

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review
Ecosystem Protection Working Group Regional Meeting
Key Colony Beach – Middle Keys
September 23, 2013**

Comments compiled from email submission

I appreciate your desire to preserve the resource of fish in the "sanctuary". Have your experts found a method to control the LIONFISH geometric population growth. We will gladly implement that plan.

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Please recognize we have similar goals.

Cordially,

Bob Crouse

I, Paul Thomson, am a member of the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club and request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas." I am greatly concerned that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. This is not a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair and could result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman, especially in the Marathon and Key Colony Beach areas.

Benjamin Villar

"Please be advised that I am a Key Colony Beach Owner and Fishermen, and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Rory Carmichael

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

I am a member of the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club, and I have reviewed the draft of the proposed modifications to the no fishing areas in the middle keys. I am requesting that there be no expansion of the no fishing areas at this time. If there is going to be any expansion it should only be from the current Sombrero Key FKNMS Zone to the 30 m depth contour. The same restrictions should apply to the Alligator Reef and Coffin Patch expansion.

The proposal on pages 5,6, and 7 are too drastic to be incorporated at this time. The areas proposed are too vast and would greatly restrict fishing for people with smaller boats that cannot safely go out to some of the deeper waters.

My comments are personal and do not necessarily represent the view of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club.

Tom Conley

Advisors:

I am a longstanding member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club. I understand that you are attempting to limit access to several fishing areas that would be detrimental to the use of members of my Club, as well as to many others in Key Colony Beach and the general Marathon area.

While I laud efforts to enhance the ecology of the Keys, I think your Group needs to get a balanced input from recreational users.

While I cannot attend any of your meetings in this "off season", I hereby appoint Bill Knickman, our president, to voice my opinion, should he get the opportunity.

Please listen, and carefully.

Charles W Spehrley

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

I am a longtime member of the Recreational Fishing Alliance..."I Fish and I Vote"...and one need only to look at the numbers of recreational fishermen to realize the voting power of the membership of not only this club but of the many other organizations. We are always grateful to legislators who stand up to the many tree huggers who won't be satisfied until all fishing grounds are closed. Please consider all the facts and numbers in your decision making.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Schmidt
Past Commodore KCBF&BC

Dear Sir , Please be advised that I am a member of K C B fishing & Boating Club . I am tired about closures & federal fisheries mismanagement with out science-based solutions. It now seems we are on a path of , lets prohibit all the fishing there, commercial & recreational . I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as " No Fish Areas ". Also the Marathon & K C B area need to have input to the Board ! Sincerely Bob Willey

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

*Sincerely,
Geza Zoller, Jr.
Key Colony Beach, FL*

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Plus, I am a REALTOR and many of my future customers are waiting on your decision to make up their minds to buying a home. The No Fish Zone will strongly affect the economy of the Keys, plus the majority of the rentals come to the Keys to go fishing. What are you thinking????????? Thank you for your time in reading this, Tobe

Tobe Creed

Gentlemen,

I wish to provide my displeasure as to the current proposals to create additional sanctuary areas in the Florida Keys and particularly in the middle keys. There is no data present that suggests the fish stocks in the middle keys are threatened or in need of additional protection. Besides this is a job for FWC with regard to seasons and catch limits.

This entire process has been forwarded with little to no involvement of local recreational fisherman and also the commercial sector. Previous meeting have been held with little notice or representation of the resource users.

This "taking" of the resource will only push additional pressure on the existing areas and create new and more expensive federal bureaucracy with the need for more boats, payroll and pensions. None of this is wanted or needed.

Sincerely,

Ronald Teke

Sir

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Respectfully
Jim Mugavero

Gentleman,

I have fished the waters off the east coast of the US for over 60 years, initially NC and VA and have seen the muddled effect of well meaning people acting in a biased way to the detriment of other classes of users. Usually the councils heavily favor commercial interests to the detriment of sport and recreational users. One has to only look at the state of our resources in NC and VA to see how this biased approach works. The outer banks of NC were once wonderful resources for the recreational fisherman, today the situation is nothing but terrible.

Given the facts of study after study I have yet to see any indication that anyone can make an economic case for favoring commercial over recreational and sport users when it comes to user access to our natural resources. Compare the commercial interest that decimated the passenger pigeon to the sportsman interest in whitetail deer. The former is extinct while the deer is proliferating throughout its range. Another example is when ducks were removed from commercial exploitation.

Almost every sport and recreational fisherman I know will support efforts to protect our resources, but they must be convinced it is a fair playing field, and so far I don't see that. Maybe you can convince us of that, we will anxiously await the signal that this is occurring.

The members of Key Colony Boating and Fishing Club, of which I am a member, are strong advocates of resources protection and would ally with any movement that supports such actions. Let's hope we become partners in this endeavor.

Sincerely,
Phillip Shropshire

Dear Mr. Berg:

I just wanted to weigh in on the discussions currently underway with regard to the potential expansion of the No-fish Zones.

Needless to say, the waters of the Florida Keys are a great source of revenue for the Keys economy both in short-term vacation and fish rental income but also introduces visitors to this wonderful part of Florida who in turn later become real property owners.

There are a number of issues confronting the Florida Keys including the Citizens Property Insurance Company current efforts to "depopulate"/discard the numbers of policies they currently underwrite. In combination with their significant change in underwriting rules and their efforts to force condominium owners into a 30-day minimum rental..... which will destroy the short term rental market and push these visitors to other out of state locations, this is now beginning to impact the economy of the Keys.

