

**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 21, 2011 MEETING OF
FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Resolution of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council in support of Natural Resource Damage Assessment Early Allocation funding for projects that mitigate the adverse effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
June 21, 2011**

Whereas, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) was established in 1990, and

Whereas, the legislation creating the FKNMS found that adjacent to the Florida Keys land mass are located spectacular, unique, and nationally significant marine environments, including seagrass meadows, mangrove islands, and extensive living coral reefs, and

Whereas, these marine environments support rich biological communities possessing extensive conservation, recreational, commercial, ecological, historic, research, educational, and esthetic values which give this area special national significance, and

Whereas, these environments are the marine equivalent of tropical rain forests in that they support high levels of biological diversity, are fragile and easily susceptible to damage from human activities, and possess high value to human beings if properly conserved, and

Whereas, the south Florida region not only is home to the world's third largest coral barrier reef, but it shelters more than 6 million full-time residents and attracts millions of seasonal visitors annually with nearly 4 million traveling to the Keys alone each year, and

Whereas, Florida's reefs are an important "engine" of the region's economic prosperity generating nearly 40,000 jobs annually in Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward Counties, and producing nearly \$3.4 billion in income and sales, and

Whereas, the threat of oil from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill impacting the marine and coastal environment of the Florida Keys and south Florida was sufficient to drive natural resource-dependent tourism and related business away from the region, and

Whereas, as part of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process surrounding the Deepwater Horizon oil spill BP has released a \$1 billion early allocation to the state and federal trustees of Gulf of Mexico natural resources including the State of Florida, NOAA and the Department of Interior, and

Whereas, a "Florida Keys Water Quality" project and a "Staghorn and Elkhorn Coral Recovery" project have been submitted by The Nature Conservancy to the State of Florida, NOAA and the Department of Interior via the prescribed submission mechanisms with the intent of mitigating adverse effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and

Whereas, it is consistent with the FKNMS and Protection Act for state and federal agencies to cooperate with the FKNMS Advisory Council, which is charged with providing recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Commerce on actions necessary to provide for the protection of the marine

resources of the Florida Keys, in addressing adverse effects over which those agencies have jurisdiction, now

Therefore, the FKNMS Advisory Council resolves to express strong support for the “Florida Keys Water Quality” and “Staghorn and Elkhorn Coral Recovery” projects submitted for NRDA funding and requests that the FKNMS Superintendent send copies of this Resolution accompanied by copies of the two project fact sheets to State of Florida, NOAA and Department of Interior officials in charge of the NRDA project review and funding allocation process.

Passed on this date: June 21, 2011

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.