

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Marathon Garden Club, Marathon, Florida

June 19, 2007

FINAL MINUTES

Members Present

Chris Bergh	Don Kincaid
Jack Curlett	Martin Moe
Dolly Garlo	Ken Nedimyer
Richard Grathwohl	George Neugent
Debra Harrison	Bruce Popham
David Hawtof	Deborah Shaw
	Brad Simonds

Alternates Present

Walter Drabinski
Peter Frezza
Bob Holston
Jack Hildreth

Call to Order/Roll Call/Approval of Minutes from April 17, 2007/Adoption of Agenda for this Meeting/Chairperson's Comments/Introductions

Chairman Bruce Popham called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. The minutes were approved as presented. Chair Popham welcomed Lilli Ferguson, the new Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) and Volunteer Coordinator to her first official SAC meeting. He asked her to take a seat at the table with the SAC as she is a key part of the Committee. He also asked that alternates sit at the table. Chair Popham then invited all those at the table to take the opportunity to briefly introduce themselves, to make a comment, or to make an announcement, and meeting participants then introduced themselves. Some highlights from those remarks follow.

Chair Popham announced that the Marathon Boatyard would be having a Clean Boatyard designation and party at 5:00 PM, and hoped that everyone would stay for it.

Steve Rohmann, from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Silver Spring, and was involved in the first coral reef ecosystem mapping effort in the Florida Keys, and is talking to the group today about the new mapping effort.

David Hawtof commented that more enforcement is needed in the Lower Keys.

Jack Curlett stated that he would like to offer to hold the October SAC meeting in the Upper Keys; he would see that the meeting would be held at the Cultural Center, and would have lunch provided for everybody. Chair Popham said he would accept that invitation on behalf of the SAC. Previously the SAC talked about possibly holding one meeting in Key Largo, and one in Key West. On behalf of the Ocean Reef Rod and Gun Club, he presented checks to the

Sanctuary Friends Foundation of the Florida Keys (SFFFK) (\$6,000) and to The Nature Conservancy (\$5,000) for coral reef restoration.

Bob Holston reported that he was just in Washington, D.C. for Capitol Hill Oceans Week, and made a lot of good contacts, and shared a lot of good information about what is happening in the Keys. Also, the dive industry is starting a program, working with NOAA (primarily the National Marine Sanctuary Program [NMSP]) to "green" the industry, so he'll be returning to DC for meetings next week.

Martin Moe commented that change, and the rate of change, in the Keys is astounding, and when you live here, you tend not to notice it as things move along. But, what happens in the next few years will be important for the beauty of the Keys, and this body shouldn't be underestimated for its ability to make change happen in the right direction.

Richard Grathwohl was recently on the snook working group, and with its recommendations, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission has accepted changes in the bag size snook limits and harvest seasons at a recent meeting. The legislature also accepted the group's recommendations to raise the snook tag. It was too bad other groups didn't also make this recommendation.

Ken Nedimyer commented that restoration in the Keys is one of his passions, particularly diadema, and he and Martin ("Skip") Moe work with Mote Marine Lab on diadema. He also has a coral nursery for restoration. He agreed that this group has an impact, and each of the different groups has a chance to voice their opinions. He also just returned from Washington, D.C.--he was there for Capitol Hill Oceans Week with Bob Holston, Billy Causey and Glenn Patton.

George Neugent just returned from the Florida Association of Counties conference in Orlando. There was a presentation from Tom Pelham, the new Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs. Mr. Neugent believes Mr. Pelham has the same priorities as the SAC; he had said in his remarks that Florida needs to refocus on its natural resources, which make Florida the great state that it is. This was heartening due to the lack of focus in the past on these issues. The state is projecting to double its population in the next 30 years. There was some discussion of saving the working waterfront, and a Congressman in Maine is sharing Maine's legislation on the topic with Florida.

