

# FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Doubletree, Key West, FL 33040

Tuesday, February 18, 2014

## FINAL MINUTES

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council met on Tuesday, February 18, 2014, in Key West, Florida. Public Categories and government agencies were present as indicated:

### Council Members

Conservation and Environment: Ken Nedimyer (Chair)  
Conservation and Environment: Chris Bergh (Vice-Chair)  
Boating Industry: Bruce Popham (absent)  
Citizen at Large – Lower Keys: David Hawtof  
Citizen at Large – Middle Keys: Vacant  
Citizen at Large – Upper Keys: David Makepeace  
Diving – Lower Keys: Don Kincaid  
Diving – Upper Keys: Rob Mitchell  
Education and Outreach: Martin Moe  
Elected County Official: George R. Neugent (absent)  
Fishing – Charter Fishing Flats Guide: Richard Grathwohl (absent)  
Fishing – Charter Sports Fishing: Steven Leopold  
Fishing – Commercial – Marine/Tropical: Ben Daughtry  
Fishing – Commercial – Shell/Scale: Jeff Cramer  
Fishing – Recreational: Jack Curlett  
Research and Monitoring: David Vaughan  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: Jerry Lorenz (absent)  
Submerged Cultural Resources: Corey Malcom  
Tourism – Lower Keys: Clinton Barras

### Council Alternates (present)

Boating Industry: Kenneth Reda  
Citizen at Large – Upper Keys: Suzy Roebing  
Diving – Lower Keys: Bob Smith  
Diving – Upper Keys: Tim Grollimund  
Fishing – Recreational: Bruce Frerer  
Fishing – Charter Sports Fishing: Rob Harris  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: Pete Frezza  
Tourism – Lower Keys: Joe Weatherby  
Tourism – Upper Keys: Eric Handte

### Agency Representatives

Florida Department of Environmental Protection: Joanna Walczak, represented by Jenna Sansguard  
FWC Division of Law Enforcement: Capt. Pat Langley, Captain David Dipre  
FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute: John Hunt (absent)

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service: Lauren Lugo/ Heather Blough  
NOAA Office of General Counsel: Karen Raine  
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement: Kenneth Blackburn, John O'Malley  
Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Park: Tracy Ziegler  
U.S. Coast Guard: LCDR Michael Capelli  
U.S. EPA: Pat Bradley (absent); Alternate: Steve Blackburn (absent)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuges Florida Keys: Nancy Finley (absent)  
U.S Navy: Ed Barham

## **I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL OF 12/10/13 DRAFT MEETING NOTES**

Chairperson Nedimyer called the meeting to order after the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **MOTION (Passed)**

Motion to approve the minutes from December 10, 2013 was made by Chris Bergh, seconded by Suzy Roebing. No objections or changes were made; minutes were approved.

### **MOTION (Passed)**

Motion to approve the meeting agenda was made by Ben Daughtry, seconded by Jack Curlett. No objections or changes were made; agenda was approved.

### **Chairperson's Comments**

Chairperson Nedimyer announced that thanks to Clinton Barras and floridakeys.com the meeting is being broadcast live on the internet and will be archived. He also indicated February 18, 2014 as the beginning of the recruitment period for the SAC Citizen at Large – Middle Keys member and alternate seats. He cited an article distributed by Billy Causey highlighting the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary as ranked 9<sup>th</sup> of the top 10 marine protected areas in the world, noting that despite its high ranking the FKNMS still lacks a formidable law enforcement presence.

## **II. MARINE ZONING AND REGULATORY REVIEW: UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

Beth Dieveney, FKNMS Deputy Superintendent for Science and Policy, presented an update on the progress of the Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review, highlighting the upcoming 2014 Ecosystem Protection working group meetings schedule and locations, along with goals to be accomplished this year. To view this presentation visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/140218regreviewupdate.pdf>

### **Discussion** (council members)

It was noted that communication and public participation are two issues that should be addressed for future Ecosystem Protection working group meetings. An outline of outreach avenues currently being utilized was presented including the FKNMS website, media outreach, radio show appearances, and the work the SAC does as a community body to spread the word to constituents. All meetings are open to the public. Several solutions were suggested including a diligent effort from SAC and working group members and FKNMS staff to target groups and individuals directly to communicate meeting information. The benefit of a flyer for SAC distribution throughout the community was also highlighted.

