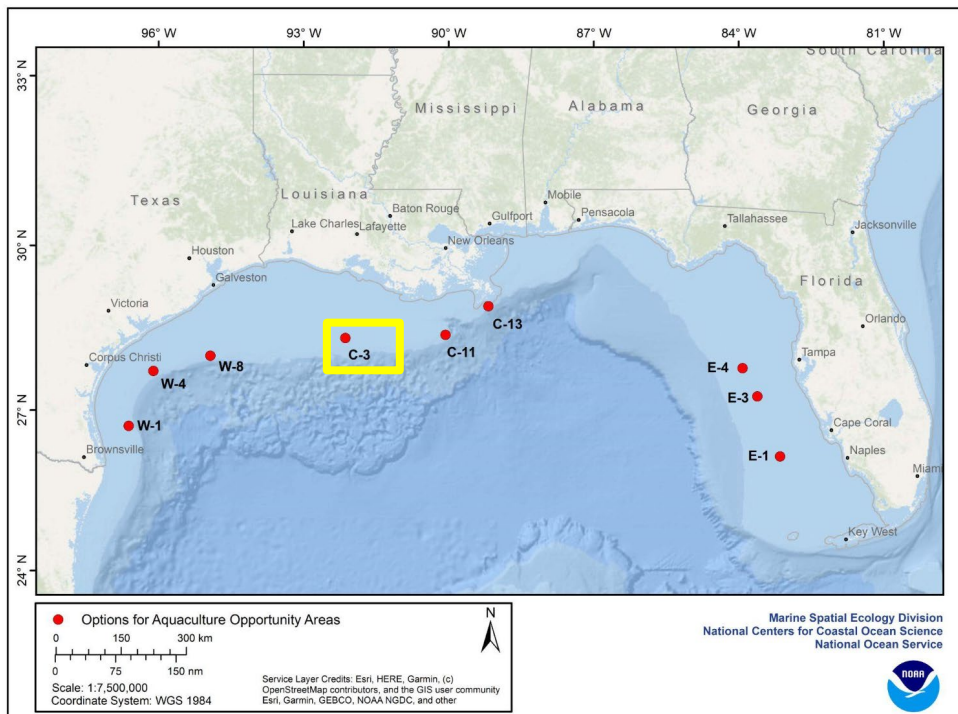


# Atlas AOA Option W-8



Map of location W-8 (500 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 58 nmi southeast of Freeport, Texas

