

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Marathon Garden Club, 5270 Overseas Highway, Marathon
Tuesday, June 17, 2008**

MINUTES

Members Present

Chris Bergh	David Hawtof
Jeff Cramer	Don Kincaid
Jack Curlett	Jerry Lorenz
Jon Fajans	Martin Moe
Dolly Garlo	George Neugent
Richard Grathwohl	Bruce Popham
Susan Ford Hammaker	Brad Simonds

Alternates Present

Jason Bennis	Bob Smith
David Makepeace	Corey Malcom
Richard Ross	Cal Sutphin
	Scott Zimmerman

Call to Order/Roll Call/Approve Minutes from April 15, 2008 Meeting/Minor Amendments to February 19, 2008 Minutes and March 25, 2008 Workshop Group Discussion Summary/Adopt Agenda for this Meeting/Chairperson's Comments, Introductions--Bruce Popham, Chair

Chair Bruce Popham called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. Commissioner George Neugent moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Jack Curlett. The motion passed unanimously. The minor amendments to the February 19, 2008 minutes and March 25, 2008 Workshop Group Discussion summary, as sent over email to the council, were briefly discussed, and as no objections were noted, were considered approved. No objections were noted on the agenda for this meeting, and it was adopted.

Chair Popham noted there was good publicity in the *Miami Herald* yesterday on the reef and recovery, and included history on Dry Tortugas and establishment of reserves. Ken Nedimyer sent his regrets; he is decompressing from a dive mission. Chair Popham also said Doug Gregory just was recognized by NOAA Fisheries as a national leader in sustainable fisheries. He noted this was well-deserved. Finally, Chair Popham asked if future Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) meeting minutes could highlight action items, and Lilli Ferguson agreed they could. **ACTION ITEM:** SAC Coordinator to highlight action items in SAC meeting minutes.

Later in the morning, Chair Popham added to his remarks that the October SAC meeting will be held at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo. He also thanked the Sanctuary Friends Foundation of the Florida Keys (SFFFK) for providing the refreshments.

Superintendent's Report--CDR David A. Score, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Superintendent, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)

CDR David A. Score, NOAA, Superintendent of FKNMS, recognized the FKNMS volunteer of the year [2007], Jerry Lorenz. CDR Score and Mr. Lorenz went to the recent Capitol Hill Ocean Week in early June. Volunteers from each of the other sites were also recognized; a volunteer out of Monterey, who was instrumental in the response to the Cosco *Busan* oil spill in the San Francisco Bay, received the national volunteer award. They met with Senator Nelson, and had time with Senator Martinez's staff. The agenda that week was geared around climate change and climate issues and it was a successful week. CDR Score mentioned looking forward to hearing from Mr. Nedimyer at the next meeting, as Mr. Nedimyer and Lori MacLaughlin are just coming out of *Aquarius*. ACTION ITEM: CDR Score to ask Ken Nedimyer to briefly report on *Aquarius* mission at August SAC meeting. Regarding the budget, CDR Score said he and Kent Edwards have been trying to keep the lights on and doors open, working with Billy Causey and the headquarters staff. FKNMS is facing pretty serious budget shortfalls, just like the County and other government agencies. There is a 10% drop in funding for planning for next year, and the sanctuaries is planning to be on a Continuing Resolution until a federal budget is passed. FKNMS will need to keep the focus on core priorities and services. CDR Score mentioned Chair Popham represented this group at the national level at a recent meeting of council chairs, to be reported on later. Also, FKNMS is going through a programmatic consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) about *Acropora* and the rules for coral and habitat. It may be that most of what we do down here will be adopted as reasonable measures for protection of the species by NMFS without much adjustment, but FKNMS is still going through the process. CDR Score said the International Coral Reef Symposium is coming up soon, and seven papers will be presented, FKNMS will host some field trips, and Bill Precht will chair a session. CDR Score announced that Leigh Espy has taken a position with the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado (last day July 5); she has been instrumental in many areas, including in the hurricane season, getting buildings set up in Key West, keeping things operating, etc. She was on today's agenda to talk about the FKNMS regulatory update process, but CDR Score will lead that discussion instead. He mentioned there is a 15% increase in visitation at the Eco-Discovery Center.

CDR Score concluded by saying John Hunt asked him to provide some information about the FWC Commission meeting, June 12th in Dania Beach. The Commission directed the FWC staff to come up with some rules related to the release of exotic species and there is likely to be amnesty programs for exotic species, and guidance on how to they should be handled. The Commission discussed what is at stake for wildlife and what can be expected in next fifty years or so years in Florida. They discussed net bans and net-related issues and decided to take no action. Finally, the Commission passed a resolution related to constitutional amendment four, which will help with the 2060 initiative to provide more conservation easements and more strategies about getting more land into public holdings.

Later in the morning, Jeff Cramer asked CDR Score about the potential for President Bush to create another protected area, like he did in the Hawaiian Islands, and wondered if he knew anything about the "Islands in the Stream" becoming a National Monument. CDR Score replied that he heard that it is one of five concepts to go to the President for consideration as a legacy

initiative. If it occurred, he believes it would be protected under an Executive Order and would not a Monument; there are discussions about which agency would be in charge if it goes through. If designated, a public process would be followed to hear from fishing groups, the councils and other public interests. The White House has not made any announcements yet, but the idea is still being considered and so something happening in the Gulf may possibly have a shot. Chair Popham was not sure from what he had heard at the national SAC Chairs and Coordinators meeting if the idea would go through.

Agency Report Highlights:

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report--Kent Edwards, DEP

Kent Edwards announced a new staff member was hired in the sanctuary's lower region; notably, Todd Hitchins has been on the job about a month, running Team OCEAN in the region. Mr. Edwards reported he went to a Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas budget meeting recently, and the state budget is very tight. But, he hopes that, as there is quite a bit of attention in the legislature and in DEP on coastal issues, the sanctuary may get enough recognition to keep the core programs going. He said that the lower region is working on getting the divers back in the water. He encouraged people to look at the web site on the Governor's climate change report for activities that have taken place related to this over the last year. He noted the Florida Forever successor program and money for wastewater improvements in the Keys passed in the legislature. He said the *Vandenberg* is still in Norfolk, Virginia, and the most recent news he has heard is that the organizers still do not have money to complete the project but are still hoping to bring it to the Keys in November. On the hydropower project, Mr. Edwards received another response with additional details, but there are still more questions and some inconsistencies, so he expects another round of responses. Finally, he is working on some U.S. Coral Reef Task Force climate change issues, and so may need to leave the meeting a little early for that.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Report--Major Mike Edwards, FWC

