

MEETING SUMMARY

Coastal Oceans Task Force Meeting
Thursday October 9, 2014 1:30 PM
Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center
Center of Excellence in Coral Reef Ecosystems Science
8000 North Ocean Drive, Dania Beach, FL 33004

COTF members present:

John Haddox, Martin County Commission
Bonnie Fischer, Town of South Palm Beach
Claire Schubert, Town of Hillsboro Beach Commission
Stuart Dodd, Town of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea
Joanna Walczak, FDEP, Coral Reef Conservation Program
Jeff Torode, South Florida Dive Headquarters
John Sprague, MIAF
Dick Dodge, Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center

Alternates present:

Jocelyn Karaszia, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Kevin Senecal, Divers Direct
Ed Tichenor, Reef Rescue

COTF Members absent:

Steven Abrams, Palm Beach County Commission
James Byrne, The Nature Conservancy
Eula Clarke, City of Stuart
Dawn Pardo, City of Riviera Beach
Susan Haynie, City of Boca Raton
Kristin Jacobs, Broward County Commission
Alex Lewy, City of Hallandale Beach
Frank Caplan, Village of Key Biscayne
Daniel Dietch, Town of Surfside
Chuck Collins, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation, Regional Director
Dana Wusinich-Mendez, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Bob Jones, Southeastern Fisheries Association
Mike Kennedy, Recreational Fishing
Becky Hope, Port of Miami

Also present:

Meghan Balling- FDEP, Coral Reef Conservation Program
Mason Smith, FWC
Beam Furr, Broward County Commission (elect)
Danielle Graham, The Nature Conservancy
Erik Fischer, Town of South Palm Beach
Tanya Tweeten, South East Florida Sierra Club, Marine & Water Quality Team
Bob Gebbia, North Palm Beach League of Cities
Steve D'Oliveira, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea
Stephan Blaer, Miami-Dade
Paul Davis

Meeting started approximately 1:37 PM.

Roll was called. There was not a quorum present.

Presentation:

Ecosystem-based Management – *The Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary, A Case Study*, Dr. Billy Causey, Regional Director, Southeast Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Region, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Ocean Service which is under the US Department of Commerce.

The National Marine Sanctuary Act provides a resource protection strategy and designation process that focuses science, education and management programs on key ocean places. Currently, there are 14 sanctuaries in the United States, including the Marine National Monument in Hawaii.

The Definition of a Marine Protected Area as defined by the IUCN (The World Conservation Union) as:

"any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment." ¹

National Marine Sanctuaries are areas of the marine environment with special conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, cultural, archeological, or esthetic qualities. This is a multiple-use program.

Various programmatic elements enable NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas, to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural legacy. These elements include:

¹ Kelleher/Kennington, 1991. Guidelines for Establishing Marine Protected Areas

- Resource Protection
- Conservation Science
- Maritime Heritage
- Education/Outreach
- Community Involvement

In the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (as amended in 2000) Congress found that national marine sanctuaries managed in the National Marine Sanctuary System will:

- improve the conservation, understanding, management, and wise and sustainable use of marine resources
- enhance public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the marine environment
- maintain for future generations the habitat and the ecological services of the natural assemblage of living resources that inhabit these areas.

Among the “Purposes and Policies” of the Act, Congress directed the NMSS to facilitate to the extent compatible with the primary objective of resource protection, all public and private uses of the resources of these marine areas not prohibited pursuant to other authorities.

The Marine Sanctuary designation does not automatically make an area a “no take” zone. Using the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) established in 1989, as an example, habitat management of all types is a primary objective. FKNMS created areas to be avoided (ATBA) by large vessels with authority to write tickets, developed a water quality protection program and marine zoning. It has an emphasis on ecosystem-based management. The local, state and federal agencies are included in the management planning process. Oil and gas drilling or exploration are prohibited.

