

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Islander Resort & Conference Center

Islamorada FL

Tuesday, February 17, 2015

MEETING SUMMARY

The following serves as a summary of the February 17, 2015 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 21 Advisory Council Meeting for approval by the council.

Daniel J. Basta, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Daniel J. Basta addressed the advisory council calling on council members to look to the past to help inform the future of the Sanctuary, noting that the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and its advisory council have served as a model for place-based management for the nation and internationally. He reiterated the importance of place-based management and active community engagement in creating the future of the sanctuary and emphasized the essential role the advisory council plays as a creative, adaptive, problem-solving entity at the local level.

Artificial Habitats in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

The advisory council heard from Federal and State agencies about their role in permitting, authorizing, or overseeing the placement of artificial habitats. Agency presenters included FKNMS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Each partner agency provided information on the following:

- Jurisdiction and/or legal authority over placement of artificial habitats in Florida waters.
- Overview of the permitting process as it applies to artificial habitats.
- Standard requirements for artificial habitat permits including specific pre-application requirements.
- Process of agency coordination or consultation when reviewing artificial habitat applications.
- Opportunities for and how the public can provide input during the artificial habitat permitting process.
- Opportunities and challenges in reviewing and considering artificial habitat projects.

The council then heard the perspective of an artificial habitat permit holder who shared information on the process, costs, time-line and reporting requirements of implementing and managing artificial habitats in the sanctuary.

A panel discussion followed on artificial habitat opportunities, needs, and challenges and opportunities for public engagement. Discussion topics included data and information needs,

funding sources, potential permitting efficiencies, role of artificial habitats in the sanctuary and the need to enhance, protect and sustain the natural ecosystem. The council then discussed potential membership, goals, and desired outcomes for an artificial habitat working group, which will be more formally launched at the April 2015 advisory council meeting.

Agency and Permittee Presenters and Panelists included:

- Joanne Delaney, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
- Gletys Guardia-Montoya and Megan Clouser, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Bruce Franck, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Laura Johnson, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- George Garrett, City of Marathon

Public Comment

Three individuals provided public comment:

- Gary Burris, captain and fisherman
- Dottie Moses, President of the Island of Key Largo Federation of Homeowners Associations
- Lee Starling, commercial diver/fisherman

Welcoming new Advisory Council Members

The council welcomed three new members:

- Tad Burke as the Fishing – Charter Fishing Flats Guide member,
- Mimi Stafford as the Citizen at Large for the lower Keys member, and
- Caroline McLaughlin as the alternate for one of the Conservation and Environment seats.