Major Mike Edwards said that he will now be the person representing FWC law enforcement at SAC meetings. There is some oil spill and other training coming up, and most people have done CPR and first aid training. The budget was reduced 12 % from last year. Six new officers were hired for Keys positions; four are now coming to the Keys (one quit and one went to another region). A couple of existing officers in Marathon are leaving to go to a federal agency. The cost of living is high in Monroe County, it is a problem as salaries do not go as far here and the budget does not allow salary increases; the advantage is the people here are dedicated. There were over 350 groundings last year handled by sanctuary staff; some were turned over to other agencies. He provided other statistics on cases. There were some serious accidents, but no fatalities. Major Edwards noted July 4th is coming up, so they are ramping up for that. For mini season people from other parts of the state are coming to assist law enforcement, and FWC will work on expanding some of the efforts started last year. He also mentioned casitas enforcement, marine life rule and regulations issues, and planning for the hurricane season. FWC is a primary response unit to the state and to the U.S. if a major hurricane hits, so there is a plan to move staff as needed to respond. The first phase of removal work has been done at Card Sound, and the work is continuing, working with Miami. Major Edwards stated he did not know if FWC would get additional money for the derelict vessel program; it is still in process. He mentioned the

recent finding of an anchor, which Capt. Laurie Luher said is now being preserved for archeological purposes, and will later be brought back to the Keys for display. It was a good partnership with towboat operators, who called them about it. Major Edwards mentioned working with Kenny Blackburn of NOAA on some cases. He said live rock collection has been closed in some other places in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, which increases the value of the live rock here. Regarding dive accidents, he said there were four serious accidents the officers were engaged in recently. He reviewed the joint enforcement and fisheries agreements with NOAA, and financial support from FKNMS. Operations need to be integrated, and instruction of officers has begun to understand the sanctuary rules and regulations, and there will be a sanctuary logo on all enforcement vessels operating in Monroe County. A full complement of cross-deputized sanctuary enforcement officers will be about 40 people. John Malley was introduced as a new special agent, and welcomed. Karen Raine, from NOAA, who has presented to the SAC previously, was also introduced and welcomed. Don Kincaid asked if there were figures about grounding, and where the people are from, and Capt. Luher responded that about one third are Monroe County residents, while about two thirds are from outside the county. The majority of the groundings are in the upper Keys. There was some discussion about the learning curve for new boaters and licensing and collection of additional statistics about grounding. Richard Grathwohl asked if raising boater registration fees would help FWC, and Major Edwards said yes, it would.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) -- Anne Morkill, USFWS

Anne Morkill reported that the Lower Keys Refuges Comprehensive Conservation Plan is out for comment, with the comment period closing on June 23rd. Some public meetings were held last week, and she encouraged comments from members of the group. She put information with contact information on the handout table for people to pick up. There is a lot of information in the plan on terrestrial habitat management and visitor management and touches lightly on management of waters, which is done with the state and the sanctuary. Chris Bergh asked about interfaces between Wildlife Management Areas and the sanctuary and Refuge, for example, ways of being more adaptive when a bird rookery changes from one "no entry" island to another which has no protection. Ms. Morkill said that is part of the process to revise the backcountry management plan, which was put in place prior to the sanctuary being established. She has had the biologists look at some of those areas and mentioned one site was lost in the hurricanes. They will now review, evaluate and revise areas every five years (which she does not think has happened in the past), and they will also evaluate the areas suggested in the SAC Marine Zoning workshop. She said she can close an area with a notice in the *Federal Register*, so that is one example of being able to be adaptive. CDR Score mentioned the sanctuary, under the Sanctuaries Act, has to follow federal rulemaking, with a public National Environmental Protection Act process, which takes 18 to 24 months. But, the Refuge has other authorities and can act quickly in some areas and cases. Working together, the agencies can use different tools in the tool box to accomplish goals. Mr. Edwards also mentioned how, with consultation, it only took a few weeks to have markers put on Wilma Key. Ms. Morkill said that even though people are not happy, there have been zero enforcement issues. Mr. Kincaid said he thought the tape may have been scaring the birds, and Ms. Morkill said some of the initially-installed stakes, rope and yellow tape were taken down.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)--Patricia Bradley, EPA

Patricia Bradley mentioned she had talked to the SAC before about biocriteria, and said now some people from DEP have been trained in the method. They will be coming to Key Largo to do some diving in July. At the International Coral Reef Symposium, she will be one of two speakers on biocriteria. Her partner in this, working with other collaborators, is The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Mr. Bergh added that TNC is giving EPA coral reef resilience data and the EPA is analyzing it.

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)--Cecelia Weaver, SFWMD

Cecelia Weaver mentioned she missed the last several meetings for personal reasons but is glad to be back. The South Florida environmental report is out, and was provided to the SAC at this meeting. She reviewed some of the items in the plan, including restoration efforts, and said input on it is welcomed. In 2005, the legislature passed two senate bills; the new laws dictate water management districts determine how much water is available for a local government. She mentioned all local governments are completing water supply plans, which are due by August. Typically, South Florida gets a net rainfall of only seven inches due to evaporation, and this year, there was less rain, which affects water levels. Lake Okeechobee is almost four feet below normal, and there is a water shortage. It is important for drinking water and irrigation. The District is trying to move away from being reactive and to implementing various phases of water restrictions. It is moving to a statewide, year-round water conservation ethic for irrigation, which should save 125 million gallons of water per day. The district also is reducing expenditures, and is working on green issues, including a green fleet. Ms. Weaver provided an update of the C-111 spreader canal, which was requested by the SAC Ecosystem Restoration Working Group. There is a Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) meeting today where they will be reviewing projects. The District is committed to expediting the C-111 project and has committed up to \$70 million dollars; the project is expected to start in October 2009. There will be more water going into the slough (19-30% above present day water levels). A final report will be published at the end of June about the Tamiami Trail. The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) recommended a bridge at the east end of the Trail, resurfacing part of the Trail, and a water level increase to Everglades National Park. The project will be bid by the ACOE July 22, with construction to begin by October 2008.

Jason Bennis asked about the agenda for the WRAC meeting, and Ms. Weaver said the C-111 canal would be discussed. He also asked if there would be any meetings/stakeholder workshops, in the Keys. Ms. Weaver said that is a good point. They are formal workshops, and have to be advertised and have a court reporter at them, and are already scheduled and on track. She would be pleased to provide an update on C-111 or the other southern projects at a SAC meeting, rather than hold a separate workshop. She would be happy to pull presenters together. Chair Popham asked Mr. Lorenz if he felt that would be appropriate and he agreed it would. Mr. Bergh mentioned that there would be more discussion during the SAC Ecosystem Restoration Working Group report about the success of topical workshops and interest from the group in having the next one focus on Everglades/Florida Bay issues. So depending on timing, this is consistent with what the Working Group has been talking about. Mr. Lorenz inquired about increased water levels in L-29 from the new Tamiami Trail project, and Ms. Weaver said it would be increased to a maximum of 8 and 1/2 feet. Chair Popham asked if an action item could be included in the minutes to have a follow up report from Ms. Weaver at the next SAC meeting; it was agreed, per

Mr. Lorenz's suggestion, to have further discussion on the topic during the Working Group report, to determine when it might be appropriate. Commissioner Neugent inquired the legislature earmarking money for restoration; Ms. Weaver said it was a significant decrease over previous years. He wondered if she had any feeling about Monroe County getting authorized wastewater money, but she did not know. The District did receive \$100,000 for the Florida Keys Water Resource Initiative.

