

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review
Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection
July 29, 2013**

Working Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Agenda

1. Review of Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review Process
2. Working Group Discussion
3. Public Comment
4. Working Group Discussion
Break for Lunch
5. Working Group Discussion
6. Public Comment
7. Working Group Discussion

1. FKNMS Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review Process

Sean Morton, FKNMS Sanctuary Superintendent revisited the marine zoning and regulatory review process. The original presentation can be found at:

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

2. Working Group Discussion

- Working group discussed the use of the preliminary ballot and concerns related to conducting a vote as homework rather than during a meeting with the benefit of discussion and hearing from fellow working group members. Due to this, two individuals reserved the right not to submit preliminary votes and other working group members expressed a lack of comfort in submitting votes.
- It was clarified that the preliminary vote was intended to help target discussion but would not be used as a final vote by individual members. Further discussion and a final in-person vote would be conducted.
- Concern was raised regarding the appropriateness of the working group Chair submitting votes. As a result, Chris Bergh, removed his preliminary votes and would not vote in the final vote but would facilitate discussion and work toward working group consensus.

3. Public Comment

All but two public comment was made orally. Staff have made every attempt to capture the main points of public comment as it was given.

Public Comment was made by numerous individuals:

- Daniel Padron, Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association (FKCFA). Cited annual fishing, tourism and sales economic statistics for the Florida Keys. States the fish stocks are presently healthy, no need for additional regulations.
- George Niles, FKCFA. I provide the charter boat businesses with bait fish. You will put both of us out of business.
- David Paul Horan, Key West Charter Boat Association (KWCBA).

You are attempting to protect the whole sanctuary from human interference. It is a sanctuary for wildlife; it is not a human sanctuary. Bureaucrats are paid to hold these meetings and diminish our livelihood. Working people can't be here to tell you how bad they are hurting. The reefs are closed to fishing and open to diving. Don't try to fix what is not broken. You are continuing to knock it down. I watched this happen 25 years ago. You are succeeding in making it no longer suitable for us.

- Leonardo Torres, KL Fishing.
The government takes but never gives back. Closed areas are never given back. Every time you take, you don't give back.
- Bill Kelly, FKCFA.
The report card from 2011 (Condition Report) addresses not only corals, but water quality as well. Water quality has been a major factor. Fishermen are just mitigating what is happening due to water quality with bag limits, size requirements, etc. All we are doing is mitigating damage that will continue instead of taking care of what is causing all of it. We are doing all of this work to protect fish that don't need protecting. We are protecting hundreds of thousands of square miles of sand bottom. I encourage public comment.
- Wayne Albert, Best Bet Sport Fishing.
I have been fishing from Key Largo to Key West. I don't agree with any of these closures. The fish stocks are healthy. The closures will just wipe us out. You guys just keep taking and taking.
- William A. Carter, Captain.
Who came up with this stuff? (Holds up package of maps and proposed recommendations). We need answers. I didn't have time to read over all of this. I recommend a trial basis. How about a recommendation of giving something back. It's all about taking, you want more and more and more.
- Jason Long, Captain.
Bill Kelly addressed one of the most important issues: water quality. The number one issue is to clean up the water. If we don't do that, this is a waste of all of our time.
- Steve Cramer.
The vote? What is that? I am not sure what is taking place here. (Chair explains that the proposed recommendations are to be voted on in the afternoon by the working group, but ultimately no vote on these takes place in the afternoon.)
- Walter Rentz, Commercial fishing.
We got kicked out of the parks and sanctuary. I disagree with any more regulations. Keep what you got. You already separated divers and fishermen. I disagree with any more scientific playgrounds. You already got enough. We got not more room. People are living the way they should live, its part of our nature.
- Vicki Gale, FKCFA.
My husband is a fisherman who can't be here today. If you take away these zones, you are taking away a lot of livelihood in the fishing and tourism industries. You can't take these zones away from us. You took 60 zones from us last year; we can't handle anymore. Use what you already got and let us live.
- Mark Mercer, Captain Mark's Chum.
The actions of the government amaze me. NOAA tried to shut down yellowtail fishing in the fall. Now you're out running the same ruse with a different hat on. What's your plan? What fishery or coastline in the Keys is in danger? What is the need for the massive

grab? Time and time again NOAA keeps getting their hand caught in the cookie jar. I laugh at the time given for public comment. When people fear the government in large masses there is tyranny.

- Bill Wickers, KWCBA.

I am confused. Are the working group members on the sanctuary board? How were these maps developed? (Chair explains the process that occurred.)

Did you all specifically yourselves draw those new boundaries? On the original SAC board, the board never looked at any of these zones and all of a sudden we had all of the large zones on the table and have to consider them. There was nothing in the minutes regarding those big zones. If there is anything in the maps, I'm saying to the board here that if there is anything in the documents that you are unfamiliar with, it could be another ringer. I'm not saying that it is happening, but it could be a possibility. That's what happened the first time around. Commercial guys can live with the way things are now. Fishery management is the most divisive thing right now- you guys want to get into it now. All we want to do is protect the coral and habitat. If you take a huge piece of the water and say no one can go in there - that's fishery management. Leave it up to the fishery management councils. I read the 2011 Condition Report, things are working. If it's working so well, why do you have to double the size of it?

