

***FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL***

**61 Hawks Cay Boulevard Duck Key, FL 33050  
Tuesday, April 16, 2013**

**FINAL MINUTES**

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council met on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, in Duck Key, Florida. Public Categories and government agencies were present as indicated:

**Council Members**

Conservation and Environment: Ken Nedimyer (Chair)  
Conservation and Environment: Chris Bergh (Vice Chair)  
Boating Industry: Bruce Popham  
Citizen at Large – Lower Keys: David Hawtof  
Citizen at Large – Middle Keys: Dolly Garlo  
Citizen at Large – Upper Keys: David Makepeace  
Diving – Lower Keys: Don Kincaid  
Diving – Upper Keys: Rob Mitchell  
Education and Outreach: Martin Moe  
Elected County Official: George R. Neugent  
Fishing – Charter Fishing Flats Guide: Richard Grathwohl  
Fishing – Charter Sports Fishing: Steven Leopold (Absent)  
Fishing – Commercial – Marine/Tropical: Ben Daughtry  
Fishing – Commercial – Shell/Scale: Jeff Cramer  
Fishing – Recreational: Jack Curlett  
Research and Monitoring: David Vaughn  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: Jerry Lorenz  
Submerged Cultural Resources: Corey Malcom  
Tourism – Lower Keys: Clinton Barras  
Tourism – Upper Keys: Andy Newman

**Council alternates** (present)

Boating Industry: Ken Reda  
Conservation and Environment: Jessica Pulfer  
Citizen at Large – Upper Keys: Suzy Roebling  
Diving – Lower Keys: Bob Smith  
Fishing – Commercial – Marine/Tropical: Linda Kruszka  
Fishing – Commercial – Shell/Scale: Justin Bruland  
Research and Monitoring: Art Itkin  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: Pete Frezza  
Submerged Cultural Resources: Diane Silvia  
Tourism – Lower Keys: Joe Weatherby  
Tourism – Upper Keys: Eric Handte

**Agency Representatives**

Florida Department of Environmental Protection: Joanna Walczak

FWC Division of Law Enforcement: Capt. Pat Langley, Dave Dupri  
FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute: John Hunt (Absent)  
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service: Lauren Lugo (Absent)  
NOAA Office of General Counsel: Karen Raine (Absent)  
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement: Kenneth Blackburn, John O'Malley  
Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Park: Tracy Ziegler  
U.S. Coast Guard: LCDR Michael Capelli  
U.S. EPA: Pat Bradley  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuges of the Florida Keys: Nancy Finley  
U.S. Navy: Ed Barham

## **I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL OF 12/11/12 DRAFT MEETING NOTES**

### **MOTION (Passed)**

Motion to adopt the agenda was made by Chris Bergh, seconded by Bruce Popham.  
No changes or objections to the 2/19/13 minutes were made.  
The chair declared the minutes approved.

Agenda for the meeting was adopted with no changes.

### **Chairperson's Comments**

Ken Nedimyer, Council Chairperson, welcomed everyone, including two new SAC members, Ken Reda, Boating Industry-Alternate and Linda Kruszka, Fishing, Commercial, Marine/Tropical, Alternate. He also explained the procedures for making public comment.

Superintendent Morton recognized the new manager of the Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Nancy Finley.

## **II. MARINE ZONING AND REGULATORY REVIEW – WORKING GROUP REPORT OUT (DISCUSSION – POTENTIAL ACTION ITEM)**

For working group meeting notes, presentations and draft recommendations, visit the sanctuary's website: <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/workgroups.html>.

### **1. Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection**

Mr. Jack Curlett, working group chair and SAC Fishing-Recreational member, provided a presentation on the objectives and progress made by the Shallow water working group after four meetings. To view this presentation, visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/130416swupdateforsac.pdf>

Meetings will be held on April 30, May 21, and June 11 at Marathon Garden Club.

In response to a question about temporal closures, Jack confirmed that the shallow water working group had discussed temporal closures to be used essentially as seasonal closures for bird nesting and similar activities.

### **2. Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration Working Group**

Ken Nedimyer, working group chair, SAC Chair and Conservation and Environment Representative, provided a presentation on the objectives and progress made by the coral reef ecosystem restoration working group. To view this presentation, visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/130416erupdateforsac.pdf>.

Meetings will be held on May 1, May 22, and June 12 at Marathon Garden Club.