Public Comment

Martin Moe introduced Hans Hoegh-Guldberg, an Australian who is working in the Keys with NOAA and Bob Leeworthy on a report to show some of the possible futures in the Keys. He has conducted some workshops. Mr. Hoegh-Guldberg said he is involved in a two-year socioeconomic study regarding climate change and other aspects. One aspect is to build up long term scenarios for providing a planning framework. Over 60 people have participated in the Keys workshops, eight of whom are present at this meeting. CDR Score asked when the final report will be delivered, and Mr. Hoegh-Guldberg said it would be September 2009.

Education/Outreach Presentation--Lad Akins, Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF)

Mr. Moe introduced Lad Akins. Mr. Akins has been with Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) since 1990; he has been the Executive Director in the past, and recently became the director of special projects. Lisa Mitchell is the new Executive Director. Mr. Akins said almost everything REEF does is related to education and outreach. The organization is based in Key Largo, and also has an office in Seattle. REEF coordinates fish surveys, does monitoring and assessment work, has an exotic species campaign, and works on spawning aggregation projects, and does a lot of education and outreach. The fish survey, which started in the Keys in 1993, engages volunteer divers and snorkelers to count fish and report to a central database. There are over 120,000 surveys in the database, and the survey data is available on the website. Many papers and projects have used the dataset, including for fisheries independent uses. REEF finished a five year look at the fish community at the *Wellwood* restoration site, has done *Spiegel Grove* artificial reef monitoring and fish recruitment studies, monitoring in Sanctuary Preservation Areas, and just received funding to work on grouper spawning aggregations. REEF volunteers have also helped find new species of fish. REEF's goals include teaching people what is there, where to find it, and how it fits in, as they will help protect the resources. The Great Annual Fish Count (like Audubon's Christmas bird count) takes place in July, and there are typically large turnouts for these events. Each summer, REEF holds a week-long seminar in the summer to learn about different subjects connected to reef ecosystems. REEF also does an annual printed newsletter and monthly electronic newsletters, which include sections on the sanctuary. REEF House, in the Upper Keys, serves as a visitor center, and the Coral Restoration Foundation will soon be sharing office space there with REEF.

Jon Fajans asked Mr. Akins if there had been discussion or development of an invertebrate survey. Mr. Akins said one was developed in the Pacific Northwest. It was implemented the year before last all the way down to California. REEF has not yet had time or funding to develop it for the Caribbean region, but there has been a lot of interest in it. CDR Score noted it is critical to have informed eyes on the water to report back on what is there. Mr. Grathwohl suggested that people who are diving take pictures of anything unusual. Scott Zimmerman asked

if the REEF data is used by NMFS; Mr. Akins said it has been used quite a bit, including for stock assessments. David Makepeace commented that his students go through REEF training every year, and Bob Smith commented that the Florida Keys Community College has also worked with REEF. Both felt it was a valuable experience for their students.

Regulatory Process Update--CDR David A. Score, NOAA, FKNMS

CDR Score reviewed the status of the regulatory update process. The FKNMS staff is rather reliant on the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Policy Planning Branch staff for this work, and there have been a number of meetings with relevant staff members from Silver Spring to look at the categories of items, who could take items on, and strategizing about resources. From 1993-1997 when establishing the regulations that are in place now, it was a full time job for a number of people at FKNMS. There are not too many people right now who have time and interest in doing this. He said there is a need to hear from the SAC about where priorities lie; he thinks he has heard many of the priorities during scoping of the Management Plan, the normal meeting process and the Zoning Workshop. As the process is somewhat resource and staff dependent, and the staff is being asked to do more with less now, he doesn't want to over promise and under deliver. FKNMS has come up with some priorities, and plans to pursue establishment of the no discharge zone into federal sanctuary waters, and attorneys are working with the staff to figure out the process, including if there needs to be a full blown Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. The headquarters staff has accepted it as a priority project. EPA's process was easier; it was established under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act at the request of state. The group working on this is reviewing the EPA process, to see if it can be updated and carried over into federal waters. CDR Score said any draft language on extending the no discharge zone would be brought back to the SAC for comment. *ACTION ITEM*: CDR Score to ensure SAC is provided opportunity to comment on draft, proposed no discharge language, when available, for the federal waters of the sanctuary.

CDR Score also said some work would be done on minor clarifications, updates and corrections of regulatory wording, and that these will be provided to the SAC over emails. One example of this is updating the reference from not approaching dives flags from "100 feet" to "100 yards" in the regulations. *ACTION ITEM*: CDR Score to have SAC provided notices, via emails, of proposed minor regulatory language changes. The FKNMS staff will also be working on related, non-regulatory processes in 2008 that do not involve rulemaking, including exploring current permit mechanisms for best practices in the salvage and towing industry; commenting as part of other agencies' processes for proposed construction projects, rather than issuing a new sanctuary permit; and continuing to track permitted bait fishing and practices in Sanctuary Preservation Areas annually via the SAC working group. That process seems to be working well now, and if there are any actions needed in the future on bait fishing, that group will draft them and will bring them to the SAC. *ACTION ITEM*: CDR Score to ensure SAC is kept updated, as needed, on the status of such nonregulatory processes.

Regarding the recommendations from the marine zoning workshop, in 2008 and 2009, FKNMS science and education staff members will work to publish current condition reports and zone performance summaries, and to do more focused education and outreach on these topics. Scott Donohue added the condition report will probably be available at the beginning of calendar year 2009. Also, the staff is contacting authors who have done any work regarding the sanctuary's

zone monitoring program, and will probably publish information on that in mid 2009. CDR Score said this information is needed for meaningful discussions and for any NEPA documents, and that he is mindful of not going through process for process' sake and would not want to end up with a status quo alternative. He wants to engage the SAC, and national and local planning folks on reviewing and updating marine zoning goals and objectives to determine if they are still the right ones, and to see if there are new proposals regarding zones. He added that other relevant studies include the currently underway socioeconomic studies and a marine zoning report card. In terms of timing, he said that if this all comes together and there are resources, in 2009, FKNMS will go through a full review of zoning, including publishing a public Notice of Intent (likely fall 2009) on the internet and in the *Federal Register*. The process would include public scoping and using previously gathered input. Decision points may vary, as issues may follow different paths. Any new rules would take a minimum of 18-24 months (processes include drafting and publishing regulatory language, public comment periods, review and response to comments, and adopting final rules), if there is headquarters staff commitment to be dedicated to it. It is also useful to have SAC buy-in and recommendations during these processes. He has asked the headquarters staff to find mechanisms to break out Wildlife Management Areas from zoning and they are paying attention to this request as it came from the SAC. CDR Score concluded the SAC will be key to this process in staying plugged in, coming to meetings, getting constituents there, informing constituents and bringing opinions forward.

CDR Score thanked Ms. Espy for her work on the process to update regulations and in providing the background for this report, and noted that Ms. Ferguson will probably be taking a bigger role with this work as Ms. Espy transitions out.

