

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

October 11th, 2005
Marathon Garden Club

FINAL MINUTES

Members Present

Chris Bergh	Martin Moe
Ralph Boragine	Ken Nedimyer
Jack Curlett	George Neugent
Debra Harrison	Kathleen Patton
David Hawtof	Bruce Popham
Don Kincaid	Deborah Shaw
	Brad Simonds

Alternates Present

Tom Dillon
Walt Drabinski
Scott Fowler
Stephen Friedman
Jack Hildreth
Jim Sharpe

Call to Order/Introductions/Approval of Minutes/Adoption of Agenda

Chair Bruce Popham called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. George Neugent introduced Lee Lapid, the new executive director of Sanctuary Friends. Anne McCarthy introduced Sera Harold, the new Sanctuary education specialist in Key West. The Minutes were approved as presented. The Agenda was modified to include discussion of a proposed resolution on the Tamiami Trail and Everglades restoration. It was adopted as amended.

Acroporid Designation Working Group Update

Ken Nedimyer, as chair of the working group, requested that other members of the council join. Dr. Brian Keller will be the staff member. Jennifer Moore and Stephania Boulden of NOAA Fisheries will be asked to participate, as will members of the public from throughout the Keys. Meetings will take place in several locations. Brad Simonds, David Hawtof, Chris Bergh, Walt Drabinski, Ralph Boragine, Kathleen Patton, Martin Moe and DeeVon Quirolo have volunteered to sit on the group.

Public Comment

Vern Pokorski of Big Pine Civic Association distributed photographs of vessels in Pine Channel and expressed the views of the board concerning unregulated moored boats in nearshore waters. He said that vessels break loose from their anchors and damage property and that the Association is opposed to Monroe County establishing a mooring field in Pine Channel.

Ken Glatthorn, a ten-year resident of Piney Point subdivision expressed concern about vessels moored in Pine Channel. He said that there are serious safety issues involved. He requested an update from Rich Jones with Monroe County.

James Crawford of Big Pine Key requested a report from Mr. Jones. He said that a mooring field will not solve the problems of boats sinking at anchor.

Jeff Garvin of Big Pine Key said that there are three major issues concerning vessels moored in Pine Channel: safety, environment and growth. He mentioned derelict vessels and pumpout problems and requested that a mooring field not be established there.

Rhonda Williams of Jolly Roger Property Association on Little Torch indicated that she is gathering information concerning a pumpout facility and 40 boat rental moorings in Newfound Harbor.

Christina Trotter of the National Parks Conservation Association urged the advisory council to support the recommendations made in the resolution concerning the proposed Tamiami Skyway. In addition, she urged council members to adopt the proposed C-SOP resolution.

Discussion concerned accountability for moored vessels. It was established that FWC and the county have a program to deal with derelict vessels, and that most of Pine Channel is not a navigable waterway. Commissioner George Neugent arranged a meeting between county staff and the public concerned over Pine Channel moorings. Further discussion concerned exotic animals in the Florida Keys.

Sanctuary Superintendent's Report – Billy Causey (FKNMS)

Mr. Causey drew attention to the Situation Reports for the past two months. He mentioned the National Marine Sanctuary Program leadership team meeting in Alpena with the message of "Breaking Away". The program is regionalizing, with Mr. Causey as the acting director for the Southeast Region. Leigh Espy will be acting as sanctuary superintendent until CDR David Score returns from the R/V Nancy Foster. Dr. Brian Keller will be the science director working from the Bayboro campus in St. Petersburg.

Mr. Causey said that the fisheries management councils, under the auspices of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, wrote to the House Resources Committee requesting that authority be taken from National Marine Sanctuaries over living creatures in the oceans. He clarified that sanctuaries have authority over habitats, including the creatures that compose them. Council members agreed to formulate an appropriate response.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection Report – Kacky Andrews (FDEP)

Ms. Andrews reported that this is her final meeting before moving to Coastal States Organization in Washington, D.C. She said that it has been a pleasure to see how the council works, as governance is supposed to. She reported that efforts to have state sanctuary employees paid equivalent to their federal partners was not successful in the state legislature. She mentioned the Coral Reef Resilience Program, and the new Florida

Ocean Council. Discussion concerned the appropriate timing for attending Tortugas hearings before the Fish and Wildlife commissioners.

Sanctuary Law Enforcement Report – Captain Laurie Luher (FWC)

Captain Luher reported on grouper closures in the Gulf of Mexico. She said that the patrol boat for the Tortugas will be brought down to the Keys by barge from Seattle towards the end of January.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Report – Van Fischer (FWS)

Mr. Fischer reported that the refuges still do not have an official manager and that land acquisition on Big Pine and No Name keys continues.

