

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

***City of Marathon Council Chambers
9805 Overseas Highway
Marathon, FL 33050
Tuesday, February 21, 2017***

MEETING SUMMARY

The following serves as a summary of the February 21, 2017 FKNMS Advisory Council Meeting. This summary does not constitute official minutes of the meeting. Draft meeting minutes will be distributed in advance of the April 18, 2017 Advisory Council Meeting for approval by the council.

ONMS Director Remarks

John Armor, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Director, addressed the Sanctuary Advisory Council. He acknowledged the invaluable role that sanctuary advisory council's play in helping ONMS achieve its mission nationally and at each sanctuary site. To guide this mission, ONMS is soon to release an updated draft Strategic Plan for public comment. John provided information on the Administration transition and status of selecting a Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Administrator.

Status and Trends in the Florida Keys

Two presentations were given highlighting the long-term change and current status and trends of biological sanctuary resources. Jim Bohnsack of NOAA Fisheries provided information on fish species and effects of various management regimes including marine reserves. Mark Chiappone of NOVA Southeastern University provided information on benthic species and habitats including coral, sponge, octocoral and algae among others. They both provided insight for management considerations in light of continued impacts from local and global change.

Florida Keys Shallow Water Boating Impact Analysis and Trends Assessment

Pete Frezza, Sanctuary Advisory Council South Florida Ecosystem Member, provided the advisory council updates on an ongoing Shallow Water Boating Impact Analysis and Trends Assessment project. This project is an update to a 1995 project to assess extent and severity of vessel prop scarring in the sanctuary. This project was undertaken to update maps and provide data to inform management of shallow water resources in the sanctuary. A final report should be available this Spring.

Joint Enforcement in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Patrick O'Shaghnessy from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and David Dipre from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission provided the advisory council an update on how the Joint Enforcement Agreement is being implemented in the sanctuary. The JEA integrates sanctuary enforcement priorities into an existing agreement between NOAA and FWC for the enforcement of federal fisheries regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Lacey Act, and Endangered Species Act. They provided updates on funding, personnel hours, and enforcement activities.

Advisory Council Chair Enforcement Letter

The Joint Enforcement Agreement discussion was followed by advisory council action to sign onto an All Advisory Council letter in support of enhanced enforcement in National Marine Sanctuaries and how NOAA can work with local communities to better protect marine and Great Lakes resources. This letter was developed by an Enforcement Working Group represented by a member from each region from among the system's 14 sanctuary advisory councils and is intended for the new NOAA Administrator when appointed. The motion passed unanimously, no public comment was provided.

National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Recreational Fishing Summit & Recreational Charter Fishing Working Group Update

Will Benson, Sanctuary Advisory Council Fishing – Charter Fishing Flats Guide alternate, provided updates on two activities that he is providing leadership for on behalf of the council. In December, he participated in a two day All Advisory Council Recreational Fishing Summit intended to share information and identify strategies to enhance the relationship with the recreational fishing community. Will noted that FKNMS is taking meaningful action to this end through efforts of the advisory council's Recreational Charter Fishing Working Group. This working group has met and hosted public evening sessions over the last month to develop a framework for a Blue Angling program modelled after the Blue Star program for dive and snorkel operators. Outcomes from this working group will be presented for discussion and potential action at the April advisory council meeting.

Public Comment

Public comment was provided by two individuals:

- Bill Kelly, Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association
- Michelle Robinson, Marine Zoning Works for Me
- Charlie Causey, Florida Keys Environmental Fund
- Gary Jennings, American Sportfishing Association