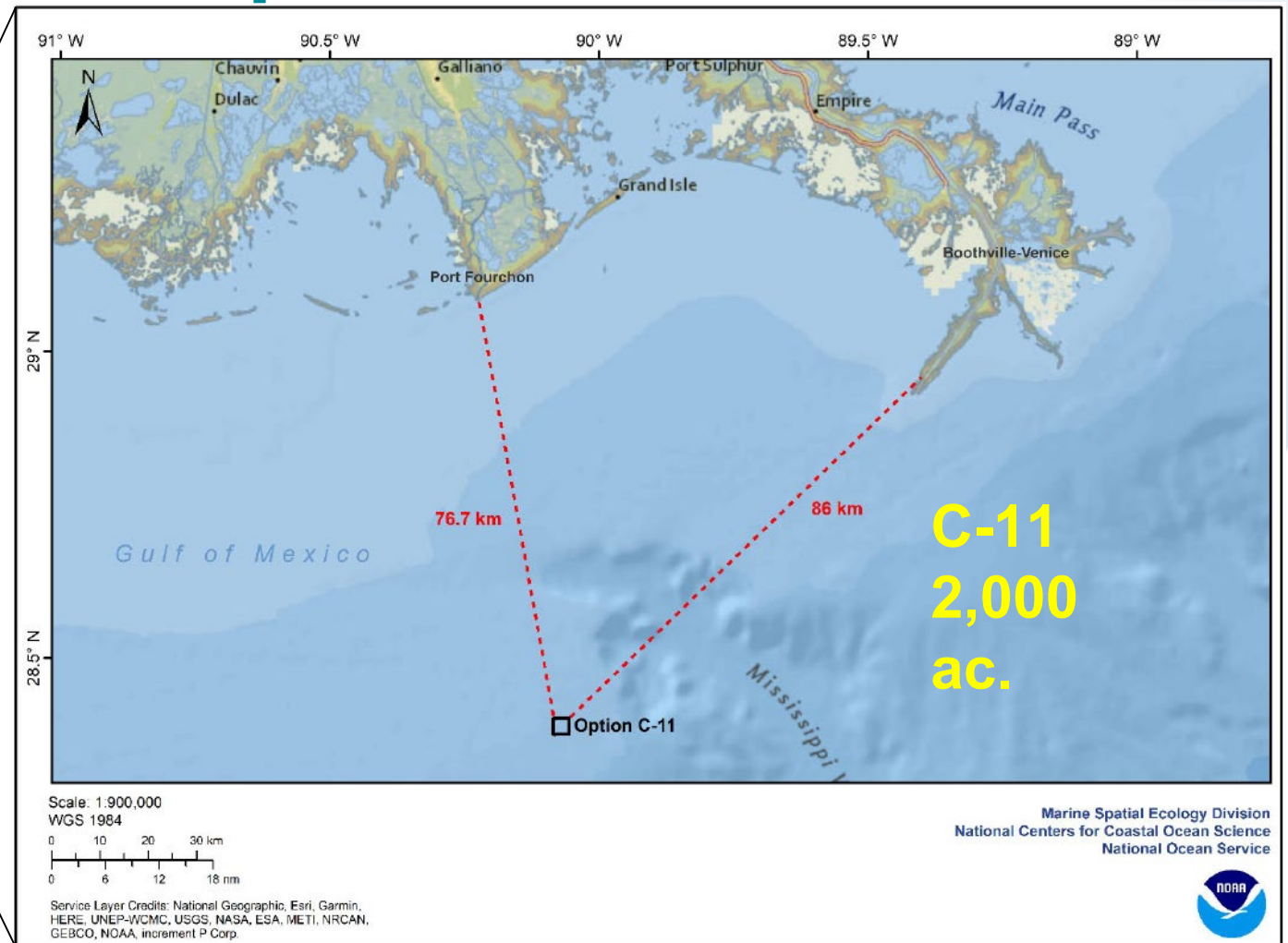
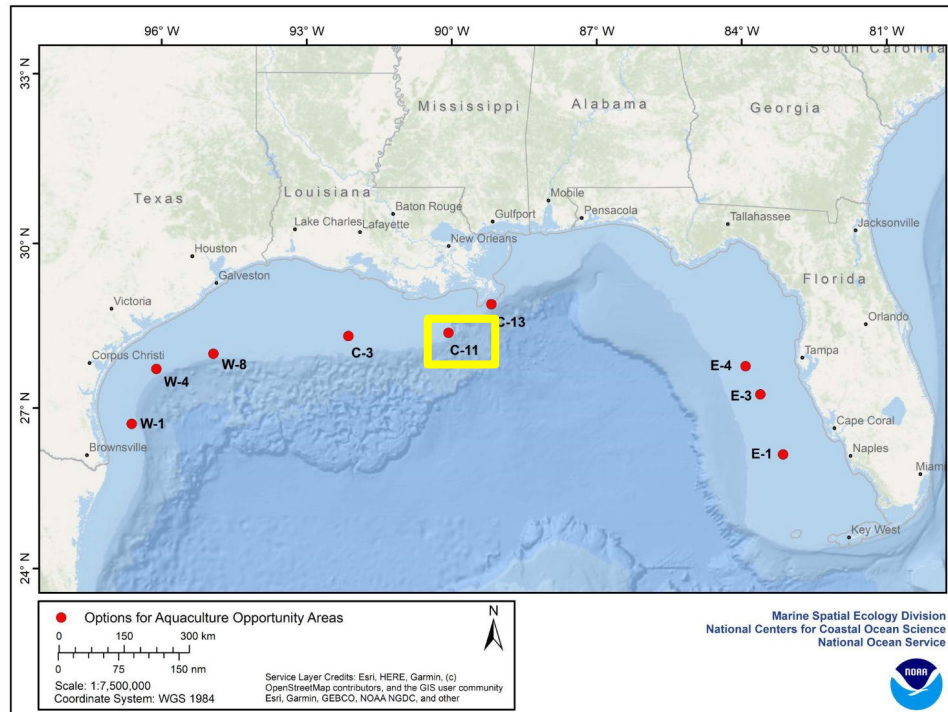
# Atlas AOA Option C-3