Deborah Shaw commented that she has lived here since 1951, and there has been a great decline in marine life since then due to human impacts and population growth. But, she is heartened by how hard the SAC and the Sanctuary staff are working to preserve remnants. She later thanked everyone for the opportunity to be on the SAC.

Don Kincaid is an underwater photographer, among other hats that he wears, and has found that the photographs taken in the 1960s and 1970s show the catastrophic loss of corals when compared to what is there today. The photographs serve as a historical record.

Chair Popham thanked everyone in this group for putting on the Climate Change and Energy Workshop in May. The professionalism of the group made it happen, and he has received a lot

of positive feedback on it. It could serve as a model for future workshops. It was televised, and there are DVDs of the proceedings as well.

Chair Popham reported that last week, he, Superintendent CDR Dave Score, Stephanie Bailenson, Kent Edwards, Lilli Ferguson and George Neugent met to review the current vacancies on the SAC. Some folks have indicated they will serve again, and some new folks have volunteered. CDR Score confirmed that the nominees are being routed through the process to appointment; their applications will be sent to DC to receive the blessing for serving on the SAC, and then the applications will be routed to Stephanie [for the State of Florida's concurrence on the selections]. It is hoped that the nominees will be seated by the next meeting. Mr. Popham and CDR Score discussed how there will be another announcement for the next round of seats to be filled for seats that will be expiring or have expired. The process is about 5-6 months behind due to the previous lack of a Sanctuary Advisory Council Coordinator. Billy Causey stated that he had reviewed the recommendations so far and agreed with them.

Agency Report Highlights:

Regional Manager's Report -- Billy Causey (NOAA, NMSP)

Billy Causey has been all over the region lately. George Sedberry has been hired at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary as the new Superintendent. He has a great deal of experience in the fisheries research and natural resources management, in building partnerships and has international interests. Mr. Causey also spent time in Puerto Rico, looking at various areas, and met with the Secretary of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources in Puerto Rico, and they are very interested in the National Marine Sanctuary Program. Mr. Causey accompanied Ken Nedimyer on some Hill visits, and it is great to have him as Volunteer of the Year. They met with Senator Nelson's staff, and Senator Martinez's staff, including Brian Ross. There are good signals from Washington, but this is not the time to relax, it is the time to tell them what good things are happening. This site is operating at a 2001 budget level, and cannot continue operating at that level. A number of other sites are in similar situations. Anything that individuals can do, both collectively and individually, and being guided by their hearts, he encourages. The National Marine Sanctuary Program has 14 sites, managing over 150,000 square miles of ocean; it is larger than the footprint of National Park Service sites, which is also a natural resource trustee agency. The Sanctuary Program's budget is trivial compared to that of any other agency, however. For the first time in years, the House budget is looking good, so maybe a little encouragement will be all it will take.

Debra Harrison added that Billy Causey and the Sanctuary staff cannot lobby; Dave Score stated that as a body, the Sanctuary Advisory Council cannot lobby either, but the individuals of the SAC can. Ms. Harrison had made a motion regarding restoration of funding, but retracted it when CDR Score stated he could send it to Dan Basta, but Mr. Basta wouldn't be able to do much with it. Ms. Harrison said she would then send an email to individuals of the SAC asking them to contact certain Senators and Representatives, to ask for \$78 million dollars for the National Marine Sanctuary Program (a figure provided by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for operation of the program). It was suggested that Don Kincaid provide before and after pictures that people could include with their emails.