Mr. Zimmerman inquired if FKNMS was wanting to get involved in fisheries management, and also asked when the sanctuary would be announcing closing areas. CDR Score said the sanctuary is not in the fisheries management business, and also, if through the zoning process, sanctuary management felt additional ecological reserves were needed, the staff would need to consult FWC and the Fishery Management Councils (FMCs) every step of the way, with no surprises. In general, FMCs and SACs need to coordinate and communicate more. FKNMS has not proposed any additional closed areas. Mr. Zimmerman noted that socioeconomic effects on communities from proposed sanctuary closures would need to be understood. CDR Score agreed that the impacts would need to be known as some of the strategies for marine zoning could have fisheries benefits. Mr. Zimmerman mentioned he would be happy to bring forward perspectives on proposed closures to any workshops. CDR Score stated he would be more than happy to hear recommendations from commercial fishing representatives and to have those vetted through the SAC, and would feed any such recommendations to the FMCs.

Mr. Cramer said there has been talk about having a SAC working group on coral issues, with Mr. Nedimyer heading it. Some stuff is coming up pretty quick, so it would be good to get that going now. CDR Score said he understood there had been some consultation with Protected Resources folks about the trap fishery, and Mr. Cramer and Mr. Zimmerman said there had. The fishermen may get an incidental take permit for trap fishing, or will need to adjust fishery management practices, in an effort to avoid take. Mr. Cramer said he would try to get in contact with Mr. Nedimyer. CDR Score said Mr. Nedimyer had previously done some work on this. *ACTION*

ITEM: Mr. Cramer to contact Mr. Nedimyer regarding the possibility of having a SAC working group meet on coral regulatory issues.

Mr. Bergh said it could be useful to address the sanctuary interface with councils, FWC and the fishermen as another potential workshop on one day, to be able to fully understand these issues. CDR Score responded that if there are specific questions, there can be a topical meeting, spending a couple of hours on that topic, with specific objectives and outcomes. Chair Popham agreed that it was a good suggestion, and would be good to spend a morning to delve into these things, rather than having a morning with five presentations on different topics.

Water Quality Protection Program Steering Committee Update--Commissioner George Neugent, SAC

Commissioner Neugent announced the tentative next Water Quality Protection Program meeting is scheduled for July 24, 8:30 to 4:30. He and Chair Popham reviewed recent discussions. Per Chair Popham, Fred McManus said technically they don't do approvals of Reasonable Assurance Documents and have passed it on to DEP. Chair Popham mentioned he tried to reach out to DEP, but he has not been able to find out the answer yet. Mr. Edwards had not been at a recent Technical Advisory Committee meeting and also did not know. Commissioner Neugent said some DEP contractors had been making presentations to jurisdictions around the County about going to Reasonable Assurance Documents, and putting regulatory processes in place for achieving water quality standards. This relates to nutrient input to nearshore waters. The county has not yet signed off on it and is still working on some of the details, though Commissioner Neugent would like it to. The City of Marathon and the Key Largo Wastewater District have signed off. There has been some talk, per Commissioner Neugent, that the EPA may not accept it - the Total Maximum Daily Loads and other things are now coming into play. Commissioner Neugent said the Reasonable Assurance Document has not yet been transmitted to EPA. Chair Popham said he had heard from Mr. McManus that all municipalities had signed off on it, except for unincorporated Monroe County. Commissioner Neugent agreed that this was true, and thinks this needs to occur for things to proceed forward. Mr. Edwards said he is hearing some new things and so will find out the status. ACTION ITEM: Mr. Edwards will make some calls and will get an update out to the SAC. Chair Popham concluded by noting that there are three long term monitoring projects, the Little Venice project, coral cover and seagrass, and Mr. McManus said there are some preliminary positive results from water testing at the Little Venice project.

Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA)--Judy Hull, FKSCA

Ms. Judy Hull said the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance is a new group, formed last year, and it builds on the work of an earlier group (Florida Keys Scenic Highway Corridor Advocacy Group) from the 1990s. A scenic highway becomes a corridor, five miles in any direction off the road, and so would include areas of the sanctuary. Previously, the designation of Scenic Highway was received from the Florida Department of Transportation, but the group disbanded, no signs were put up, and nothing happened. Having a National Scenic Byway designation is important for recognition and receiving grants, and another possible, higher designation is "All-American Road". Special highways have byway features that do not exist anywhere the U.S., and are scenic enough to be tourist attractions on their own. To receive the honor, a group has to wait for a call for nomination, and have at least two of six required features. Ms. Hull said her group has been told there will final call for All American Road nominations this summer, then

the designation process will be closed and there will be no more calls. She provided draft language for a resolution to Ms. Ferguson, which can be sent to the SAC if people want it. She said it is important to get local support for this to get the designation; or a letter can be sent supporting national designation. She can be contacted at any time as well, and the group is also collecting memberships. Chair Popham thanked Ms. Hull for the information.

Invasive Lionfish--Lad Akins, REEF

Mr. Akins reviewed the problem of non-native, venomous lionfish in this area. Over twenty different non-native marine fish species have been documented since the mid 1990s from Monroe to Palm Beach Counties. REEF has been working with the University of Washington to try to figure out where they are coming from; there is a low correlation with ship ballast water, and a high correlation with home aquarists. Of the twenty-plus species, the lionfish is the first to become established in the Mid Atlantic; there are two species that can only be told apart through DNA analysis, as they look the same. It is thought that they could be big problem, but there are questions about if there could be trophic impacts, the effect on coral reefs, and the effect on public health. REEF has been working with the sanctuary and other partners, and has been addressing some research questions (about 1000 lionfish have documented in the Bahamas so far), and REEF has asked volunteers to help look for the fish and to report them if found. They went from a few fish in the Bahamas to an infestation within four years, and lionfish are found in a number of Caribbean countries and in the U.S. as far north as New York. They may be in the Keys within the next year. There has only been one study on what feeds on the lionfish. The Marine Ornamental Response Program wants to get all relevant parties talk about and deal with planning for early detection and rapid response, and a meeting is scheduled at the Marathon Garden Club for the two days following the SAC meeting. Right now, people can report sightings (with as much detail as possible, rather than collecting the fish) to a number of organizations, including REEF, the sanctuary, Mote and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Card Sound Road Cleanup Report--John Ricisak, Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM)

Mr. John Ricisak reviewed a recent cleanup that took place in the vicinity of Card Sound Road, in Miami-Dade County, within the sanctuary. DERM has been working with DEP, FWC, FKNMS and a few other agencies to address the long-standing problems there. The area has a long history of illegal activities, including illegal docks and marinas. DERM been trying to approach the problems from several directions, focusing on removal and prevention of several types of marine debris. The first active removal was last December, in which offenders working off community service hours, referred by Miami-Dade police, picked up trash in the mangroves. That effort got rained out after about two hours, but they collected a lot. He mentioned the county has also targeted derelict vessels in the area and has worked closely with FWC enforcement staff members. Approximately 70 derelict vessels have been documented, and they are working to find the responsible parties. Some were found, and some vessels were removed and taken to a landfill. These vessels damage habitat, and many still contain fuel, batteries, etc. Recently, coinciding with DERM's "Baynanza" they had 7000 volunteers at different sites around the county. At Card Sound Road, they focused on derelict trap removal, posting their intentions in the area first, giving people the opportunity to pull traps out first. Quite a few did remove traps, and many crabbers were encouraging about what they were trying to do. Sometimes traps move and scour the bottom, and many of them ghost fish. About 50 volunteers

did the work, mostly using small boats; Peter Frezza and others from Audubon were there. Of 313 traps removed, only one had identification on it. They also pulled out tires and other debris, including gill nets. DERM is following up, and the plan is to take some of the individuals claiming ownership to court. Mr. Ricisak noted he appreciates the FKNMS support, and that he hopes FKNMS and the SAC can continue to support this in the future.

