

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

Coastal Oceans Task Force Meeting  
Thursday February 13, 2014  
Palm Beach County Planning, Zoning and Building Complex  
Vista Center Complex  
2300 N. Jog Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33411-2741

### COTF members present:

Steven Abrams, Palm Beach County Commission  
John Haddox, Martin County Commission  
Eula Clarke, City of Stuart  
Dana Wusinich-Mendez, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Jeff Torode, South Florida Dive Headquarters  
Mike Kennedy, Recreational Fishing  
Claire Schubert, Town of Hillsboro Beach Commission  
Joanna Walczak, FDEP  
Dick Dodge, NSUOC  
Alternates present:  
Ed Tichenor, Reef Rescue

### COTF Members absent:

Kristin Jacobs, Broward County Commission  
Dawn Pardo, City of Riviera Beach  
Frank Caplan, Village of Key Biscayne  
Phil Aridas, Town of Lantana  
Susan Haynie, City of Boca Raton  
Albert Jones, City of Dania Beach  
Michelle Kligman, Town of Surfside  
Jocelyn Karazsia, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (alt)  
Bob Jones, Southeastern Fisheries Association  
Becky Hope, Port of Miami  
Jamie Monty, FDEP  
Alex Lewy, City of Hallandale Beach  
James Byrne, TNC  
John Sprague, MIAF

### Also present:

Dan Bates, Palm Beach County  
Dan Clark, Cry of the Water  
Bob Gebbia, League of Cities, North Palm Beach  
Stephanie Bohnsack, Miami-Dade DRER-ERM  
Mason Smith, FWC – Marine Fisheries Management  
Christopher Boykin, FDEP  
Roll call - Roll was called. A quorum was not present

Presentations:

**FDEP Coral Reef Conservation Program**

**Awareness and Appreciation (AA) of the Southeast Florida Coral Reefs**

Christopher Boykin-Awareness & Appreciation Project Coordinator-FDEP

Coral Reefs are Important.

- Economy
- Storm protection
- Fisheries
- Medicine
- Most productive habitat in Florida

Coral Reefs are declining

- 97% decline at field stations in the keys and Caribbean
- Not just locally, but globally ...

Corals are one of the most fragile animals on the planet

- Need the temperature to be just right
- & good water quality

Where to start? (To educate and advise the public) consisting of

- 6 million residents
- 30 million visitors
- 4 counties
- 100 miles of coastline.
- 3 primary languages

Following SEIFCRI's Local Action Strategy document, what has been done? Here are some accomplishments.

AA#5 SEFCRI Website

- In English and Spanish, ADA features
- Contains school curriculum- K-12
- Curriculum is being revamped to be south Florida specific this summer.

AA #11 News Articles and Brochures-23% open rate (pretty good)

AA #10 Media Campaigns-currently featuring fishing regulations

- Bus Wraps
- New Third party validation PSAs (30-seconds) featuring-explaining why reefs are important.
  - Diver/Family Owned Dive Shop
  - Kite boarder (English / Spanish)
  - Angler (Bouncer Smith)
  - Celebrity
  - Seafood consumer/restaurant
  - Boat captain
- Movie Theatres

AA #7 Excursions for Elected Officials- did one in 2007

AA #23 Community Events

- 25 Event Days Per Year
- Multi-day Events (2-5 days)
- Friends of Nature Music Fest
- Port Salerno Seafood Fest
- Miami Boat Show

- Palm Beach Boat Show
- Marine Aquarium Conference of North America
- Speaker's Bureau
- Coral Identification Classes

#### AA #35 Traveling Coral Reef Resource Trunks

- 4 trunks rotating in each of the 4 county elementary school systems
- Have coral replicas, posters, books, DVDs.
- In process of being updated to be curriculum which is specific to south Florida.
- Created reef poster primarily for teachers

#### AA #37 Teacher Trainings

- Had to apply and agree to teach the curriculum.
- Held 9 Teacher Trainings to date (340+ teachers)
- Next two will be Spring 2014 for 6-8 grade teachers
- Curriculum sharing by teachers
- Fish & Coral Identification
- Field trip to the reef
- Network of more than 700 teachers

#### Facebook / Social Media- 1158 Likes

- Visit <http://ourfloridareefs.org/> & signup
- Like us on our Facebook page

#### Our Florida Reefs Website <http://ourfloridareefs.org>

- Is the largest project to date.
- 12 Community meetings to date
- Gateway for stakeholders to get more involved
- 7 different topic pages
- Public comment section

#### Recommendations

- Visit Our Florida Reefs Website <http://ourfloridareefs.org> and sign up
- Notify us of large scale community events or speaking opportunities
- Make informed seafood choices
- Be a steward for our planet (in every way)
- "Water is life" – conserve & protect it
- Use rain barrels, compost, recycle, and reduce your carbon footprint

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Presentation

##### **Marine Incidents on Southeast Florida's Coral Reefs**

Karen Bohnsack

Reef Resilience Coordinator -Florida Coastal Office-FDEP

There are large and complex issues that affect quality of the reefs. Two that we are talking about today are what we collectively call Marine Incidents. These consist of Marine Biological Disturbances and Marine Debris

Biological Disturbances – any disturbance that relates to a living organism- includes a large number of items, but mainly concerned about things that affect the marine organisms- i.e. coral bleaching, coral and sponge disease, fish kills, harmful algal blooms, invasive species etc.