Map of location C-3 (2,000 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 72 nmi from Pecan Island (Morgan City, Louisiana, is the closest town with significant infrastructure)

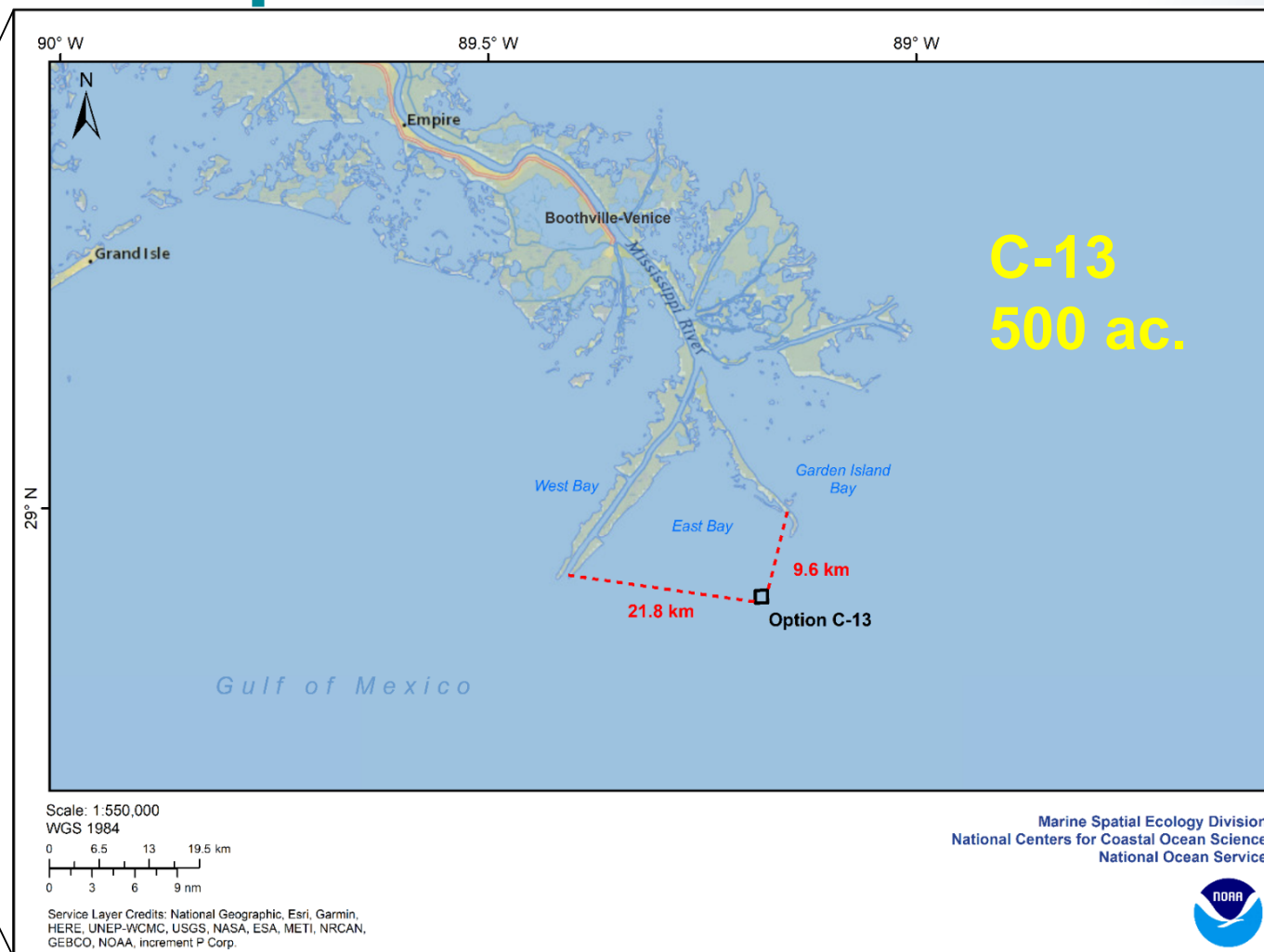
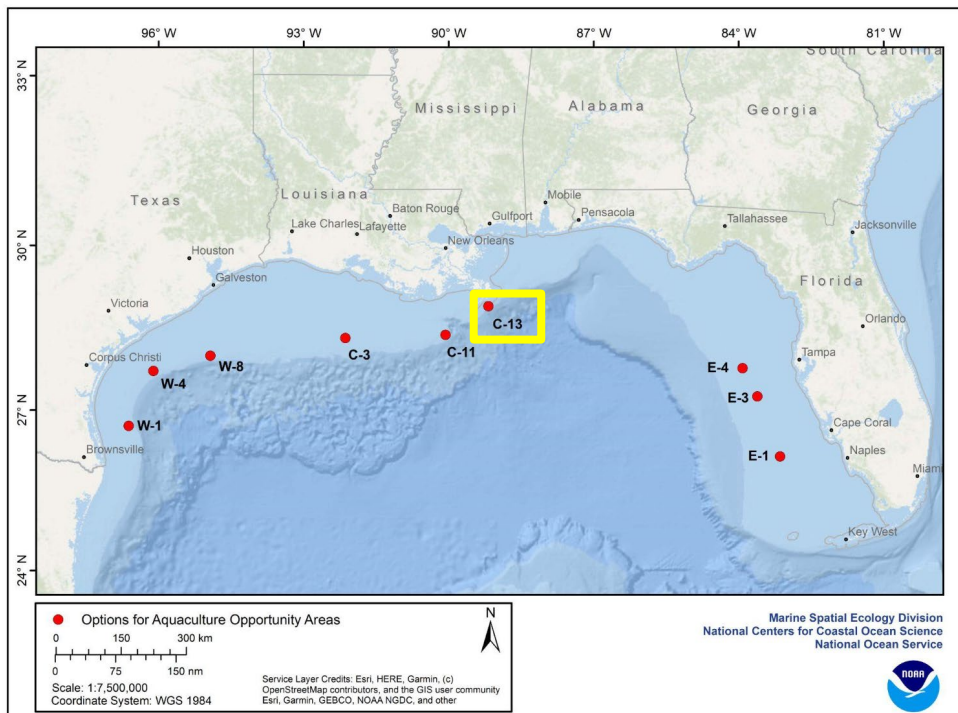