## **II. INTRODUCTION: FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ENFORCEMENT**

Superintendent Sean Morton introduced the meeting topic, law enforcement, noting that each law enforcement partner would outline their roles, responsibilities and enforcement assets. FKNMS focuses on resource protection and provides financial resources to Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to accomplish the law enforcement mission. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview of enforcement activities and for the SAC to offer ideas throughout the meeting for establishing a stronger enforcement presence on the water.

### **Discussion** (council members)

The Advisory Council circulated a draft motion to continue funding law enforcement programs within FKNMS and SAC members were asked to consider the day's discussion in order to advise expanding and adding detail to the motion.

## **III. FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ENFORCEMENT OVERVIEW**

Stephen Werndli, FKNMS Enforcement and Emergency Response Coordinator, provided an overview of all agencies present and presenting on the agenda, explaining how they work together. Discussed in detail were goals, available resources, and funding for each agency as well as how they are work together. He highlighted the Cooperative Enforcement Program, Joint Enforcement Agreements for the transfer of funds, and Division of Enforcement Plans that outline specific annual priorities. Enforcement support items that require funding include vehicles, vessels, assessment efforts, office space and equipment. To view this presentation visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/140218fknmsenforcementoverview.pdf>

## **IV. COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM – NOAA OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Jeff Radonski from the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) provided a presentation outlining the role of NOAA's OLE in protecting marine resources. FKNMS falls within NOAA OLE Southeast Division District 2 which includes South Florida and the Florida Keys, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean. Law enforcement priorities identified include fisheries legislation, observer harassment, protected resources, international marine trade, and marine sanctuaries. NOAA OLE provides primarily investigative services with two dedicated special agents for the Florida Keys, Kenny Blackburn and John O'Malley. To view this presentation visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/140218noaaoleenforcement.pdf>

### **Discussion** (council members)

It was noted that Jeff Radonski defined NOAA OLE as an investigative team which often reveals larger cases as more information is unveiled, therefore confirming concerns about examples from the presentation only capturing the tip of the iceberg in terms of actual violations.

A discussion continued concerning the success of violation fines collection and use. Jeff explained some of the revenue generated from fines goes to an asset forfeiture fund which, for instance, can pay for travel and rewards, and pays back state and other departments outside of the Joint Enforcement Agreement. These funds cannot be used to hire additional enforcement personnel.

SAC members raised concern that additional funding and resources are needed for NOAA OLE. Mr. Radonski responded with details for future plans including placement of more uniformed officers in the Southeast Region and also explained funds are received from ONMS and FKNMS for NOAA OLE to manage. He noted that the JEA with other agencies pays for patrol time, not investigative time. The long-term plan for NOAA OLE support in the region is to transition from investigative officers to uniformed officers. Ben Daughtry made a recommendation to support keeping the current special agents as well as gain the uniformed officers. Chris Bergh noted that this could be included in the enforcement motion to support additional funding for specific law enforcement needs. Captain David Dipre of FWC expressed the limitations of the FWC if NOAA OLE special agents were lost, explaining his organization cannot accomplish the same mission.

## **Break**

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ernie Piton, Florida Keys Commercial Fisherman's Association President

- Mr. Piton, a commercial fisherman out of Key Largo and member of the Ecosystem Protection working group, expressed an interest why no questions were asked about the upcoming working group meetings, and why nobody checked with members of the group to ensure everyone could attend the meetings. Ken Nedimyer indicated a discussion at the beginning of the SAC meeting addressing the issue. Sean Morton further explained a schedule was determined based on staff and room availability, taking into consideration as many personal conflicts as possible. Mr. Piton indicated 12 meetings for people who work seems extreme, and the SAC should be making decisions based on the results from the review of the past year. He claimed the working group provided direction, i.e., law enforcement, education, and water quality rather than land grabbing. He noted seeing boats anchoring on the reef or overfishing, leading him to believe the protected areas are not being managed properly. Therefore, he concluded, not only are regulations ineffective, but as commercial fishing groups are pushed out of marine areas, they are pushed on top of each other.