- Steve Leopold, Islamorada Charter Boat Fishing Association.

Since SPAs designation areas and discussion of ballyhoo fishing, I have attended all meetings as SAC representative. It is clear to me that my input and participation has contributed to the process. Why was the hair-hook process allowed by SAC? Why do I have to defend my right to protect my fishing of ballyhoo in SPAs? I don't know. I hope the decision makers here will keep this in mind. The working group meetings started when we are in full swing of fishing season. Fishermen of the upper keys held a meeting last night. Some of us cancelled our fishing trips to be here. If your perception is not based on fact, we have to keep discussing this. Hop on a boat to see these areas. Charter fishermen have not created this negative impact. Maybe it's time to put regulations on other user groups. My family and I are divers. Maybe the current process for divers should be considered. I like the idea of Blue Star diving program. I'm glad to take required classes. Regarding expanding SPAs: Why is this working group making fishery management decisions? Sanctuary does not do fisheries management. Leave it to NMFS - who agrees yellowtail stocks are good. The shoreward expansion of Alligator Reef SPA will interfere with fishing. That is not a practical modification it will only protect sandy areas. This expansion will cause huge impacts to fishermen. It will be devastating.

- Justin Bruland, Commercial Fishing.

I don't believe the working group has consulted the fishermen community. If we were represented well, we wouldn't be here right now. Stakeholders are fighting for what we need right now. If you look through the packet, I don't understand what's going on here. I want you to see what it would do to all these fisherman here. That's why we are here.

- Richard Gomez, Charter boat owner.

The people in the room here today are just such a small percentage of people against this. We can't even keep track of all that is going on. Trolling is non-invasive. I don't know why we're here dealing with this stuff. Any smart fisherman knows not to drop anchor on corals, because you can lose your anchor. It also protects coral reef. At Western Dry Rocks, as you come off the edge where you drop anchor, it's rubbly dead bottom. It's not

like our anchors are doing a lot of damage. We aren't causing any of these problems. It's more from pollution, over-diving. I agree with rules regulating commercial fishermen. Key West was a fishing town before it was a diving town. Industry here is based on tourism. Key West fishermen take care of the tourists.

- John O'Hearn, Flats fishing guide.
A guiding principle for this process is large non-extractive zones, which is a pretty tall order. The definition of a non-extractive zone is pretty elusive. I was part of Shallow Water working group. Catch-and-release fishing is a non-extractive endeavor. This working group had a better opportunity to address the large non-extractive zones. None of these considerations take into consideration catch-and-release fishing, just no-take zones. Catch-and-release survival rates are above 90%. All forms of fishing have a form of impact; different forms of fishing have different forms of impacts. The regulations do not reflect that well.
- Tony Iarocci, FKCF.
A bunch of the guys involved in the first process a long time ago are here. The old dogs are back and ready to play. There is a lot of young blood here. You come in and don't have enough charts to look at. It's like deja vu. In 2000, we had these proposals thrown in our faces. This is not the way to do this. If there is a legitimate issue in these areas that needs to be addressed, it should be addressed. But not this way, these large areas. I was on the original group on SAC, working groups, spent hundreds of hours going around the table and discussed it in the area that it's intended for.
- Diane Harbaugh, Fisher/CCA/ICBA.
I lived in the Keys for 30 years. I am representing basic fisherwomen. I believe everyone in the room respects the environment, the stewardship of this. I don't believe that the people at this table get this. Use the science with balance. ERs and SPAs are closures. We got water quality and education issues. At my marina, we are called to get more brochures from NOAA. Economic impacts, you all get it, I won't touch it again. I can't believe that the people here realize what you guys are doing to everybody out here. We took Billy Causey out and showed him the areas. You gotta realize what you are doing. Who are drawing those lines? Did you all draw lines and come to a consensus? To bring the boundary out to 30 m / 90 ft contour is crazy. Regarding the proposed new Tennessee ER: consult fisherman, is it practical? No it's not practical.
- Bill Harbaugh, Recreational/Commercial Fisherman.
Realize you guys aren't the only ones from which this ire comes from. Along with you (sanctuary), it's coming from the NPS, NMFS, the state, etc. How much more are we supposed to take? You guys are taking and strangling us, we don't get anything back. When Causey in 1999 went on his upper keys PR action, this is exactly what he said would not happen. It was never was going to happen. Never was 13 years. Realize that this stuff trickles down into everything in our economy. Real estate, tax base, etc.
- Greg, Key Largo Fishing Adventures.
My business brings in half a million dollars a year. It brings in hundreds of clients for hotels and restaurants. Steve talked about bait fishing in winter. If we can't bait fish in winter, we're out of business. I spent the weekend on my boat. In the corner at Marine DelMar is a cleaning station. If you want to work on improving these areas, educate recreational people. I saw 12" mutton snapper, 6" yellowtail fish being cleaned. You should protect ballyhoo, commercial industries. Focus on recreational people.