The Citizens currently-underway plans as mentioned above, while not of the same nature as the expansion of the "no-fish" zone, do have a commonality..... that being the real potential for negatively impacting our local Keys economy.

As a full-time resident I am opposed to increasing the "no-fish" ban and hope that you will give thoughtful consideration to my comments.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Wovas

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Mark Benton

406-580-7149

Hello,

I live in Key Colony Beach and belong to the KCB fishing club. I fish the flats Oceanside from Key Largo to the Marquesas and Gulfside from Key Largo to Key West and as far North as the Shark River. I fish about 3 or 4 days a week, sometimes with a guide and sometimes with a friend. I fish for recreation and this sport is very important to me. I and most of my fellow fly fishermen follow "catch and release" fishing so the fish will be available for others to enjoy.

The Keys are a fishing destination for fishermen all over the world and a very large source of revenue for the keys. Recreational fishing is a very large source of revenue for the keys, but recreational fishing has little representation on FKNMS, this needs to be changed.

It may be necessary to add limited areas as "No Fish Areas" to protect spawning fish, but the proposals that have been submitted are clearly way to extensive. Protect our fisheries, but do not close large areas to the recreational fishermen. THE CURRENT PROPOSAL IS CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE.

John Albin

As a member of the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club, and a Keys fisherman, I am opposed to any increase in the "No Fish Areas".

The Keys have contributed greatly to the economic stability for our area with \$500 million in recreational fishing. To increase "No Fish Areas" will only cause local and state revenues to decline in a time when all are hurting.

We, in the Key Colony Beach and Marathon communities feel we are left without adequate representation on the board, this needs to be addressed so we may have a voice in decisions concerning us.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Russell

Greetings,

As a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating club I am writing to express my opposition to further targeting by the Advisory Board of areas designated as "No Fishing Areas". The recreational fisherman, a major stakeholder in the Keys and especially Key Colony Beach, have not been adequately represented and therefore any decision will be unrepresentative of the interests of the local community. The local economy is very dependent upon the recreational fisherman many of whom chose to live in this area because of the fishing opportunity.

Don Palmer

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

ERIC LARSSON

I am a member of the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club and I strongly object to the fact that there is inadequate representation of recreational anglers in the Advisory Board. It seems absurd that Recreational Fishermen generates far more revenue for the local economy than commercial fishermen, yet commercial fishermen are so much more heavily being represented by this Advisory Board. There is not a single member from Key Colony Beach and very few members from Marathon on the Advisory Board. This obviously is not a group of "diverse" stake holders as you claim. Why weren't meetings of "no fish zones" advertised for comment?

I frequently fish off Key Colony Beach in the general area around "Coffins Patch". It is my understanding that you are proposing to increase the size of this particular "No Fish Zone" by 300%. Where is your data to back up such measures? On what grounds are you proposing triple the size of this closed fishing area? Have size limits, bag limits been considered?

Fishing populations seem to be healthier now than they were 10 years ago in this area. Yellowtail, Mangrove snapper, grouper, and other fish species that populate the area around Coffins Patch seem to be much more plentiful than years past and are thriving from season restrictions, size, and bag limit measures that are currently in place. Thus, it makes no sense why we should arbitrarily close more premium fishing areas without documentation supporting such decisions.

I request that Advisory Board not increase "No Fish Areas" until the recreational anglers of those respective areas are given the opportunity to voice their opinions or at the very least be made aware such legislation is being proposed!!

Daniel Simmons
Key Colony Beach, FL

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Charles Alferes

I am a member of the Key Colony Beach Boating and Fishing Club and a homeowner and taxpayer on Key Colony Beach since 1989. I am outraged at the proposals being considered as "no fish zones" in and around KCB. I request no further grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "no fish Zones". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from the Marathon area and NONE from Key Colony. I feel this is not only unfair, IT IS UNJUST. Such action will result in a bias decision for recreational fishermen especially those of us In Key Colony.

I wish my voice to be heard at the next meeting.

Phil Flagg

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and the Marathon Yacht Club.

I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Our businesses have suffered enough with this economy.

I would appreciate receiving email notices of any upcoming meetings you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph Girkins

I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Carl Freeman

To: Chris Bergh and Sean Morton,

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Roy O. Haase, P.A. Realtor
Key Colony Beach Realty, Inc.

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Richard P Waltz Jr
305-743-9394

Dear Board Members;

I am forwarding the below message from our Commodore, because I agree 100% with his concerns. We in Key Colony Beach fight hard for representation on all boards governing our environment and quality of life in the Keys. I am a member of the Sanctuary's Canal Water Quality Subcommittee and the Monroe County RESTORE ACT Committee. Bill is a valued leader in Key Colony Beach for our recreational fishermen and speaks for our fishing club, representing well over 200 fishermen.

Thank you,
John De Neale
Commissioner

Dear Member,

I need your help and I need it now. We need to send a loud and clear message to the Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary Advisory Board that we do not want any more of our fishing grounds to become "No Fish Zones."

I believe that these latest proposals are an effort to justify the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's existence and to spend more taxpayer's dollars. I also believe that insufficient scientific and socioeconomic data was used in identifying the targeted areas.

In 2001, a similar plan of action was proposed by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and only thirty (30) comments were received from the public. As a result, the FKNMS did whatever they wanted- a sharp contrast to the six thousand (6000) comments received for the 1996 plan.

