

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review
Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection
April 2, 2013**

Working Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Agenda

1. Update on progress of the Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration and Ecosystem Protection working groups
 2. Presentation: Vessel Groundings and Injury Recovery in the FKNMS (Alicia Farrer, FKNMS)
 3. Presentation: Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitats: biological resources and habitat requirements (John Hunt, FWC)
 4. Discussion: Finalize criteria the working group will use when developing options and recommendations
 5. Discussion: Review working group created charts and data layers for shallow water habitat and wildlife base maps
 6. Discussion: Discuss and develop working group plan for next steps in developing options and recommendations for managing shallow water wildlife and habitats of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
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1. Update on progress of the Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration and the Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection working groups
 - Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration Working Group:
 - Finalized criteria to use when selecting optional sites for active coral reef ecosystem restoration.
 - Identified adaptive management triggers.
 - Beginning preliminary site development (pre-decisional).
 - Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection Working Group:
 - Building foundation by reviewing existing zones and the state of sanctuary resources as well as the concept of resilience.
 2. Presentation: Vessel Groundings and Injury Recovery in the FKNMS (Alicia Farrer, FKNMS)
Alicia Farrer, a biologist with the FKNMS, gave a presentation on vessel grounding characteristics, impacts, injury recovery and restoration.

Working Group Discussion:

Considered costs of restoration, limitations of response and ideas for how to more effectively generate funding for restoration in the FKNMS that is not solely dependent on case settlement.

3. Presentation: Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitats: biological resources and habitat requirements (John Hunt, FWC)

John Hunt, Program Administrator for the FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute in Marathon, gave a presentation on the different types of shallow water habitats in the FKNMS and the characteristics and importance of these habitats.

- Types of shallow water habitats in the FKNMS: oceanside beaches, nearshore oceanside seagrass beds, shallow water seagrass beds, shallow water hardbottom
- Impacts to shallow water habitats were identified: lobster/crab trap movement, water quality (algae events), vessel groundings

Public Comment

Public comment was provided by three individuals:

- Dottie Moses, Key Largo Federation of Home Owner Associations. Informed working group of the April 18th, 2013 hearing for Monroe County Comprehensive Plan Amendment Changes. Noted that there was no mention in the vessel grounding presentation about dredging being an option to avoid prop scarring.
- Chris Bergh, The Nature Conservancy and Sanctuary Advisory Council representative. Identified a nearshore threat of trampling of seagrass and widening paths through seagrass at roadside beaches such as Veteran's Beach in Monroe County.
- Janice Duquesnel, Florida State Parks Biologist. Stated that the state parks are not bound by the same process as the FKNMS with regard to seagrass restoration funding. Lignumvitae Key Submerged Land Management Area uses grant money and other funding sources to perform seagrass restoration. Money recouped from vessel groundings go into a Help Our State Parks fund which can be used for various resource management needs. State Parks do not need to wait for cases to be settled to do restoration. Also mentioned about a concern of seagrass being trampled around Rodriguez Key.

4. Discussion: Finalize criteria the working group will use when developing options and recommendations (Beth Dieveney)

- Reviewed table with Categories, Marine Zoning Goals, Objectives, and Draft Criteria
- New criteria added: Specifically state there has to be spatial and temporal components for areas that are set aside for research/control with specific research questions being addresses.

5. Discussion: Review working group created charts and data layers for shallow water habitat and wildlife base maps (Chris Anderson and Stephen Werndli)

- Displayed digitized maps of data the group identified on paper maps at the last session. Displayed data sets available for the group to use when evaluating areas.

- Data layers identified for working group process include: existing management zones, habitat, depth contours, vessel groundings and prop scarring, restoration sites, bird nesting and roosting sites, turtle habitat needs, fish assemblage data, among others.

No Afternoon Public Comment

6. Discussion: Review how the working group sees Objectives 1-6 as inter-related/dependent. Discuss and develop working group plan for next steps in developing options and recommendations for managing shallow water wildlife and habitats
 - Reviewed SAC objectives and Shallow Water working group objectives
 1. Principle: Each habitat type should be represented in a non-extractive marine zone in each of the biogeographically distinct sub regions of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to achieve replication. Over-arching principle that Shallow Water working group will not solely be responsible for identifying non-extractive zones.
 - Reviewed Working Group Objectives 1-6.
 1. Evaluate existing Wildlife Management Areas for effectiveness in protecting wildlife and their habitats under current as well as emerging public uses and environmental conditions; displayed table where recommendation will go, i.e. status quo, modification, and/or new areas.
 2. Develop recommendations considering existing regulations and zoning – mainly use of vessel restrictions on access, anchoring, speed, and channel marking – to further protect seagrass and critical shallow water habitats in FKNMS
 3. Address concentrated uses that diminish and destroy seagrass and shallow water habitats
 4. Identify where high impact activities known to occur should be allowed and encouraged for public and private uses
 5. using spreadsheet with previously identified resource impacts and uses
 - Reviewed spreadsheet with previously identified high and concentrated activities and uses
 6. Evaluate mangrove habitat protection for bird nesting

Follow-Up Actions for Working Group Members

1. Review and provide final comments on draft criteria.
2. Review table of existing Wildlife Management Areas and perform an individual evaluation of effectiveness and make potential recommendations for changes to site and associated regulations. Review due by April 19th. Compilation of working group responses will be sent in advance of next meeting.
3. Identify issues/challenges with existing regulations and potential new/innovative regulations
4. Use maps (working group generated and FKNMS/FWC created) to begin to recommend status quo, modification, and/or new areas that will meet the SAC and Shallow Water working group goals

Decision Items of Note

- No decision items were before the working group at this meeting.