- Richard Diaz, commercial fisherman.
 We depend on the fishing industry to support our family. I was a part of planning the structure of the sanctuary. I disagree with the closures. You need to get into small groups in the area where this is going to affect. What we have given up in Dry Tortugas is more than we can bear. Our method of fishing does not destroy the bottom, Causey was quoted in saying that. On the maps, we've given up more than we can bear. It is our duty as fishermen to conserve and protect the resources. Is this group put together to conserve fisheries or ecosystem? Because I am confused. Who of you were involved in drawing these lines? Four out of 14? How can that be just? You need to do it by little groups. Let us tell you what we can do with our bottom. I know what we have to do to preserve this.
- Gary Nichols, Commercial Fishing / President of OFF.
 I was involved in fishery management. Also in the water quality working group, trying to accomplish clean water. The goal of Organized Fishermen of Florida is to protect the environmental resources of Florida. Without the resources we have nothing. We came up with the idea of closing SPAs to protect areas. Fishermen agree with small areas being protected. We have a problem with Grassy, Conch, and Sombrero Keys - close us out here. There is not enough room for traps to go. That area has a large populace. This is the most ludicrous map that I have seen in my life. This is not fair. If you close Conch Key, Grassy Key and expand the sanctuary out to the sandy areas, you are not protecting anything. What is really going on here? Someone wake up. Get up and go out in the water to see what you are protecting. Give us a break. This is ridiculous.
- Jeff Cramer, OFF / FKCF.
 SAC member for 8 years, on coral advisory panel, board of directors for fishing, etc. I participated with the FWC studies, went to DC with TNC with the Chair. I've been a commercial fisherman my whole life. This doesn't make sense. These big boxes on maps don't make sense. All of a sudden these maps came up. In coral restoration, we put little dots here and there. I've seen the science. These big closed areas don't make sense. This isn't going to do anything, just protecting sand. If you guys are trying to get on fishery management, sanctuary does not do stock assessment. Let the Fishery Management Councils decide on stock assessment. We shut down taking out big boxes, you guys should do the same thing.
- David Paul Horan, Key West Charter boat Association.
 I am representing a large Key West Charter boat Association. I asked you if I could use more than three minutes if someone gave up his right to speak – you refused – then changed your mind and let someone else do it? Don't change it back. Give me the time provided by one of my clients members. I will be back for public comment this afternoon. I will identify members who will yield their time to me.
- Richard Diaz, Commercial fisherman
 I'm just trying to make a living to support my family. Also dealing with storms, when closures you got are not sufficient as it is. Instead of taking my livelihood, just let me work. Think if someone has to come and take your job. Give us a break. You are just pushing the fishermen together. You are suffocating us, taking money from my pocket and putting it in yours. You're being greedy. We are the ones providing you with the science. Take our information and turn it around on us. Stop being the enemy, and work with us.

- Jeffrey Dickman
I agree with what has already been said. I've been to the meeting on how you came up with the maps. It seems like the maps just came out from the last meeting. It seems like you guys didn't even discuss it yet. How can you have a vote, when you guys didn't even speak amongst each other. It seems like you're stacking the deck. Take a position or don't.
- Eliu Gonzales.
A lot of rich chemical people make billions of dollars and are polluting the ocean. It is documented by NOAA. It is public record.
- Henry Fedder, PhD. Marine life fisherman.
Marine life fishing is prohibited in the sanctuary and Everglades. Setting up new zones outside of these areas will have severe financial impacts. The sanctuary is set up to protect areas. I went with Causey and surveyed areas that were to be protected. I am concerned with shallow areas. There is no need to protect the rubbly areas. There is no justification on the maps for extending the area. Then why? To protect Snapper Ledge is fine. But to extend it has no justification. Water quality ...this whole process seems like a repeat of Everglades City.
- Mark Pumo, Owner of Bait Masters.
Questions maps: we need to figure out what's going on. Then we'll comment.
- Al, Captain.
Scratch out Sand Key, Marquesas, that's fine. Not a lot of people go out there. Tortugas, not enough people go out there. This makes no sense to me. How did you come up with the zones? To piss people off? You got it. We could probably find lawyers to prosecute this.
- Greg Ekland: Charter fisherman, Islamorada.
The schedule of public comment is ridiculous. Two weeks before going to SAC, the information spreading is terrible. You need to improve your process. I'm here to tell you that this is not right. Sanctuary is not here to manage fisheries. You took it upon yourselves to manage fisheries. I disagree with the expansion of SPAs and any other protected areas. At steep reef habitat, we put our anchor package in the sand. Why would we anchor in the reef? We are the last people to disrespect this, we are the user groups. Why close areas that we all use now? If you take all these areas, you will make 60 boats go to the unclosed area and beat the hell out of it there. You should be educating all user groups, enforcing what you have now. Address water quality, outreach programs. You can use all these tools without draconian measures.
- Unknown commenter.
All these things that are being proposed seems like they were proposed individually and not as a group. Fishermen are adaptable people. The idea of fishing with licensed guides is what you could consider. I paid my guide to come with me here today. That is how important it is to me. I spend 90% of my income every year on guides. People who are using the resources care about taking care of it.
- Carlos Jimenez, Fisherman.
Fishing. Preservation. What this is really about: a lot of divers hate fishermen. This is a declaration of war against the fisherman. Snapper Ledge is popular for divers. An idiot speared and gutted a nurse shark and left it on the bottom. A diver did it. Fishermen don't use Snapper Ledge. We need everybody to get a piece of the pie - use the resource. Deal