Sanctuary Superintendent's Report – CDR Dave Score (Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary [FKNMS], NOAA Corps)

Superintendent CDR Score stated that individuals in the room and agencies helped to get the budget mark where it is, and thanked them and the SFFFK for being active and engaged, and for the SFFFK's support with food for the meeting and for providing some travel funds for Mr. Nedimyer. He thanked the participants of the recent trip to D.C. CDR Score introduced and welcomed Jason Rueter, from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). He was invited to attend in response to the SAC's request to have more involvement from and interaction with the NMFS. CDR Score also thanked Deborah Shaw for her long service to the SAC, this meeting is her last official meeting. CDR Score apologized for not having a plaque to present to her at this meeting, but will have one at a later date. He stated that he hoped she could help acclimate the new alternate to the seat; it is hoped that that person will be in place by the next meeting. Ms. Shaw stated she will continue to help the Sanctuary as needed. She is going to be semi-retired, but still working for the Florida Keys Electric Cooperative Association part time. CDR Score also thanked those people who met with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recently; the OIG is doing a program assessment. Feedback he heard from those meetings included that the OIG is very impressed with the SAC and members' level of involvement; also, the OIG recognized there is not enough funding for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to do all that it could do. CDR Score also stated that there will be a REEF Foundation Great American Fish Count in July, with events at the Reef House on July 7. CDR Score then recognized FKNMS Education Coordinator Mary Tagliareni, to provide some education and outreach highlights.

Mary stated that the FKNMS has received funding from the coastal zone management program, which went through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, for a new website on seagrass. The website will be launched in July. The Coral Reef Classroom program took place again this April and May, funded by the South Florida Water Management District. Eight of ten trips took place; two were canceled due to weather. Ten more trips are planned for August and September. Two Hollings Scholars, funded by NOAA, are working at the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center (FKEDC) this summer. They are college interns, and are working on Reef Medics and a series of Discovery Saturdays for children in Kindergarten through Fifth at the FKEDC. Finally, the lobster brochure has been printed for this year (and there were no rule changes), and will be available "on the street" and on the website, and the staff will be providing lobster education over the next month.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Report – Stephanie Bailenson (FDEP)

Ms. Bailenson stated the Florida Legislature had a busy session. The Ocean Coastal Resource Council did receive funding - \$3.2 million and one Full Time Equivalent staff person. The Governor had asked for more, but the funding that was authorized is a great start. The focus will be on developing products and demonstrating success. Billy Causey helped lobby the state about this; Ms. Bailenson could not. The Council asked that DEP help organize a legislative tour to the Florida Keys at the end of August. Ms. Bailenson also announced that the Coastal States Organization has partnered with NOAA to have a coastal visioning workshop in Florida on June 22. These workshops are taking place across the nation to find hurdles and next steps in coastal management on local, regional and national scales. All data from the workshop will be made

available to the state. Ms. Bailenson was also in D.C. recently (as she can lobby for the Sanctuaries), and helped to talk to members of Congress on the budget and the Coral Reef Ecosystem bill. This bill shifts from a programmatic focus to a protection standard, and response and restoration and data standards activities cover NOAA, the Department of the Interior, and other agencies. It covers coral reef ecosystems, as well as climate and other things. The State of Florida has a few concerns with the bill, such as wanting federal coordination and partnership with the states, and to ensure funds are appropriately used. The bill is still making its way through Congress. Mr. Causey asked Bruce Popham to thank Ron Saunders for his efforts on the Ocean Coastal Resource Council and the comprehensive research plan.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Report – Anne Morkill (USFWS)

Ms. Morkill reported that the USFWS got \$50,000 in emergency supplemental funds to do a marine debris program in Refuges in the southeast. They are in the process of transferring the money to NOAA. There is also some funds for buoys, signage in the back country, which will help with enforcement. Steve Berger was hired to fill the vacant law enforcement position. Les Pulley had decided to move to Naples, so now they will need to fill the vacancy created by his move. Ms. Morkill stated that the power of Friends groups to work with Congressmen is amazing, and they have helped the USFWS with the Refuges--with a workforce plan, moving salary funds into operations, working to lobby D.C. for funds, etc.

