

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Hyatt Place
1996 Overseas Highway
Marathon, FL 33050
Tuesday, December 8, 2015

MEETING SUMMARY

The following serves as a summary of the December 8, 2015 FKNMS Advisory Council Meeting. This summary does not constitute official minutes of the meeting. Draft meeting minutes will be distributed in advance of the February 16, 2016 Advisory Council Meeting for approval by the council.

NOAA Recreational Fishing Strategic Plan

Russ Dunn, NOAA's National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fisheries, provided information about NOAA's National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy and Implementation Plan. This initiative was launched due to an agency desire to establish and maintain a strong and trusting partnership with the recreational fishing community. Russ provided highlights since the inception of this initiative including two national saltwater recreational fisheries summits, regional listening sessions, national attitudes and perspectives surveys and an issue specific workshop. Outputs of this program include a National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy and Implementation Plan, which outline a vision, a suite of goals, principles and actions. He noted upcoming opportunities for engagement including a meeting of all Sanctuary Advisory Council recreational fishing members. To view the Policy and Implementation Plan visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/management/recreational/policy/>

Florida Bay Seagrass and Water Quality Monitoring Program and Updates on Current Condition

The advisory council received updates on seagrass and water quality monitoring program, long-term trends from these programs and current conditions related to the health of the Bay.

Seagrass

Jim Fourqurean from Florida International University presented data on the historical seagrass die off in the 1980's including the causes, confounding ecosystem impacts from the dying seagrass, and trajectory of recovery. He provided details about the current seagrass die-off situation and potential impacts in the coming months and years.

Water Quality

Chris Kelble from NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory presented on long term trends in the water quality of South Florida. Chris provided data from several different monitoring programs that operate throughout the Florida Keys and Florida Bay highlighting work conducted in Florida Bay relating elevating salinity levels with a decrease in juvenile spotted seatrout. Chris discussed water quality throughout the Florida Keys and parameters that effect eutrophication.

SAC Members Chris Bergh and Caroline McLaughlin presented a draft motion for consideration. This motion was discussed and minor alterations made due to the information provided by Jim Fourqurean and Chris Kelble. The final motion supported full implementation of Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan activities and promotes active intervention experiments to facilitate Florida Bay ecosystem recovery. Following public comment by two individuals the advisory council voted and the motion passed unanimously (20 in favor, 0 against).

Water Quality Protection Program – Canal Demonstration Projects

Rhonda Haag, Sustainability Program Manager for Monroe County, provided updates on the Canal Subcommittee of the Water Quality Protection Program. The Canal Subcommittee was established to assess and address water quality issues in the 502 residential canals in the Florida Keys. Since its inception, the Canal Subcommittee has developed a Canal Management Master Plan, mapped all canals, assessed water quality in all canals, and prioritized those canals in need of corrective action. These canal demonstration projects are intended to test the efficacy and cost of various technologies and develop a process through which future projects could be completed.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Mooring Buoy Campaign

Sean Morton, FKNMS Superintendent, provided information on a new Mooring Buoy Campaign, which was launched by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation in partnership with FURY Water Adventures, one of the sanctuary's Blue Star Operators. This year-long campaign is intended to raise awareness and funds for the mooring buoy program. For more information and to contribute visit: <http://nmsfocean.org/mooring-buoys>

Tourism Development Council – Highlights from Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary 25th Anniversary

Andy Newman, Sanctuary Advisory Council Tourism – Upper Keys Member presented highlights of the outreach products and audiences reached through the Monroe County Tourist Development Council's efforts to promote the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuaries 25th Anniversary. Twenty-five years of marine preservation was the feature story in the Keys Traveler: The Magazine (<http://www.fla-keys.com/pdf/KeysTraveler2016.pdf>), a one-minute Florida Keys and FKNMS promotional video was produced that was widely distributed and picked up by media outlets as far away as Alaska, and web and Facebook postings throughout the Anniversary week hit an even broader audience. To watch the video visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pugOu8mvF8>

Public Comment

No general public comment was made.

Public comment in response to the motion related to activities in Florida Bay was provided by two individuals:

- Bill Wickers, Key West Charter Boat Association
- Ron Cole, Citizen