with the problem: big sugar, pesticides in the water. Stream line the artificial reef program. There are other ways to deal with this. Everybody here is against this proposal. So far nobody from the diving community is for it. Whoever drew up these lines think they are an environmental hero. They are villains and don't know it. There is a vast overreach.

- George Clark Jr., Fishing Charter in Key Largo, Commercial Fisher.
Support my way of life today. We all lose income today to fight for our livelihoods. The main thing is water quality. It hasn't been done, hasn't been addressed. That is the issue. The fish regulations are proven to be working today. When the first no fishing zones came into effect, a lot of people knew that that was the beginning of the end. Now we are talking about making some of them 10 times bigger. Whatever was taken will not be given back. The culture will be taken away. I feel like I'm being discriminated against. There is more damage to coral by touching it and pollution.
- Tom Hill, Fishing Association.
We're all concerned about water quality. It is a very important issue. I'm addressing members of the committee. To know that you guys were hand-picked to represent us, whatever you guys recommend will go to Morton to take to the council. The working group carries a very heavy responsibility. The people in this room represent just a fraction of who this is going to impact. The entire Keys will be impacted if much of any of this gets passed. You need to take a real hard look at what you are proposing. I want to hear the science behind it, and not the opinion. (holds up maps) I was here during the last meeting. I saw how the lines were drawn. There was no science to that. That was opinion. You woke up a sleeping giant.
- Rick Hill, Key Largo Fish.
Regarding water quality, sewers were put in Key Largo. You are not addressing the lion fish issue. We're not balancing what we have. If you don't have balance it, we're going to lose it all.
- Ramone Rodriguez, Rusty Anchor.
Every boat in the Keys uses bleach and all the other chemicals. We need to slow that down. We can't stop it, the emission fluids, etc. We have to eat and use the restrooms. We have to think here: why are these things happening to the areas that are not right? Give it a little time. Take monthly times instead: two, six months for instance and see what happens.
- Aimee Rodriguez, Husband is a commercial fisherman.
I didn't know what was going on, I'm not prepared to tell you. Just for him to get a snapper/grouper unlimited license, it cost over \$18,000, just to fish alone. We have to fight with vendors, fill out a lot of forms. One area proposed to close is where he fishes. A lot of these fishermen are bread winners in their homes. My husband doesn't speak English. If it wasn't for me, my husband wouldn't know what is going on. A lot of them don't know what's going on. Unemployment is going to go sky high. We'll need to move, and where are we going to go now?
- Lee Starling, Commercial Fishing.
You are not taking into consideration lionfish. I'm a diver. I scour these areas - I'm controlling all the lionfish for you. I kill like 80 a day. Also the traps catch a lot of lionfish. If you close an area, the lionfish population will explode. When I go to inshore patches, there are no lionfish on them. For the economic thing, you don't look at the

consequences of the closed areas. The areas outside of the closed areas are actually healthier than the closed areas. You don't deserve anything that you are asking for. You can't enforce it. The Peter Gladding is more broken down than it works. You bought a \$400,000 drone that you're not allowed to use in state waters. Every law enforcement officer knows me. If I lose my business, my wife, I will not be so concerned about my future actions.

A little civil unrest goes a long way. Raise your hand if you don't think we should have any more closed areas.

