

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review
Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection
January 30, 2013**

Working Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Agenda

1. Working Group Admin Support, Resources, and Public Information (Jack Curlett and Beth Dieveney)
2. FKNMS Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review: Historical review / Current Marine Zoning & Regulatory Scheme (Sean Morton)
3. Mapping & Science Support (Chris Anderson)
4. Shallow Water Wildlife & Habitat Protection Work Plan & Objectives
5. Public Comment

Major Points of Discussion

1. The working group reviewed available resources, websites, and identified specific ground rules for how they will operate.

Working Group Discussion:

- Request that FKNMS staff provide guidance if ideas being discussed or put forth are unattainable or outside the scope of this process.
- Working Group recommendations need to be informed by the best available science and data, anecdotal information will need to be verified; this will help instill public trust in the working group process and recommendations.
- Differing input and opinions are welcome and it is the responsibility of the working group members to solicit and share opinions of others in community.

2. FKNMS Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review: Historical review / Current Marine Zoning and Regulatory Scheme.

Sean Morton, FKNMS Sanctuary Superintendent, made a presentation highlighting the relevant history of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, provided context for the current marine zoning and regulatory review process and outlined the charge to the three Sanctuary Advisory Council Working Groups. The presentation can be found at:
<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/shallowwater>.

Working Group Discussion:

- Catch and release fishing is a non-extractive use and should be considered when other non-extractive uses are considered.
- Sufficient funding for law enforcement is a concern.
- Consider lessons learned from other locations. For example, in Tampa Bay guides have been trained by Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to look for and report fisheries violations

3. Mapping and Science Support

Kathleen O’Keefe and Chris Anderson of FWC/Florida Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) demonstrated how to access and utilize the on-line data, mapping, and information tools. These can be found here: ocean.floridamarine.org/fknms_zone_review

Working Group Discussion:

- Provide seagrass shape files on shallow water mapping web page
- Request to separate out seagrass coverage from hardbottom areas on mapping page
- Provide/add data layers on recreational fishing and diving activities (locations of); and other socioeconomic data

4. Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection Work Plan and Objectives

Beth Dieveney, FKNMS Staff, gave a presentation and led a discussion about the Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection Working Group Objectives. The presentation, which can be found at: <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/shallowwater>, includes a map of the “study areas”.

Locations within the study areas but outside present FKNMS boundaries can be considered in the zoning and review process by the Sanctuary Advisory Council working groups.

Working Group Discussion:

- Highlighted the importance that this working group remain positive when considering options; some things that might not have been possible in the past may be possible in the future.
- The working group identified the values and recognizes the rights of various user groups.
- Noted the importance of ensuring science informs the recommendation of the working group
- Clarified that the working group can:
 - a. Recommend changes to existing zones, including related regulations/restrictions.
 - b. Consider new zone types to meet certain purposes; for example poll and troll zones
- Identified the following issues as items to consider:
 - a. Prop scarring impact to seagrass; of particular concern in the lower Keys
 - b. High intensity use areas, particularly on sand-bars, can cause significant damage to seagrass
 - c. Greater need for enhanced education and enforcement; lessons learned from other sites including Everglades National Park
 - d. Various user conflicts
 - e. Fisheries management may be discussed by this group, however, this issue is being addressed by relevant fisheries management agencies; an update will be provided at the summer Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting.
 - f. Public uses, both current and future important that this working group be proactive about identifying and considering potential new future uses
- Identified the following challenges:
 - a. Potential lack of scientific studies/base-line data in shallow zones; however can potentially use studies from other sites as reference (Bahamas and Cuba were two examples. For example, Cuba has pristine seagrass habitats, which could be helpful in predicting what the zones might look like over time with protections; Cuba has good catch and release/ flats fishery.)
- Working Group could benefit by hearing how the Personal Water Craft issue was resolved in Key West (presentation made at December 2012 Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting).

5. Public Comment

Public comment was made by five individuals:

- Ben Daughtry, Dynasty Marine Associates, Inc. and Sanctuary Advisory Council representative.
 - a. Thanked everyone for their time and effort. Noted that education and enforcement should be considered and offered marine life collectors as a knowledgeable resource for this working group.
- Dottie Moses, Key Largo Federation of Home Owner Associations.
 - a. Noted that Monroe County is considering a change to its master plan to allow dredging of a channel that was originally dredged over 50 years ago and has not been maintained since then. Concern was raised that this could open up the possibility for other property owners to apply for dredging permits.
- C.C. Moore, private citizen and long-time resident.
 - a. Thanked everyone for their work on this topic and encouraged the working group to consider the impact of sponging.
- Chris Bergh, The Nature Conservancy Director and Sanctuary Advisory Council co-chair.
 - a. Thanked everyone for participating and noted that he will be leading the Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection Working Group.
- Peggy Matthews, representative from the American Watercraft Association.
 - a. Noted the importance of considering socioeconomic impacts in its recommendations.

Follow-Up Actions for Working Group Members

1. Review relevant materials including the data and mapping information.
2. Read the public scoping comment.

Decision Items of Note

No decision items were before the working group at this meeting.