Rita Cotter, Monroe County Director for Congressman Garcia

- Ms. Cotter took the opportunity to introduce herself and asked for members and constituents to reach out to her about questions or federal issues.

## **VI. ENFORCEMENT – FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Captain David Dipre of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) presented an overview of his agency and how it partners with others. Of note, out of 36 FWC officers on the water, 6 are dedicated to FKNMS and can enforce state and federal regulations – all cases require due diligence and considerable time, and officers are also responsible for necessary paperwork and vessel maintenance. The FWC is responsible for patrolling state park areas and responds to turtle and marine mammal strandings, marine sanitation issues, alligator and crocodile issues, migrant interdiction, and derelict vessels. To view this presentation visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/140218fwcenforcement.pdf>

### **Discussion** (council members)

Question was raised regarding training citizens to help FWC with its mission and better know what to look for in order to report violations. FWC has hesitated to take an on the water volunteer approach in the past because some participants have exercised too much authority; however, it could be possible to educate citizens in more detail than has been done in the past, specifically what kind of information would need to be collected and reported for evidence. Education for tourists on jet skis could also be improved.

The point was made again that contacting state and federal government representatives is the best way to achieve the goal of more law enforcement.

A concern about the turnover rate for FWC officers was addressed. Currently within the Monroe County FWC there are 58 positions with 9 vacant. However, positions are shifted as funding priorities change and new officers are being moved from Northern Florida to Monroe County to help fill some of the vacant positions. More could be done to keep officers in the Keys longer.

Jeff Cramer specifically thanked FWC Captains Dipre and Langley for their consistent attendance at meetings for the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association and Organized Fishermen of Florida groups. Although these groups attempt to aid the FWC with smaller purchases, it is widely recognized that FWC is limited by man power and funding; therefore, the greatest obstacle is finding funds.

Confusion about FWC patrol hours lead to a clarifying discussion. It was explained out of 36 officers, five officers and one Lieutenant focus on sanctuary issues exclusively, logging an average of 6000 hours. Specifically, the 6000 hours is time spent on the water, while the other half of an officer's job is spent completing administrative duties as well as upkeep and transport of vessels. It was confirmed the JEA requires sanctuary officers to complete 917 patrol hours annually. There is an ongoing effort to reduce administrative requirements to ensure more patrol time on the water.

The lack of FWC manpower was addressed with a discussion of an ideal staffing plan. It was noted eight years ago an evaluation stated 25% more officers were needed.

On the topic of streamlining derelict vessels, it was also noted that limited staffing is part of the problem, with only two FWC officers handling such cases. Every derelict vessel found is property and must be administratively treated as such to avoid placing the financial burden of removal, storage, or destruction on the county.

### **LUNCH**

### **VII. ENFORCEMENT – U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

Steve Berger, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Enforcement Officer, gave a presentation outlining the responsibilities of the two enforcement officers in the four Wildlife Management Areas in the Keys including Key deer response, large snake response, habitat protection, environmental impact, visitor safety, and emergency response with partner agencies. To view this presentation visit: <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/140218enforcementusfws.pdf>

## **VIII. ENFORCEMENT – U.S. COAST GUARD**

Senior Chief Parenti, U.S. Coast Guard Station Islamorada Enforcement Division, presented an outline of the duties and responsibilities of the U.S. Coast Guard within the Keys and contributions to enforcement in the sanctuary. Although the Coast Guard must balance 11 missions mandated by law, primary activities are enforcement of the Exclusive Economic Zone, domestic fisheries laws, and ‘significant’ violations of high regional interest, which include sanctuary regulation violations, as well as Search and Rescue, training, drug interdiction, sanitation, and living marine resource protection. To view this presentation visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/140218uscgenforcement.pdf>

### **Discussion** (council members)

A question was raised regarding how the USCG prioritizes its use of funds. Priorities are set at a higher level and align with the national mission of the USCG. USCG works closely with the sanctuary and supports the mission of the sanctuary where possible. Funding for the Coast guard is spread across its 11 set initiatives, and unless representatives hear a lot of communication with regards to a change in funding, it will remain the same. Decisions and priorities are issued from Washington, D.C. and are Coast Guard wide. Local priorities can be changed, but still must work within the funds allotted.

