

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC)  
Recommendations Based on the SAC Marine Zoning Workshop March 25, 2008  
June 11, 2008 DRAFT**

**[Presented to the SAC at the June 17, 2008 meeting as overarching guidance  
for the FKNMS staff; no motion for adoption made]**

The following recommendations were distilled from the comprehensive notes taken during the SAC Marine Zoning Workshop which took place on March 2008. Rich detail is available in the summary of breakout group discussions presented to and discussed by the SAC during the April 2008 SAC meeting, but these recommendations are intended to be more general in nature. They are designed as overarching guidance to FKNMS staff rather than a prescription for specific changes. Recommendations are lumped under the questions around which the workshop was organized with the following exceptions;

- Any changes to FKNMS zones or overall zoning approach should be based on the best available science and input from the people who would be affected by the changes.
- FKNMS resource users, managers, scientists and other stakeholders should engage in a discussion of the principles of zoning changes and reach consensus about what those principles should be prior to discussion of specific changes at specific locations.
- Ecologically as well as socially, the FKNMS does not stand alone and should engage in marine zoning discussions and processes of overlapping jurisdictions (i.e. the Keys' National Wildlife Refuges, State Aquatic Preserves, Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) neighboring MPA's (i.e. Biscayne, Dry Tortugas, and Everglades National Parks) and neighboring marine conservation initiatives (i.e. the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative) to help ensure ecosystem-wide conservation of shared resources.
- Law enforcement is the key to effective zone-based management.

*1. Collectively, do the FKNMS's five current zone types (i.e. Sanctuary Preservation Area, Ecological Reserve, Special Use Area [including Research Only Area], Wildlife Management Area, Existing Management Area) and the unzoned area address the FKNMS purpose and the goals and objectives for marine zones? In other words, do we have all the right tools in the toolbox and are we using the tools that we have effectively? Any suggestions?*

- The current zone types are among the right types to accomplish the FKNMS purpose, but other types are warranted.
- Special Use Areas (i.e. Research Only Areas, Recovery Areas and Restoration Areas) are not being used to their full potential.
- As rezoning takes place, the area-type currently described as "unzoned" should be classified and recognized as a zone type (e.g. "general use area", "multiple use area" or something to that effect).
- Temporal zoning (e.g. seasonal closures) should be considered as a tool for protecting spawning aggregations. If state and federal fisheries management authorities need to be

involved in this process, the FKNMS should request that they engage with the SAC, and the public as a whole, on this issue.

- Flexibility is called for in the use of Wildlife Management Areas. For example, when a bird nesting colony protected by a WMA disappears or relocates to a new island, the original WMA may be dissolved and a new one created around the new nesting island.

2. *Are the FKNMS's current zones sized appropriately to enable them to achieve the purposes for their zone types? Any suggestions?*

- Size matters. Cumulatively, the approximately 6% (the majority of which is concentrated in the Dry Tortugas region) of the FKNMS area that is closed to all extractive uses, or "take," is insufficient to achieve the FKNMS purpose.
- New and larger SPAs, no take buffers around existing SPAs and/or more ER's are warranted.

3. *Are the FKNMS's current zones located and arranged in such a way that they best meet their intended purposes, or are different locations or arrangements needed? Any suggestions?*

- The current zones were located and arranged with some fundamental reserve network design elements (i.e. representation of all habitat types, replication of all habitat types at multiple locations and connectivity among zones) in mind, but the current zoning network is not adequately representative.
- Gulf/Bay side habitats are almost completely unrepresented.
- While many habitat types (e.g. inshore patch reefs, mid-channel patch reefs, offshore patch reefs, reef margin, fore reef, deep reef, seagrass, hardbottom, mangrove, etc.) are represented, the current zoning network is not fully replicated.
- Each habitat type should be represented in each of the biogeographically distinct subregions of the FKNMS (i.e. Tortugas, Marquesas, Lower Keys, Middle Keys and Upper Keys) to achieve replication.
- Placement of the Tortugas Ecological Reserve and W. Sambos Ecological Reserve meets criteria for oceanographic connectivity to down-current areas of the ecosystem admirably. Changes to the zoning approach should take oceanographic connectivity into consideration.
- Inshore to offshore connectivity (e.g. from mangrove to seagrass to hardbottom and coral reef habitats and back again) is not fully realized in the Marquesas, Middle Keys and Upper Keys regions of the FKNMS.
- Connectivity from Gulf/Bayside habitats to Atlantic side habitats is not achieved in any region.
- Some refugia, or areas that can resist degradation and subsequently act as "seed sources" for ecosystem recovery, may be represented in the current zoning scheme, but new information about resilient reef areas that can serve as refugia should be taken into account in future zoning plans.
- Marine habitats, species populations and organisms of Florida Bay are integral parts of the Keys marine ecosystem. The FKNMS SAC and staff should be fully engaged in Everglades National Park's current General Management Planning process and subsequent dialogue and collaboration.

4. *Do any FKNMS zones or zone types have unintended or undesirable consequences for natural resources? Any suggestions?*

- Installation of mooring buoys attracts human use and associated impacts. Balance between minimization of anchor damage and potential increase in other forms of impact needs to be carefully considered.

5. *Do the current research and monitoring efforts detect effectiveness of the FKNMS zones? Any suggestions?*

- Research and monitoring results showing effectiveness for some zone success criteria are available but the results are not getting out to the public.
- Results of this research and monitoring that do get to the public but are not readily understood by people who lack scientific training.
- Translation of research and monitoring results into readily understandable terms is badly needed.