

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

***Ocean Reef Cultural Center
200 Anchor Drive,
Ocean Reef Club, Key Largo, FL 33037
Tuesday, October 18, 2016***

MEETING SUMMARY

The following serves as a summary of the October 18, 2016 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 21, 2017 Advisory Council Meeting for approval by the council.

Coral Bleaching in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

The advisory council received updates on recent coral bleaching monitoring activities and impacts.

Brooke Gintert, graduate student with University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine Science provided information on a coral bleaching monitoring project at Cheeca Rocks in the Florida Keys. This project used 2-dimensional photomosaic analysis to document reef sites, measure change and processes over time to inform management questions and decisions.

Chris Bergh of The Nature Conservancy provided Florida Reef Resilience Program outcomes for the 2014 and 2015 bleaching season and preliminary results from 2016.

Community Observations and Citizen Science Opportunities

Cory Walter with Mote Marine Laboratory provided updates on two citizen science programs. Bleachwatch, modeled after a program in the Great Barrier Reef, trains recreational, commercial and scientific divers to help monitor and report on conditions at the reefs.

C-OCEAN – Community-Based Observations of Coastal Ecosystems and Assessment Network – is designed to provide early detection and assessment of biological events occurring in the Florida Keys and surrounding waters. The goal of the network is to help the scientific community better understand the nature and causes of marine events that adversely affect marine organisms, and assist ongoing research efforts to assess and monitor events as they develop. Understanding these events help scientists and managers determine whether the events are natural or are linked to human activities.

Promoting Best Management Practices for Recreational Fishing in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Nicole Uibel, FKNMS outreach and education staff member, presented a draft proposal for next steps to create a working group to help establish a voluntary education and recognition program for charter fishing operators including selecting an advisory council chair, potential external individual and organization membership, and a draft schedule for meetings. Following

discussion the Advisory Council selected Will Benson to serve as chair of this working group. Working group meetings will convene in early 2017.

Boater Education Options for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

As follow-up to discussion at the August 2016 meeting, the advisory council revisited options to promote better boater operator behavior and the potential for a targeted boater education program in the sanctuary, including mandatory boater education. A range of options for enhancing boater education will be considered as part of the management plan review process and will be analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Water Quality Protection Program Updates

Chris Bergh, Advisory Council representative to the Water Quality Protection Program provided updates on priorities and recent activities related to water quality including status of sewer hook-ups throughout the Florida Keys, efforts to address stormwater run-off and canal restoration demonstration projects.

Public Comment

Public comment was provided by two individuals:

- Nicole Vasilaros, National Marine Manufacturers Association
- Glenn Clyatt, Fisherman