## **IX. CIVIL PENALTY PROCESS – NOAA GENERAL COUNSEL ENFORCEMENT SECTION**

Karen Raine, NOAA General Counsel Enforcement Section (GCES) Senior Enforcement Attorney, and Jim Landon, NOAA General Counsel Enforcement Lead, offered a presentation outlining the function and effectiveness of the NOAA General Counsel, specifically how funds collected into NOAA’s Asset Forfeiture Funds from the Florida Keys civil court law enforcement cases are distributed. Returns to FKNMS usually range around \$30-\$40,000 per year and are used to support education and outreach materials, lobster brochures, repairs for vessels, disposal of derelict vessels, and enforcement resources and support; however, the money cannot pay salaries and there are other limitations to how these funds can be used. To view this presentation visit:

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/othermaterials/140218noaagcesenforcement.pdf>

### **Discussion** (council members)

Discussion revealed statistics for prosecuted cases in fiscal year 2013, indicating 29 cases referred, of which 12 were groundings, with three declined. If a violator expresses an inability to pay, a compromise is sought.

### **Break**

## **X. PANEL DISCUSSION: ENFORCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES, NEEDS, AND CHALLENGES FOR SANCTUARY AND MARINE ZONING MANAGEMENT**

### **Discussion** (council members)

On the question of ways to improve enforcement in the sanctuary, a more centralized command and control effort within and across agencies present to improve information sharing was offered as a possible solution. Specifically referring to enforcement efforts on the water, it was stressed that

intelligence gathering and information sharing should be detailed and accurate to enhance an officer's ability to locate violators. Increased manpower was discussed, FWC could improve dispatch services, offer three year contractual agreements for officers to reduce turnover rate, or the sanctuary could contract others such as the Monroe County Sheriff's office all in an effort to reduce enforcement costs.

Public education was also mentioned as a method to reduce the need for law enforcement efforts, or at least reduce damage. Inexperienced boaters would benefit greatly from more intensive education, including procedure in cases of grounding, illegal anchoring, and fishing violations where most damage is done. A targeted enforcement initiative to educate public about areas affected most frequently would also be beneficial.

Referencing the marine zoning and regulatory review process, the question arose concerning what the SAC should keep in mind as far as enhancing enforcement. Setting reasonable expectations of enforceability of new regulations was noted as a concern, as well as circulating new information to the public. It was suggested any new regulations should not be considered enforceable for at least six months to allow time for the public to become educated. In order to prosecute violators, officers and prosecutors need to be confident all measures were taken to educate and inform the public.

Considering existing regulations and any potential modifications, measures could be taken to improve enforceability. For example, creating zones with consistent shapes (squares), sizes, and marking patterns not only makes enforcement simpler, but makes displays to the public easier to understand as well. It was suggested enforceability would greatly improve if all regulations were made consistent throughout zones, and the total number of protected areas was reduced to create a single larger area. However, none of these ideas will reduce transit time or eliminate the time enforcement officers need to check the reef line and protected areas. It was pointed out that the partnership between the FWC and the Coast Guard using planes to fly over has been beneficial in Tortugas South, thanks in part to the simple structure of the zone, making it easier to see and track from above.

To aid enforceability, a suggestion was also made to register vessels in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and issue an identifier indicating the boater has completed a boater education course. One possible identifier suggested includes a decal or stamp on a fishing license, similar to the lobster stamp, while another could be an annual changing decal on vessel registrations. Funds from this process would also be dedicated to the mission, whether that is education, law enforcement, etc. However, it was noted the State of Florida may be resistant to raising the price of a fishing license or registration fees because this would be perceived as an additional tax.

The question was addressed whether money could be raised through private sources and then be used to hire more officers. There are times when officers are contracted by private companies, known as enhanced patrol, and these funds go to the State which filters it back down. Another example provided was funds from license plates that fund panther and manatee officers. It was noted that if funds are provided from private sources they cannot be used to hire full time, regular officers. Further restrictions exist under Federal law to accepting a gift under the Gift Act, and the Anti-augmentation Act, which does not allow additional funds to be provided to an agency for an activity than was provided through the Congressional budget.