Marine Zoning is the setting aside of areas for specific activities to balance commercial and recreational interests with the need for a sustainable ecosystem.²

FKNMS has the following zones:

- Preservation Areas and Ecological Reserves – No Take Areas
- Wildlife Management Areas – Access, Speed and Boating Restrictions
- Special Use Areas – Research Only
- General use (94% of FKNMS) is “General Use”

FKNMS regulates the following activities to protect resources

- Spearfishing
- Marine Life / Aquarium Collection

² FKNMS Final Management Plan, 1996

- Fishing / Trapping / Gear Type
- Personal Watercraft
- Airboats / Waterskiing
- Vessel Speed / Wake / Motor
- Vessel Size / groundings / prop scaring
- Anchoring / Mooring
- Impacts to Corals, Seagrass & Mangroves
- Access
- Diving / Snorkeling
- Discharges / Land / Vessels
- Bottom Disturbances

The New Sanctuary Nomination Process

- Re-establishes the process by which the American public nominates special places as new National Marine Sanctuaries. (It had been deactivated in 1995)
- Is built around evaluative criteria and considerations directly connected to the NMSA
- Recognizes nationally significant resources and habitats, as well as economic incentives and collaborative partnerships

Nominations for new national marine sanctuaries (NMS) can come from anyone. Individuals, local, state, and tribal governments, academia, citizen groups, Sanctuary Advisory Councils and Non-governmental organizations.

Reestablishing the nomination process supports NOAA's ability to fulfill the mandate of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and supports the Administration's National Ocean Policy goal of ensuring healthy coastal communities and economies. The sanctuary nomination process replaces the inactive Site Evaluation List with community-based, criteria-driven proposals for new national marine sanctuaries. The final rule includes:

- criteria and considerations to evaluate nominations
- a guide to the nomination process
- responses to public comments on the proposed rule
- final regulations

Stakeholders will work together to build engagement and solicit nominations for areas as new national marine sanctuaries. Communities will be expected to identify opportunities for partnerships and collaborative management. Nominated areas will be reviewed by NOAA against the final criteria and considerations. The agency, if successful, may move forward with formal designation as a national marine sanctuary. All nominations will be made public via a dedicated website. New nominations do not equate to new sanctuary designations. Formal designation occurs in a separate, highly public process that often takes years to complete. The designation process is established by standards in the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

How You Can Help:

- Familiarize yourself with the process.
- Know the benefits – and needs – of our Sanctuary System.
- Engage with interested communities.
- Raise awareness in those that may not be aware.
- Support – directly or indirectly – future nominations.
- Talk to your members of Congress



Questions:

In your opinion, is it worthwhile to pursue nominating our area (north of Key Biscayne to Martin County) as a marine sanctuary? *Yes, it is an optimal situation.*

Would it be better to have the reef managed as a whole ecosystem (from the Dry Tortugas up to Martin County) instead of two or more sanctuaries? *It all depends, so it should be part of the discussion. I believe there are benefits both ways. It depends on what the communities' priorities are.*

What is the timeframe? Is there a deadline? *It is ongoing, but the faster the better. Probably 1-5 years. Right now there is no deadline.*

Is 2 ½ miles (the length of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea) too short of an area to be considered as a national marine sanctuary? *The smallest size of a successful marine preserve has been calculated to be 32 square kilometers so depending on far offshore you go you would have enough area.*

Does an area have to already have an abundance of resources in order to be considered or can it be an area that once did and has the capacity to rebound. *No, it can be a potential area.*

Comments:

I would encourage everyone to contact Commissioner George Neugent District 2 Key West if you have any questions regarding how important the marine sanctuary is to Monroe County. *B. Causey*

I believe that this should be added as one of the Task Force's higher ranked recommendations. *C. Schubert.*

Our Florida Reefs update: The management/action phase meetings are continuing and producing numerous ideas for recommendation. Is the Task Force amenable to reviewing the recommendations and providing commentary to the work group? Yes, that's fine. It will be emailed to all the members of the Task Force.

Nova has developed a marine planner, an online user friendly data platform that allows the public to access many years of marine maps and data instead of just research scientists and a reef use survey which is being used to poll the public regarding where and how they use the reefs.

Draft Recommendations: The list of current interim recommendations was sent to members. Task force members should be reviewing the current list in preparation for January's meeting. Additions can still be made up until then. We will also have an appendix for anyone who wants to be officially listed as having comments/objections on specific resolutions. The original intent was to then take the final list back to the respective governing bodies and ask for resolutions of support.

Inlet sand bypassing being considered as a regional issue, not community issue should be added to our list of recommendations. *C. Schubert* (Staff will add it to the list).

Our recommendations should be stated as regional goals.

Adding language that states how the recommendation will help meet the goals of the Task Force should be included in the recommendation. (Staff will modify the suggested recommendations)

New business: We will have holiday break and reconvene in January.

Public Comment: Our reefs are like a strand of pearls. They are to be protected because they are rare, and, because they are rare, they are valuable. *John Bohnsack*