Draft recommendations from these two working groups will go before the SAC by the July 9 meeting.

3. Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves, Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection Working Group (aka Ecosystem protection working group)

Mr. Chris Bergh, working group chair, SAC Vice Chair and Conservation and Environment Representative, provided a presentation on the objectives and progress made by the Ecosystem protection working group after having met two times. To view this presentation, visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/130416erupdateforsac.pdf>.

Meetings will be held on May 2, May 23, and June 13, July 11, and July 29 at Marathon Garden Club.

Mr. Bergh noted that the ecosystem protection working group had reached consensus to consider all of the area not inside current or potential future zones as a general use or multi-use zone.

### **Discussion**

Chairperson Nedimyer reminded everyone the advisory council identified zoning goals two years ago. Resource protection is an important part of this process. Difficult decisions will be made and it is important to keep the big picture in mind and meet the challenge. Recommendations will be made using the best available science.

Council comments focused on the need to ensure the public and constituents are informed about and involved in this process. The council should promote engagement by the public and media. The sanctuary uses many tools to reach out to the public about the meeting dates and times and topics to be covered. The sanctuary uses its website, Facebook, live radio broadcasts and other media to communicate about meetings. Information for the process as a whole and for each individual working group can be found on the Sanctuary website:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/welcome.html>

Council recognized that the marine zoning effort is a public process and is not controlled by the government. Members of the advisory council asked the sanctuary to conduct this review and the process is being driven by the public, not the government.

Specific council questions focused on the need to review specific restrictions in SPAs including the baitfishing exemption.

Billy Causey made reference to the Tortugas 2000 process noting that this effort is following a similar format. This effort is collaborative and information is being shared throughout the process. He recommends trying to involve people if they have a concern or complaint. Experts in oceanography were really helpful in the Tortugas process and directed the placement of zones. Both Western Sambo and Tortugas Ecological Reserves are on the edge of the Pourtales and Tortugas Gyres, respectively, and this information was used to decide the location of the reserves.

### **III. Public Comment for Items Not on Agenda**

Tim Grollimund, Diver, Columnist

- Mr. Grollimund stated that he appreciates the opportunity to participate in the process. Recently in regards to one of his newspaper columns, he heard from a fisherman who was misinformed about the zoning process and was very unhappy about things. He invited him to come to the working group meeting and SAC meeting to learn more about what is taking place. It is very important to educate people on the topics and management options being discussed.

Peggy Matthews, American Watercraft Association

- Ms. Matthews expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to speak. Years ago, she was involved in water quality protection program management plan. She thinks the sanctuary's website as a resource for marine zoning working groups is wonderful and she uses it all the time for meeting minutes and materials. Her only comment is in reference to the shallow water notes where the notes mention accepting the review criteria in a particular table, but the notes don't clearly state what the criteria are and those kinds of details would be helpful for people trying to follow this process long distance. She appreciates everyone's time working through this process.

Richard Grathwohl, Marathon Guides Association

- Richard emphasized the need for the SAC's involvement with Everglades ecosystem restoration. As a representative for flats guides, the lack of involvement in the Everglades management plan at this time is a huge mistake for a concerned group of citizens. All groups within the restoration working groups depend upon water flow into the east Everglades and through Taylor Slough. The history of the council's involvement in this issue is a long one and now is not the time to pull away from these issues. The *Tropical Connections* book shows the importance of water flowing into eastern Florida Bay and the dependence of the Keys on this system. The inaction that has been taking place in terms of restoring water flows has benefited some people, but not Florida Bay. Now it is time to act within the advisory council. FKNMS should be a leader in keeping federal, state and local governmental officials informed regarding Everglades restoration and how it might impact the Florida Keys. He asks why so much money, time and effort would be spent on a management plan if we are not addressing one of the main impacts on water quality of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

### **IV. MARINE ZONING AND REGULATORY REVIEW – EDUCATION, OUTREACH AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES (DISCUSSION – POTENTIAL ACTION ITEM)**

Mary Tagliareni FKNMS Deputy Superintendent for Education & Operations

Ms. Tagliareni provided a presentation about the education and outreach program in the Florida Keys, with special emphasis on addressing comments made in the marine zoning public scoping comments document. To view this presentation, visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/130416fknmseducation.pdf>.

