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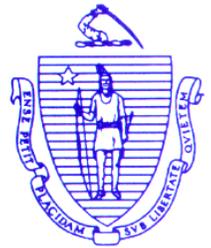
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September 18, 2017

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Public Scoping Meeting: Describing Mobile Gear Closures

DMF has scheduled two meetings to discuss modernizing its mobile gear closure regulations in order to improve the clarity of the closure coordinates, especially those that reference the Line of 1881. DMF favors amending these closure boundaries to instead use latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates that are more amenable to modern GPS technology. Both fixed and mobile gear fishermen are encouraged to attend the scoping meetings. The meeting schedule is:

6PM
Wednesday, September 27, 2017
DMF's Annisquam River Station
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, MA

6PM
Thursday, September 28, 2017
Hotel 1620
180 Water Street
Plymouth, MA

DMF regulations establish a series of spatial and temporal mobile gear closures. In many instances, the seaward boundary for the closure is described as the Line of 1881. This is a historic line that previously delineated the exterior boundary of the Commonwealth. Today, the coordinates for the Line of 1881 are not readily available to fishermen and Law Enforcement, as it is not portrayed on NOAA charts or through GPS overlays.

As a result fishing industry representatives and members of Law Enforcement have encouraged DMF to modernize its mobile gear closure regulations to use straight lines between lat/long coordinates. In advance of these meetings, DMF has delineated and mapped the point corners of the 1881 Line and the seaward boundaries of our mobile gear closures using lat/long coordinates. These documents are available on the [Division's website](#).

These two public meetings have been scheduled to discuss modernizing the boundary descriptions, as well as potentially simplifying the closure areas. DMF is not seeking to establish any new closures or to rescind any existing closures. However, DMF may consider minor modifications to the existing closures, provided they will not impact the agency's conservation and management objectives. Following these meetings, DMF will consider the comments received and begin to draft regulatory changes. We anticipate public hearings will be held on these draft regulations this winter, this will provide stakeholders with another opportunity to comment on this issue. Final regulatory adjustments should then be implemented by the spring of 2018.

For more information about mobile gear fishery management in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.