- Meru Finch, Captain, Redfish Charters Inc.
I am a charter boat captain. I agree with about 90% of the opinions against closed areas. Recreational fishermen are out-numbered here. They outnumber us 5/10:1. Fishing effort will be concentrated on what is left. I think that this will be a detriment to the overall fishing. Effort will be focused on smaller and smaller areas.
- Greg Sosnow, Key Largo Fishing.
The sanctuary has lost its' way. Law is a restriction on previously unrestricted rights. You are attempting to restrict our unrestricted rights. You are attacking paradise. We want to fight back. Your time is about up. For fishery management, the state manages fisheries. You are an ecosystem protection group. You have no rational basis for expanding the reserves. If you can't come up with a good rational basis for protecting our rights, then get out of it.
- John Greco, Key Largo Fisherman.
I want to be a commercial fisherman. I bought my own business last year. There is nothing wrong with the areas you want to close down. It's not constitutional to take these areas. We don't come in and say we'll cut your hours. We just want to make a living. To just go fishing.
- Gary Garland.
The Marquesas has been used by fly fishermen for several decades. As such, we fly fisherman stand to lose the most if entire sections of the fishery are made off limits. I would suggest that instead of an outright closure zone around the east, south and southwest of the island, extending for indefinite distances from the shore, a "protection zone" be established that starts at the shoreline and extends a defined distance such as 100 (200?) yds out. This could be easily accomplished through using buoy markers. This would protect the island itself, its mangrove and sand shorelines and the many aquatic species that live in these most sensitive of areas. At the same time it would still allow us fishermen to continue to fish the outer, deeper and much less sensitive zones. I have participated in tagging of both bonefish and permit in the area and this information is invaluable in protecting the resource we all love and want to protect. Another suggestion is to require any person fishing the area to maintain a log of what is caught, when, etc. AT A MINIMUM the entire area around the island should be a fly fishing only, catch and release area for ALL species. This would result in minimizing the loss of sensitive species through by-catch methods. Last but not least, if the closures as proposed were to be implemented it would only act to more heavily impact those zones still open to fishing. In other words you would be pushing the same number of fishermen into an area that is only approx. half the size it is now. The damage done by that would far outweigh keeping the proposed closure areas open. Thanks for your time.
- Toby Kight, Fisherman.

Please don't close the shoreline out to the reef off Conch Key and Grassy Key Middle Keys. I am a life-long fisherman with a small boat. I have fished this area since the middle 1960s. It would hurt me and my family greatly.

- Mel Walker, Captain, Owner/Operator of Gotcha Sportfishing, Inc.
This is written to Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The Ecosystem Protection Working Group, NOAA and all other parties concerning recommended changes in the SPA boundaries and bait fishing within SPA boundaries. These observations and comments will only be directed at the recommended changes to the upper keys SPAs. Although I believe many of the user groups in the middle and lower keys will have similar concerns, I don't have any day to day experience in those areas.
My name is Mel Walker. I own and operate a day charter fishing operation in Islamorada. I have worked as a charter fisherman my entire adult life. I am now 50. Charter fishing has been my sole source of income my entire adult life. Having logged approximately 8000 fishing trips in the waters surrounding the upper keys I consider myself very capable of making suggestion concerning the future of the reef ecosystem. The proposed changes to the SPA boundaries would roughly increase the closed the fishing area by 2, 3, and almost 4 times the size they are now. Upon review of the EPWG recommended changes to the existing SPA boundaries, we would lose much of the area we fish in during at least half of the year. Keep in mind that the majority of the fishing done in the "proposed SPA extension area" is catch and release (re: sailfish). I will also add that there are many days all the sailfish caught that day are in the "proposed SPA extension area". For whatever reason there are very specific avenues of travel that pelagic fish use, these proposed areas are right smack in the middle of some of our best fishing areas. Since the induction of the SPAs fishermen in general have figured out a way to coexist and at the same time catch a few fish. There is no reason that we can't continue under the existing boundaries and rules of the SPAs. The biggest key or factor in our fishing October – April is bait, or more importantly the abundance of bait. Many fishermen hold special permits that allow bait fishing only inside SPA boundaries. There is no reason to dissolve these permits as long as the permit holder has held up the requirements of being a permit holder. Rather than with a hair hook or cast net there is very little or no by-catch issues. The SPAs are not "broke" so they do not need fixing, it's really as easy as that. There are a lot of problems and user conflicts that are going to occur if these areas are enlarged way more significant than these small issues that I have brought up. Thanks for your time.
- General public comment:
You are officially on notice that we will be coming after any large changes.
- Aimee Rodriguez, Husband is a commercial fisherman.
Five of you said you drew the lines on the map. Is this public record? Where is this documentation? We have a right to see everything that you guys are doing. Our public comments have never been taken into consideration. We've lost from the get-go. It is our right to have this information. You are not helping us.
Facilitator, chair, and working group response: The lines drawn on the maps are options to consider. The scientific presentations can be found online. Various scientific studies and publications have been distributed to the working group and can also be found online. Any and all available science can be used throughout this process. The working group is charged with addressing the goals and objectives as outlined by the sanctuary

advisory council (posted on wall and can be found on-line). The WG is making recommendations to the sanctuary advisory council.

- Aimee Rodriguez, Husband is a commercial fisherman.
We are here just to make a public comment, correct? We are not here to be a part of the discussion that will affect our lives. Nobody can answer my question of providing me, presenting the documentation.
Working group response: There are many more steps to this process and many more opportunities for the public to engage in provide comment and input.

4. Working Group Discussion

- Request from working group member that the working group recommend to the SAC that water quality, education, enforcement be addressed. (Sean Morton: Those issues are being addressed at the SAC during the August 20th meeting.)
- Proposal from working group member that we consider taking a step back and potentially host regional meetings to hear more specifically what the issues and opportunities are in each of the regions. I would be willing to sit and hear every one of you guys: upper, middle, lower keys. Take a step back and hear all of your input.
- We need to send something positive to the SAC, to give them something to work with.
- Discussion about timing and location of meetings. These meetings were held in central location. However if we go forward with regional meetings would have them in each region and would hold them in the afternoon/evening to allow for greater public participation.
- Working group discussed next steps and raised concerns about making a vote on any of the proposed zone modifications. Working group recognizes the need to have more input and that recommendations should be informed by more people.
- Decision to break for lunch and regroup with how to proceed with this meeting and recommendations for SAC consideration when reconvene after lunch.

