

Public Comment to the Coral Reef Task Force, October 22, 2005
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Thank you for the opportunity to once again give public comment to the Task Force even though we cannot attend the meeting in Palau.

We believe the Task Force has worked and is still working to improve the public comment process and encourage stakeholder involvement.

Unfortunately it is not always the case here in Southeast Florida with SEFCRI.

I had a recent conference call with FDEP staff in Miami about public comment at an upcoming Land Based Sources of Pollution TAC meeting. I was told that if I wanted to give public comment there I must turn in an electronic copy before the meeting and it would be put into the minutes. I explained that I could do that however I may have additional comments after sitting through the presentations at the meeting. I was informed that any additional comments would not be added to the minutes even if I gave her a written copy of it afterwards. They informed me that the purpose of public comment was to provide a time for you to share your coral comments regarding the effect of land-based sources of pollution on southeast Florida's coral reefs with the members of the SEFCRI LBSP TAC. It was not to comment on anything I had seen at the meeting. When I questioned this policy and told them I thought it went against both the Florida Sunshine law and the intent of the Coral Reef Task Force I was informed that this came from the Coral Reef Task Force Charter. I did not believe this since I had given public comment before the task force many times in the past and this was not the policy.

This is an example of the way FDEP has failed to make the process more open to stakeholder involvement. Please see announcement for SEFCRI TAC Meeting attached.

Stakeholder Meetings

We have not had a public stakeholder meeting in a year and they are now saying we may not have one next year or until 2007. It does not seem right that we can appear before the Task Force twice a year to give public comment but not have a public stakeholder meeting in two years with the Local Action Strategy Team. We believe that these public meetings are vital to keeping priority projects on track.

Land Based Sources of Pollution

As LBSP Team Members we worked with the Agencies to develop a list of Priorities. Water Quality and Water Quality Monitoring were on the top of our list. The group was led to believe that the Task Force was informed that this was our priority. We have since found out that it was never officially turned in to the Coral Reef Task Force as one of our priorities. We believe this was a decision made by FDEP. So I officially ask you now to please help us find a way to establish a comprehensive water quality-monitoring program for the Reefs of Southeast Florida. For the following reasons we need a program similar to the one that now exist in the Keys.

Point Source Pollution

Discharge from Point Source such as sewer outfall pipes that pump 300 MGD of partially treated sewage on to reefs of Martin, Palm Beach, Dade and Broward. Some of these discharge pipes are located directly on the reef tract.

Please see Sewer outfall pipes damaging reef

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/southflorida/sfl-psewerpipe16oct16,0,4870802.story?coll=sfla-home-headlines>

As we have learned here in Broward County sewer discharge includes the leachate from our county landfills. We are currently taking leachate from both landfill and incinerator and running it through our sewer plants and discharging it out the Sewer outfall pipe. When we raised this issue at other meetings we are told that they have a pre-treat permit. We have talked to plant managers that said there is no pre-treat process. If this is true it may be a major source of heavy metals and other toxins on the reef tract.

Beach Dredge and Fill Projects

Presently in Broward County we have dredged up sediments directly down current from a sewer outfall pipe and deposited it along miles of beaches as part of a renourishment project, possibly further spreading contaminates. We had asked that this material be tested for heavy metals and contaminates but we do not believe it was ever done.

Cyanobacteria Blooms

We first saw cyanobacteria as a problem down stream of sewer outfalls, however in the last 4 years we have seen Countywide blooms. They seem to be worse at the end of summer when the water gets very warm on the shallow reefs. Recently areas that are not near point -sources of pollution have been affected. This brings into question the impacts of storm and ground water discharge. What impact pumping millions of Gallons a day of partially treated sewage into Deep Wells up and down the coast.

Everglades Restoration

A large volume of water is dumped to tide from the conservation areas along the edge of the everglades. You can go to these spillways and see soap suds floating on the water and some times what seems to be green stringy algae growing in large amounts.

This brings into question the quality of the water flowing out of the Everglades. We are afraid that the Everglades Restoration project has focused on the quality of the water being sent south through the Everglades proper. They have failed to look at the quality of the water being sent east and its impacts to the reefs.

There are strict standards for water being pumped in to the everglades proper we need standards set for water flowing out of the conservation areas to tide.

Some of the richest coral reef resources and most valuable essential fish habitats are along the southeast coast of Florida. Our areas have to be designated as aquatic preserve and become managed areas. There is currently no management plan in place for these reefs. Even though a Social Economic Study of the Reefs of Southeast Florida showed that these reefs generate billions of dollars to the local economy. It shocked everyone to see that these reefs generate more to the local economy then the reefs in the Keys.

For the above reasons we ask the Task Force to delegate someone on your staff to discuss some of these issues. The Southeast Florida Team needs a liaison between the local stakeholders and Task Force who is not a FDEP employee. There is much going on with SEFCRI that we do not have time to discuss in this public comment. We look forward to working with you and your staff to further improve the process.

PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative

The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) Land Based Sources of Pollution (LBSP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be meeting November 16 & 17, 2005 at the Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center in Dania Beach, Florida. The SEFCRI would like to advertise the opportunity for public comment on the first day of the Meeting, November 16, 2005.

The public comment period provides a time for you to share your coral comments regarding the effect of land-based sources of pollution on southeast Florida's coral reefs with the members of the SEFCRI LBSP TAC.

All public comments must be submitted in written format for documentation purposes, and must be provided as an electronic file using standard word-processing software or as an Adobe PDF file.

For those attending the meeting, written comments may be provided in person at the registration desk between 8:30 and 9:00am on November 16. For those who cannot attend the meeting, written comments may be submitted in advance from Friday, November 11, 2005 – Tuesday, November 15, 2005 to the address below.

When submitting public comment, please provide the following information:

Name:

Affiliation:

Contact Information:

Address:

Email:

The full text of all public comments will be catalogued and made available on the DEP Coral website after the meeting. When you submit the text of your comments, please indicate if you grant the TAC permission to post your comments to the public website at http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/past_meetings.htm

Send Advance Public Comments to:

Mail: Cory Marie Naugle

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