

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center, 35 East Quay Rd., Key West
Tuesday, December 9, 2008**

MOTION

Moved by Mr. Jon Fajans and seconded by Mr. Jason Bennis. The motion passed unanimously upon roll call vote.

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council requests the Sanctuary Superintendent to ask Everglades National Park to consider creating a mandatory boater education program, that would require licensing and certification, in their General Management Plan, when implemented, and share the results and best practices with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and other agencies, to help protect and reduce further prop scarring and damage to the seagrass bottom of Florida Bay since:

(1) Many commercial fishery species rely on seagrass habitat during some part of their life cycles including pink shrimp, lobster, red fish, and stone crab.

(2) Seagrass habitat helps to support a thriving, multi-million dollar recreational fishery including flats fishing for bonefish and tarpon.

(3) The estimated total value for Monroe County in 2006 for six seagrass dependent species added up to about \$25.8 million.

(4) More than 70% of Florida's recreational and commercial fish, crustaceans, and shellfish spend part of their lives in shallow water estuaries.

(5) The value in 2006 of the stone crab fishery in Monroe County was estimated at \$13,026,000.

(6) The value of the 2006 spiny lobster fishery in Monroe County was estimated at \$21,264,000.

(7) Yellowtail and gray snapper, brought in \$2.66 million in 2006 to Monroe County.

(8) Over \$200 million is spent yearly in Monroe County in the viewing of nature and wildlife that are directly connected to the health of the seagrass in Florida Bay.

(facts from Seagrass awareness materials).

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.