If you think this action, if enacted, won't change your fishing, diving, spear fishing, snorkeling, and lobstering life in the Keys, you are mistaken. Our voice must be heard or the result will be that the FKNMS will do what they want and not what the public wants.

Here is an interesting fact obtained from the NKNMS website. Recreational Fishing generates \$500 million dollars for the local economy. Commercial Fishing generates \$57 million. Question? If recreational fishing provides almost ten times the revenue as commercial fishing, why is there very little representation on the Advisory Board for recreational fishermen and ten times more representation for the commercial fishermen. How do you think this will turn out for the recreational fishermen?

The only reason that these meetings have been scheduled is a result of public outcry. Quote from today's article in the Key West Citizen (Sunday September 22, 2013 page 1). "Sanctuary officials agreed to the four additional meetings to address the issue last month after fishermen and divers loudly voiced their objection to a series of maps that proposed new closed areas and the expansion of existing areas."

I am requesting every member of the Key Colony Beach Boating and Fishing Club to take five (5) minutes and send an email to the Advisory Board. If you do not have the time or ambition to compose a personal message, you can copy and paste the following.

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Please send your emails to the following persons:

Chris Bergh- cbergh@TNC.ORG

Sean Morton- sean.morton@noaa.gov

Please do this today or at the latest before tomorrow night's meeting at 5:00PM

I have been working very hard to protect your interests, but I cannot do this alone. Please Help!

I am trying to network with all the other fishing clubs and dive clubs in the Florida Keys to unite in this effort. If you are presently in Key Colony or Marathon, please attend Monday night's meeting at Key Colony City Hall at 5:00PM.

To all the great members who have already sent emails, I thank you and comment you for your support.

Thank you,

Bill Knickman

Commordore

Hi Sean and Chris,

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Also, on a personal keys recreational fishing note: since fishing the Middle Keys area every year from 1991 to present there have been many up and down fishing seasons, but Spring 2013 was one of the best fishing seasons for reef and offshore. Regulations to preserve the future of the reef and fish are a must, the current no fish areas and

regulations have been working.

Thank you,

Jamie Worley
KCB Boating and Fishing Club Member

There is no reason presented to further limit fishing in the near shore waters. It is very important to our tourist industry which a very big part is fishing. I can understand the limit on size, which was done years ago and caused an increase in fish in the area.

Please do not set more no-take zones in the near shore waters in the Florida Keys.

William S. Wilkinson, P.A. Realtor
wswilkinson@rermx.net

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fishing Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fishermen especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.
Cheryl Burnett

Please be advised that my husband and I are members of the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club, and we request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas".

We also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. We do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust, and will result in a bias decision for recreational fishermen, especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Jean and Norval Smith
Casa Clara Condominiums

Please be advised that I am a member of the fishing group of Marathon Yacht Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a biased decision for recreational fishermen, especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Richard Dugan

Stop the expansion of the no take zones. Stop creating private aquariums disguised as research areas. The new proposals are madness. We need intellect in the decision making process.
Samuel J. Zaydon M.D.

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

John Fruhmorgen
Tournament Director
Key Colony Beach Fishing Club

Hi

Please give the middle keys some say in the closures

Tom Alferes
Key colony beach
Fishing and boating club
Chairman of fundraising

We are residents here in Marathon. We moved here to enjoy our passion of fishing and diving. We do want our oceans and the fish to be preserved for the future, but disagree with the proposed areas being restricted. What research went into designating these areas?

We are also members of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and we request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". We also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. We do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Cindy and Tom Casey

Gentlemen,

Please accept this correspondence as my strong objection to the arbitrary and capricious manner which the EPWG Advisory Board approaches the closure of certain fishing areas in the Florida keys. The manner in which these recommendations are brought to the publics attention in the off season and with very little public notification is extremely suspect. The advisory board should participate in a thorough dialogue with recreational fisherman and property owners impacted by these decisions. I have invested in excess of 1 million dollars in lifetime savings to own a retirement / vacation home on Key Colony Beach and yet I was unaware of these proposals and have no representation in the matter . Futhermore two of these proposals impact areas we currently fish.

I would appreciate the EPWG advisory boards additional consideration in a more public and open forum!

Best Regards,

Grady L Simmons P.E
Key Colony Beach Fla.

“Please be advised that I am a Key Colony Beach resident and Fishermen, and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as “No Fish Areas”. I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach”.

I spend three months every winter in key colony and fish daily. I feel expanding the no fish zones would adversely effect my fishing. I spend a considerable money for both fuel and bait during these three month and would look elsewhere to fish if these regulations were to be implemented.

Sincerely,
Captain Jim lutz
Nev-r-enuf sportfishing

Chris, I can't believe that this could happen. I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing Club. We need to keep the economy going. I live in Long Key in the winter and this is our fishing grounds. Please stop this nonsense. Gary Kline Sent from my iPad
Gary Kline

As a member of the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating club at MM 53.5, in the Florida Keys, I am extremely disturbed by the attempt to create more "No Fish-No Take Areas" in the Keys without input from the tax payers and residents of KCB and Marathon. Tourism is our primary source of income in the keys, especially in this area. People come to the keys to fish and dive. If those activities are restricted you will put a choke hold on our suffering economy. All businesses in the keys depend on fishing, lobstering, and spear fishing. You clearly are saying you do not care about the residents, visitors and businesses in the keys. You never offered notice or the opportunity to have input into your planned closures.