## **Discussion**

Council comments focused on the need for additional education and outreach if new zones are created through the marine zoning and regulatory review process and the means and possibility of measuring the effectiveness of education programs and materials. In response, Mary explained that it is difficult to separate out the factors that affect behaviors in many cases. For example, better education and channel marking may both contribute to reduced grounding incidents, but it is difficult to measure the effects of each one separately. Superintendent Morton noted that there are some formal socio-economic studies that quantify changes in attitudes over time.

Additional information on Dolphin Smart and Blue Star, Blue Rider programs were noted:

- Nicole Vasilaros (National Marine Manufacturers Association): In response to a question about the Blue Rider program, she noted that there are 13 voluntary companies participating in Key West.
- Billy Causey: The dolphin issue was the topic of discussion at a SAC meeting several years ago (operators getting too close to dolphins). Sanctuary management could have taken emergency actions to address these certain dolphin operators. Instead, the SAC took the approach of creating this voluntary program called Dolphin Smart and it worked well to achieve the endpoint. Self-regulation can be a very useful thing and many industries will regulate themselves. The SAC has made a lot of progress in the area of personal watercraft since it first voted to ban them in the sanctuary years ago and have developed a good relationship with PWC industry.
- Karrie Carnes, Sanctuary Communications Coordinator: The sanctuary is working to get “Waterways” distributed nation-wide and has a YouTube channel that features “Waterways” and makes these sanctuary television episodes readily available. Visit the channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/WaterwaysTVShow>.

No formal recommendations were made, but the importance of sanctuary education programs was recognized. Superintendent Morton added that education was a topic in the scoping comments. Many education and outreach materials will need to be updated as a result of any potential marine zoning changes.

## **V. ISLAMORADA VILLAGE WATER QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE – HORIZONTAL DIRECTIONAL DRILLING PROJECT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Greg Tindle, Wastewater Program Manager, Village of Islamorada

Mr. Tindle described the horizontal drilling project for Islamorada. In the north part of Islamorada, wastewater treatment has been in place since 2007. To complete the rest of the upgrades, the village took a design/build/operate approach and signed a contract with Reynolds Water of Islamorada. They were given a notice to proceed in 2012 and a mandate to finish the system by December 2015. The schedule is tight. Another decision was made to send effluent for treatment to Key Largo. The partnership agreement was signed in 2012. The approach will reduce the operating cost for both Key Largo and Islamorada.

The Islamorada system will be a low pressure system, but pump stations will be used where needed. Middle Plantation Key is under construction now. Pipelines in Key Largo are being installed. Channel crossing to carry effluent to Key Largo will be made by drilling under the channel itself. The work will start in July and run through May of 2014. Pipelines to meet Key Largo pipes are

being installed. Water quality testing was done through a water quality advisory committee in the past and they may reinstate that testing program. New data could be compared with these baseline data.

Don Eckler with Eckler engineering/ Reynolds Water Islamorada and Project Consultant Sandra Walters were present to address the council. Mr. Eckler explained that horizontal drilling is similar to drilling oil wells going horizontally, instead of vertically. The pipe will be forty feet below surface of the rock under the water. The work will start in July and will take a year to complete wells going across 7 channels. In this process a hole is drilled in the from one island and run under the channel and comes up on the adjacent island and then pipeline is pulled through the hole. This high density pipe with thick walls will transport wastewater to Key Largo. The system will minimize potential damage to the environment with safeguards and procedures in place to minimize damage. It is better to use this underwater/underground approach compared to hanging the pipe from the bridge. The pipe is inert and won't be degraded by salt water or wastewater.

Ms. Walters addressed the council regarding this procedure. She noted that Superintendent Sean Morton's experience with this kind of technology was very helpful when the company was undergoing the permit process with the sanctuary. She gives credit to the design team because through their planning, they were able to avoid impacts to all wetlands or other habitat from large equipment being staged in those areas. This project involves drilling 40 feet below the surface. This drilling technology in Florida has a good track record and she is confident that the contingency plan and procedures will go smoothly.

The Islamorada team would also be happy to give presentations to other groups. They are focused right now on reaching involved residents.