On the topic of the motion being drafted by the SAC in reference to boosting law enforcement in the sanctuary, a grassroots effort lobbying representatives on an individual basis, not as a unified body, was encouraged.

Again referencing the motion, specifically the priorities of the JEA, FWC dispatch and efficient sharing of information between agencies were noted as important. It was also mentioned including in the motion realistic, meaningful, and concrete numbers representing specific enforcement needs and goals.

In conclusion, a recommendation was made to hold the motion and to instead meet and develop another draft with more concise targets for further discussion at the April 15 2014 Advisory Council meeting.

## **Break**

### **XI. NOMINATIONS FOR SAC CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR ELECTION IN APRIL 2014**

Chairperson Ken Nedimyer announced the SAC is now accepting nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair two year terms. Although Chris Bergh is not present, both Ken Nedimyer and Mr. Bergh agreed to continue in their positions if nominated. However, Chris Bergh expressed he does not wish to be the Chair in the future and would like other interested parties to consider stepping into the Vice-Chair role. Martin Moe nominated Ken Nedimyer for Chair and Chris Bergh for Vice-Chair. Mr. Nedimyer accepted and indicated Mr. Bergh did as well, but pointed out nominations were still welcome until the April 15<sup>th</sup> SAC meeting, at which time there will be a vote.

### **XII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT & AGENCY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS: DEP, FWC, NOAA NMFS SOUTHEAST REGION, NOAA OGCES, NOAA OLE, NPS, USCG, USEPA, USFWS AND US NAVY.**

#### **NOAA Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Report, Sean Morton**

- Science journal *Nature* published a study ranking marine protected areas around the world, specifically the criteria that form a MPA, in which the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, with a focus on the Tortugas Ecological Reserve, was the only U.S. MPA to make an appearance at the top of the journal's ranking. One of five criteria which designate a marine protected area is law enforcement. The article can be found at <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nature13022.html> with associated commentary at <http://news.sciencemag.org/plants-animals/2014/02/why-wont-simply-creating-lots-marine-reserves-save-sea-life>
- The EPA, which manages the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program, prepared their biannual update to Congress, including updates and status of all projects within the WQPP. The report is posted on the EPA website at [http://ocean.floridamarine.org/FKNMS\\_WQPP/pages/wqpp.html](http://ocean.floridamarine.org/FKNMS_WQPP/pages/wqpp.html)

#### **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Report, Jenna Sansguard**

- Last week the DEP & EPA held a meeting of the FKNMS WQPP Steering Committee. Updates were given on the implementation status for the Monroe County Wastewater Plan, the canal restoration efforts, and the DEP Clean Marina Program including the Clean Vessel Act grants available for sewage pump-out systems in Monroe County. The CVA grants



provide funding for pump-outs up to 75% with a 25% match and DEP's web page provides all the details:<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina/cva/default.htm>

- This week, the DEP SAC representative Joanna Walczak and DEP Coastal Office Director Kevin Claridge are representing the State of Florida at meetings of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) and the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee, held in Washington, D.C. Highlights of the meeting included updates on the USCRTF Watershed Partnership Initiative coordination in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and American Samoa; the National Ocean Policy Strategic Action Plans; updates on the new (still pending) coral Endangered Species Act listings; and work done by the USCRTF's Injury Response Tools & Mitigation Working Group. The next USCRTF meeting will be held in fall 2014 in Hawaii and will focus on climate change, tourism initiatives, natural disaster response, and watershed restoration issues.
- Finally, long-time John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park Manager Pat Wells retired in late January. A new Manager is not expected to be placed until at least April, but in the meantime, Bob Bodner will be Acting Manager. The FDEP would like to thank Pat for all of his tremendous efforts over the years and wish him a very relaxing retirement.