At least 90% of the tax revenue of Monroe county comes from the keys, which makes up a very small part of the county land mass. Our area generates the most tax revenue for the county and state, with the exception of Key West. It appears that the make up of your board is deliberately set up so it has little or no input from KCB and Marathon.

I suggest you reconsider what you are trying to do without adequate input from the citizens and businesses who will be impacted by it. Get representatives on your board from all the areas you are considering for closure.

Peter Hines
Resident and Fisherman

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as “No Fish Areas”. I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach”.

BR
Jim Rambo
KCB Resident

Dear Sirs,

I am a local resident in marathon and am VERY opposed to your intended plan to expand more no fishing zones and or limit fishing in more of our keys areas.

With estimates of over \$500 million dollars spent by sport fisherman to the keys economy, It is hard to understand your position .

PLEASE....do not EXPAND or add more no fishing zones.

***Your decision will affect more than the fisherman.
The keys will become an Economic Dead Zone if you pass
more Restrictions.
Thank you in advance for your Understanding in this matter.***

***Sincerely,
BILL HOUTTEKIER***

“Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as “No Fish Areas”. I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach”.
Lois Krause

I request that no more fishing grounds be designated "No fish areas". It seems one sided and biased in that there are no Marathon area members on the board. Let's have equal representation. Larry Wagner
Key Colony Beach

I am a full time resident of Marathon.
I belong to the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club, an organization of over 200 fishing members.
I don't understand how you can have a meeting when a large majority of our members are out of town for the summer. It seems very shortsighted to not let them be heard.
The magnitude of the closures that are being recommended is huge, way to much interference.
The meeting has not been publicized well.
Closures seem to have a lasting effect and once in place never seem to go away.
The catch quota's are already very controlled by limits in both size and quantity. Raise those temporarily if you must.
All of these closures will just cause enforcement headaches and a lack of knowledge by those tourists that pay dearly to come here to fish.
It amazes me that no fishing representation is from Marathon!
There are enough closed protected area's, the judgment to close more is not based on accurate research.

John Tyson

Mr Bergh,
My name Chuck Busse , I live in Minnesota and every year I come to key colany Fla. To sport fish the local waters with charter captain's in the Marathon area's . And I also fish local waters with friends in the key colany Beach club, and look foreward to fishing these local waters with life time friends . But now I see that with this ever growing regulations of no fish zone this may come to an end . Sadly !!! . I have been reading very little on the benefits of the closures and hearing largely the down fall and lost to the local economic well being . In these hard times and seeing the greater benefits to the stimulating economic up rise of all sport fishing I would hope that you would reconsider this no fish expansion at this time and understand that we need to be able to appreciate and beams to enjoy the local water in the keys . Thank you Chris for your time and help in this very import matter .
A friend to the sport fisherman in all the Fla, Keys
Mr, Chuck Busse. Thank you.

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club, member of the U.S.P.S. in Marathon, and a property owner in Key Colony Beach.

I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". This will greatly affect Recreational Fishing and I am OPPOSED to this expansion.

I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fishermen especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Yours truly,

Mr. John R. Lapointe

Please be advised that I am a property owner in Key Colony Beach.

I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". This will greatly affect Recreational Fishing and I am OPPOSED to this expansion.

I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fishermen especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Yours truly,

Michael Lapointe, CFA

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach". Thank You John Luciano Florida resident

Gentlemen,

We both are members of the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club, and we are very disappointed that we will not be in town for the meetings to be held tomorrow at the KCB City Hall. I hope that the information and questions from that meeting are disseminated to the public, as I think it is very important that the recreational fishermen in our area are aware of this issue. We understand the importance of protecting this important resource, but we also have concerns regarding the economic impacts, as well as the possible limiting of so many areas, all along the Florida Keys. We would also like to express our concerns in the limited, if any, representation of recreational fishermen on the Advisory Board. We also feel that a balanced representation of members from all along the Florida Keys would lend itself to more diverse opinions, and possible solutions. Turning large areas into No Fish Zones, may not be the best answer. Please take our comments into consideration when discussing the options you are considering.

Regards,

Dan and Dee Settles

Ft Lauderdale and Key Colony Beach

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club, member of the U.S.P.S. in Marathon, and a property owner in Key Colony Beach.

I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". This will greatly affect Recreational Fishing and I am OPPOSED to this expansion.

I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fishermen especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Jo-Ann E. Lapointe

