

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

April 20, 2004

Marathon Garden Club

FINAL MINUTES

Members Present:

Jack Curlett	Duncan Mathewson
Fran Decker	Martin Moe
Todd Firm	Ken Nedimyer
Richard Grathwohl	George Neugent
David Hawtof	Bruce Popham
Don Kincaid	Anita Schwessinger
Mark Klingbeil	Deborah Shaw
Nancy Klingener	

Alternates Present:

Peter Gladding
Jerry Lorenz
Sheila Mullins
Jody Thomas
Jim Trice

Call to Order

Chair Neugent called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Approval of Minutes and Adoption of Agenda

The Minutes of the February 17, 2004 meeting were approved as presented and the Agenda was adopted as presented.

Five year Management Plan Review Update – June Cradick (FKNMS)

Ms. Cradick gave the attached status report on the Management Plan. She announced her retirement after 30 years of service with the Federal Government. The Sanctuary Advisory Council presented her with original artwork by Fran Decker in grateful recognition for her many hours and years of work with the Council and its working groups.

Environmental Hero Award

Superintendent Billy Causey, on behalf of Admiral Lautenbacher, gave council member Ken Nedimyer a NOAA Environmental Hero award in recognition for his many years of time and effort devoted to supporting the mission of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Sanctuary Superintendent’s Report – Billy Causey (FKNMS)

Mr. Causey gave the attached report. He introduced Susan Hunt, his new assistant in the Marathon office, who is joining Sanctuary staff from the Park Service.

Navy Dredging Report – Lauri MacLaughlin (FKNMS)

Ms. MacLaughlin said that there has been one dredge-related injury to coral and a citation has been issued. The hopper dredge has been replaced by an excavator dredge.

Introduction

Mr. Causey introduced Captain Laurie Luher who is replacing Captain Jayson Horadam on the Sanctuary Enforcement Team. She returns to the Keys after several years working elsewhere in the state.

Public Comment

Captain Sheri Sullenger of the Florida Keys Wild Dolphin Alliance said that the recent meeting for commercial marine mammal viewing interests in Key West was a success. She said that there are still concerns over the growing number of businesses and the lack of regulation. Discussion concerned regulatory authority and an occupational license from the City of Key West for charter boats involved in marine mammal viewing.

Sergeant Louis Caputo asked that the Council support the Citizens’ Advisory Council to the Sheriff’s Department in requesting from the Board of County Commissioners a pump out boat and land based support facilities for the Upper Keys. There are between two and three hundred transient and live-aboard boats between Jew Fish Creek and Tavernier.

Jill Patterson of the Monroe County Sheriff’s Department Sector 7, Zone 1 Citizens’ Advisory Council added a request for a resolution from the Sanctuary Advisory Council to Sergeant Caputo’s remarks.

Dr. Deborah Shaw moved that the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council requests that Sanctuary managers convey to the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) a resolution of support to the BOCC urging their support for Monroe County Sheriff’s Department Sector 7, Zone 1 Citizens’ Advisory Council proposal to establish pump out facilities and financial support for sustaining ongoing operation of pump out services in State of Florida waters in the Upper Keys region. The motion was seconded by Jack Curlett and passed unanimously.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection Report – Anne McCarthy (FDEP)

Ms. McCarthy reported that President Bush and Governor Bush will be visiting Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in conjunction with an Oceans Day event in Tallahassee. She gave a status update on damage incidents in the Sanctuary, as well as the mooring buoy program and the Coral Reef Task Force.

Sanctuary Law Enforcement Report – Officer Andy Cox (FWC)

Officer Cox reported that the Point Monroe is out for bid. He said that Officers Scarpa, Meghan and Mallow are receiving instruction in side-scan sonar.

Addendum to Superintendent's Report

Billy Causey said that Sanctuary webmaster Ben Richards is leaving to start on his doctorate in the North West Hawaiian Islands. LCDR Dave Score is also leaving to become the Executive Officer on the NOAA vessel Nancy Foster. LCDR Steve Beckwith of the NOAA Corps will be replacing him as Upper Keys Regional Manager.

Permit Bag and Vessel Limits – Richard Grathwohl, Jim Trice and Bill Kelly

The panelists reviewed the current status of permit, which is not considered a game fish and has no federal limits. Bill Kelly read the attached letter from Captain Steve Leopold into the record. Members of the Islamorada Charter Boat Association (ICBA) would like to see permit regulated by the FWC as a catch-and-release species except for a limit of one fish per boat per day. This is in response to anglers targeting schools of permit spawning on artificial structures. Discussion concerned regulations and statistics on the fishery. The impact of regulations on the charter boat industry was discussed and also the need to bring the issue before the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) as well as the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council (GMFMC) and the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC).

Mark Klingbeil moved that the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council request that Sanctuary managers convey to FWC, GMFMC and SAFMC the Council's support for the ICBA proposal to protect permit through bag and vessel limits in the Florida Keys. The motion was seconded by Dr. Lorenz and passed unanimously. A working group was formed to gather more information on permit.

Some Results from Riley's Hump in the South Tortugas Ecological Reserve

- Dr. Michael Burton (NOAA Fisheries)

Dr. Burton gave the attached PowerPoint presentation based on data from a cruise to monitor the abundance of snapper and grouper at Riley's Hump. The results suggest that at least mutton snapper populations appear to have increased since implementing the reserve, although the data are not so consistent for black grouper.

Report on Biscayne National Park Fisheries Management Plan Working Group

- Janice Fleischer (The Institute for Community Collaboration, Inc.), Jack Curlett (Chair), Jerry Lorenz, Martin Moe, Ken Nedimyer.

Mr. Causey explained that the Council is involved in this Management Plan because under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the process for establishing a council for the Park Service is difficult, and as an entity with contiguous boundaries with Biscayne National Park, the Sanctuary is in a position to lend its support to the Park.

Ms. Fleischer gave the attached PowerPoint presentation on the process of the working group. The panelists outlined the desired future conditions for fishing within the Park. Discussion concerned the position of marine protected areas within the General Management Plan and not the Fisheries Management Plan and the role of science in decision-making.

18 Mile Stretch – Dr. Jerry Lorenz, John Hammerstrom, Billy Wagner (Monroe County Emergency Management)

The panelists presented information on hurricane evacuation, safety, and the impact on adjoining wetlands of proposed road improvements by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The secondary impacts of increased visitor traffic on Sanctuary resources was discussed. Concern was expressed that proposed Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project plans and FDOT plans are not synchronized, and that the proposed alterations to Jewfish Creek Bridge will bring more and larger boats into the backcountry, further jeopardizing resources there. The issue of major development on the mainland at the head of the Keys was also discussed.

Dr. Lorenz moved that based on the Sanctuary Advisory Council's (SAC) concerns about direct and secondary environmental impacts of the 18 Mile Stretch project and the outdated status of current Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the SAC requests that the Superintendent of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary write a letter to Colonel Carpenter of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, requesting a supplemental EIS that would reflect current environmental research and understanding, as well as regional ecosystem restoration efforts. The motion was seconded by Dr. Shaw and passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Following discussion, it was determined that the permit issue is an FWC issue. The status of SAC applications was discussed. The impact of paintballs on the marine environment was mentioned.

Adjourn 3:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Fiona Wilmot