## **Discussion**

### **Emergency Procedures and Frack-outs**

Ms. Walters answered a question about the toxicity of the mud being displaced by the pipe. This mud/clay is bentonite and if it were to be released into the water column it would create a turbidity issue, not a toxicity one. The contingency plan is very extensive. Throughout the drill, the fluid pressures are monitored closely and any drop in pressure triggers looking more closely at the situation to make sure a frack-out (accidental release of drilling mud) is not occurring. The plan specifies that an environmental specialist be on the job during the drilling and monitoring the process. If a frack-out occurs, the appropriate agencies will be notified immediately. If this event affects the sanctuary bay bottom, they will immediately coordinate with sanctuary staff and dive team to find where it is breaking out and determine appropriate process for cleanup. If something happens, the pressure of the drill will be stopped immediately. Vacuum equipment will be available at all times onsite for clean-up and if damages do occur compensation will be made.

### **Pipe Construction and Drilling Operations**

The transition from the horizontal pipe up to the land is made by a narrower PVC pipe installed at an angle of about 10 degrees to meet the horizontal pipe. The horizontal pipe is high density polyethylene, which is very inert to wastewater and saltwater. Maintenance will be done regularly on the pipeline to avoid the possibility of solid build-up and the flow will not slow down due to the vacuum pumping system. The drill operator and horizontal drilling company are very aware of the many voids in the rock that exist and as a precaution drill pressure will be kept at the minimum

necessary for drilling and be watched constantly so that the pressure can be dropped if a void is encountered.

## **VII. EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (DISCUSSION – POTENTIAL ACTION ITEM):**

Fred Herling, Supervisory Park Planner, Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks  
Dan Kimball, Park Superintendent

### **Superintendent Dan Kimball**

- This is the first General Management Plan (GMP) for 34 years and has taken 10 years to develop. Seven meetings have been held by the park already to receive input on the plan and a meeting will be held tonight in Marathon and in Key West tomorrow evening. The comment period closes on May 12.
- Protection of Florida Bay from boating impacts is of concern to this group and is a real challenge. In 1977, Congress took additional action to protect the bottom of Florida Bay under the authority of the federal Wilderness Act designation. It is the only submerged Wilderness in existence.
- The park has been involved in Everglades ecosystem restoration efforts. The Tamiami Bridge and C-111 projects are designed to increase freshwater flows into the park. The Central Everglades Planning Process (CEPP) will bring more water to the central everglades in the future. An underground seepage barrier was built by the rock miners (as mitigation) and will help reduce seepage from park lands.
- The EPA and State of Florida entered into a settlement restoration strategy so that money is available to treat water coming south from agricultural lands. Only clean water will be entering the system and bay.
- The park is also engaging in a boater education program and other ways to reduce prop scars and implementing a zoning plan. Areas that are two feet deep are proposed to be Pole and Troll Zones (PTZs). It has been a challenge to offer reasonable access to the bay while still protecting the wilderness bay bottom. The park has had meetings with guides and recreational anglers to discuss access issues and identify solutions that protect resources and address access. This is a draft plan and the park is listening to the comments from the public.
- It is unfortunate timing to have the plan released around sequestration because the park has additional resource needs related to implementing the plan. There are positive things in president's budget, but additional cuts are planned for next year. Budget realities may force the park into a phased approach of this plan; feedback on what part of the plan will be implemented first will be helpful when making decisions. Needs include a stand-alone education program and the creation of an advisory committee, something like the SAC, for marine issues. The park is interested in recommendations on how to structure this body.

Park Planner Fred Herling provided a presentation on the general management plan for Everglades National Park. The plan can be found at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/EVER>, select open to submit a comment. To view the presentation made by Mr. Herling, visit <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/130416npsgmpforsac.pdf>.

### **Discussion**

#### **Access Issues and GMP Process**

Council comments focused on the poll and troll zones. Guides and other users are concerned about access issues and the time needed to reach desired areas. Superintendent Kimball stated that there are deeper areas that are currently inside some of the zones and would be accessible. The park is listening to users and looking at areas to provide additional access while still protecting the resources. There may be places where the park can consider a mix of poll and troll and idling.

Park Planner Fred Herling added that at the suggestion of guides, the park is looking for deep water areas that are suitable for idling and some may exist in the western bay. The park is looking at how seasonal changes in water levels might affect plans for access. The final EIS will be issued and comment will be taken for 30 days before a record of decision is issued.

