

SE Florida Coral Reef Fisheries Stakeholder Committee - Meeting 2

Virtual meeting via Zoom
6-8 pm, September 3, 2020

Summary

Overview

On Thursday, September 3rd the second Coral Reef Committee meeting was held virtually via Zoom. Project principal investigator Kai Lorenzen, facilitator Joy Hazell, project coordinator and online producer Susana Hervas attended the meeting.

Seventeen stakeholders, one Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff, one Florida Department of Environmental Protection employee, one Florida Sea Grant agent, and three observers attended the meeting.

The meeting objectives were to:

- Build community and trust
- Share reef ecosystem status and threats
- Identify information needs
- Strengthen committee membership and identity

Welcome

The meeting began with activities designed to set a positive, collaborative tone. Activities included introductions, an explanation and clarification of the meeting agenda and objectives. (Slides can be found as an appendix in this document.)

Introductions

All participants introduced themselves. There were eight participants who had been present during the first meeting, and nine who were new to this meeting. New participants had been suggested by the eight initial participants in Meeting #1. Below is a summary of participant introductions by affiliation.

Stakeholder 1: Charter vessel captain.

Stakeholder 2: President of the WPB Fishing Club.

Stakeholder 3: Captain previously involved in SEFCRI.

Stakeholder 4: Marine Industries Association of South Florida Industry Liaison. Used to be in SEFCRI when it first started.

Stakeholder 5: Commercial fisher and diver.

Stakeholder 6: Editor at Salt Water Sportsman magazine. Nationally televised fishing TV show in Discovery Channel. Angler.

Stakeholder 7: Recreational diver, spearfish.

Stakeholder 8: American Sportfishing Association.

Stakeholder 9: Angler and diver for 60 years. Trustee emeritus of the International Game Fish Association and IGFA hall of fame inductee.

Stakeholder 10: Passionate fisherman and activist of the reef.

Stakeholder 11: Associated with South Florida diving, fishing, boating, marine industry and law enforcement. Currently recreational angler via diving or boating.

Stakeholder 12: Coastal Conservation Association.

Stakeholder 13: Involved in the Marina business for 50 years.

Stakeholder 14: Tackle shop owner.

Stakeholder 15: Charter and competitive boat.

Stakeholder 16: Executive Director of Port Salerno Commercial Fishing Dock Authority and vice president of Marine Industries Association of Treasure Coast.

Stakeholder 17: President of Marine Industries Association of State of Florida. Involved in Marine Industries Association of Treasure Coast for 30 years.

Guest/Observer 1: Academic member of SEFCRI Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Guest/Observer 2: Executive Director of Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County.

Guest/Observer 3: American Sportfishing Association.

Agency 1: FDEP Coral Reef Conservation Program Manager and SEFCRI Chair.

Agency 2: Regional biologist FWC.

Agency 3: Florida Sea Grant Agent.

UF team: Principal investigator.

UF team: Project coordinator.

Group norms

The following group norms were suggested by the project team and discussed:

- Listen carefully
- Consider each idea
- Everyone participates
- No one dominates

- Tough on the issues, not on the people
- Minimize distractions

Zoom Related

- Keep your camera on (if possible)
- Wave your hand to make a comment (wave it as opposed to just raise it, it is easier to detect in zoom)
- Unmute to speak

In the discussion the following points were made:

- If necessary, facilitator will ensure that we hear from people we haven't heard from
- Is it ok if pictures/screenshots are taken during the meeting? They will only be used for things such as reports. Please message or email the project coordinator whether you agree or not so that we can keep record. She will remind participants if not contacted.

Operating under the Florida Sunshine Law

- Public can attend the meeting
- Reasonable notice of meetings
- Minutes recorded and open to public
- The law, in essence, is applicable to any gathering, whether formal or casual, of two or more members of the same board or commission to discuss some matter on which foreseeable action will be taken by the public board or commission.

Participants were reminded of the Sunshine Law during the meeting. It was emphasized with an example, that two committee members cannot talk the day before and decide on how to move your agenda forward. Conversations about committee issues must be discussed only within the meeting timeframe.

Meeting summary reminder

A meeting summary will be sent before two weeks.

Participants were asked to check it for consistency with what was said during the meeting. It is a useful tool to revisit what happened at each meeting.

The first and second committee meeting are not recorded, but in the future it might be useful to do so to make sure we have an accurate record of the meetings. Keep that in mind.

Recap from Meeting #1

What was said last meeting?

Stakeholder: We talked about problems we saw in the reef and how we would go about them.

Stakeholder: Disease issues and where it comes from. Difficult for us to turn it back around to where it was.

Stakeholder: Discussed why we are here. To make things look the way they were 20 or 30 years ago.

Stakeholder: We broke into groups to discuss. The main focus on their group was water quality and how it affected the reef. It was not solution oriented but rather talking about water quality as the biggest problem, although there are other areas.

Stakeholder: The reason the group got together was because there was disparity between how the recreational community felt about the previous process. There were some feelings that recreational anglers felt like it was the environmentalists / diving / educators vs the recreational fishers. We are very concerned about conservation but still want to have access.