CDR Score said that he understood that Mr. Ricisak has worked with Rich Jones of Monroe County, who was present at the meeting. Mr. Jones said Monroe County has been involved in a similar thing on the Monroe County side on a smaller scale, mostly run by DEP. They had a number of law enforcement officers trying to figure out who the owners were, if things were permitted or not, etc.. Monroe County only had 8-12 derelict vessels in the area, and they are waiting for FWC to tag them, and once the approval is given, the County will remove them. Capt. Luher said she believes they have been tagged. DEP has been doing a lot of the work on compliance issues. Some people there were stealing power, which creates fire hazards and is a felony. The law enforcement officers wanted to catch the people doing illegal activities. She noted that Mr. Ricisak and he team have been working very hard on this and deserve a round of applause.

Mr. Cramer noted that he was upset by the illegal gear, without tags, and wondered if there maybe needed to be a closed season for blue crab. Capt Luher said she would like to work on the gill net issue, and watching to see who would come back to try to claim them. Corey Malcom asked what percent is legal there, and Capt. Luher said 2% (Alabama Jack's is permitted). Mr. Ricisak added that none of it, in Miami-Dade County, was built with any permits. The area has been like that for a long time, but it is a work in progress, and new structures are being built all the time, making it difficult to stay on top of it. But, determining that people do not have ownership is key to the problem. Bill Precht noted many were eradicated by Hurricane Andrew in 1992, and only since then have the structures really built up. Mr. Cramer said FWC has a blue crab advisory board, and bet that if Mr. Ricisak showed them the pictures and suggest a closed season, they would act. Mr. Ricisak agreed that a closed season would be key. Mr. Cramer offered to help him get in contact with people if he needed it. He thinks things would work better if the staff worked with the fishermen toward a solution. Chair Popham thanked Mr. Ricisak and Mr. Jones for their support and help.

National Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting 2008 Highlights-- Bruce Popham, Chair and Lilli Ferguson, FKNMS

Ms. Ferguson shared from her perspective how the national meeting of advisory council chairs and coordinators went. It was her first meeting, and she said it was good to meet her counterparts and the other SAC chairs, and to hear about the different processes and issues in other areas, and thinking about ways to work together in the future. The first day was just the SAC coordinators and some national staff members, and they discussed the logistics of running councils, national issues, planning, products produced such as an annual report provided to members of Congress, and performance measures, among other items. The second day, the chairs were there as well, and there were presentations about the state of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation, and regional case studies. The one for our region was on zoning; some of the others were on oil spill response, a transition in Hawaii from a smaller advisory body to a multi-agency administration

of the Monument, and whales at Stellwagen Bank. Billy Causey solicited the opinions of the sites chairs and coordinators from his region during a regional breakout session, and from that, he said he would like to increase cross fertilization among the regional staff members and the SAC, and among the SACs in the region, resources permitting. There was a field trip and other opportunities for socialization, which allowed participants time to get to know each other in informal settings. On the last day, the presentations were on management plan review, program evaluations, a Korean MPA, and there was an open session with Dan Basta, the head of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

Chair Popham noted only a few of the chairs had been to the meeting in the past, and there were a lot of new people to meet. He mentioned Dan Basta had talked on the theme of "then and now", and that there is a lot to celebrate in terms of how the program has grown. He noted much of the meeting was at the Mariner's Museum, which has a number of Monitor artifacts, including the turret (which was fascinating to see up close--it was designed to have two guns, and to rotate), and a full scale model of the Monitor. The group shared issues they faced, including unfunded mandates and budgets and reaching the public, and but he noted that sometimes issues people suggested he bring forward could not be brought up at these meetings, as the right time and place are needed. He talked to his colleagues about how they reach out to the public, and he was impressed with their efforts; the FKNMS SAC pioneered a lot of the processes mentioned, like the working groups, and in talking with his counterparts, and he thought we are doing the best job out there and there are not any better ideas. The others have similar concerns about things like websites and money - we are all in the same boat, he said. It seems as if the older sanctuaries take a bigger hit with cutbacks, and they have a bigger base of operations, and so are hit harder. There are a lot of things in the sanctuary program that are working, though. Since the Administration will be changing soon, not a lot will be done between now and then. He said that the oil spill in California, described in one of the regional case studies, prompted Barbara Boxer and other politicians to go back to D.C. and put in request to greatly enlarge the area of the affected sanctuaries, which will probably go through. He mentioned that the chairs have an evening where they have dinner with Dan Basta, and one of the topics that came up, for further discussion, was a national advisory council. It had also been discussed a few years ago. Possibly it could be a council comprised of chairs, who could provide input at the national level and have an opportunity to look at what is going nationally, and not necessarily represent the sanctuary. Chair Popham concluded that people are dealing with similar issues; it was inspiring to see who is involved, and it was enlightening and informative.

Public Comment

There was none.

Developing Culture and Reef Restoration Techniques to Conserve Coral Reefs in the Florida Keys--Jack Curlett, SAC (introduction); Dr. Kevan L. Main, and Dr. Kenneth M. Leber, Mote Marine Laboratory

Mr. Curlett spoke as an Ocean Reef Rod and Gun Club representative, and noted the club had raised \$150,000 this past year from 450 members. It was more limited when it was formed ten years ago, so the club has grown a lot. He listed some of the groups and people who had received funds, and said he was pleased to give a continuing donation to Dr. Kevan Main and Dr. Kenneth Leber, both of Mote Marine Laboratory, of \$15,000. Dr. Main said Mote was able to

leverage the money to get additional monies. Mr. Curlett noted the club has provided Mote \$50,000 over four years for coral aquaculture work.

Dr. Main described the program Mote has been working on with this grant money and the money provided by others (including FKNMS and the "Protect Our Reefs" license plate proceeds). Dave Vaughan was not able to be present today, as scheduled. She is the director of the Mote aquaculture park program, and is based in Sarasota. This work is taking place at the Summerland Key lab, and the initial effort was to get the animals (corals) into their land-based culture system. Ninety percent of the species were collected at the Navy wall, and she noted it was thanks to the sanctuary staff that many of the corals were rescued. The purpose of this work is to establish and maintain a seed bank. The corals are collected, named, numbered and tracked, and they are cultured via fragmentation. One thing the scientists are looking at is which corals grow the best in the controlled environment; they are also working to maintain optimal culture conditions, and to develop culture methods that will expand production. They are evaluating growth and survival under varying light conditions. Also, they used to keep brood stock animals with the experimental animals, but now they are doing the growth experiments with just the experimental animals. At this time, they are getting ready to move animals into the field and a number of them are in outdoor raceways. She hopes to be able to expand production at Sarasota into raceway systems. She also mentioned that Mote has funding through the Protect Our Reefs grants to work on *Diadema*, which are critical for the health of the reef, and Mote has partnered with Mr. Moe and Mr. Nedimyer on this. Mr. Moe has 1.3 million *Diadema* growing now. Mote's goal is to move to larger scale production systems when ready.