Meeting Reconvene

5. Working Group Discussion

- Chair reiterates that the maps are solely ideas proposed to meet the working group goals and objectives. The working group has discussed these at previous meeting but has not yet discussed them to develop a suite of recommendations for the SAC. At this stage, there has been no determination if they are bad or good ideas.
- Recognizing that there is need for more public comment and that the task before the working group will not likely be completed through today's meeting, the working group revisits the discussion about how to proceed with this meeting and what they can effectively send to the SAC for consideration.
- Recommendations to put before the SAC:
 - Address education, enforcement and water quality
 - Host regional meetings to hear from resource users in that region that would be impacted by any potential changes.
- Working group members expressed the desire to "do this right", to work through issues, to use broader regional knowledge about an area.

- Working group members noted that this has been a long process that has built from meeting to meeting, that a lot of science and other information have been provided.
- One working group member noted that the intent is to make this a better place for all of us. We don't intend to put anybody out of business. Not everybody in here is going to agree on everything. That balance between protection and everybody's livelihood is paramount. I love the idea of regional meetings. Your contributions today are invaluable to this process and I want to say thank you.
- Working group decided to hold further action on taking a vote at this meeting. Following public comment would consider what recommendations they would make to the SAC.

6. Public Comment

- Michael Belitzky, National Marine Manufacturer's Association.
We build your boats, supply your tackles, etc. We have a stake in this as well. We need to take a breath and take a step back. This is all a Congressional act. I want to know that you understand the process. Let's not make the working group the villains. Their job is to come up with recommendations to bring to the SAC. Congress says, all the working group members can do is to provide advice, they are not allowed to make laws or regulations. The sanctuary then takes this into consideration and may or may not adopt it. I am not a Florida Keys native, but I am glad that you all came today. The information is on NOAA's website, but it is hard to find. On NOAA's website, the sanctuary says they protect the resources. We are resources too. Please don't bow down to SAC's deadlines.
- Ricardo Fernandez, Yellow Baithouse.
I have a story. About four to five years ago, a young guy goes into my store. He wants to buy a dozen shrimp to fish for bonefish. I told him it wasn't a good time and the right conditions to fish for bonefish. He says, yeah, but I have a grant from UF to do this study. I tell him why don't you hire a guide to fish for bonefish? He said I have to spend the grant and I only have a week left. They don't know how to fish, and they have to spend the grant. That is the science we have?
- Dianne Harbaugh, Conch Key.
I appreciate your efforts. Hopefully you will not put through these draft plans on the maps and will put through to have meetings in different areas, to meet with us, and then we will come up with a consensus for us, future generations, and to protect the natural resources.
- Steve Cramer.
These things will not affect us for the next 20 years. Chris, you said you want to be sensitive to other people's time. But you have to be sensitive to our livelihood. Be sensitive to a little bit of time that will affect us for the rest of our lives. I have two kids that may want to get into this industry. You may push through some or none or all of these recommendations. The next group may or may not do this. Pretty soon, there may not be any more areas for our kids to fish on. Chris, if I said to your kids that I'm going to take away what your kids love doing, are you going to sit down and take this? There are a lot of people that come here to dive, but there are a lot more that come here to fish.
- George Niles, FKCFA.
I've been to a lot of meetings. I don't think I've ever been to a meeting that you had representing all user groups where they are on the same page.
- William Noble, Key Largo Fishing Adventures.

I'm in commercial fishing. I lost my license when a vote happened a day earlier than it was supposed to. Then I went to charter boat fishing. Now you're trying to close down a lot of the areas. We need to take a step back and look at all of this, affects all of us. We need public education. Mini-season tears up our reefs, more so than anything that we have done. Law enforcement comes up to me and misnames fish, education is really important, even in our law enforcement agencies. They get sizes wrong. I have to ask all the time, what can I fish for, because they are constantly changing things. I want to stay legal.

- Steve Leopold.

I appreciate all of you being here. I'm vocal about user-conflict and the value of commercial fishermen. We work outside of meetings and work out our problems. I want to thank everyone here.

- Lee Starling, Lost Reef Adventure Dive Shop.

We do not have a conflict with commercial and/or charter boat operators. We work together. We run small trips of 14 people max to dive at Sand Key, Rock Key. My customers are going to quit coming to catch lobsters if they can't catch it. If you guys really believe in global warming, wait until Stock Island is under water, then take this stuff. I question all the science. They get their money from grants. Jerry Ault said hogfish is extinct. I caught the extinct hogfish. If scientists had to fish for a living, they would starve to death. Scientists are skewing the results. We asked for regional meetings from the start. The website is extremely hard to navigate. I appreciate the working groups' time and efforts.

