

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary  
Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review  
Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection Working  
Group Meeting  
April 4, 2013**

**Working Group Meeting Summary**

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**Meeting Agenda**

1. Working Group Admin Announcements, Recap of last meeting, Update on progress of other working groups, and Review Agenda and Meeting Objectives (Chris Bergh and Beth Dieveney)
2. Existing FKNMS Zones and Zone Regulations (Mary Tagliareni)
3. Current FKNMS Conditions (Scott Donahue)
4. Resilience (Dr. Rob van Woelik)
5. Data and Information (Beth Dieveney and Chris Anderson)
6. Discussion & Decision of Study Areas and Geographic Regions for Consideration (Beth Dieveney and Chris Bergh)

**Major Points of Discussion**

1. Working Group Admin Announcements, Recap of last meeting, Update on progress of other working groups, and Review Agenda and Meeting Objectives

Working Group Discussion

- The composition of the working group has been slightly altered. Dave Vandenbosch (dive instructor for Capt. Hook's Dive Center in Marathon) is taking Denise Vandenbosch's seat. Rob Mitchell resigned from the working group due to time constraints. It has not been decided if that seat will be filled.

2. Existing FKNMS Zones and Zone Regulations

Mary Tagliareni, FKNMS Sanctuary Deputy Superintendent of Education and Operations, made a presentation highlighting the sanctuary-wide regulations, zones types and their standard regulations and exceptions to those standard regulations in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The presentation can be found at: <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/ecosystemprotection>.

Working Group Discussion:

- Identified challenges regarding the complexity and difficulty of interpreting and understanding Sanctuary regulations.
- Encouraged to focus on the purpose and intent of the goals and objectives for the marine zoning review process, while also making recommendations for updates/changes to existing regulations easily understood and complied with.

3. Current FKNMS Conditions

Scott Donahue, FKNMS Science Coordinator, gave a presentation on the current scientific condition of Sanctuary resources including water quality, habitats, and marine life and identified the key threats to resource health. The presentation can be found at:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/ecosystemprotection>.

#### Working Group Discussion:

- Discussed the locations of big fish and their recruitment and noted the importance of sustainable fisheries management. ; while specifically addressing this issue is outside the scope of this working group charge, if issues and recommendations are raised, the working group can provide input to the Sanctuary Advisory Council to consider.
- Recognize the need for spawning aggregation protection. Request for open discussion of fishing aggregation data, specific resource and oceanographic needs, and temporal information.
- Recommended to working group read:  
Jeffrey, C.F.G., V.R. Leeworthy, M.E. Monaco, G. Piniak, M. Fonseca (eds.). 2012. An Integrated Biogeographic Assessment of Reef Fish Populations and Fisheries in Dry Tortugas: Effects of No-take Reserves. NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 111. Prepared by the NCCOS Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment Biogeography Branch. Silver Spring, MD. 147 pp.
- Identified the need to understand near-shore needs of particular species, for example whether near-shore conch populations spawn and/or settle in the near shore environment. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff noted a study that has shown that at least 200 adult conchs/hectare is needed in order to achieve active spawning. Presently, near shore aggregations are not dense enough to support spawning. Also, a study focusing on endocrine-system disruptions is ongoing, yet it is still too early to yield conclusive results. It has been commented by working group members that in the past they did observe near-shore conch populations going through the motions of spawning in the lower Keys ocean-side.
- Discussed the importance of education and enforcement of Sanctuary regulations.

#### 4. Public Comment

Public Comment was provided by one individual:

- Trudy Ferraro, Biological Scientist II John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Suggests the Sanctuary make it mandatory for people to take educational/informational training on how to properly conduct themselves in the Sanctuary in regards to the zones and regulations before using the Sanctuary waters and resources.

#### 5. Concept of Resilience in Marine Resource Management

Dr. Rob van Woesik, Florida Institute of Technology researcher and professor, gave a presentation on the concept of resilience and the latest research contributing to understanding of resilience in the FL Keys. Emphasized how this data and results can be considered in developing recommendations.

#### Working Group Discussion:

- Discussed and clarified the concept of “dirty water”, which is an overload of Nitrogen and Phosphates causing potential blooms to form and then becomes a form of pollutant.
- Discussed the differentiation between resilience and diversity and what constitutes a more “resilient” and healthy ecosystem.

- Discussed that heterogeneity of species in coral habitats is preferred over homogeneity as homogeneity signifies the loss of less resilient species.
- Identified the importance of considering baselines; consider systems in local, regional, and global contexts. Dealing with the local and regional effects will collectively and ultimately lead to better chances of coping with global system changes.