Dr. Leber talked about *Diadema* stock enhancement, and he said that it is important to take a careful, guarded approach to coral and other stock enhancement when working in the field. The big picture is, do the organisms survive and grow, or is the money being wasted? Also, they want to make sure they are not displacing wild individuals (and the jury is still out on this). They want to make sure it is sustainable over time and economical. He mentioned publishing a paper with others, "A responsible approach to marine stock enhancement", and discussed the potential for staying within the context of a fisheries management plan in developing a sound stocking strategy, if stocking is found to be effective. He mentioned a number of the things he is involved in, and said he is working on pilot studies for releasing *Diadema*, and is working with Mr. Moe and Mr. Nedimyer on aquaculture techniques and experimental reefs. In the first transplant study on optimal release strategies, none of the *Diadema* survived. Through additional study, they have found that the small artificial reefs were not adequate for long *Diadema* releases or long term field experiments, but they are good for some other purposes. Habitat, timing, seasonal effects, etc. all have an impact on *Diadema*. The work is continuing on several scales. Dr. Leber thanked all the funders of the work, including the sanctuary and Mr. Curlett's group.

Commissioner Neugent suggested that if people do not already have the Protect Our Reef plates, they should get one if they can, as it brings money to the community, helps save the reef and protect the resource, and helps promote the sanctuary.

SAC Education and Outreach Working Group Report--Martin Moe, SAC

Mr. Moe reported on the April 29 meeting of the SAC Education and Outreach Working Group, held at the FKNMS Marathon office. Minutes are available from him or Ms. Ferguson. At the

meeting, Glenn Patton and Diana Ruelens reported funding of sanctuary projects, and on a Sanctuary 101 packet of sanctuary education materials the SFFFK had developed, and plans to have a Reef Week April 6-13 2009 to raise awareness and support of coral reefs and the environment. Mr. Moe also mentioned an open house was held at May 24 at the National Weather Service office in Key West, with FKNMS and SFFFK playing instrumental roles. He said the group is still working on its action plan, and that he will put more meat on the bones of the plan before the next meeting, so the group may comment on his suggestions and work on it the next meeting. ACTION ITEM: Mr. Moe to draft more details for the SAC Education and Outreach Working Group action plan and provide a new draft to group members prior to its next meeting. Mr. Moe mentioned that work continues on the electronic inventory of Keys education and outreach organizations that Mary Tagliareni and Mr. Patton have been working on, and that the SAC will hear more about it as it takes shape. The education and outreach activities of the FKNMS staff were reviewed at the meeting by Mrs. Tagliareni; the lobster season will keep staff busy, as always, and she also mentioned the staff's involvement in the NOAA socioeconomic survey. Mr. Moe announced that the National Parks and Conservation Association will be the education and outreach group presenting about their activities at the August SAC meeting. The group also talked about potentially creating guidelines for speakers at SAC meetings and SAC events, tapping into the knowledge of group members and other FKNMS staff members about presentations, to help speakers reach engage and reach the audience better. A plan was not developed yet. Mr. Moe concluded by saying this is still an open area for thinking about and possible development, maybe with the help of others.

Mr. Moe said many people in community don't know what the SAC is or what it does, and that Cal Sutphin would like to address the SAC on this topic. Mr. Sutphin said he has run across many people do not realize they have representation on the SAC, and think the sanctuary is doing whatever it wants. He imagined SAC members as being somewhat like senators with constituents, covering the whole Keys. He applied to be on SAC so he could have better liaison with press. He knows Karrie Carnes and Ms. Ferguson do a good job of getting information to the press, but there is very little public comment at SAC meetings, and he wondered if each member is working with their constituents and passing information back and forth. One idea is that SAC members could speak for five minutes at the various meetings they attend in the community. He offered to be a person that could do this if others not comfortable doing it, to get the word out on what is going on. Mr. Moe said the mission statement refers to the SAC as an interactive liaison, so SAC members have the duty to outreach and bring what the community says to the sanctuary. Mr. Makepeace noted that he serves the same role as Mr. Sutphin in upper keys, and he spends more time explaining what it is he is doing for them than getting any questions. The process works, but it is work to make it happen. He suggested that perhaps, once a year, in one format or another when it is needed, there be some kind of public distribution vehicle (like a Sunday newspaper insert) that brings into focus the role of the SAC and its accessibility. Commissioner Neugent commented that having sat on the SAC for many years, it is kind of nice to have some quiet time, to get over the slings and arrows of previous times. He also equated the SAC to local government; people in the Keys don't like to get involved until the 11th hour of an issue. He added that if there is something controversial on the agenda, we will get some action. Chair Popham said a few years ago it came up as a thought to include the list of SAC members with the meeting notice. Ms. Ferguson said she had mentioned this to Cheva Heck prior to her departure, and Ms. Heck advised that the media would not print that

information, so it would not be worthwhile to send it. She and Ms. Ferguson decided to include a mention of the SAC web page and its listing of members in meeting notices. Chair Popham noted that it is a difficult process, no matter how you do it, to reach the community, so there is a need to figure out better ways to do that. Perhaps have the suggested annual report come from the SAC. He passed along a product from Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary; he understands it is put out periodically, and is funding dependent. CDR Score said FKNMS has had *Sounding Line* over the years. Commission Neugent suggested it may be possible to apply to the local tourist development council provide money to publish a product. CDR Score said he agreed the issues will drive it, along with the intelligence of the people that select members for this group. He said really does rely on the SAC members to know how to reach folks, but the sanctuary can help with products and advice to the extent it can. Mr. Smith noted that the constituencies are different, which gives entirely different communications problems. It is difficult when represent groups that don't have organizations of their own, but he thinks people can try systematically in their own way to get the information to the constituents, and then the information will come back. Mr. Moe said it important not to just talk about it and then not take action. The working group is set up to help with things like this, and if people have thoughts about this, he encouraged people to send them to him or Ms. Ferguson in an email for consideration at the next Working Group meeting. **ACTION ITEM:** if SAC members have suggestions about improving the two-way flow of information to and from constituents, please send them to Mr. Moe or Ms. Ferguson. CDR Score noted, in response to a question from Chair Popham, that there is still no money to have Matt Stout come down from the headquarters office to do a communications training for SAC members, an idea suggested a few years ago. Perhaps Ms. Karnes could do it. Mr. Moe concluded by saying the next meeting of this working group is scheduled for July 29 at the Marathon State Building, Room 104. But, the meeting date may be changed if a survey of the working group indicates it is needed.