- Chris Garcia, Charter Boat Captain.

(Asking questions about the process) The working group members who are not here, will their vote count? (The Chair explains ground rules and the voting process.)

Chris, do you still waive your right to vote now and in the future? (Chair answers yes on the working group vote, but will vote on the SAC.)

I've heard multiple members say they're not familiar with that area, how can they vote on it? (The chair explains the voting process.)

- Walter Rentz.

I can shorten your meeting by saying have no meetings at all. Leave it like it is, we can all live with it. I don't trust scientists that work on grants. Because you know your jobs depend on it. End your stuff right now and recommend no changes.

- Tony Iarocci.

Chris (Chair) I feel bad for you right now. If it wasn't for TNC, etc. all the big environmental groups, there's a lot of negative comments going on. Marine reserves do work, for the right place for the right reasons, with the help of the fishermen. The lionfish in Caribbean are almost as big as the grouper here. We have to address that here. I keep going back to Tortugas 2000, we did have regional meetings, and big meetings. We had separate meetings so people on the working group can hear from the people.

The best available science, it sucks. There are not enough grants, not enough fishermen working with scientists. I can't believe it's happening all over again.

- Unknown Commenter.

Water quality, education, enforcement. If we had that established, we might not be here today. Drop the mind-set of closures. All we are doing is damage control. You are not going to see one scientific article that addresses white sand. We looked at a request from

NOAA to create 50 coral protection zones. We looked at the coral sets, was using data sets from the 1990s. We gave them 10 more sites that have coral. We made it work in a big way. And we have the opportunity to make that happen again. We are sitting here talking about fish species that have come out of the stock assessments with flying colors. We are addressing all these issues that science and NOAA says are doing great. We need to get back to addressing water quality, education and enforcement. We have existing rules and regulations that address these things. I want to remind everybody we have common ground here. We are stewards of the environment, make it work.

- Eliu Gonzales.

I'm worried about the chemicals that do not respect yellow buoys or markers. We voted on sugar cane. All those chemicals are in the water. Science from NOAA says Florida water is attacked by all of the contaminants. There is a big impact from chemicals. Miles and miles from the Gulf become dead. That's my concern. Are we doing the right thing?

- Daniel Padron, FKCFA.

It seems like what's going on here, it's like someone took a handful of darts and threw it on the wall for closed areas. If any one of these gets through, the sanctuary wins. Us (fisherman) are all in the same boat. We need to work together and support each other. The stakes are high, lots of jobs, big industry, recreational, etc. When is enough enough?

- Greg Eklund, Islamorada, Charter operation.

(Points to flip chart) This is a big step in the right direction. Economics is huge. For managing big area, an exploration of alternatives to closures will get more done. You guys have a responsibility to the community that you are here to represent. Pushing through votes on issues that you know nothing about is irresponsible. Make it clear that you don't want to vote on issues that you don't understand. You can't go neutral and let that go into agreement. Unless you go into smaller user groups, this stuff won't make sense.

- Diane Harbaugh, Fisher/CCA/ICBA.

How you guys vote, unknown or undecided should not be considered as agreement.

- Lee Starling, Commercial Fishing.

You gave us a lot of little maps. It will look like a patchwork quilt on one large map. So it comes down to, you've got a sanctuary and I have no place to fish in.

- Aimee Rodriguez, Husband is a commercial fisherman.

The information in this Tortugas booklet, is it updated? So it's not updated for this process, and the lines are drawn on these maps. Some of the data is listed from 2000. Is this what you are basing off of for closing these areas? So basically old information.

- Unknown Commenter.

A giant has been woken. There are 14 other sanctuaries. This is a huge concern for the entire nation. FKNMS will set precedent for the rest of the year. I will talk to Joe Garcia and to the papers.

- Unknown Commenter.

The maps are scattered. They are not in sequence. We need one piece of paper with all of these on it so we can see it.

- Bill Kelly, FKCFA.

Speaks of upcoming meetings about South Florida Regional Fishery Management: Key Largo Hilton 4-8pm, Tuesday. Jessica and Martha (FWC staff): Gulf and Atlantic Council - discuss regional management. Will address one set of rules that will cover both

sides of island. On Wednesday: Key Colony. On Thursday: Harvey Government Center: myfwc.com.