Law Enforcement Report – Capt. Laurie Luher (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission [FWC])

Capt. Luher stated that it has been busy, with a number of boating accidents, critical incidents and search and rescue operations. Major Skip Russell has retired, and Major Michael Edwards has come from Jacksonville to fill the vacancy. More law enforcement is needed everywhere, not just in the Lower Keys; it is a critical tool in the NMSP toolbox, calls for service are increasing, and there are more boaters and more people taking up commercial and recreational fishing. FWC is doing a pilot boater education program, as there have been 11 fatal accidents on the water (3 in Monroe County) in the last 11 weeks in the three-county region. The DiveAlive program is coming up (on or around July 26 at Florida Keys Community College), and Cheva Heck has been instrumental in heading that up and on communicating about dive safety. Capt. Luher also reported that the FWC increased the snook size limit down here, reduced the two bag to one bag, and changed the season--first half of December and all of February is closed harvest season. The Commission also proposed rules to allow licensed trap fishers to designate people to recover and possess their traps, when the Governor and FWC declare a state of emergency. George Garrett should be commended for the outstanding job he has done to remove marine debris and 600 derelict vessels from Monroe County. The rules would also exempt local, state and federal agencies from having to get FWC approval before removing traps and trap debris from areas where trapping is prohibited. Discussion ensued about calls placed to FWC. An example was that a vessel was trying to tie up to one of the yellow regulatory buoys in the Western Sambo Ecological Reserve; the operator didn't know the details of what the caller was trying to explain or where the area was. Capt. Luher said the calls now all go to Miami-Dade dispatchers, and they handle calls for a lot of different agencies besides FWC. New dispatchers may need to receive special training. There is also a new phone system going into place--Capt. Luher is trying to work through the staffing issues, and she may end up being in charge of calls

for this area. Her Major has requested this, and she would like to do it. She is following up on the incident mentioned.

National Marine Fisheries Service Report – Jason Rueter (NMFS)

Mr. Rueter commented that the NMFS Regional office has a lot going on. Regarding aquaculture, there are two issues going on now. The National Aquaculture Act was introduced into the House and Senate. Senator Stevens introduced it with a plea for additional amendments. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council going forward under its authority under the Magnuson Stevens Act to introduce aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico. There will be public hearings on both July 9-12. Final action on the amendment is projected for November.

Public Comment

There was none.

Summary of Florida Keys Benthic Habitat Mapping Project – Steve Rohmann, Ph.D. (NOAA, National Ocean Service, Special Projects Office)

Dr. Rohmann gave a PowerPoint presentation on the past efforts to map the benthic habits of the Florida Keys (1992-1998), and current and future mapping. Some of the areas are being mapped for the first time. The mapping is linked to overall assessment and monitoring efforts. A proposal has been submitted to the FWC for \$375,000 to continue the mapping efforts and to fill in gaps, especially in Hawk's Channel, Florida Bay, the Marquesas, and the Dry Tortugas. Discussion ensued about different mapping technologies, using ground validation techniques, when different technologies are used, and the scale of detail that can be gathered using them. It was noted that if the data is collected properly, it can then be added to NOAA nautical charts. Some of the needs surrounding this effort are: working with all relevant parties on long-term support, identifying critical locations where mapping is needed, characterizing the needs for various map products, and evaluating techniques to track large and small scale changes in habitats over time. Discussion also centered around the value of habitat maps, and the ways in which they may be used.

Offshore Ocean Aquaculture - Jason Rueter (NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service)

CDR Score said that this presentation is in response to a request from Scott Zimmerman to have the SAC learn more about the topic of offshore ocean aquaculture. Mr. Zimmerman said he studied aquaculture at the University of Miami, and felt the SAC could benefit by learning more about the topic, its economic benefits and new issues in sustainable production. Mr. Rueter gave a PowerPoint presentation NOAA's involvement with aquaculture, and discussed some of the economic, political and social factors influencing the aquaculture industry. It is an agency priority right now. He stated that there is an opportunity, with participation of all groups concerned, to do aquaculture in a responsible manner. NMFS has tried to address concerns in the 2007 proposed amendments to the Aquaculture Act. The presentation covered types of species raised in the U.S., technologies, and challenges. Relevant legislation, policies and proposals include: the National Aquaculture Act of 1980, the NOAA Aquaculture Policy of 1998, the Department of Commerce Aquaculture Policy of 1999, the proposed 2005 National Offshore Aquaculture Act. There are at least six federal agencies with jurisdiction in the Exclusive Economic Zone. Some of the concerns environmental groups have relate to disease, pollution and unintended impacts on other components of the marine environment; Mr. Rueter