SAC Ecosystem Restoration Working Group Report--Jerry Lorenz, SAC

Mr. Lorenz said the SAC Ecosystem Restoration Working Group met on June 2nd at Keys Marine Lab. Several topics were discussed. They discussed results from the Florida Reef Resilience Conference, which is an item later in the afternoon on the agenda. The report on the algae bloom workshop is not done yet, but Mr. Donohue has said it will be released soon. Most of the Working Group's conversation was about another proposed workshop on Everglades and Florida Bay issues, including the effects on our economy, the Everglades National Park General Management Plan, the different components of restoration, fishing and conflicts people on the mainland would have regarding restoration efforts, Florida Bay and the Florida Keys. Many people in the Keys don't seem to understand how Everglades Restoration will impact the Keys, and he said the group wants to use the SAC get them more involved in the issues, rulemaking, etc. as regards restoration impacts in the Florida Keys. Citizens were mobilized in the early 1990s on Florida Bay, and the group feels that these issues are creeping up again with the algal blooms. The group proposes to have a workshop in November (the 18th is proposed), perhaps at the Islamorada Fishing Club. He asked if the SAC thought it was a good idea, and if so, the group can continue work on it. It is not organized now and they are asking now for SAC input. Chair Popham asked what CDR Score thought, as these incremental meetings cost money. CDR Score said he would also like to hear from the SAC first if there is a consensus opinion that this is a good idea, and he would like to know what are the objectives and goals, who are we trying to reach, what kind of outcomes are we trying to achieve and is the SAC weighing into that, and

how to get the right people in the room to make sure that it resonates. It sounds like mobilization and involvement, and the SAC doing a good job of getting people in the seats, are issues...

Mr. Lorenz said the group did talk about getting knowledge out to the public, and one of the hottest topics that may bring in people is the General Management Plan for Florida Bay. Mr. Grathwohl expressed wanting the fishing community to attend, and the group thought November would be a reasonably good time to get them there. As far as outcomes, he is not sure about any resolutions or such things, but he said they want to start pushing some of the issues that are not part of the sanctuary, but will heavily impact the sanctuary, so the decisions will affect the sanctuary in a positive way. CDR Score noted that the SAC has not digested Everglades and Florida Bay issues for a while. Mr. Lorenz noted he has tried to keep people up to date, but it takes a constant effort, and the public needs to know as well. CDR Score said people have offered to come back to the SAC to provide updates, and we have talked about doing 1-2 workshops in addition to bimonthly meetings. Chair Popham agreed that the discussion was to keep the current meeting structure as we have it, moving the location up and down the Keys, with 1-2 issue based special workshops per year. He said one of the biggest issues, is can we afford to do this? CDR Score wondered if it would be better to have a full day workshop, or to dedicate a half a day at a SAC meeting to this. Mr. Lorenz said there are many issues to include to educate the SAC and the general public on, but the group has not gone very far with the planning process yet, but has talked about several sessions with different topics, including Everglades restoration, impacts, and the General Management Plan. Chair Popham said, what about making most of the October meeting dedicated to this? Mr. Lorenz thought that would be fine. Mr. Bergh said he thinks it does not matter if it is a workshop or SAC meeting, but it is important to spend a significant amount of time dedicated to the issues. Mr. Moe and Mr. Bergh commented that we might not reach public if it is at a SAC meeting or workshop. Mr. Bergh said there is need to educate and re-educate people and to continue to engage them; Mr. Lorenz commented it is a 50-year process. A number of SAC members commented about the proposal, including the issues that might be addressed, getting members of the public there, timing (seems good to most of those who commented), important speakers to invite, the proposed location (Fishing Club may not be appropriate due to size, several felt), the possibility of televising the event, and the money needed. CDR Score stated it is not just the money, it is also the people and planning costs; we need to be strategic on how spend the time to get the right outcome. Mr. Ross said his hotel has a ballroom which can hold more than 200 people, and there are a series of rooms which hold 20 to 100 people. He can check to see if the rooms could be donated, but he would not want it to be a conflict of interest for himself. *ACTION ITEM:* Mr. Ross to check if meeting space can be donated and report back. Chair Popham said he felt like the group was giving the idea the nod. Mr. Makepeace suggested a collaboration between the SAC Education and Outreach Working Group and the SAC Ecosystem Restoration Working Group. Mr. Moe suggested a joint meeting. CDR Score said if there is a consensus opinion and recommendation that this is something the SAC wants to pursue, then the SAC should give him that recommendation, and we will work with both these groups to flesh out agenda and what these panels might look like, and we [FKNMS] will reach out to the Park and the folks that the groups think would be value added on the panels. If it is referred back to him at the August meeting, there will still be time to work on this and set it up. *ACTION ITEM:* Mr. Lorenz and Mr. Moe to work together on next steps and inform SAC and CDR Score at the August SAC meeting of the recommendations for discussing Everglades Restoration/Florida Bay issues. Mr. Lorenz said

the next meeting of this Working Group is not yet scheduled but it will need to meet before the August SAC meeting. CDR Score said he would like to see suggested panels and questions for the panels, and for FKNMS to make the invitations, if it is going to be an official SAC workshop, as opposed to taking another path.

Mr. Lorenz referred to the recommendations from the SAC marine zoning workshop, and mentioned the handout produced. It is meant to give overarching guidance for the staff, rather than be a prescription for the future. People should let him or Ms. Ferguson know if there are any suggestions for change to the document. CDR Score said it provided him good guidance and can be fed into alternative development or scoping down the road.

Mr. Lorenz said an issue came up with Gulf of Mexico offshore aquaculture, and that there is a public meeting on the topic on Monday, July 21, 2008 at the Radisson in Key West, and that we should be participants in that meeting. He read a resolution that had been circulated to SAC members. It acceptance was moved by Commissioner Neugent, and seconded by Dolly Garlo. Mr. Moe commented it seems like right thing to do. Mr. Zimmerman asked if the first generation of *Diadema* will be placed in the water. Mr. Moe replied, not necessarily; there are two hurdles before placing them in the water. One is the permit from the state, that the stock to go back in is certified as healthy and OK to put back into the wild and the other is scientific. You have to know specifics about what will happen to them, how soon, and when. It needs to be done in a structured way, well scheduled, controlled and monitored. Mr. Zimmerman asked if Mr. Moe will take spawn of the harvested broodstock and place them in the water, and Mr. Moe replied that was correct. Mr. Zimmerman said that he understands that it is same for the proposed raising of cobia, though they would be raised in cages. The discussion continued about various aspects of genomes, broodstocks, genetic enhancement, magnifying effects, disease resistance and escapement. Mr. Zimmerman said that once fish get out of cages, most of them die, but he agreed there is no doubt there is the potential for a problem. Mr. Makepeace commented that *Diadema* do not go far, but cobia would. Commissioner Neugent asked Mr. Zimmerman if he had a concern; Mr. Zimmerman said he just wanted people to understand the issues of genetics and aquaculture. Commissioner Neugent said the resolution does not say we are in opposition, it says we want to look at it, and Mr. Grathwolh added that we want to be proactive, rather than reactive. Mr. Bennis asked if there was a looming issue, and Mr. Lorenz and Mr. Zimmerman noted that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and NOAA are pushing aquaculture, and that there is a public meeting in July in Key West on this. Mr. Bergh said he does not think NOAA has commented on the FMC's proposal. Mr. Ross said he remembered the Atlantic salmon escapement issue in the Pacific Northwest, where people had concerns about impacts to the native fish, and wondered if anyone had looked at that. Mr. Bergh said this proposal is only for native fishes. The resolution passed as read; the text follows.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL ON CONCERNS OF DOWNSTREAM IMPACTS OF OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE
TO THE SENSITIVE FISHERIES AND HABITATS OF FLORIDA BAY AND FLORIDA KEYS
(OR FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY)**