## 6. Data and Information

Identify the primary habitats and resources that the working group should consider. Identify the data layers that will be essential for this working group to consider when making recommendations.

Working Group Discussion:

- Consider hotspots for best habitat and species diversity; as opposed to solely looking at resilient species data
- Birds, seabirds; roosting/nesting sites
- Any and all spawning aggregations
- Accessibility of sites for human use
- Green turtles (west of the Marquesas)
- Hotspots of fish spawning aggregations
- Threatened and endangered species
- Habitat diversity
- Interconnectivity (e.g. sources of larvae and where they end up, arrangement of nursery, adult and spawning areas for a given species) Migratory Species
- Consider Innovative / Adaptive management

Chris Anderson demonstrates the mapping tools that are available and noted that the maps will be created as requested by the working group. If working group members have data to share, it can be incorporated into the GIS analyses.

## 7. Discussion & Decision of Study Areas and Geographic Regions for Consideration

The working group reviewed the study areas identified by the Sanctuary Advisory Council for the marine zoning and regulatory review process; reviewed the regional delineations of upper, middle, lower Keys, Marquesas, and Dry Tortugas. The working group discussed and took a vote on the following Sanctuary Advisory Council Principle:

*2. All areas of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary should be classified as part of a specific zone, therefore the current “unzoned” area should be classified as a recognized zone type such as “general use area” or “multiple use area”.*

Working Group Discussion and Vote:

- Working group vote reached consensus (see page 5 for outline of voting process).
- Two working group members voted 2: “I disagree with the decision”.
- Issues raised by the two members who disagreed with the decision included:
  - Desire to help working group members understand how the voting process works

- Concern that once an area has a zoning classification it will be easier to change to another zoning classification that may be less desirable.
- Preference that the group have knowledge of zones and use of zones to promote their intended purpose and goals before making any decisions

To see the full Sanctuary Advisory Council Regulatory and Zoning Alternatives Development Work-Plan go to: <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/121211draftworkplan.pdf>

#### 8. Public Comment

Public Comment was provided by two individuals:

- Trudy Ferraro, Biological Scientist II John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Noted for working group consideration, migratory species and their geographic ranges.
- Jerry Weinstock and Donna Weinstock, FL Keys residents. “When my husband and I first arrived here in 1959 fishing was defined in one word as glorious. Since then it has been a sharp and continuous decline without appropriate regulations. We have seen the near extinction of the snook, Nassau grouper, and kingfish, because the spawning aggregations were unprotected. World experience with spawning aggregations – once they are decimated they never, never, never, return....Either we want fish for the foreseeable future, or do we want to cash in now and have no future.”

#### **Follow-Up Actions for Working Group Members**

- Review table of existing marine zones and associated regulations. Begin to consider potential changes and recommendations. As an additional resource, use the 1997 Final Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Vol. I as an additional resource. Specifically focus on the Zoning Action Plan section starting on page 255. This can be found at: <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/ecosystemprotection>.
- Review publication: Jeffrey, C.F.G., V.R. Leeworthy, M.E. Monaco, G. Piniak, M. Fonseca (eds.). 2012. An Integrated Biogeographic Assessment of Reef Fish Populations and Fisheries in Dry Tortugas: Effects of No-take Reserves. NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 111. Prepared by the NCCOS Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment Biogeography Branch. Silver Spring, MD. 147 pp.

#### **Decision Items of Note**

- A vote was taken and consensus reached regarding the following Sanctuary Advisory Council Principle:
  2. *All areas of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary should be classified as part of a specific zone, therefore the current “unzoned” area should be classified as a recognized zone type such as “general use area” or “multiple use area”.*

## Decision-making in Working Groups and Advisory Council Recommendations

The Sanctuary Advisory Council’s charter outlines how decisions and recommendations are made by majority vote of those present, provided there is a quorum. In order to facilitate a stronger recommendation and encourage stakeholder engagement, the Council has recommended a consensus process whereby:

- Consensus is achieved if at least 75% of the members give a “3” or above as outlined in the table below.
- On final consensus tallying, numbers will be added up, recorded and documented in proceedings.
- No one person can veto and stop the process.
- Members who register a “1” or “2” are encouraged to provide an alternate proposal that achieves the goals and objectives set out by the SAC. If no alternative is offered, they are encouraged to explain why they voted a one or two, and their reasons and objections will be noted and recorded.

	Level of Consensus
5	I strongly agree with this decision.
4	I agree with this decision.
3	I do not agree or disagree with this decision.
2	I disagree with the decision.
1	I strongly disagree with this decision.