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Stanley Topolski

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Gail Cortelyou

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

Robert Soderquist, Key Colony Beach Fishing & Boating Club

I THINK YOU PEOPLE ARE DOING A GREAT JOB. AS A REC.FISHERMAN WE NEED CLOSED AREAS OR ELSE NOTHING

WILL BE LEFT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

PHIL JUDYSKI

Subject: Marquesas/ Tortugas

I am writing you today to request that the Advisory council recommends no closures in the Marquesas and the Tortugas. These areas are a vital part of my commercial fishing business. Closures there will definitely end my commercial fishing business that I have maintained for over 30 years. It takes a great deal of effort in time and money to access these areas, costs of fuel make it prohibitive for recreational interests to use the areas. Closing these areas will only impact the commercial fisherman. When looking at the proposed closures up and down the keys, I am astounded that "ALL" the closures are only on the reef side of the keys!?! You do know that there are 2 sides to the Marine Sanctuary? Why are the closures only on the Atlantic side? My Federal fishing license is only good for the waters south of US1. We can no longer fish in all state waters like in the past. By closing areas only in the Atlantic you are diminishing the value of my license. My recommendation for the advisory council would be to back a keys wide fisheries council. As opposed to the current S. Atlantic council and the Gulf Council. One that is run by keys area people who are focused on keys unique issues. This new council will take the heat off of the Marine Sanctuary from attempting to get involved in fisheries management. Mr. Bill Wickers spoke at the last advisory board meeting with sound advise that the Sanctuary stay out of fisheries management. Leave that to the FWC and the councils to take the rap. The sanctuaries original mandate was to focus on water quality issues not fisheries management. The goodwill that the sanctuary has earned with the people of the Florida keys is at risk if you continue in this closure issue. So please forget the closures idea, as a commercial fisherman I am for closure of spawning fish stocks. Closure during the spawn is a far better means of conservation than vast area closures. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Bob Elkins

Hi Chris and Sean,
Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach. The fishing industry is a prime industry leader for any location in the keys. Having more no fish zones could hard both our recreational and commercial fishing, which provides a thriving economy for the keys. Please take this into consideration before marking zones No Fish Zones!

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Thank you!

Natalie M. Johnson, Realtor, e-PRO

“Please be advised that I am a Key Colony Beach Owner and Fishermen, and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as “No Fish Areas”. I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach”.

Rick Spraggins
Directory Marketing Solutions

Sean Morton,

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club, and I request no further fishing grounds be targeted as “ no fish areas “.

Kelley A. Bergstrom
Bergstrom Investment Management LLC

Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and a winter resident of Key Colony Beach since 1977 and fishing is one of the main reasons I chosen KCB, I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as “No Fish Areas”. I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach”.

John M. Busch

Chris,

I can understand how you might be overwhelmed. I did attend the meeting at KCB and I will admit that to some degree a lot of people confuse what the Sanctuary can do compared to the various Fishery rule making bodies. You guys are catching some grief in that respect, BUT you probably have a quicker and better communications with some of those bodies than we individuals, so we hope you will pass on our opinions. I meant what I said in that previous email, so Yes you certainly can provide it to the group. While the Sanctuary does not create Fishing Rules, what it does with the zoning of areas will affect us Recreational Fisherman. We already suffer from the complicated rules, and the allowance for Commercial to take the lion’s share of the fish, so now if we get zoned out, it will get overbearing.

Last night I asked just what kind of science was used to make the zoning regulations, and that question could not be answered, simply that someone in some group make the suggestion?

Thanks for all your efforts.

Jim Teague

Chris,

Thank you for your response. Of the 5 emails I sent, you were the only one to reply. I think speaking for numerous people I know, we all realize that the “recommendations” are not cast in concrete, BUT we also know that unless there is serious opposition, all of a sudden we hear that since there was not much reaction, and nobody seemed to care, well we just followed the recommendations. Someone wanted those restrictions, or they would not have been mentioned in the first place. Therefore, I hoped to be especially blunt in telling you that everyone I have mentioned these “recommendations” to are extremely concerned. We all want fish and a nice reef for future generations, but we also know that once the radicals get water or land closed to Sportsman’s use, it never opens back up. So, future generations will lose the God Given resources taken away by Man, in the name of Ecosystem Protection. We Sportsman want the protection people to stop what is destroying the resources, and it is not the recreational angler catching a few fish for the table.

Once again I say, IF there is a particular area of concern, then CLOSE it completely. Make it an area that is easy to define, and control, not a whole bunch of rather small areas that people have trouble keeping

track of and accidentally violating, AND get rid of the people who exploit the resources by taking spawning fish like the Muttons, and the huge commercial take.

Jim Teague

From: Chris Bergh [mailto:cbergh@TNC.ORG]
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2013 3:52 PM
To: Jim Teague
Subject: RE: No Fish Zones

Thank you for reaching out to me, Jim. I appreciate your input and I'll pass your comments on to the Sanctuary staff so the whole EPWG can see them along with the others I have received. I apologize in advance for the pat response that follows, but I am getting a lot of email on this subject all of a sudden and this is the best I can do at the moment.

I think you and many others have looked at the big stack of maps of potential changes and additions to the Sanctuary's zoning and assumed that the whole stack is "the proposal" or "the recommendation." Not so. The Ecosystem Protection Working Group, which is composed of a diverse group of Keys stakeholders including commercial, charter and recreational fishermen, has gone through a stepwise process to identify and map this broad set of preliminary ideas about modifying or adding zones, but we have not yet taken the final steps. Those final steps are winnowing the list down to the smaller number (much smaller, I expect) of ideas that we consider "keepers" and formally recommending these ideas to the Sanctuary Advisory Council. Once we do so the Council may take them, leave them or modify them when it makes its own recommendations for regulatory changes to the staff of the Sanctuary. The next step after that will be the staff developing a detailed Draft Environmental Impact Statement that will spotlight the pros and cons for both the environment and the economy, including fishing considerations. That gets public review and comment, which could modify the proposed changes, and then a final decision is made and regulations might actually change in 2015 or 2016. Imbedded throughout this lengthy process is consultation with the fishery managers (NOAA Fisheries and Florida FWC) who are in charge of the grouper rules you mentioned, and of course the community.

Between now and making our recommendations to the Council, the working group is seeking additional input from the broader community by holding a series of meetings next week and the first meeting is at KCB City Hall on Monday evening. I'll forward those details to you and hope to see you there.