# Atlas AOA Option C-11



Map of location C-11 (2,000 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 41 nmi south of Port Fourchon, Louisiana.

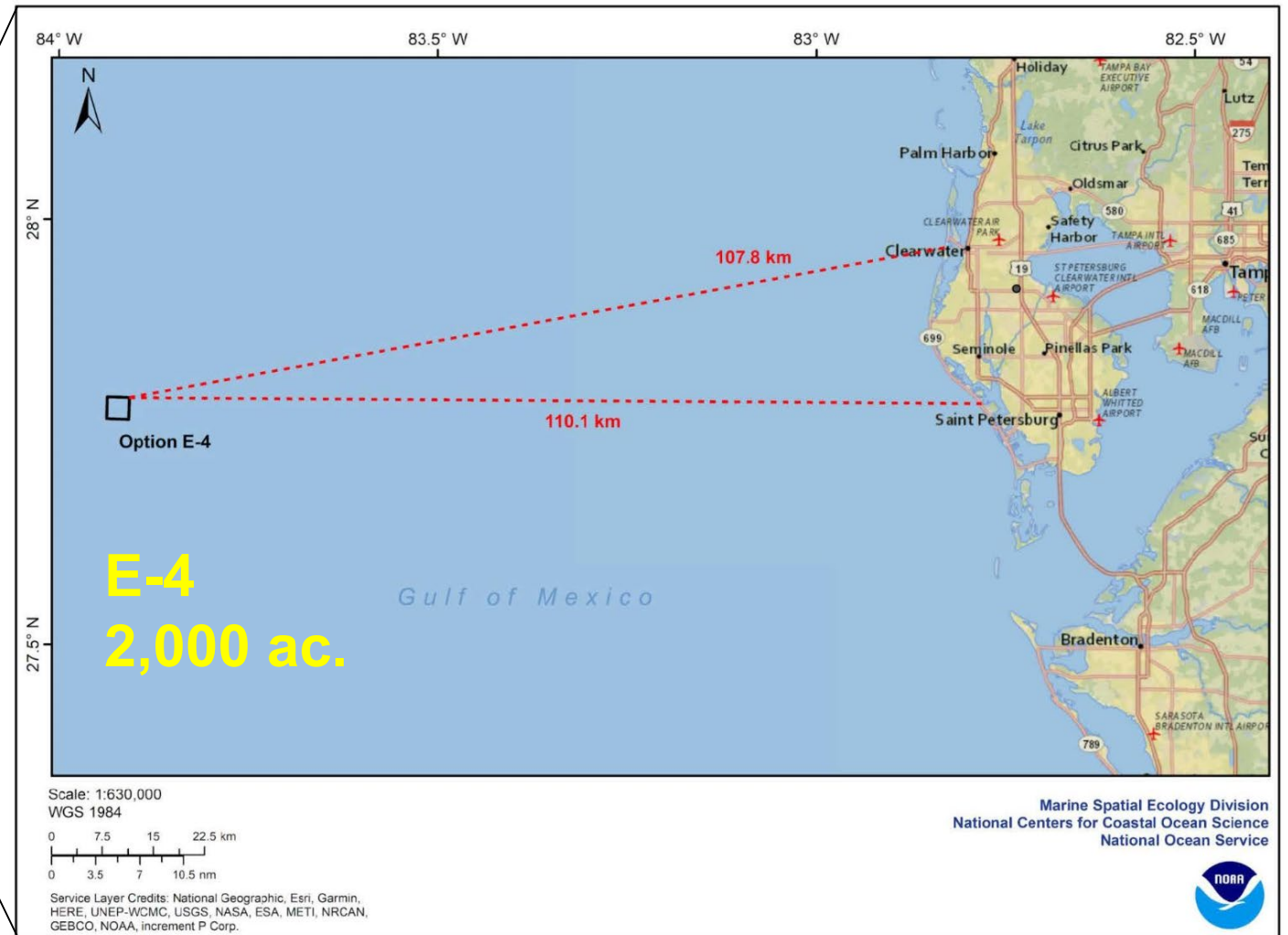