acknowledged that these need to be examined and addressed. All sides need to have their voices heard, but there is a need to move forward as well. Other discussion included the processes that will take place to move forward on aquaculture, hatcheries, natural means of cleaning cages, placement of cages, and use of old oil drilling infrastructure for aquaculture. Chair Popham noted that this was a first pass at reviewing this issue, and there will be other opportunities to look at it, and a member commented that perhaps there could be a workshop on this subject. CDR Score commented that the SAC can provide outreach to constituents groups, gather their input, and provide accurate information on this topic. Scott Zimmerman and Mr. Rueter both stated they welcome questions and discussion and encouraged people to contact them.

Working Group Reports

Ecosystem Restoration Working Group Report – Peter Frezza (SAC)

Peter Frezza, reporting for Dr. Jerry Lorenz, reviewed the minutes of the working group meeting held two weeks ago. He commented that the Climate Change and Energy Workshop went well, was worthwhile, and could serve as a model for future workshops. Where there are overlapping topics, maybe working groups could combine efforts to organize a workshop. The group recommended that the next topic for a workshop be marine protected areas (MPAs) and how management areas are using them. Other topics for a workshop include ecosystem based fisheries, both recreational and commercial, and aquaculture. One possibility would be to have a half day on MPAs and a half day on workshop was also mentioned. The group also discussed the topic of SAC meetings and there is a feeling that the SAC should be more efficient. A variety of opinions and suggestions were put forward, along with factors that influence efficiency; this topic would be addressed again later in the meeting. Mr. Frezza reported that Dr. Lorenz had drafted a water use resolution regarding giving existing uses of water and environmental needs being given priority over new uses and ventures such as golf courses, but the working group has not had the opportunity yet to edit it. The group will bring a draft resolution to the SAC's August meeting. Mr. Frezza also reviewed the group's discussions on the C-111 canal projects and what is currently proposed. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is coming out with a draft schedule in June. Also, with Crocodile Lake and Lake Surprise, there was discussion about what is currently proposed vs. earlier proposals. A 1992 diagram from the Environmental Impact Statement was mentioned, but plans have changed since then; CDR Score stated that the permit is to take the roadbed down to a few feet above the bottom per the original plan, and to plant seagrass to restore the area. But, there are discussions about how best to promote water flow and what to do to ensure the seagrass takes hold. He will also send follow up information to the SAC about the project. The Florida Department of Transportation is going to be doing core sampling to determine the potential for water pollution and algae blooms from the roadbed removal work. There is a proposal to put fill from the Lake Surprise project at sites in John Pennekamp State Park, but park biologists do not feel that the fill would be suitable for placement in the park and are concerned about impacts on habitat for the wood rat. On a final topic, there is an effort underway to incorporate climate change and coral reef resiliency messages in outreach; user groups will be engaged in a workshop to determine what reef relief means to them. Chris Bergh added that Mote Marine Lab is starting its bleach watch efforts again. There will be trainings in September on coral reef bleaching monitoring. This will be the third year that data are collected, and will help scientists in their research on coral resiliency and which species are affected.