Resolution of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and the C-SOP Advisory Team

Debra Harrison read the attached resolution into the record and requested support in favor from council members. Discussion concerned additional supporting information from a professional hydrologist, and the lack of notice on the agenda for interested parties. It was agreed to defer a decision until later in the agenda.

Strategic Planning Follow-Up: Mission Statement and Setting Priorities – Janice Fleischer (FlashResolutions)

Ms. Fleischer facilitated prioritization of issues identified at the workshop in October. Discussion concerned ranking and the primacy of goal-oriented priorities. The ranking is a way of focusing in on goals. Ms. Fleischer then facilitated the writing of a Mission Statement for the Advisory Council. It was agreed to form a working group via e-mail to finalize the wording. Martin Moe (as chair), Tom Dillon, Kathleen Patton, Deb Shaw and George Neugent agreed to participate. Leigh Espy will be the staff member. The final version will be brought to the full council for approval in December.

Illegal Lobster Habitat – LT Joe Scarpa (FWC)

LT Scarpa reported on a major law enforcement action taken in August, including cases that were made. He showed remarkable video footage of individuals in the act of pursuing illegal acts on deliberately placed habitat. He also made recommendations for changes to be presented to the Fish and Wildlife commissioners at their December meeting. Among his recommendations are additional marking for gear and increased fines for violations. Sanctuary officers demonstrated illegal habitat and fish traps to the council.

Public Comment

Captain Steve Leopold of the Islamorada Charter Boat Association gave a history of the association's request for hairhook permits for ballyhoo in designated Sanctuary Preservation Areas in the Upper Keys. He recommended that the pilot project be continued for a second year for all those permit holders that submitted logs to the Sanctuary.

Captain Rob Dixon of Islamorada echoed Capt. Leopold's sentiments.

Manny Rabelo, a commercial lobster diver, asked if resource destruction is the main problem for habitats. Mr. Causey clarified that it is, as well as changing lobster behavior.

Ron Gage, a commercial lobster diver, argued that habitat provides more habitat and does less damage to sanctuary resources than trap fishing.

John Walton of Marathon said, in response to LT Scarpa's remarks, that he dives bridges and would not feel safe tethered to a surface float. He recommended that the same changes apply to marine life collectors as well as commercial divers.

Rust Maltz of Marathon said that casitas attract life, and that if properly installed they do not damage the bottom.

Council members thanked them for attending the meeting and bringing the debate into public.

Ballyhoo Hairhook Permit Working Group – Ken Nedimyer and Debra Harrison (SAC co-chairs)

Discussion concerned the process and permit compliance. After significant discussion, Dr. Keller and Mr. Causey pointed out that research scientists are routinely awarded permits in the sanctuary despite sometimes sending in late reports. Mr. Causey said that the working group will advise the council, who will make recommendations to him. He will make the call on who receives permits for the second year of the pilot project. No major problems were reported by law enforcement.

Capt. Brad Simonds moved that the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council recommend to sanctuary managers that ballyhoo hairhook permits be renewed for the 22 persons who returned log books, for the period October 15, 2005 through May 31st, 2006. The motion was seconded by Ken Nedimyer and passed on roll call vote by a majority of 12-1.

C-SOP Resolution – Debra Harrison

Ms. Harrison brought the motion back to the table. Capt. Brad Simonds seconded the motion and it passed unanimously on roll call vote.

Tamiami Trail Resolution – George Neugent

Commissioner Neugent requested council support for the attached resolutions. Ms. Harrison seconded the motion and after discussion concerning the impacts of nutrients on Florida Bay, the motion passed unanimously upon roll call vote.

Naming the New Tortugas Patrol Vessel

Richard Grathwohl requested in writing that council members pass a resolution in support of naming the new vessel the P/V Peter Gladding, in honor of deceased council member and Tortugas Ecological Reserve advocate and commercial hand-line fisherman Peter

Gladding. Officer Charlie Mallow stated that as a crew member on the vessel, he and LT Joe Scarpa would be proud to have the name of their mentor on the bow and stern of the boat. Seconded by Ms. Harrison, the motion passed unanimously upon voice vote.

Unfinished Business

Discussion concerned the amount of notice time for adding items to the agenda. Cheva Heck said that to reach the major print publications in the Keys, two weeks is adequate notice.

Mr. Causey reminded council members of the forthcoming Carnegie Centennial Celebration in Key West and the Dry Tortugas.

Adjourn
4:45 p.m.

Submitted respectfully by

Fiona Wilmot