

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Hyatt Place
1996 Overseas Highway
Marathon, FL 33050
Tuesday, April 18, 2017

MEETING SUMMARY

The following serves as a summary of the April 18, 2017 FKNMS Advisory Council Meeting. This summary does not constitute official minutes of the meeting. Draft meeting minutes will be distributed in advance of the June 20, 2017 Advisory Council Meeting for approval by the council.

Advisory Council Business

Florida Keys Shallow Water Boating Impact Analysis and Trends Assessment

Pete Frezza, Audubon Florida and South Florida Ecosystem Restoration FKNMS Member

Pete Frezza presented a resolution recommending that a recently completed 2017 FKNMS boating impact mapping dataset be considered as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and be used to guide implementation of measures to protect and restore shallow water habitats in the Florida Keys through boater's education, increased enforcement, improved channel marking and marine zoning. No public comment was heard. The resolution passed unanimously.

Advisory Council Chair and Vice Chair Selection

Ken Nedimyer and Chris Bergh, current Advisory Council Chair and Vice Chair

The Advisory Council selected Bruce Popham, Boating Industry member and Clinton Barras, Tourism – Lower Keys member as their new Chair and Vice Chair. Sanctuary Advisory Council officers can serve two consecutive two year terms. Ken Nedimyer, outgoing Chair, and Chris Bergh, outgoing Vice Chair, were acknowledge and thanked for their service.

Outcomes and Recommendations from Advisory Council Recreational Charter Fishing Working Group Status and Trends in the Florida Keys

Will Benson, Advisory Council Fishing – Charter Flats Guide alternative and working group chair and Nicole Uibel, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Will Benson and Nicole Uibel presented the recommendations of the Recreational Charter Fishing working group in support of development of a Blue Star Fishing Guide program. They presented information related to best management practices, process and incentives for participation and the overall goal and mission of such a program. Will then presented a resolution acknowledging the contribution of the Recreational – Charter Fishing Working Group and requesting that their recommendations be forwarded to the Sanctuary Superintendent for development of a Blue Star Fishing Guide program. One public comment was heard in support of such a program. The resolution passed unanimously.

Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review Status and Issue Update: Derelict and Abandoned Vessels & Towing and Salvage Operations

The Advisory Council heard a series of updates on the issue of derelict and abandoned vessels and towing and salvage operations. Beth Dieveney, sanctuary staff, provided context to the issue and the request by the Advisory Council that regulations related to these issues and potential impacts to sanctuary resources be considered as part of the FKNMS marine zoning and regulatory review process. Steve Werndli, sanctuary staff, provided context for this issue including the scope and scale of derelict and abandoned vessels in sanctuary waters, potential impacts to sanctuary resources, current federal, county and local authorities, and background on towing and salvage operations.

Rich Jones, Monroe County Marine Resources Office, provided background on the county's efforts to remove derelict vessels including costs, working with contractors, legal considerations, and efforts, both through education and legislation, to proactively address vessels at risk of becoming derelict.

Celia Hitchins, Monroe County Marine Resources Office, gave a presentation on the recently completed multi-partner derelict vessel removal effort in the Marquesas Keys. She highlighted the various partners and associated roles, the process to complete this effort from initial salvage assessment to environmental review and permitting, and noted the challenges to complete this effort such as weather, tides, operating in sensitive habitats, and coordinating all the necessary partners. Monroe County acknowledge John Coffin of Coffin Marine Services for his leadership and his teams' skill in successfully removing 31 derelict vessels from the Marquesas Keys.

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Update

Jennifer Koss, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Manager, provided an update on Coral Program priorities and strategic direction nationally and in Florida. Justine Kimball, Coral Program staff, provided background on a Coral Program Report Card designed to provide high-level status and trends for coral reefs in each of the States and Territories with coral reef resources. These documents are under development for Florida and American Samoa.

Public Comment

Public comment was heard from 1 individual:

- Andy Newman, NewmanPR and Advisory Council Tourism – Upper Keys Member