Thanks again,

Chris Bergh

FKNMS Ecosystem Protection Working Group

FKNMS Advisory Council

Since the government buys property that cannot be developed, and the government buys equipment from commercial fisherman who might be displaced, why don't you simply buy all the boats and equipment of us Recreational Anglers. The government seems to want to make it harder and harder for us to go out and catch a few fish to eat. This latest bunch of recommendations from the EPWG is just another step in that direction. Soon the Environmental Extremists will get their long term goal accomplished by forming so many NO Fish zones that no one will fish.

First of all, IF there is any shortage of fish, look for the Commercial Fishery. The world was created with all person's being equal and being equally allowed to enjoy the benefits of the environment, BUT the government has seen fit to make some more equal than others. Down here in the keys for example. Some bought and paid for bureaucrat decided that we have so many Yellowtail Snappers that they added tons and tons to the commercial harvest, BUT if I get caught with 11 of them, I get fined, my boat taken away, and maybe even jailed. I was finally glad to see that starting Jan. 1, 2013, I could once again go out deep dropping and try to catch a snowy grouper. If I did so, it would be maybe 2 or 3 times a year, and I might catch one and I might not. I waited until summer to get some calm water, but BOOM, got up on June 1, diligently checking the regs since down here they seem to change without notice, and WOW, The government closed down Snowy Grouper and Golden Tile BUT only for recreational, NOT commercial. Seems that someone decided that maybe the year before they did not do an accurate count, and maybe recreational caught more than the 500 or so they are allowed, so they closed the season early this year, in case they made a mistake last year. BUT I repeat, NOT for commercial. IF there is a shortage of Snowy Grouper or Golden Tile, I submit to you, the shortage is for EVERYONE not just the Recreational Angler. I know that is a different bunch of bureaucrats, but it seems to be a contagion going through the Fishery Bureaucracies.

NOW I admit you will claim this has nothing to do with the EPWG recommendations, BUT I claim it is all part of the larger problem. The government trying to solve problems with a sledge hammer instead of a scalpel. We all want fish to catch. Stopping the taking of muttons for instance during the spawning, and stopping fishing in aggregation and spawning areas is certainly a good idea. Solve problems where problems exist!!

Does anyone realize what would happen IF these areas are all implemented? Take the 4 areas from Long Key to Sombrero. If fully implemented there would be hundreds of buoys needed, and/or everyone out there would have to be excellent navigators. It is hard enough for those who live here, but what about the people who vacation for a week or two. OH, I know, you just hire a lot more FWC officers and fine the hell out of everyone who mistakenly sets foot into those areas??? Good solution. More money for the government! More pissed off people who won't fish anymore or simply quit coming to the Keys. Once again the extremist get their goal accomplished.

Many of us troll the reef in the winter especially targeting wahoo. We troll from about 90 depth on out, the favorite being from 100-150. When trolling a reefline that wanders, it is normal to all of a sudden be in 90 feet of water and then back into 100'. SO, now as we troll from somewhere off Conch Key to Sombrero, we could very easily pass in and out of the No Fish Zone. SO, here comes the FWC and we are in deep trouble. There would come a time when a person or two on a boat would need another person just to monitor that they do not wander into a No Fish Zone. What are we harming trolling through in 80-90 feet of water?

To summarize: It is not the recreational angler who takes a few fish for the table that causes any shortage. It is the commercial industry. Who gave 1 commercial fisherman more rights to take fish than one recreational fisherman. 1 Person-1 Fish. Of course some will say that the commercial guy is supporting employees, and the economy, BUT what about the people who repair engines, repair boats, store boats, sell boats, sell gas, sell bait, sell fishing equipment, sell chum, etc etc. All of those people depend on the Recreational Fisherman, and it has been proven that every fish taken recreationally contributes more to the economy than a fish taken commercially.

SO, even though the EPWG might not directly address this inequity, these zones certainly affect the recreational guy with a small boat who wants to fish near home, and catch a couple fish for dinner, more

than it will affect the commercial guys with big boats who can go farther away, especially to the aggregation areas and rape the environment.

AND: Whatever areas are finally implemented, they should also become NO ANCHORING and NO DIVING. If it is to truly be an exclusion zone, it should be fully excluded. When I go past Coffins Patch or Sombrero areas, they are full of anchored boats and divers messing with the fish and destroying the bottom. In fact, I know that in some cases divers are spearing hog fish and grouper in those areas. If you want to close a ZONE, CLOSE IT.

Respectfully Submitted, but ticked off
Jim Teague
Key Colony Beach

We do not need more no fishing zones
Steve Buckeridge
KCB, FL

"Please be advised that I am a member of the Key Colony Fishing and Boating Club and I request that no further fishing grounds be targeted by the Advisory Board as "No Fish Areas". I also strongly oppose the fact that there are very few members of the Board from Marathon and no one from Key Colony Beach. I do not see this as being a group of diverse stakeholders. This is unfair, unjust and will result in a bias decision for recreational fisherman especially the ones in Marathon and Key Colony Beach".

I concur heartily with the above statement and find it outrageous that this action is being taken without proper studies, proper and realistic goals and without proper local representation. Many years ago this country fought revolution against a tyrannical government which didn't allow for "representation". Sadly your organization seems to have forgotten the basic principals we were founded under

Walt Comb

I believe the proposed fishing closures in the marathon...grassey key areas are unjust and unnecessary. I am a member of the key colony fishing and boating club which does a lot of promoting and charitable work in our community and I feel these proposals would be detrimental to the recreational health and the economy of the area.

