

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

August 16th, 2005

Hawk's Cay Convention Center

FINAL MINUTES

Members Present

Chris Bergh Martin Moe

Ralph Boragine Ken Nedimyer

Jack Curlett Krueger Nicholson

Richard Grathwohl George Neugent

Debra Harrison Kathleen Patton

David Hawtof Bruce Popham

Don Kincaid Deborah Shaw

Mark Klingbeil Brad Simonds

Alternates Present

Walter Drabinski

Scott Fowler

Steve Friedman

Bob Holston

Call to Order/Approval of Minutes/Adoption of Agenda

Chair Bruce Popham called the meeting to order at 9:07. The Minutes were approved as presented. The Agenda was amended to change the time of Dr. Shinn's presentation and adopted as amended.

Working Waterfront Working Group Update Bruce Popham

Chair Popham said that Monroe County Commission has imposed a moratorium for nine months on all new development of working waterfront to other uses while a census is conducted of existing marinas, fish houses and ramps. The process adopted by the South Florida Regional Management Council is being adopted. He announced that there will be a meeting on the subject in Key West on August 23rd. The final plan will be delivered in December and necessary changes will be made to Monroe County Comprehensive Plan.

Dry Tortugas National Park Management Plan Revision Update Bruce Popham

Chair Popham said that good representation from the Sanctuary Advisory Council was instrumental in persuading the Governor and Cabinet of Florida to support the proposed Research Natural Area in the Park. This shallow water habitat complements the deeper habitats closed to consumptive activities in the Tortugas Ecological Reserve. Discussion concerned the necessity of making a similar presentation to the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission at their meeting in St. Petersburg on September 22, 2005.

Public Comment

Sally Mishmash, founder and coordinator of Coral Reef Sweepers requested assistance from the Sanctuary for the 11th reef cleanup. Discussion concerned making it a Keys-wide effort, and coordination with National Cleanup Day in September. Team OCEAN member Robert Keeley and Volunteer Coordinator Nick Tagliareni were designated as staff for this. Superintendent Billy Causey and Commissioner George Neugent both commended her for her past efforts in organizing reef sweeps.

Steve Davidson, volunteer with The Nature Conservancy, gave an update on map work he is conducting for Pat Wells of Lignumvitae State Park, rectifying information from aerial photos using the Digital Orthographic Quarter Quad (DOQQ) system. Further information may be obtained at www.labins.gov on the Land Boundary Information System. Chris Bergh thanked him for all his work volunteering with The Nature Conservancy.

H.T. Pontin, master mariner, expressed concern that his remarks from the June meeting had not been included with the Draft Minutes from that meeting. He read the attached document concerning treaties into the record.

Sanctuary Superintendent's Report Billy Causey (FKNMS)

Mr. Causey reported on the recent inter-agency multi-vessel cruise to document Pulley Ridge. He spoke enthusiastically of the flexibility provided by technical diving as well as the use of ROVs in investigating deep habitats. He said that samples of several species, probably new to science, were collected and are being described and analyzed.

As a board member for the Colombian conservation group CORALINA, he recently visited the San Andres archipelago where the Seaflower Protected Area is now fully implemented. It is the largest marine protected area upstream from the Florida Keys. He described some of the changes wrought by Hurricane Dennis, including the surprise uprighting of the Spiegel Grove.

Mr. Causey said that as Acting Regional Superintendent he visited Cape Canaveral, where Cape Kennedy Space Center is keenly interested in establishing a national marine sanctuary. Forthcoming events are that there will be a celebration of the Carnegie Institute in Key West from October 13-15 and that Dr. Brian Keller will be the chief scientist on the coral disease cruise aboard the R/V Nancy Foster and Commander Dave Score is the executive officer.

Chair Popham recognized TeamOCEAN member Robert Keeley and volunteer Jan Blackmon for their efforts during the two-day lobster sport season in returning illegally harvested lobster to the Eastern and Western Sambo Preserves.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection Kacky Andrews (FDEP)

Ms. Andrews reported on the newly formed Florida Ocean Commission, which will be presenting a report to the Legislature in January 2006. The Commission, with significant budgetary resources, will be working with state and federal representatives as well as the other four Gulf states. Billy Causey, Jerry Lorenz and Jody Thomas from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Advisory Council have been appointed to the Commission. She said that Ellen McCarron, the new Assistant Director for the Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas will be visiting the Keys shortly.

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission John Hunt (FWRI)

Mr. Hunt said that even though the eye of Hurricane Dennis passed over the Dry Tortugas, where FWRI has a lobster tagging project underway, 33 out of the 36 sonic receivers were located after the storm by the crew of the Nancy Foster. He reported that the Commission meeting focused on red grouper in the Gulf of Mexico. It is too early to make any statements about the state of the lobster season so far in the Keys, although he observed that perceptions of what constitutes a good season demonstrate the concept of "shifting baselines".

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Van Fischer (FWS)

Mr. Fischer announced that Dr. Phil Frank has left the service for the private world and that John Kasbohm has been detailed to replace him for 90 days. It is not known who will direct the refuges in the Florida Keys after that.

Law Enforcement Capt. Laurie Luher (FWC)

Captain Luher said that Monroe County will investigate the reported deaths of individuals engaged in mini-season activities, which was otherwise very quiet with a large presence of officers from around the state. She announced that Officer McDaniel has been promoted to Investigator I, and will be working under Capt. Jayson Horadam. He will take Investigator Roudebush's place upon his retirement.

Florida Reef Resilience Program Dr. Phillip Kramer (The Nature Conservancy)

Dr. Kramer gave a PowerPoint presentation, in which he defined concepts, and identified management plans to address the likely consequences of climate change on coral reefs. He suggested some new tools, such as shading bleaching-prone reefs during the summer months, seeding reefs with tolerant corals, increasing water flow and manipulating parrot fish and urchins.

Discussion concerned CAMA's funding for this program and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's comparable efforts to build resilience, not just into the reefs, but also into the people who depend on them. Further discussion concerned estimates of coral cover and the differences between patch reefs and the outer reef, as well as the enormous number of people visiting, and impacting, the reefs every day. Suggestions were made for managing the number of visitors, including user fees, closing areas to visitation and reducing the numbers per boat.

Mapping the Florida Keys Reef Tract Dr. Eugene Shinn (USGS)

Dr. Shinn charmed the audience with a hand-crafted transect model of the Florida Keys. Instead of using PowerPoint, he displayed a number of geological maps reflecting Barbara Lidz's work in the Keys for the past 16 years. The full results are available in a manuscript that weighs 16lbs, which will be available in CD format. He described the formation of the Keys, beginning with a period of global warming 120,000 years ago, through to the present. He observed that reefs are controlled by topography, and that the current outer reefs are what is termed senile, or "give-up" reefs, since they are not building at a rate to keep up with sea level rising. Discussion concerned the climate record present in large coral formations and chemical elements present in cores taken from them reflecting both volcanic eruptions and periods of continental aridity. Extracting the information, is, however, costly.

Adjourn

12:00 noon

Submitted respectfully by

Fiona Wilmot