

MEETING SUMMARY

Coastal Oceans Task Force Meeting
Thursday January 8, 2015 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
Dawn Pardo, City of Riviera Beach
Claire Schubert, Town of Hillsboro Beach Commission
Stuart Dodd, Town of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea
Frank Caplan, Village of Key Biscayne
Ernie Marks, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation
Joanna Walczak, FDEP, Coral Reef Conservation Program
Dana Wusinich-Mendez, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Dick Dodge, Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center
Jeff Torode, South Florida Dive Headquarters
Mike Kennedy, Recreational Fishing
James Byrne, The Nature Conservancy
John Sprague, MIAF

Alternates present:

Ed Tichenor, Reef Rescue

COTF Members absent:

Steven Abrams, Palm Beach County Commission
Eula Clarke, City of Stuart
Susan Haynie, City of Boca Raton
Kristin Jacobs, Broward County Commission
Daniel Dietch, Town of Surfside
Bob Jones, Southeastern Fisheries Association
Becky Hope, Port of Miami

Also present:

Kathy Fitzpatrick, Martin County
Leanne Welch, Palm Beach County ERM
Chuck Collins

Meeting started approximately 1:35 PM.

Commissioner Haddox opened the meeting.

Roll was called. A quorum was present.

Commissioner Haddox welcomed Ernie Marks, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation who replaces Chuck Collins who retired last year.

A motion to approve the October 9, 2014 meeting summary was offered, seconded and passed.

Cameron Jaggart who is with the Pew Charitable Trust, said that the organization would like to present a presentation on forage fish to the Task Force. The Task Force voted to allow them to present.

Our Florida Reefs Work Group has made their list of recommendations. Ken Banks will review and indicate gaps between OFR and COTF recommendations with help from Dana Wusinich-Mendez.

Our Florida Reefs update: The educational phase is now complete and the group has started brainstorming. There are 191 initial recommendations or options that will now go through a review process to assess their feasibility. They will then go back to the working groups for prioritization. See www.ourfloridareefs.org for more information.

Draft Recommendations: After much discussion, the following was decided based on draft recommendations presentation:

Water Quality

Items 1, 2 and 3 will be combined under the heading Water Quality with subdivisions addressing specific recommendations on nutrient loading, water treatment, water supply and habitat restoration. Staff will bring back reformatted drafts to next meeting for further discussion.

Item 4 can be shortened to The Coastal Ocean Task Force should oppose any and all actions to investigate, support or allow offshore oil or fracking exploration on the Florida coast.

Include item 5 with 1, 2 and 3.

Beaches

Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are all related and should be combined as a regional sand management item. Add that the reef structure contributes to wave attenuations and, therefore, natural beach erosion prevention. This should be supported and best practices beach maintenance should be encouraged. As with Water Quality, staff will bring back reformatted drafts with an overarching statement and separate underlying sections for further discussion.

Discussion will resume at the next meeting starting with Fisheries conservation issues.

New business: NOAA announced the selection of Biscayne Bay as a Habitat Blue Print for the southeast United States region. The Habitat Blueprint is NOAA's strategy to integrate habitat conservation throughout the agency, focus efforts in priority areas, and leverage internal and external collaborations to achieve measurable benefits within key habitats such as rivers, coral reefs, and wetlands

Next meeting will be February 12 at the Boca Raton Community Center.