

Public Comment to U. S. Coral Reef Task Force
Dan Clark Cry of the Water
March 1, 2007

At the last Task Force meeting in the Virgin Islands we showed photos of the sewer ocean outfalls. Bob Ballard from Florida said that he would direct his staff to work to get all sewer outfalls off the reefs in the next 10 years. We returned to Florida and found out the following things:

Updates on Water Quality Issues

- South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has asked Broward County to do away with its numerical water Quality Standard and adopt a narrative Standard for its inland water bodies.
- Florida DEP asked Broward County to reclassify some of its 1800 miles of canals to ditches.
- EPA asked the states to shorten their lists of Impaired Waters. We believe that EPA was asking the states to clean up the water bodies not change their classification to remove them from the lists.
- We found out that there are over 50 Industrial waste permits allowed to pump to the two Broward Outfalls.
- We found out that one of the NPDES permits for ocean outfall in Miami-Dade expired 12 years ago. FDEP has still not written a draft permit for renewal of this outfall pipe. Permits expire every 5 years.
- Army Corps announced plans to pipe dirty Lake and Agricultural water under Miami Canal. Water would be discharged into Key Biscayne increasing pollution.

One of the few SEFCRI members who are also involved in the South Florida Eco-Systems Restoration Task Force is Richard Harvey. When he raised his concerns about added pollution to Biscayne Bay from the Miami Canal Project he was removed from the Eco-Systems Working Group. We ask that he be returned to the Working Group and that more interagency coordination be developed. In South Florida we have:

- SEFCRI (Coral Reef Task Force),
 - South Florida Eco-Systems Restoration Task Force
 - Florida Ocean Counsel
 - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission working on The Future of Saltwater Fishing
- A vision of Florida's Marine Resources

The future of our reefs depends on the coordination between these groups and agencies. We need more interaction between these groups not less.

In the Draft Future of Saltwater Fishing document priority area that were identified were:

- Improve Habitat Enhancement and Protection
- Develop Ecosystem Management as a Tool
- Improve Management and Research Coordination
- Improve Interagency Coordination
- Enhance Funding and Staffing

We must do all we can to improve water quality as soon as possible. We must establish a management plan for Southeast Florida's reefs and fisheries. We must stop giving out permits to destroy the resource. We must afford these reefs some level of protection such as Outstanding Florida Waters or Aquatic Preserves.

We are losing the reefs on the east coast of Florida at an alarming rate. We must act immediately.