Environmental indicators, a type of “Canary in the Coal Mine. An indicator that something is going or has gone wrong.

What causes them to happen?

- Can be caused by natural and artificial events; examples
  - Algal blooms can be caused by excessive fertilizer runoff (artificial) or upwelling (natural)
  - Coral bleaching- caused by poor water quality (artificial) or the water temperature too warm (natural).

Marine Debris (any manufactured object disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment, intentional or not)

- Size range from very small to very large.
- Categories-household items, regular trash, fishing debris.

Has serious effects besides looking ugly.,

- Coral- can be impacted by crushing or tissue abrasion.
- Sea life can ingest debris and become ill or die, or get entangled and starve.
- Can impact tourism-no one wants to dive on a reef or go to a beach that is covered in trash.
- Discarded fishing gear still catches and kills fish-depleting fishing stocks.
- Floating debris is a navigational hazard.

Osborne tire reef is a huge problem in south Florida.

- Just offshore of Broward county.
- Between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> reef lines.
- Started out in 1970's as an attempt to create an artificial reef.
- Between one and two million tires were deposited in approximately 65 feet of water.
- Bindings used to hold tires together corroded and tires are now rolling around sea floor less than 70 feet from the natural reef.
- There have been many attempts to remediate this. The most successful has been a partnership between the US Military, Broward County and the Department of Environment. Approximately 72,000 tires have been removed so far.

SEFCRI efforts to address these issues


SEAFAN-South East Florida Action Network

- Launched in 2012
- Community based reporting and response system for marine incidents; both biological and debris.
- Have sea going population observe and report incidents.
- More eyes and ears to cover more geographical areas. More information for research will be gathered even if a solution is not immediately found.
- One hotline number or website– SEAFAN will pass on the information to the appropriate entity.

Marine debris is its own program under the SEAFAN umbrella.

- Goals
  - Minimize the impacts of marine debris.
  - Large debris removal- items one person cannot remove alone.
    - Successfully removed large fishing net (30'x200') from 100 feet of water in 2013; required coordination between many agencies and groups.
  - Plan for more to be done.

- Educate the public of the impact of marine debris.
- Organize community reef cleanups



Year	# of Boats	# of Divers	Pieces of Debris Removed	Weight of Debris (lbs)	Volume of Debris (gal)
2011	1	17	60	110	30
2012	6	76	485	356.5	165.5
2013	12	146	1568	1072	849.7

Fishing and trash were the main components of the trash collected.

Challenges in dealing with biological disturbances and marine debris.

- Large area of operation. Northern border of Biscayne Bay National Park to St. Lucie Inlet.
- The science is not exact- causes are not always able to be determined- even if they are – nothing to be done.
- Contacting and educating public
- Response coordination. Many groups many specialties

Marine debris

- Where is it and where does it come from
- No way to stop it.
- Can come from hundreds of miles away
- Community engagement-how do we do it?
- Response coordination and cost
- Paperwork involved
- Osborne reef tire removal \$15 per tire.

Recommendation you can do

- Get the word out tell your friends, family, etc. about SEAFAN
- Pick up some trash yourself, report incidences to SEAFAN
- Support Best Practices for Water Management.
- Have trash and recycling containers at beach entrances.

Joanna Walczak-any suggestions on better ways to educate the public would be welcomed.

- Sandbar parties and the trash that results especially an issue.

New business

Ken Banks will present a list of recommendations at next month's meeting based on the education everyone has been receiving at these meetings.

League of Cities has been approached regarding appointing new members to replace chronically absent members. Chuck Collins has been appointed from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation (FFWC).

Public Comment

Dan Clark - Cry of the Water

- Concern regarding Port Everglades to Hillsboro Inlet proposed beach renourishment project.
- In his opinion it uses too much sand; 706,000 cubic yards is projected.

- Area is right in front of reef that has very large and old coral heads; some as big as 26' feet across.
- The project probably can't be stopped, but some procedures could be followed to prevent adverse impacts to the reef. He believes the surveys don't convey all the facts in regards to reef impacts.
- Suggested best management practices for beaches to be a future meeting topic. Suggested Dr. Hal Wanless (University of Miami) as a speaker, to learn how to make beaches more sustainable and reduce the need for future beach renourishment projects.
- Tire reef - maybe funds from Broward County Solid Waste Authority which is being shut down and/or Florida DOT tire disposal fund could be used to fund tire removal. It was decided that staff will investigate possibility of receiving funds from tire disposal fund and bring back information to Task Force.

Next scheduled meeting is March 13, 2014. Chair Abrams suggested FAU, Boca Campus as the site. The topic will be *The Implications of Climate Change on Southeast Florida Oceans*.