Superintendent Kimball stated that the park is cognizant of the access and time issue for guides and other park users and possible economic consequences, and is dedicated to finding ways to provide reasonable access. The park is managed using an adaptive management approach. In the future, for example, an advisory committee could provide recommendations/changes for park managers to consider. The park has heard that the socioeconomic evaluation in the draft EIS was not as thorough as it should be, but this will be addressed in the final EIS.

### **Changes Expected with Restoration of Florida Bay (fisheries and water quality)**

Changes in Florida Bay are expected to occur with more water coming into the system as part of Everglades restoration. Superintendent Kimball noted that Everglades restoration is an experiment itself and as more water enters the system, managers will also have to deal with sea level rise. Restoration of the bay through increased flows should have beneficial effects on fish populations, which should benefit fishing guides and may mean that they don't have to poll as far to reach fish. Fisheries will be monitored to track any changes with restoration actions.

Concerns were expressed about the quality of the new water that will be entering the Everglades system. The park has a consent decree with FDEP and EPA and Superintendent Kimball receive compliance reports on a quarterly basis regarding water quality. Phosphorus is the big concern and is the limiting nutrient. Right now it is difficult to bring more water into the park and still meet the strict phosphorus standards. The Everglades strategies program will have stormwater treatment and other features to improve water quality, but won't be coming online for another 10 years. In the meantime, managers are trying to bring more water into the park and stay within the nutrient limits.

### **Monitoring of Everglades Restoration**

An extensive monitoring program to track changes with restoration of wetlands and Florida Bay is in place for Everglades National Park and park staff is working closely with South Florida Water Management District. If there are deleterious effects (phytoplankton blooms) in Florida Bay with restoration that in turn affect the Keys marine environment, adjustments can be made in the system. A few years back, they were beginning to find endosulfan in Florida Bay from the agricultural fields and now that has been banned from use in the U.S. due to its deleterious effects.

### **Wilderness Act Designation of Florida Bay bottom**

The 1964 Wilderness Act has rigorous requirements associated with it and lands designated as wilderness such as the interior wetlands of Everglades National Park are expected to have no signs of humans. In terms of Florida Bay, the 1978 law that established the Everglades National Park wilderness, designated the bottom as submerged marine wilderness that has protections from

mechanized and motorized impacts. However, since the water column is not wilderness, people are allowed to use motorized vessels in the bay (so long as they don't damage the bottom habitat).

## **Break**

### **VIII. Public Comment for Items Not on Agenda**

Peggy Matthews, representing Monroe County

- Peggy Mathews explained that Mayor Neugent had to leave so she is relating this information regarding the BP oil spill money, which will be distributed to the 23 counties that border the Gulf of Mexico. The distribution of this money is managed by a consortium consisting of one representative from each county. The next consortium meeting will be in Key Largo on May 16 with a reception on the evening of May 15. Businesses or organizations can be a sponsor of the consortium and have a display exhibited at the reception and during the meeting. The price to be a sponsor is \$500. Contact George Neugent for more information on being a sponsor.

Nicole Vasilarus, National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA)

- In regards to any boater education requirements, NMMA is a big proponent of boater education and supports the Florida boater education requirement. But the organization does not support creating a bifurcated system where there is a state level requirement and a separate sanctuary specific boater education. It doesn't matter whether a license or permit is involved; such measures are a big inhibitor to access. This is especially true in an area where tourism is prevalent and people are coming from elsewhere. The NMMA does support boater education without a mandated requirement. This educational information could be contained in materials or be tied to a fishing license or boating license that is already required.

### **MOTION (Passed)**

Pete Frezza drafted a resolution supporting the park's GMP. Input on the resolution was provided by Richard Grathwohl, Chris Bergh, Jack Curlett and Jerry Lorenz.

Jerry Lorenz made the motion; seconded by Richard Grathwohl. The motion is posted at <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/130416resolutionnps.pdf>.

### **Discussion**

The following points were made about the resolution that supported the Everglades National Park's GMP.

- At this time, if the council endorsed the draft plan, it would be endorsing a plan without knowing its final details because public comments are still being taken on the plan.
- It might be best to let the park go through the comment period and develop a new plan before endorsing it.
- This meeting is the last meeting before the end of the comment period and the resolution does support the park's efforts in seeking input from fishing guides and recreational users on access issues.
- This final plan could have the deeper areas near and inside of poll and troll zones suggested by the guides, if the park deems them not likely to damage the wilderness sea bottom.