#### **FWC, Division of Law Enforcement Report, Capt. Pat Langley**

- Although December and January were slow, there were 18 groundings in December and 16 groundings in January for a total of 34. The FWC also followed up on a complaint that Sanctuary Preservation Areas were being fished after dark by extending weekend patrols until 2am. However, only one boat was found on patrols from Sombrero Reef to Carysfort Reef.
- Unique searches were conducted in the Upper Keys. Hunts for overdue canoes, two missing PWCs in the Everglades, and a suicidal man who jumped into the water at Cow Key Channel late at night all ended well with the return of property and the rescue of the man.
- A boat Captain was arrested for forgery of 300 stone crab certificates.
- The crew of the Peter Gladding was awarded 2013 Team of the Year for FWC.

#### **NOAA National Marine Fisheries Report, Lauren Lugo**

- Lauren Lugo announced she will be turning over her seat on the SAC to Heather Blough. Heather has worked for Fisheries Service Southeast Region for 11 years and directly for Roy Crabtree for eight years, acting as his policy advisor and special assistant on all things management and regulatory.
- NMFS has a new Assistant Administrator, Eileen Sobeck, who started approximately January 15<sup>th</sup> into the politically appointed position.
- Joint South Florida Fisheries Management Committee, comprised of members from both the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils, met in January to discuss cross jurisdictional problems. The next committee meeting will most likely be in July. The Gulf Council will hold meetings in Key West June 23-27, and the South Atlantic Council will meet in June. Information on progress of the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' move towards Joint South Florida Management can be found here:  
[http://www.gulfcouncil.org/resources/council\\_meeting\\_briefing\\_books.php](http://www.gulfcouncil.org/resources/council_meeting_briefing_books.php).
- Ms. Lugo also passed along a thank you from to the marine mammal team to the sanctuary for responding to pilot whale strandings in December.

**NOAA Office of General Council Report, Karen Raine**

- Settlements on cases this fiscal year include: an Area to be Avoided settled for the full amount of \$6,000, a grounding case which settled for \$1,800.

**NOAA Office of Law Enforcement Report, Kenny Blackburn**

- The NOAA OLE handled several federal proceedings in criminal court in Key West. Referencing Operation Rock Bottom Phase 14, Country Critters and President Jonathan Hale pled not guilty to sale and purchase of illegally harvested protected live rock and corals from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The products were allegedly mislabeled and resold as foreign items. Hale was indicted in November, with travel restrictions and a \$25,000 corporate security bond. The trial resumes in March.
- In reference to Operation Rock Bottom Phase 15, Jared Teeter of Tropical Fish Transshippers pled guilty after a change of plea and sentencing. He earned two years of probation, a \$1,000 fine, and a \$4,000 payment to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Tropical Transshippers the company received three years of probation, a \$1,000 fine, and a \$1,500 payment to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to be used for law enforcement functions. They were unlawfully transporting and selling juvenile nurse sharks and shipping them out of the country, along with corals, live rock, and tropical fish.
- OLE officers assisted in Juan Soca investigation with HIS.
- John O'Malley concluded his work with JTR and the FBI on the emerald case.

**National Park Service (NPS) Report, Tracy Ziegler, NPS**

- No report.

**United States Coast Guard (USCG) Report, LCDR Michael Capelli**

- In the past two months, the Coast guard responded to 30 incidents; for two, approximately \$6,000 was spent and 120 gallons of diesel fuel was recovered, one sunken vessel was recovered, two vessel fires were addressed, and three letters of warning and one notice of violation with a penalty of \$250 were issued.

**US EPA Report, Steve Blackburn**

- No report.

**USFWS Report, Nancy Finley**

- No report.

**US Navy (USN) Report, Ed Barham, USN**

- No report.

**National Marine Sanctuaries/Southeast Region Report, Billy Causey**

- No report.

**FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) Report, John Hunt**

- No report.

## **XII. UPCOMING MEETING AND CLOSING REMARKS**

Chairperson Nedimyer announced a notice will be published this day for the SAC recruitment for the Middle Keys – Citizen at Large member and alternate seats. Dave Hawtof, who is undergoing chemotherapy, attended the day's meeting and looked well. Sadly, Irene Hooper passed away February 13<sup>th</sup>. She was one of the founders of Seacamp and was the director for decades. A gesture in memorium from the SAC to Seacamp or Irene's sister Grace was suggested. The next meeting is April 15, 2014 in Islamorada at the Islander Resort.

## **XIII. ADJOURN**