

Management Areas and Boundaries on Mapping Tools



Outreach and Education Technical Committee
Gulf Council

History



December 2024 - O&E supported staff in exploring a path to adding management areas and boundaries to commercially available mapping tools.

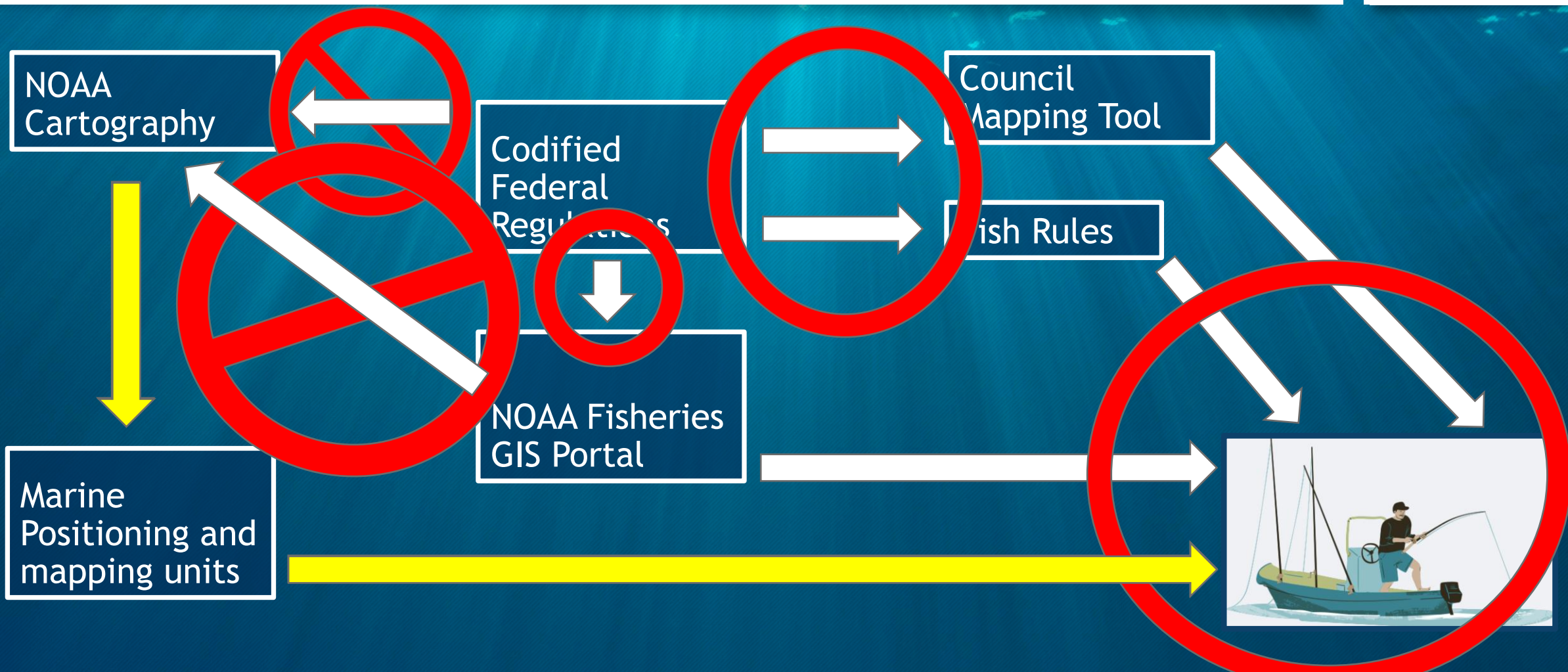
- Closed areas don't sell devices.
- Hosting regulatory areas could be a liability for companies.

January 2025 - Council warned staff to have low expectations for success.

- FWC previously unsuccessful in accomplishing this goal.



Reality...



A Case Study: 9-Mile Reef Fish Boundary



2018 Congress shifted the reef fish state/federal line to 9nm

- Based on the Territorial Seas Baseline
- FL/TX 9-miles previously based on Submerged Lands Act
- Defined new boundary for LA, MS, AL

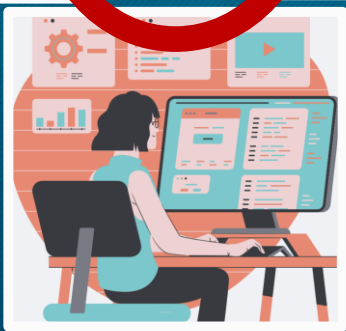
The 9-Mile Reef Fish Boundary isn't in the CFRs... so where is it (A 9-month journey...)

- NOAA Cartography & marine positioning units display a 9-mile navigational line based on the Submerged Lands Act.
- Not on the NOAA Fisheries GIS Portal and no existing NOAA GIS personnel
- Worked with NOAA OLE and GC
 - **Historical Council presentation**
 - **Gulf States Review**
 - **Confirmation that the Territorial Seas baseline had not been updated**

The Ideal Scenario....



Codified Federal Regulations → REST API



→ Marine Positioning and mapping units
→ Council Mapping Tool & Fish Rules



How do we get there?



1. Ensure that there are sanctioned map products of all applicable regulations.
2. Gauge industry appetite for regional specific product.
3. Develop cooperative workflow to host and maintain regulations.



Possible Next Steps



Wait for Modernizing Access to Our Public Oceans (MAPOceans) Act

- Legislation requiring NOAA to consolidate, standardize, and digitize public data on marine waters
- Unanimously passed by the Senate (9/11/25) the House is yet to vote on it.

Or....

Take Council Action

- Encourage NOAA to put resources towards this effort
- Embark on our own effort
 - Would require NOAA sanctioned map products
 - May require national coordination

Feedback / Discussion