### **Roll Call Vote on Resolution**

**Motion passed;** 15 in favor, 1 opposed

### **IX. MARINE PORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SAC REPRESENTATION (ACTION ITEM):** Rich Jones, Monroe County Marine Resources Office

Rich Jones explained that he serves on the Marine Port and Advisory Committee. All committee members are appointed by the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Recently, the committee has been revamped somewhat and reduced from ten to seven committee members, with one seat specified to be taken by a FKNMS SAC. He is charged by the BOCC to seek a nomination for the SAC seat. The advisory council representative will work with marine resource staff on marine matters and provide recommendations on issues involving anchoring and mooring, access ramps, sewage and pumpout services, special projects, etc. A specific description of committee member responsibilities was created to clarify the role of members. Meetings are held in Marathon (4 times per year, first Tuesday of every other month) and the appointment term is for four years. Chairperson Nedimyer called for a volunteer from the council. Dave Makepeace agreed to serve in the Marine and Port Advisory Committee until the end of his SAC term, which is 1.5 years of the typical 2 year SAC seat. His nomination will go before the BOCC in June.

### **X. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT, & AGENCY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:** DEP, FWC, NOAA NMFS Southeast Region, NOAA OGCES, NOAA OLE, NPS, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, and U.S. Navy

#### **NOAA/Sanctuary Report, FKNMS Superintendent Morton**

- The Islamorada horizontal drilling project was just permitted and there will be other permits from pipe crossings in the future. If anyone is interested in hearing about them in advance, let the sanctuary know.
- The sanctuary has experienced a shift in staffing priorities to meet needs for marine zoning and regulatory review.
- Congress passed the 2013 budget. The appropriated funds for the FKNMS have been reduced 15% from last year. Last week, the president released the 2014 budget, which also had cuts at the ONMS level. NOAA has instituted a hiring freeze and travel restrictions are in place. Federal workers may have to take four days of furlough.
- The full impacts of these budget cuts are not known at this time, but programs and probably the zoning review will be affected. Superintendent Morton's travel to Tallahassee to keep state partners informed about the marine zoning process will likely be affected.

#### **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Report, Joanna Walczak**

- Since 2004, the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) has been working on reefs in the northern area from Biscayne National Park to St. Lucie County. Information has been collected on the location, condition and health of reefs in this area. A group of stakeholders similar to the advisory council is in place to provide advice to SEFCRI on resource issues.
- On behalf of SEFCRI, Joanna is happy to announce the launch of the Our Florida Reefs: Your Voice, Our Future process. This is a transparent stakeholder-driven process to achieve the mission of SEFCRI, which is to implement strategies to preserve coral reefs, emphasizing the balance between use of and protection of coral reefs in cooperation of all interested parties.

- The process will be similar to the one the sanctuary is currently undergoing. Public meetings will be held on the following dates in the following counties: June 5, Martin County; June 12, Palm Beach County; June 19 Broward County; June 25 in North Miami-Dade and June 26 in South Miami-Dade. In the summer and fall, working groups will be created to give feedback to FDEP coral program with management recommendations. More information will be provided in the future.

#### **FWC, Division of Law Enforcement Report, Capt. Dipre**

- Vessel *Peter Gladding* is being repaired. Even so, FWC officers are still out making cases in the Tortugas, Marquesas and elsewhere using the smaller vessels. FWC officers in Key West made two huge cases in one day: one for illegal harvest of sea turtles and the other for the numerous fishing violations. *Gladding* is expected to be up and working soon.
- May through July is spawning season for mutton snapper and they are fished hard at this time. FWC will be doing reef-line patrols at night and early morning to check for overfishing and undersized fish.
- FWC will be replacing fishing signs on bridges throughout the Keys. The size and bag limits will not appear on the new signs, but will help identify fish species and provide websites for specific fishing regulations. A suggestion was made to use smart phone technology to convey the internet URL from signs, etc.
- FWC and FDEP enforcement merged about a year ago and FWC is now the law enforcement branch for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Environmental investigators have been folded into FWC and are now being tasked to train FWC about enforcement of FDEP regulations regarding mangrove trimming, environmental spills, etc. FDEP will still be handling the civil violations; FWC will handle criminal ones.
- A question was asked about a derelict vessel visible from the highway. FWC is investigating the incident and working with Monroe County to remove it.