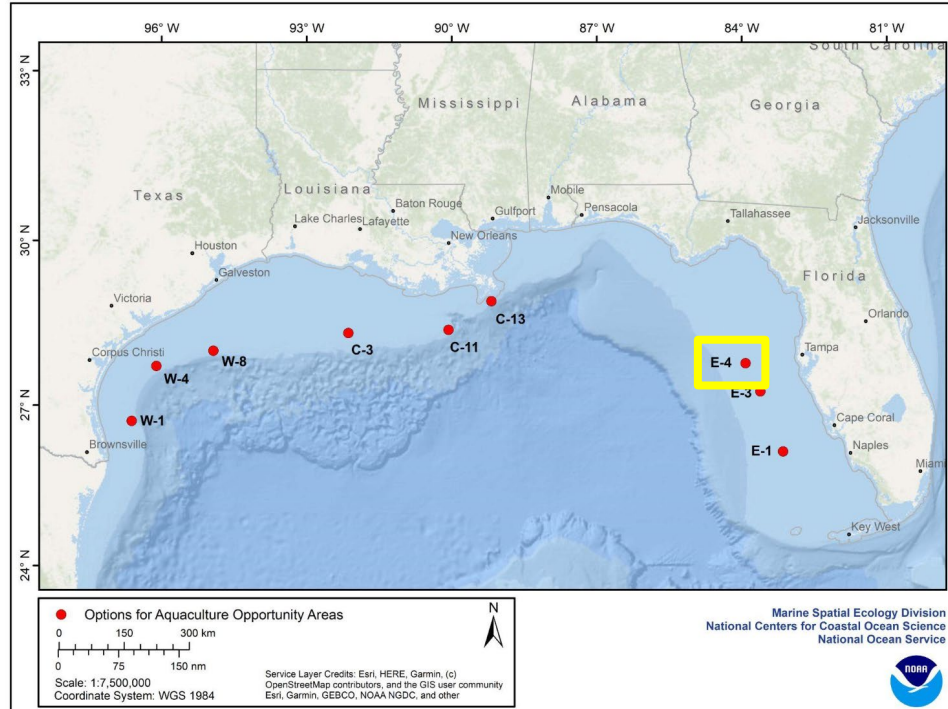
# Atlas AOA Option C-13



Map of location C-13 (500 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 5 nmi south of the inlet to South Pass, Louisiana.