Education and Outreach Working Group Report - Martin Moe (SAC) and Mary Tagliareni (FKNMS)

Martin Moe reported that the Education and Outreach Working Group had a good meeting about a year ago, but have been floundering a bit since then. Fiona Wilmot used to help with working group facilitation, and there has been a gap in that function, but now that Lilli is here, she can help with that. The issues with this group have been visited before; one of them is to not repeat the problem of the working group coming up with a number of ideas and expectations that it is not possible for the staff to implement. An action plan with objectives was drawn up at the SAC retreat, but none of the FKNMS Education staff were able to be there to provide input. Mr. Moe asked if the SAC could help work out a better approach for the working group. Mary Tagliareni is the co-chair for this group, and she added that the action plan items for education and outreach would be difficult to measure and attain--need to have achievable and measurable goals and objectives. It is also important for the working group to work closely with the staff, to make sure impractical, unfunded to do items aren't handed off to staff. Causey added that it is easy to come up with good ideas, but not as easy to implement them. The group could be the voice of the community, with ideas for what needs to be in the next version of the management plan. Discussion ensued about ideas the group could pursue, membership of the group, how best to work with existing groups, recruitment and use of volunteers, keeping abreast of what the Education staff is working on and accomplishing, what's being done in Monroe County classrooms, the possibility of holding an education and outreach workshop and assessing what is being done in coastal and marine education in this area. Glenn Patton of the SFFFK mentioned the Foundation applied for a number of grants to assist the Sanctuary, and now have received some funds and need to coordinate with the Sanctuary staff to appropriately spend the money by the deadlines. Chair Popham stated that the working group should take a look at the action plan and modify it as needed, and bring proposals to the SAC as appropriate. The action plan items were meant to be fleshed out and modified as needed. CDR Score stated that the SAC needs to be aware of the implementation of the Management Plan, but it is more general. Staff members build the Annual Operating Plan, which determines what is to be accomplished in a given year, and it would be good to have SAC and community input and recommendations to build it. The role of the SAC is to provide advice and recommendations to the Sanctuary managers, and to be a conduit between the constituencies they represent and the SAC and Sanctuary staff. The SAC may also ask clarifying questions about how Sanctuary staff members are implementing things. Mr. Moe stated he would plan another meeting of the working group.

Further discussion entailed training for SAC members. NMSP headquarters was supposed to provide a media training for the group, and had to cancel; it was discussed that maybe this could be scheduled for the October meeting. A training session/orientation materials for new SAC members are also needed, such as information about the Management Plan, the Action Plan and rules and regulations.

SAC Strategic Planning and Working Group Discussion - SAC

Chair Popham distributed a proposal for a meeting schedule and organization and reviewed it:

- All meetings to start and finish on time -- Please be here prior to the scheduled start and be committed to finishing the complete meeting.

- Agency reports -- status or updates to be forwarded via email prior to meeting through SAC Coordinator. Present issues at meeting that need current or future actions or discussions.
- Maintain current schedule of 6 meetings per year with special/single issue incremental meetings as needed.
- Alternate attendance--all alternates should be in attendance when ever possible to maintain continuity and community involvement. Bring alternates to the table for discussion, but member only votes.
- Schedule one meeting per year in Key Largo and Key West.
- Working Groups -- Active groups and current list of participants to be provided with staff members assigned for participation.
- Have Working Group meetings prior to full SAC meeting--8-10 with full SAC meeting from 10:00 to 4:00.
- Utilize email for items with tight time lines between scheduled meetings.

Chair Popham committed to bullet number one. Regarding bullet two, he asked that agency reports be action oriented during meetings, with written reports sent in advance with items that the SAC needs to know. The agency representatives in attendance agreed they could do this. Chair Popham stated that the Situation Reports sent in advance of the meeting were helpful for knowing what has happened over the past few months. The issue of how many meetings per year drew quite a bit of discussion and varying opinions, with some for the proposal, and some advocating for more meetings. Public notice, volunteer time and energy, preparation for meetings, work done in between meetings, use of alternates, impacts on volunteers' businesses, staff time, budget, length of meetings, and agenda composition are all factors that influence the SAC's efficiency. Causey stated that the SAC has been meeting six times a year since 1998. Chair Popham said, and people generally agreed, that it was clear that the SAC needed to be more efficient, and stated he would work to make that happened with the current meeting schedule, with additional special meetings held as needed. He noted that there will be additional meetings in the future that the SAC will be preparing for and assisting with, regarding the regulations to go with the Revised Management Plan. Causey stated the Water Quality Steering Committee will be meeting in July. The idea of having working group meetings the morning of full SAC meetings was discussed (proposed in the seventh bullet), but it was decided not to do this for several reasons relating to timing, overlapping membership in groups, and availability of staff support. Email can be utilized for information sharing between meetings, but meetings and SAC business cannot be conducted over email or the telephone as there are requirements to notice meetings.

