

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review
Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
June 12, 2013**

Working Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Agenda

1. Update on progress of Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection & Ecosystem Protection working groups
2. Discussion & Decision: Working Group General Recommendations
 - Active Restoration Sites
 - Managed Access including User Fees
 - Marking Zones
 - Permitting & Regulator Conditions
 - Adaptive Management
3. Discussion & Decision: Working Group Restoration Zone Recommendations

Major Points of Discussion

1. Update on progress of the Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection & Ecosystem Protection (Beth Dieveney)
 - Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection Working Group final recommendations include:
 - Completed their last meeting. Finalized recommendations for presentation to the Sanctuary Advisory Council. Recommendations included zones for protecting shallow water wildlife and habitats, types of access, types of use, how to mark sites, make them consistent, and apply the concept of adaptive management.
 - Text, table, and map formats display the results of the group's recommendations.
 - The recommendations can be found at:
<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/shallowwater>.
 - Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection Working Group:
 - Presentation from John Hunt from FWC on zone performance of the Western Sambos Ecological Reserve.
 - Reviewing existing SPAs and ERs and any regulatory modifications.
 - Reviewing the larger study area and identifying ecosystem protection hot-spots.
1. Discussion & Decision: Working Group General Recommendations
 - Recommend entire FKNMS be eligible for restoration activities and prioritize areas within that.
 - Identify general zones, and specific site selection would occur when actual restoration is being implemented. Site size and type will be determined by the restoration work being undertaken.
 - Noted concern of public perception if the entire area is identified as a potential zone and perceived as restricted access.

- Discussed and clarified access options:
 - Managed access: restrict access during restoration activities and while site is stabilizing; Temporal closure provides greatest opportunity for site to stabilize.
 - Let the project define the specific closure times
 - Added language to ensure use and user groups are consulted when potentially restricting access to a restoration site.
 - Noted that for some sites, users will want access to site even while restoration is happening
 - Areas of high use need to be considered when determining potential access options
 - Incentive access could include guided tours, mooring ball sponsorship
 - Clarified the difference between demonstration and incentive site; noted that some sites should be open to all and some have restrictions dictated by restoration and public access goals.

Morning Public Comment

One individual provided public comment:

- Davis Poole, Eternal Seas Memorials. What we had proposed for coral restoration or memorial restoration zones would probably be in areas that are not high use. It could also go after active area where the reef once was and is proposed to restore that area. Having said that, we propose for your consideration an access area being in a SPA what we would ask after that the policy whatever you agreed to on restoration as opposed to closed we would actively look for no fishing no lobster diving we really wouldn't want people to do that on a grave site. Scuba Diving and snorkeling and re-visitation to drive that economy and tourist economy if you want to call it that we really want that, sort of a hybrid. A closed or active restoration until it stabilized and going to restrict. So that is a good example of what we would ask for.

Discussion Continued:

- During site selection and permitting, managed access options selected should consider use and impact to various user groups.
- Adaptive management of restoration sites could entail changes to management including options to restrict access to sites to conduct restoration activities and/or open sites and lift any access restrictions if restoration is complete or no longer underway.

Decision: After June 12 changes to the document have been incorporated, the draft recommendation framework document will go forward to the Sanctuary Advisory Council.

3. Discussion & Decision: Working Group Restoration Zone Recommendations

- Working group first agreed to the need to restore the entire coral reef ecosystem of FKNMS; however identified 105 zones that were then prioritized for a total of 34 zones.
- Discussed further prioritization, selection of zones, and presenting potential maps of zones.

- Recommends that the entire reef tract within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary be restored and be eligible for restoration activities. However, the working group selected a suite of 105 zones for restoration and further prioritized those sites for a total of 34 priority zones. Recommend that the entire coral reef ecosystem be eligible for restoration
- Discussed use and presentation of zone maps:
 - Clear explanation needed to accompany zone maps
 - Show general area of zone with no delineated area marked as the public perception will be that the area would be closed; which is not the intent
 - Concern raised regarding buffer areas around zones
 - Better characterizations of maps and criteria for zones, include information on criteria used to select the zone
- Working group has chosen the best candidate sites. Restoration practitioners can then use working group site selection criteria to determine best site for specific restoration projects.

Afternoon Public Comment

One individual provided public comment:

- Davis Poole, Eternal Seas Memorials. Provided a hand-out to the working group on the Eternal Seas Memorials.

Discussion Continued:

- Determined that the priority zone list would be forwarded to the SAC in addition to the entire list of zones identified by the working group.
 - Noted the value in providing the SAC and the public this full list to provide a range of options for where restoration can take place
 - Discussed the need identify the full list of zones to be analyzed through the environmental review process; as any time a new zone is identified it would have to go through regulatory review. To streamline that process, it was recommended that all zones be included for review now.
- Maps will serve as an appendix for the SAC to provide additional spatial information. Coral reef restoration is not limited to this list. These sites only represent the working group priority list of sites.

Co-Chair calls for a vote:

- Forward the 34 priority zones to the SAC. The working group retains that all of the FKNMS should be restored but the list represent the high priority sites.
 - 10 in favor – 1 opposed

Further discussion regarding whether to send the full list of zones or only the list of 34 priority zones.

Co-Chair calls for a second vote:

- All zones should be eligible, provide list of 129 zones with additional analysis, and provide the list of 34 priority zones.

- The vote was unanimous, all 11 members were in favor

Follow-Up Actions for Working Group Members

- Review the June 12 meeting notes, Recommendations Framework and table of zone specific recommendations.
- Attend the SAC meeting on July 9 at the Islander Resort in Islamorada.
- Stay involved and engaged in this process.

Decision Items of Note

- The Recommendation framework for Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review for the Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration Protection Working Group will go forward to the SAC after the June 12 meeting's comments/changes are incorporated.
- Zone specific recommendations, including all zones identified and priority zones selected will go forward to the SAC after the June 12 meeting's comments/changes are incorporated.
- Working Group Recommendations can be found here:
<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/coralrestoration.html>