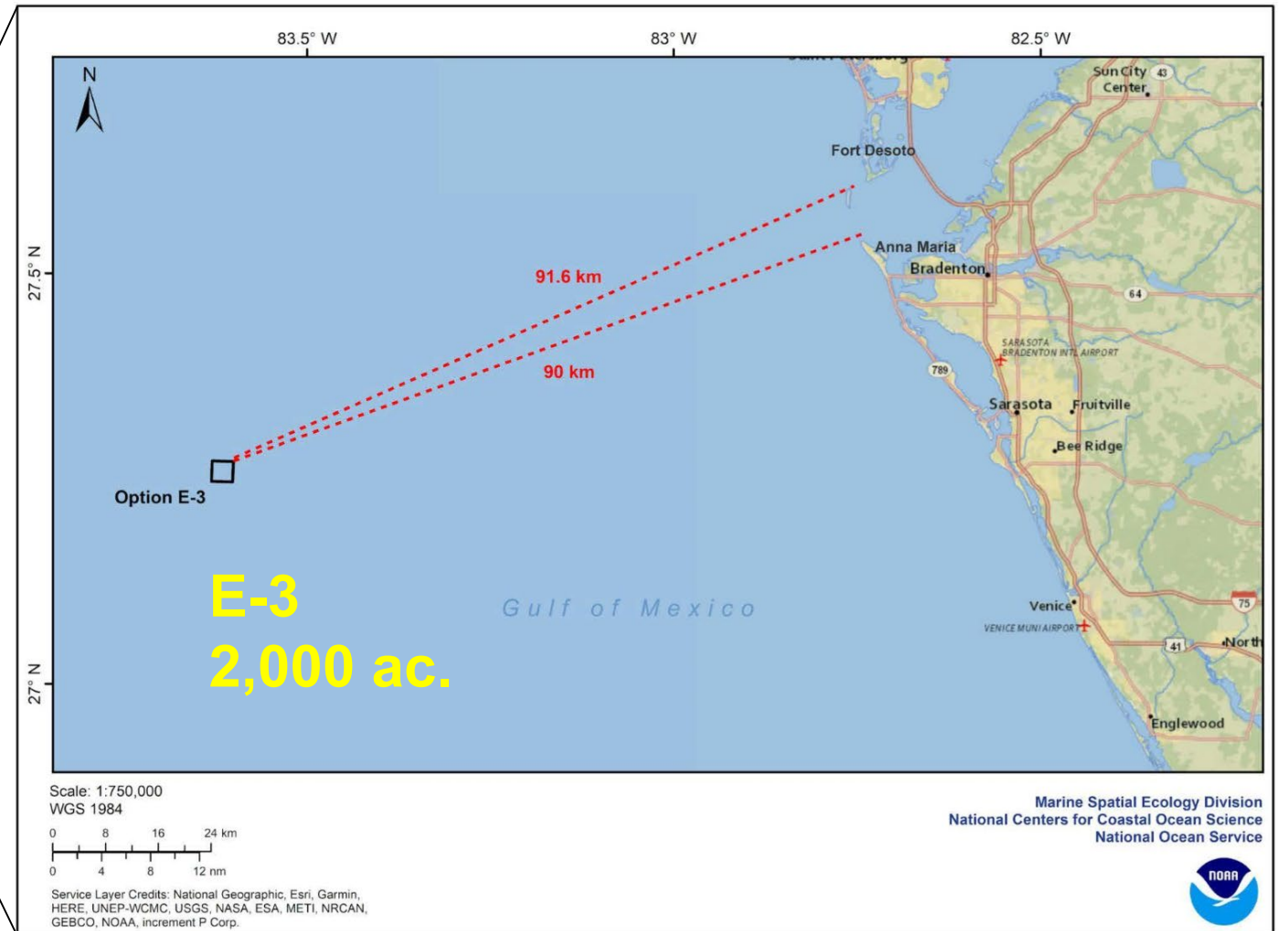
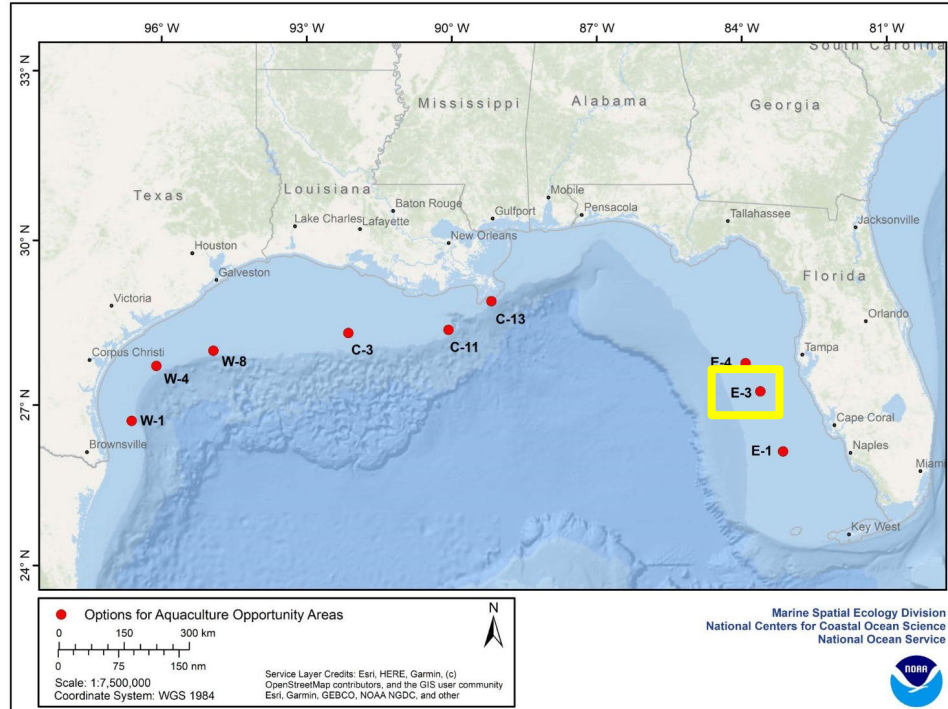