Update Staghorn Coral Transplanting and Nursery Project - Ken Nedimyer, SAC member

Mr. Nedimyer reviewed his work with offshore live rock aquaculture, including the recent placement of staghorn coral at Molasses Reef. He and Jerry Lorenz also worked on a permit application, which he submitted a month ago, to move more corals on July 19 and 20 to a ten foot demonstration site. Funding is short for these types of projects, and Mr. Nedimyer is working with various people on planning, funding and communications issues. FKNMS is working with Mote Marine Laboratory on coral restoration as well, and CDR Score reviewed other efforts underway. The SFFFK said they would be happy to help with putting together a budget, including valuation of cultured coral units.

Water Quality Working Group - Bruce Popham (SAC)

Chair Popham stated the Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP) has a meeting scheduled for July 24 at Key Colony Beach. The group is now meeting twice a year, with conference calls in between those meetings. They had a conference call last week and approved a budget of \$1.4 million (\$100,000 for special studies). As Chair of this working group, he participates in the WQPP; others involved include CDR Score, Mr. Causey, Commissioner Neugent, Anne Morkill and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the DEP. The group had been meeting for about 13-14 months, and now is meeting again. CDR Score stated the EPA is continuing to fund this; this partner funding is allowing the monitoring to continue. It is hoped that the NMSP will be able to restore funding for monitoring in the future. Mr. Bergh said it is the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) role to oversee expenditure of the funds; they met a year ago. He suggested a special meeting between this group and the SAC be held. CDR Score commented that the Sanctuary condition report is now being put together and will be based on the results of the special studies. He said the TAC would be involved in doing a review of that, and workshops will be held. Chair Popham will report again to the SAC on the WQPP in August.

Public Comment

There was none.

Follow Up from Climate Change and Energy Workshop/Proposed FP&L Glades Project

This was already discussed during the working group report. Mr. Lorenz will be bringing a water quality resolution to the SAC in August. Debra Harrison commented that the SAC's action was appropriate regarding the coal-fired power plant, and Governor Crist and the Public Service Commission took the input of legitimate groups like the SAC into account in their actions [to keep the proposed plant from moving forward at this time].

Unfinished Business

There was none.

New Business

Debra Harrison read a resolution that came from one of the Keys' groups (Reef Relief), "Resolution of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Supporting Efforts to Protect Florida from Offshore Oil Drilling and Exploration." Don Kincaid moved, seconded by Deborah Shaw, that this resolution be passed.

After some discussion, including the status of the lease sale and where it is, the resolution passed unanimously upon voice vote.

The text of the resolution follows:

Resolution of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
Supporting Efforts to Protect Florida
from Offshore Oil Drilling and Exploration
June 19, 2007

Whereas, Florida's coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, beaches, fisheries, endangered species, tourism and quality of life depend upon clean ocean waters. The impacts of drilling muds and spills caused by offshore oil development can be carried by great distances by the Gulf Loop Current onto Florida's coasts. Routine drilling muds release thousands of pounds of toxic chemicals into the environment, harm fish, corals and marine mammals, and place Florida at risk of a large or catastrophic spill, and

Whereas, Floridians and especially residents of the Florida Keys have been unified in their opposition to offshore oil drilling and exploration for many years, and

Whereas, the area south of 26 degrees North Latitude, approximately where Marco Island, Florida, lies, and all waters outside of Lease Sale 181, are under a Congressional moratorium for oil and natural gas exploration and development, thanks to years of past efforts, and