#### **NOAA Office of General Council Report, Karen Raine**

- No report.

#### **NOAA National Marine Fisheries Report, Lauren Lugo**

- No report.

#### **National Marine Sanctuaries/Southeast Region Report, Billy Causey**

- No report.

#### **NOAA OLE Report, Kenny Blackburn and John O'Malley**

- Officer Blackburn reported that he and Officer O'Malley are criminal investigators for NOAA, specifically for the National Marine Fisheries Service. Cases are based on the priorities for law enforcement set by Office of Law Enforcement. Sustainable fisheries and sanctuary are high priorities for cases.
- All criminal cases go to Department of Justice in Miami or NOAA General Council, Karen Raine. The officers keep a case load of about 10-15 cases at a time. Most are ongoing and can't be discussed, which is why they often can't report details at advisory council meetings.
- Recently, some information released by them was reported in the newspapers. One case involved the illegal harvest and sale of nurse sharks and another involved the illegal sale of lemon sharks and eagle rays to an aquarium. One investigation often leads to another as information is uncovered.

#### **FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) Report, John Hunt**

- No report.

### **USFWS Report, Nancy Finley**

- No report.

### **National Park Service (NPS) Report, Tracy Ziegler, NPS**

- The Tamiami trail new bridge is an amazing accomplishment for Everglades National Park.
- The park has two more public meetings on the GMP.
- Biscayne National Park has a new superintendent, Brian Carlstrom.
- Two parts of the Research Natural Area science plan for Dry Tortugas National Park have been implemented recently. One involves a creel survey, which involves interviewing fishermen on fish sizes and species to gauge fishing pressures inside the park. The other involves a social science survey being implemented to ask visitors about their experience in the park.

**Superintendent Kimball** added that on behalf of the park, he is very appreciative of the support given to the GMP by the council and is supportive of the caveats that are part of the resolution the SAC passed. The council has his commitment on following through on these. He also invited any one to meet with him individually on the plan.

### **US EPA Report, Pat Bradley, EPA**

- The following announcement was made regarding the Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP) from EPA, Region IV. The WQPP agreed at its February steering committee meeting to work with NOAA to address the water quality public comments made as part of the marine zoning and regulatory review scoping process. The WQPP will work to evaluate and respond to public comments. The responses will be presented at the July 10 steering committee meeting for approval before forwarding to NOAA. Chris Bergh added his support for this approach.
- The EPA Office of Research and Development is working on a remote sensing water quality research project with Florida Wildlife Research Institute, University of South Florida and NASA. Hopefully, budget cuts will not impact the project; more will be known about the status of this project by the next meeting.

### **United States Coast Guard (USCG) Report, LCDR Michael Capelli**

- In this time of sequestration, the coast guard has had to cut out some extras, including training, but they are not under a hiring freeze. Recently, they hired a commercial fishing vessel examiner who will be covering the Keys and Miami sectors.
- Sand Key Light protects the reef; but the light went out 3 months ago. A temporary light has been placed on the base, but the structure is not safe now. Sanctuary divers are diving today to find locations for its positions.
- Since the last report, there have been 45 reports of pollution in the Keys that were responded to by the coast guard/auxiliary.
- Since last meeting, guard worked with National Park Service to stabilize a buoy that broke free.
- As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, Cuba will not be drilling for oil any longer.

A question was asked about the future of the Sand Key structure. LCDR Capelli stated that it can be taken over and maintained if someone wants to do that. Otherwise, it must be removed and disposed of properly. Even if it is listed on the national historic register, someone will still need to pay for it.

Superintendent Morton added that this will be the case for all lighthouses that are being removed in the Keys.

**US Navy (USN) Report, Ed Barham, USN**

The Navy is also under sequestration and at this time does not have money for environmental projects. They will be conducting a spill drill next week with their fuel provider to be better prepared for such an incident.

**XI. UPCOMING MEETING AND CLOSING REMARKS**

**ADJOURN**

Chairperson Nedimyer reminded everyone that the next council meeting will be at the Islander, Oceanside Resort in Islamorada. Presentations from the shallow water, coral restoration working groups will be given, along with preliminary recommendations for the council to consider. The SAC will also hear from Jessica McCawley, Director of Division of Marine Fisheries Management and Roy Crabtree, Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service. A discussion user fees and alternative funding sources will also take place

Meeting Adjourned 4:14.