I personally do mostly catch and release fly fishing and now you want to tell me I can't even do that in some of my favorite areas!!!!

very concerned, James McCadie DDS

Chris, thanks for your reply... I fish from east of Islamorada to west of big pine and white water bay to past the marathon hump. The previous closures you have imposed that I know of are on the reef and relatively small and do not extend to shore. " Fisherman" tend to surround these areas because it is like hunting on the edge of a game preserve in their minds. So instead of protecting areas with closures you are concentrating the fishing pressure. Also, I fail to see the value of closing areas all the way to shore as it will concentrate the tarpon fisherman to a degree that will make it almost impossible to have any quality fishing.

You should be concentrating on ways to stop the pollution and creating habitat instead of closing areas and making your biggest source of income upset with your actions.
sincerely, jim mccadie

Chris,

Once again thank you for taking the time to point out all of this information. No matter what I may sound like, I like most Recreational Fisherman are in favor of wise protection of the environment. Having said that, what is troublesome to us is how we seem to get the short end of the stick. Most fish shortages are the result of overfishing by Commercial, and such as the Goliath Grouper, too easy to take by spear fisherman. If all of us Recreational Fisherman went out and caught our limit of some kind of fish a couple times of the week, we could never ruin the fishery or hurt the environment.

I know the sanctuary does not deal with Fishing Regs, but as I read all of the Recommendations from the Working Group, I see that the vast majority use stopping fishing as their justification. Therefore, in that manner the sanctuary rules will affect recreational fisherman. It certainly appears that Divers had a lot of input. To some, Divers characterize themselves as the keepers of the environment. It is obvious a lot of these recommendations are intended to keep fisherman away so the divers have unfettered access. I have nothing against divers, except those who have come to where I am fishing, drop anchor, put up their dive flag and expect I should move!!! Of course every sport has jerks and violators such as those divers that brag to me they speared hogfish at Coffins Patch.

My point is: As I said before. IF some area is supposed to be an ECO-Zone intended to allow Mother Nature to regroup, then it should prohibit ALL Human activity. No one can tell me that dozens of boats anchored or moored in a small area full of divers is not a disturbance to the environment. (Of course I think we would all welcome Lion Fish removal anywhere and everywhere). I guess when you meet with the entire group, some mention should be made that a huge portion of the recommendations want to prohibit recreational fishing, and a few from where it might affect commercial even more, but I did not really see any where diving was recommended to be closed. I am sure with all of the details, I might have missed some.

IF any areas are to be marked off with marker buoys, then have mooring buoys installed for divers, then I say tax the divers to pay for it if they are the only ones who can use those areas.

Again I know it is said that these recommendations are only recommendations, but heaven help the recreational fishing industry even very many of these are implemented. As was pointed out last night, if much of this happens, and where people can and can't fish gets too complicated, people will stop coming to the Keys to fish, and many of us will pick up and move out. Great news for the Real Estate Market and the tax base. AND somebody has to keep in mind that if and when these zones come into play, all of our GPS Maps and Programs will be outdated, paper charts will be outdated and it will be a nightmare to get the correct zones known to the public. (great for FWC collecting fines)

Thanks for listening and passing these comments along.

Jim

Dear Members,

As promised, I am getting back to all our members that were not able to attend the meeting on Monday with NOAA, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the Ecosystem Protection Working Group (EPWG), the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC), and the public. This observation report is rather lengthy so please bear with me.

First of all, we first became aware of these meetings on September 19th and had limited information concerning the intent and goals of the above agencies. If some of my information was incorrect or inaccurate, I apologize. However, I can blame some of this on what I consider poor communications between the agencies and the public. A simple Google Search of "Florida Keys Fishing Clubs" would

have directed the agencies to the websites for the KCB Fishing and Boating Club, the Islamorada Fishing Club, and the Upper Keys Fishing Club. I feel that the agencies should have reached out to our clubs to make us aware of their agenda and adding our organizations to their mailing list at the beginning of their process which began in January 2013. My initial information came from blogs and forums on Florida Sportsman magazine and emails from some concerned members.

Besides the three (3) Florida Keys fishing clubs, the Realtor associations, some dive shops, and some bait and tackle shops were also unaware of the meetings and the agendas. The meetings were obviously not adequately advertized.

There were approximately eighty (80) persons who attended the meeting including several members from the above agencies. Our Club was well represented given the fact that only 15% of the members are full-time residents. There were also members from the local Real Estate community, commercial fishermen, charter captains, bait and tackle shop owners, and others members of the public.

The opinions that I am going to put forth are a composite from a portion of the KCBF&B members who I had the opportunity to speak with and discuss their opinions of the meeting. Therefore, the observations that I will now share are not indicative of every member who attended the meeting.

The meeting started with a twenty minute presentation of the history of the Marine Sanctuary and its administrative process. After this presentation, we were broken up into groups of 8-10 persons at round tables with each table having a one or more representatives from one of the agencies.

