

**A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF ECO-MARINER, AN EDUCATIONAL COURSE DESIGNED TO HELP BOATERS AND ANGLERS ENJOY AND PRESERVE FLORIDA BAY**

February 17, 2009

**Whereas**, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) was established in 1990 to provide for the protection of the spectacular marine resources surrounding the Florida Keys; and

**Whereas**, the statute establishing the FKNMS conveyed to the Sanctuary the responsibility of managing all impacts affecting these resources whether generated from within or from outside the boundaries of said Sanctuary; and

**Whereas**, the Gulf of Mexico, the southwest coast of Florida, and Florida Bay is connected through currents and has a significant impact on the fisheries and resources of the FKNMS; and

**Whereas** Florida Bay makes up 1/3 of Everglades National Park which is a nationally and internationally recognized site and one of America's most unique and fragile natural treasures; and

**Whereas** the Florida Keys and Florida Bay support a substantial and economically significant fishing industry that drives much of the approximately \$9 billion total economic value of fishing in Florida; and

**Whereas** the economy, fisheries and quality of life in Key Largo, the Florida Keys and Monroe County is dependent upon the health of Florida Bay; and

**Whereas** the clear waters and renowned flats fishing of Florida Bay are drawing an increasing number of boaters and local communities and users of Florida Bay have expressed concerns about the Bay's health; and

**Whereas** fish and wildlife populations and habitat are under significant stress within Florida Bay and FKNMS

**Whereas** Eco-Mariner will teach park users about the Bay's fragile ecosystem and how to safely navigate the Bay's shallow waters and should help reduce the extent of seagrass habitat damage and improve the fishery

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL SUPPORTS ECO-MARINER. IN ADDITION, THE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDS THROUGH ITS SUPERINTENDENT THAT THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SUPPORT OR ENDORSE ECO-MARINER SO THAT:**

- The FKNMS name could be used publicly to support the **Eco-Mariner** program content and its mission to help boaters enjoy and preserve Florida Bay;
- The FKNMS name/logo could be appear on website screen(s) in the on-line version of **Eco-Mariner**, specifically on the webpage for all supporting organizations;
- The FKNMS name/logo could appear on **Eco-Mariner** branded printed materials (including information packets, press releases, fliers, banners, advertisements, fact sheets, letterhead, etc.);

- A web link on the **Eco-Mariner** website will be provided to the FKNMS website and the FKNMS is encouraged to add a web link on our website to the **Eco-Mariner** website;
- The FKNMS may use **Eco-Mariner** content, components, messages, etc. to further support the FKNMS mission, outreach efforts, or public communications.

Passed unanimously on this date: February 17, 2009.

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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.