# Atlas AOA Option E-4



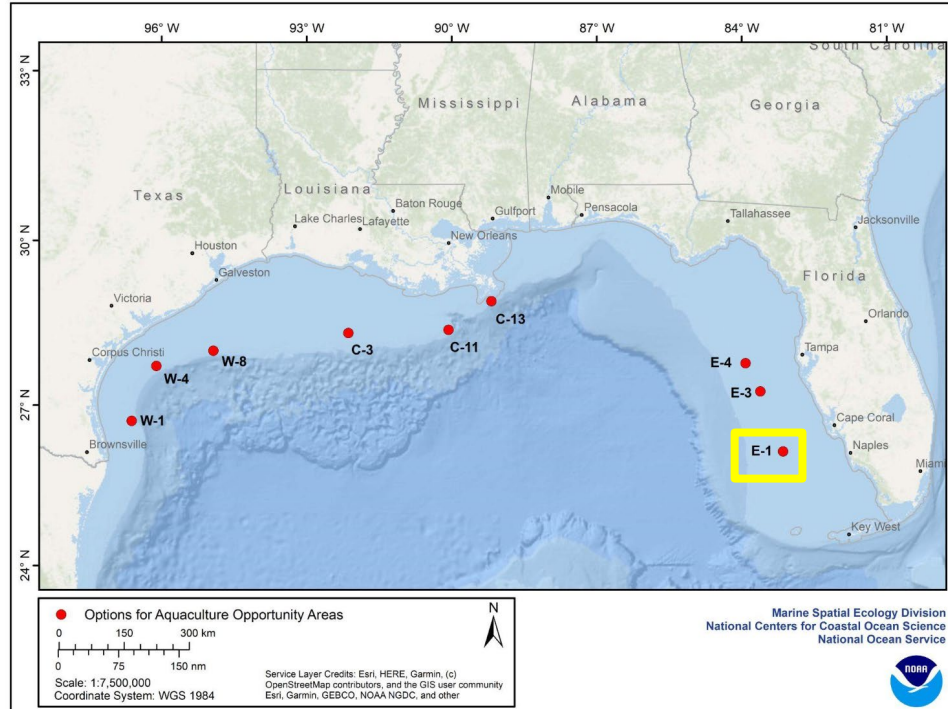
Map of location E-4 (2,000 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 58 nmi from the inlet in Clearwater, Florida.