Most of the KCBF&B members I have spoken to were not happy with this arrangement since it did not allow any of us to address the entire audience. Participants had the opportunity to hear the comments and input only from the persons at their respective tables. Some felt it was an effort to "divide and conquer". I expressed this to Chris Bergh, an EPWG and SAC member, after the meeting and he explained that they felt that more people would provide input and comments if they were in a smaller group. They also felt that many people are too shy to get up and speak to a crowd. I can appreciate this view but I personally would have preferred that they did both. Allowing the public to address the entire audience and then break up into groups. This would also have given us the opportunity to get answers from the various experts on the panel. Many tables had representatives who were administrative personal, water quality specialists, tourism specialists, etc. and could not answer questions about our fishing issues.

We all felt that our questions were rarely answered directly and we kept constantly being told to refer to the website. The website is several hundred pages of text and for a layman like me, difficult to interpret. It all appears to be written by academics and/or attorneys. If you are a PhD or have a Master's degree, you may not have the problem that many of our members are having trying to fully digest the language on the website and interpreting its meaning. We find that navigating the website is cumbersome and very time consuming. It seems that every page refers you to several other pages and links. Upon landing on the referred page, one finds the same drill. But for whatever reason, the agency people would not answer many of the questions in simple layman's terms. This complaint was prevalent among most of our members in attendance. For example, at our table when asked what the purpose and goals of the SAC are regarding recreational fishing, we were told that it all was on the website. When asked what science was used to justify changing any of the existing management plan, again you were told to go to the website or view it in a 4" thick book resting on a table in the front of the hall. When asked how they were going to enforce any new regulations when the FWC does not and cannot fully enforce the existing laws, we were not given a direct answer. When asked to outline the costs to implement any changes and the source of the new funds necessary to enact and enforce any new regulations, we were not giving a direct answer. When asked how the thirty (30) possible areas for "no take" zones were chosen and who made the decisions to select particular zones and what science was used to identify these areas, we were not given a straight answer. I think you get the idea.

After some additional research on their website in an effort to answer the above questions, it became obvious from the various justifications listed on the website that the vast majority of the Preservation Areas will be created to prohibit fishing, while still allowing diving. It seems that it is assumed that divers are environmentalists and fishermen are abusers. Several suggested Preservation Areas list NO JUSTIFICATION as a cause to target a particular area.

Here are some quotes taken from printed justifications.

"—highly visited reef and thus should continue to separate snorkeling/diving from fishing activities"

Many justifications quote "protect habitat from fishing activities"

“ --- Reef is perhaps the most heavily visited reef on the planet and should continue as SPA to separate incompatible act“. Once again, keep it for divers, lock the fisherman out.

Meets SAC principle to have a non-extractive zone in each of the Keys sub-regions “activities” In other words, lock the fisherman out!!

I must say that the people from the various agencies were very professional and dignified despite taking some serious heat from the public. However, they have been discussing and developing all this data and information on their website since 2011 and I do believe that they understand it but they need to explain it in layman’s language and be forthcoming on exactly what it all means. How can they expect the public to absorb all of the data and information in a very short period of time before they use our input to make their recommendations? I do not feel that this is fair or considerate.

The FKNMS tells us that this entire plan in is the early stages and no final decisions have been made and will not be finalized for years, but we were happy to have been able to voice our objections to any proposed bans on recreational fishing by creating additional “no take” areas. We have no objection if the science shows that certain species are overfished or endangered and in need of protection, but we feel that bag limits, size limits, season closing, proper law enforcement of existing regulations, and other methods are preferred over closing areas. Once an area is closed, it is rarely reopened. If an area is closed, the adjoining areas will be overfished.

Another complaint that was voiced at my table was the make-up of the SAC. If recreational fishing accounts for \$500 million dollars for the local economy and commercial fishing only contributes \$57 million, why are there only two (2) recreational fishermen seated on the SAC Fishing Group Advisors but eight (8) non-recreational members? There are no members on the Sanctuary Advisory Council from Key Colony Beach and only four (4) members from Marathon as oppose to thirty-six (36) persons residing in other towns throughout the Keys. It is difficult to believe that Marathon and Key Colony will be truly represented and will be treated fairly given this limited representation.

We still have not received credible and understandable explanations to the following issues and questions:

- What exactly was the “stepwise process to identify and map this broad set of preliminary ideas about modifying or adding zones”.
 - Why were the meetings scheduled at a time when 80-85% of the recreational fishermen are not present in the Keys to provide their input?
 - What are the goals of the SAC, EPWG, and the FKNMS in regard to fishing? What species are being targeted and have other methods of conservation been considered other than closing areas to recreational fishermen. Will any new regulations apply to both commercial and recreational fisherman?
- How about divers, snorkelers, spear fishermen, lobster fishermen, etc?

There is another SAC – EPWG meeting scheduled for Monday September 30th between 9:30AM and 4:00PM. The purpose of this meeting at the Marathon Garden Club, as far as I can understand from the agenda on the “website”, is for the EPWG to review all the public comments and input gleaned from the public at the meetings this week and to then make their recommendations to the SAC. The public will be allowed to address the Council and EPWG for twenty (20) minutes at 11:00AM and thirty (30) minutes at 2:00PM. Some of us will be attending public input parts of the meeting. If you are presently in KCB or Marathon, please consider joining us. I intend on formally requesting the agencies postpone any recommendations until additional public input meetings can take place in the winter when the vast majority of recreational fishermen have returned to the Keys.

Again, I remind you that these opinions are not solely my own, but are echoed by several members in attendance.

I want to thank all of our members who attended last Monday night’s meeting and thanks to all the members who showed support by emailing the SAC. We need every member to do the same no matter what your view of these developments. It is not too late to get involved.

Best regards,

Commodore Bill Knickman