Whereas, the Congressional and a Presidential moratoria on offshore oil are now up for review, at a time when our coral reefs are endangered and need more, not less, protection to survive. The White House agreement with the State of Florida, that currently protects most of Lease Sale 181, a hotly contested area in the Gulf, expires this year, and

Whereas, the U.S. Interior Department released a new Five Year Plan for Oil and Gas Development and Exploration that undermines current protections for Florida's coral reefs. The current program runs through June 30, 2007. The next Five Year Plan would put a 4 million plus acre area on the auction block and proposed to rapidly make the west coast of Florida the most intensively-leased region of all currently-protected Outer Continental Shelf waters nationwide. In addition, it opens up the coast of Virginia and Alaska's fishery-rich Bristol Bay, and

Whereas, Florida Senators Mel Martinez (R) and Bill Nelson (D) sponsored legislation that Congress recently passed to protect coastal areas, but which opens up Lease Sale 181 to oil and natural gas drilling. The measure would not prevent development on roughly 700,000 acres in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, and

Whereas, after years of being unified against drilling, Florida's congressional members seem more divided and indecisive on the issue than ever.

Now, therefore, the Sanctuary Advisory Council of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary resolves as follows:

We support the strongest possible protection for Florida and other fragile marine environments from the impacts of offshore oil and gas exploration and development, including additional efforts to expand exclusionary zones, extension of Presidential and Congressional moratoria, and

defeat of legislation to open up Lease Sale 181 to offshore oil. We encourage our Florida Congressmen and Florida Governor Charles Crist to work in support of these goals.

We oppose the Department of the Interior's new 5 Year Plan and the legislation filed to remove natural gas from the moratoria. We oppose any new offshore oil and gas leasing, exploration, drilling activity and seismic inventories affecting Florida's coast and support new Congressional moratoria against offshore oil drilling near Florida and other fragile coastal areas.

We support a permanent cancellation of the 90 plus existing and active leases, some as close as 11 miles from our coast. Compensate the holders of those leases through rents due and royalty forgiveness for other current drilling activity. We support cancelling any activity in Lease Sale 181 and establishment of a buffer zone against drilling on Florida's east coast.

We resolve to request that the Superintendent forward this resolution to:

- * Honorable Norm Dicks, Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior and Environment, Committee on Appropriations, B-308 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
- * Honorable Todd Tiahrt, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior and Environment, Committee on Appropriations, 1016 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
- * Representative Bill Young, 2407 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515
- * Representative Connie Mack, 115 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
- * Representative Alan Boyd, 1227 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
- * Honorable Senator Bill Nelson, 716 Senate Hart Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
- * Honorable Senator Mel Martinez, 317 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
- * Honorable Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, 2160 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515
- * Governor Charles Crist, The Capitol, Tallahassee, FL 32301
- * Renee Orr, 5-Year Program Manager, Minerals Management Service (MS-4010), Room 3120, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, VA 20170.

Passed unanimously on this date: June 19, 2007.

It was noted that new business needs to be added to the agenda with the notice to the SAC, and not brought to the SAC at the end of the day without prior discussion. Chair Popham apologized that this was not done, and said he had asked Ms. Harrison at lunch to confirm some facts and to bring up the matter to the SAC. The best thing to do is to approve the agenda first thing in the morning, including and discuss any changes to it at that time. CDR Score noted that, in addition, advance copies of resolutions composed in advance of a meeting should be circulated to the SAC and be made available to the public.

Mr. Nedimyer congratulated Bruce Popham on the Clean Boatyard award his business recently received.

Mr. Causey stated he had good news. The House mark is \$79 million dollars, and the full House budget is \$21 billion; so far \$8 million has not been earmarked for the Northwest Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, as it was last time.

Adjourned, 4:15 p.m.

Submitted respectfully by Lilli Ferguson.