# Atlas AOA Option E-3



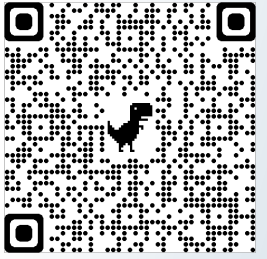
Map of location E-3 (2,000 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 49 nmi from the inlet off of Tampa, Florida.

# Atlas AOA Option E-1



Map of location E-1 (500 acres), depicted as a square situated approximately 56-58 nmi from inlets off of Ft. Myers, Florida.



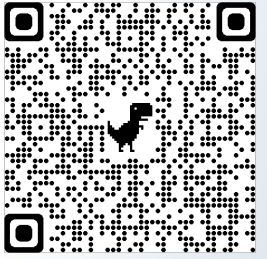


# NOAA Fisheries is interested in feedback, information, opinions, data, analyses on . . .

- The scope of the PEIS analysis, including the range of reasonable alternatives and how many or which locations should be considered and evaluated
- Type of aquaculture (e.g., finfish, shellfish, seaweed, multi-species)
- Ecologically, economically and socially suitable species and gear
- Monitoring and reporting requirements for owners and operators of aquaculture facilities that could mitigate impacts



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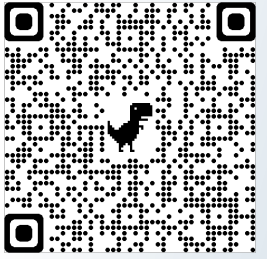
# **NOAA Fisheries is interested in feedback, information, opinions, data, analyses on . . .**

- Potential adverse, beneficial, neutral, or cumulative impacts to biological, physical and ecological resources
- Potential adverse, beneficial, neutral, or cumulative impacts to the social, economic, and cultural environment
- Promotion of environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion when considering alternative AOA locations
- Underserved communities and underrepresented groups, and/or regions and communities that could either benefit from or be adversely impacted by the siting of AOAs in the Gulf of Mexico



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# NOAA Fisheries is interested in feedback, information, opinions, data, analyses on . . .



- The impact of climate change or changing environmental conditions (e.g., storm intensity, sea level rise, water quality) on siting and other aspects of aquaculture
- Current or planned activities in or near the areas highlighted in this notice and their possible impacts on aquaculture development or the impact of aquaculture developments on those activities
- Other topics relevant to the Proposed Action and its impacts on the human environment

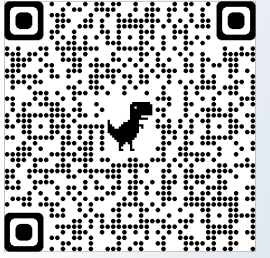


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# How to provide comments in writing

Public comment deadline is **Monday, August 1, 2022**



## By Mail:

Andrew Richard, Regional Aquaculture Coordinator  
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office  
263 13th Ave. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
RE: Gulf AOA PEIS

## Electronically:

- Go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)
- Enter “**NOAA-NMFS-2022-0044**” in the search box
- Click on the “Comment” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments
- Put “N/A” in personal information fields to be anonymous



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# How to provide comments verbally

- Third and final public meeting will be:

**Tuesday, July 12, 2022**

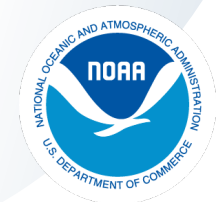
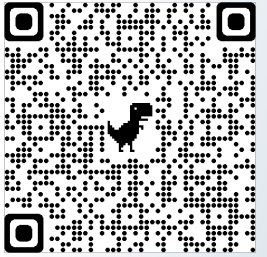
**6:30 pm - 8:30 pm CDT/7:30 pm - 9:30 pm EDT**

Follow this webinar link to view the presentation:

<https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=PWXW2739199&p=9612327&t=c>

To listen to the meeting, dial: 800-857-5095

Participant passcode: 9612327



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Andrew Richard  
Regional Aquaculture Coordinator  
NOAA Fisheries  
Southeast Regional Office

[andrew.richard@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.richard@noaa.gov)

(727) 551-5709



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