- Unknown name, Charter boat captain of Islamorada.
Is there any kind of estimation on if all of these were put together, what would the total square miles this will be? I know nothing about these other areas: Key West, Marquesas. I want everyone to know how big this area really is. You got park laws, etc. we all need to stick these meetings out.
- Unknown Commenter.
You have united: commercial, recreational, charter guys, divers, we have evolved. We need to keep coming because our livelihood is based on this.
- John Greco, Fisherman.
The scientific factor doesn't work. Mother Nature does not work in a predictable manner. I caught more Amber Jack in one year than I did in the ten years before. All the stuff out here is migratory. One day you might see ten fish, then none the other. We're too close to Mexico. If we protect it here, we'll have more protected for them.
- David Paul Horan, Key West Charter boat Association.
- Martin Moe, SAC Education and Outreach Member
We have a problem in the Keys. It is a problem that is not going to “go away”. It will only become more and more intense, as it has in the last few years. The problem is the “party beaches” that are within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. These are areas that are not areas formally set aside for public use, but beaches both remote from residential areas and some very close and actually adjacent to quiet residential areas. These gatherings can be quite large (hundreds of boats and a thousand people) on weekends and holidays. Needless to say, significant environmental damage, enforcement problems, safety concerns, and conflicts between partiers and residents are the result of this intensive usage of fragile public environments. This is a problem that pits public use of public property directly against environmental protection and the rights of private property residents, and as such, there are no easy answers. However, there may be some solutions. Biscayne National Park established regulations to control large concentrations of boats and people at “party beaches” on Sand Key and Elliott Key in 2011. Using their regulation and the sanctuary regulations for coral reef visitation as a guide, the sanctuary and local municipalities may be able to control the number of boats and people that congregate at party beaches without completely closing beaches to visitation. However, in some residential areas, prohibiting anchoring might be a better alternative. Mooring buoys, similar to mooring buoys on coral reef locations. Boat rafting regulations – reduction of the number of boats, protection of the environment, ease of enforcement, enhanced safety of boaters and children.

7. Working Group Discussion

- Working group considers idea of hosting regional meetings:
 - Host regional meetings, working group members participate/region, SAC members participate/region, review existing zones/modifications to zones, science and economic impact considered, include a range of user groups, September time frame – evenings, publicize,
 - Working group agreed that if regional meetings take place, they would reconvene to consider input from regional meetings and would then consider

recommendations to send to the SAC. The working group got a lot of science that the SAC was not privy to so it is appropriate that the working group consider the input and make recommendations.

- We should see this through the end, if we have the option. Every meeting was on the website. Everyone (the public) came today because the maps were put out.
- Discussion about how to break down the regions: (1) Upper, (2) Middle, (3) Lower, and (4) Marquesas and Dry Tortugas.
- The “No action” option needs to be clearly identified. Maybe have one large map that has everything on it, instead of the small ones. The maps need to be in geographic order. There needs to be some type of executive summary of the science. Issues need to be distilled so the public can read them and feel like they did their homework and are ready to talk about this.
- This is important: we are obligated to the principles, goals, and objectives. Those are going to have to be explained and gone through.
- I don't have any trouble making recommendations with the science I see from the people I hear. I want my recommendations to be informed by the people that I have to live next to. It may not be the best publicized process, having all the bird-watchers show up and burn the building down. SAC said to the working group, if we don't make recommendations, they will.
- Concerned noted by working group member that while more meetings and regional meetings is great conceptually, What do you think is going to happen? Answer: exactly what happened today. This is officially going to be taken out of our hands today. You (the public) all showed up in the 4th quarter, with 3 minutes left. The reality is the sanctuary is going to do something.
- Working group identified that education, enforcement, and water quality are priority issues for SAC to consider. In discussion it was noted that:
 - Education, enforcement and water quality have nothing to do with our objectives which focus on zoning.
 - A desire to leave here today with something positive. Recommend to vote on education, enforcement, water quality.
- Note that working group products throughout this process include:
 - Criteria/issues to consider if/when proposing modifications to existing zones
 - Ecosystem Protection Zone Maps with proposed modifications
 - Ecosystem Protection Working Group ballot showing zoning changes and a “no action” option for every existing or potential new zone (but that no final discussion, no voting to reach consensus has been conducted.)
 - Ecosystem Protection Working Group individual comments on justification related to potential modifications to zones and regulations (comments were not discussed, no voting to reach consensus has been conducted.)
- Final discussion and vote for what goes forward to the SAC:
 - Regional Meetings
 - Education, Enforcement, and Water Quality
 - Products will include the maps with science and all proposed modifications made by working group members. No preliminary votes would be included.

Decision Items of Note

1. Zones for Ecosystem Protection:

- Host regional meetings (one/region) to facilitate region and site-specific input and information exchange
- Reconvene the full working group following regional meetings to consider input and develop recommendations for SAC consideration.
- Working Group members will participate for their specific region
- SAC members are requested to participate for their specific region
- Meetings could include:
 - Review existing zones, modifications to existing zones, and potential new zones
 - Cross-cutting issues
 - Science and economic impact
 - Meetings should include a range of user groups that could contribute ideas or be impacted by potential modifications
- Meeting administration and logistics:
 - One meeting per region; Regions are: (1) Upper Keys, (2) Middle Keys, (3) Lower Keys, and (4) Marquesas and Tortugas (also identified by general area recognizable landmarks)
 - Held in September
 - Evening meetings
 - Publicize meetings through various mechanisms (suggestions included: web, radio, newspaper, National Weather Service notice)

2. Additional Issues for SAC Consideration:

The working group noted that the following issues are of concern and should be considered by the SAC through the marine zoning and regulatory review process:

- Education
- Enforcement
- Water Quality