June 17, 2008

WHEREAS the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary helps protect the unique marine waters of the Florida Keys that are a national treasure and of international significance; and

WHEREAS, the Gulf of Mexico and the southwest coast of Florida is connected through currents and has a significant impact on the fisheries and resources of The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Keys supports a substantial and economically significant fishing industry, which depends on good water quality and healthy brood stocks; and

WHEREAS the economy, fisheries and quality of life in the Florida Keys is dependent upon the health of south Florida's marine ecosystem; and

WHEREAS the total economic value of fishing in Florida is valued at approximately \$9 billion, much of it driven by the fisheries in Florida Bay and the Florida Keys; and

WHEREAS there the various concerns associated with offshore aquaculture such as the deterioration of wild fish stocks, introduction of diseases, water pollution, feed inefficiency, economic competition with wild stock fisheries, and habitat impact to coral, hardbottom, and seagrass communities; and

WHEREAS the Gulf of Mexico is prone to natural catastrophes such as hurricanes and red tides;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, through its superintendent, recommends to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council that prior to approving offshore aquaculture activities in the Gulf of Mexico:

- 1) That an analysis be undertaken on the downstream affects of offshore aquaculture water quality impacts to the sensitive habitats and fisheries of the Florida Keys;
- 2) That an assessment of the impacts of cultured fish escapement on the genetics of wild fisheries and wild fish competition, as well as the effects of disease , occurrence of severe red tide algae blooms, loss of all fish under culture (effect of the death and decay of all cultured fish), use of chemical or biological agents and its impacts to various invertebrates and plantonic life forms; and
- 3) That an economic impact study be conducted on the impacts to wild fisheries in Florida;
- 4) That the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council conduct a series of public hearings in the Florida Keys, including to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, to present findings to these concerns and to allow stakeholder input; and

- 5) That Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and Monroe County constituents concerns be properly addressed prior to approval.

Passed unanimously on this date: June 17, 2008.

The Council is an advisory body to the sanctuary superintendent. The opinions and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Referring back to morning agenda item on agency updates, Mr. Lorenz asked if Ms. Weaver's update on C-111 and the Tamiami Trail could be sent to the group. *ACTION ITEM*: Ms. Weaver to email the update to Ms. Ferguson, who will send it to the SAC.

Mr. Lorenz noted that Mr. Fajans wanted to give a briefing on the Sustained Ecological Assessment of the Florida Keys Seascape (SEAKEYS). The new monitoring buoy for Carysfort should be in place by the next SAC meeting. He said that an Integrated Coral Observation Network station in the Bahamas was to be taken down soon due to lack of funding, and after talking with the various parties, it appears that the Keys Marine Lab will be funding the cost of annual maintenance for that station, making it the 9th SEAKEYS station. The NOAA wave height buoy off of Key West has been out of service, but it will be put back in in the next six weeks, partly due to discussions at a recent meeting. He hopes the Lab will be teaming up with Mr. Edwards to put in equipment at the coral nursery at the Key West facility to monitor growth rates at the dock, and he has a package ready to go in at Ken Nedimyer's aquaculture nursery. He mentioned some other efforts at Molasses Reef, and correlating data with the National Weather Service. Finally, later this week, he will be attending a workshop at Mote to discuss Florida's plans for an ocean tracking network between Key West and Cuba. It will pick up tags of marked species and will transmit information from sonar acoustic monitoring back to a shore station.

Florida Reef Resilience Conference Report--Chris Bergh, SAC

Mr. Bergh provided a handout of the top strategies that came out of the Florida reef resilience conference held April 22nd and 23rd. He referred people to the frfp.org website for a copy of agenda and linked information from the conference. He noted that there was interesting dialogue on a number of issues among the 140 participants, and he reviewed the efforts to reach out to stakeholders. At the conference, 180 strategies to increase or maintain reef resilience were discussed. There were breakout groups, and some strategies were slightly modified. People then voted. The handout shows the top 25 strategies that resulted from the vote, and Mr. Bergh went through them. The top strategy was to devise a comprehensive plan for marine zoning based on reef resilience principles, best available science and user input; the second was to create a boating license, similar to a driver's license; the third was to get dive tour operators and others involved in monitoring, reporting to a centralized system. After going through the handout and soliciting comment, Mr. Bergh noted he was surprised no one commented on the marine zoning recommendation; this is an opportunity for comment and he encouraged people to think about what is contained in the document. He pointed out that the reef tax idea is a new strategy added

to the list, which came from the Australian case--a user fee is one way to get money to manage the resources, but is controversial. He announced that he plans to meet after this meeting with Mr. Zimmerman and possibly others to talk about working together on a lobster trap-oriented reef cleanup the last weekend July. Mr. Grathwolh talked about some of the other fees he has to pay, included one of \$1,000. Chair Popham asked if a staff member could look into what charts the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has produced and what it cost.

ACTION ITEM: CDR Score to have a staff member to research the charts the GBRMPA has produced, and report back to the SAC. CDR Score encouraged the SAC to get out information to their constituents on the results of the conference.

Unfinished/New Business

Florida Keys Scenic Corridor

Ms. Garlo asked the SAC to think about Ms. Hull's request for support for special designation for Highway 1. She reviewed the draft resolution Ms. Hull had provided to Ms. Ferguson, and said it recites pretty much everything Ms. Hull had said. She said she is not sure the SAC needs a resolution, so maybe they could just write a letter supporting the alliance and designation, and getting funding. She moved that we provide a letter of support to the alliance; the motion was seconded by Mr. Moe. CDR Score said he could write the letter, saying in it that the SAC heard the scenic highway proposal and resolved to support. Chair Popham noted that none were opposed, so the motion carried. *ACTION ITEM:* CDR Score to write a letter in support of the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance's efforts.

SAC Logistical Matters

Ms. Ferguson reminded people to please be sure to report SAC-related volunteer hours to her at the conclusion of each month; she is required to report this information to NOAA and to the State, and it helps show community participation and involvement in the sanctuary. *ACTION ITEM:* People to send in SAC-related volunteer hours for the previous month to Ms. Ferguson upon her request early in following month.

Ms. Ferguson also mentioned that, for proposed agenda items for future SAC meetings, members should send an email with the request to Chair Popham and CDR Score, and cc Ms. Ferguson. She keeps track of the suggestions and starts the draft agenda. Chair Popham and CDR Score are the ones who make the final decision about the items that appear on the agenda. Typically, the three of them start putting the agenda together three to four weeks in advance of a meeting. Chair Popham added that often there are competing requests, so choices have to be made about what topics will go into a given agenda. *ACTION ITEM:* SAC members and alternates who would like to request an item be added to a SAC agenda are asked to email the request to the SAC Chair and Superintendent, and cc the SAC Coordinator.

Finally, Ms. Ferguson announced she would be away on leave at the end of the week, returning to work July 7.

Adjourned, 4:28 PM.

Submitted respectfully by Lilli Ferguson.