Facilitator: All those are part of what happened in the first meeting. The first meeting was also to center the process and begin the process thinking about how we want the reef to look like for our children and grandchildren. We also asked who was missing, and there is where all the new folks come from since they were identified by the folks who were here last time.

Stakeholder: Appreciated breaking out into small groups. Gave a chance to talk between members.

Facilitator: This meeting will be to dive deeper into the threats. Rather than describe the reef we would like in the future, we would like to see how it is now.

Activity: Describe the state of the reef and related fisheries

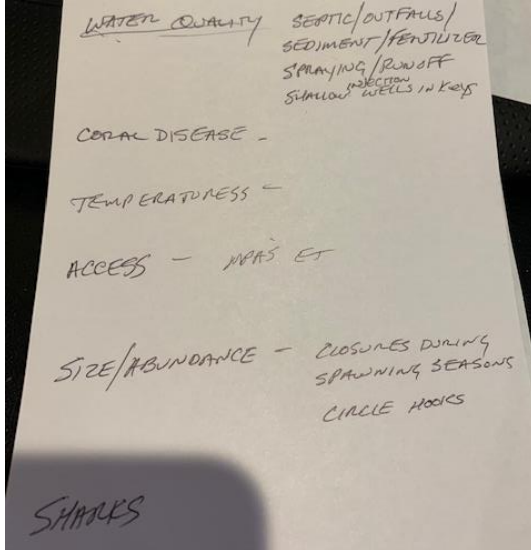
First each participant on their own wrote one sentence that described the state of the reef and 5 threats facing the South Florida Reef Tract.

Then, all stakeholders were divided into five groups for ten minutes so that they could be in smaller groups discussing their lists and creating a common one that they could share with the rest of the group.

After breaking out into five separate break out rooms, each group came back with the following notes:

Activity notes

Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There is a lack of regulation. DEP and WFC are not paid enough. They need and increase of budget. Nobody is looking at violations and anchoring.- Discharges and water quality are the greatest concern.- We need to make people conscious that Florida makes a living from tourism. We need to make the general population of tourists more aware of the environmental struggles.- There is an ability to have a focused plan now. Other attempts tended to leak over to the fishing unnecessarily. A structured / elemental approach that is goal oriented focusing on the reef can be the way to go and focusing on the reef can bring more agreement.- There is no issue with FWC looking at stock assessments. The real issues is degradation and enforcement.
Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Water quality is the biggest concern. E.g. Septic tank leakage, outfalls, sediment, fertilizer, spraying, runoff, shallow water injection wells leaking.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coral disease and temperatures. - Concern of size and abundance of fish. Number of fish is not what it used to be. More people are using the reef. - There need to be closures in specific areas. Some people in the group thought of closures during spawning seasons and using circle hooks as an option. Closing areas had agreement and disagreement within the group. - Depredation from sharks has also increased. 
Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a large amount of coral reef that is dying or dead. The percentage and reasons are unknown. It would be helpful to know what the diseases are caused by. - Water quality was the main issue: from Lake Okechobee discharges to storm water runoff, increased water temperature, outfalls, infrastructure, from the Mississippi to the Gulf, inlets and everything that feeds inlets. But we need to know more how water affects reef and what areas does it come from in different sections of the reef. - Fisheries are doing fairly well probably due to regulation and rules that FWC are putting in place. Some folks did not agree with this saying that there aren't fish like before. - Sharks are responsible for a fair amount of taking of the harvest as fishermen try to bring in their catch. It has been out of control for the last 5 or 6 years. It's concerning. - Let's try to better our coral. If we don't cure these diseases, we are going backwards. There are agencies and institutions working on it. - FWC do a remarkable work of constantly looking at fish species with limited funds. - Global warming is a big killer of our reefs but it's not something Florida alone can fix.
Group 4	<p>Five threats at local and global scales. "Think globally, act locally"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freshwater discharges. E.g. Septic tank leakages, sewage outfalls, much connectivity between inshore and offshore waters.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Groundings and anchoring issues. Off Palm Beach. There are lines left underwater that can break reefs. There are designated anchorages but you can often see anchoring issues. Issues of physical contact with the reef. Not just anchoring and lines, also snorkel and diving. 3. Climate change. Increase in average water temperatures that lead to coral bleaching, stony coral tissue disease, ocean acidification. 4. Dredging and beach nourishment projects. Dredging of inlets and channels. E.g. Miami, off palm beach. A subsection of this threat is coastal development. 5. Future threat of overfishing. More boats are being bought and the number one activity on boats is fishing. Stay vigilant in fishery management issues. Also managing invasive species like lionfish and managing shark depredation.
Group 5	<p>We have lost the reefs to a variety of factors and the reefs are nowhere anywhere close for many reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water quality. 2. Climate change. Ocean acidification, coral bleaching, slowing of the gulf stream because of too much water coming from Greenland. 3. Anchoring is destroying the reef 4. Turbidity from dredging and what is coming out from the inlets. 5. Must have educated public and enforcement. 6. Coral disease. Living corals are dying off. 7. Shark depredation – why is this happening? Can't protect fish with regulations when you lose so many fish on their way to the boat.

Original Planning for the Committee

The facilitator shared the original plan for the committee's first four meetings, as well as the suggested new plan to adapt to the covid situation. (Slides 10 and 11). The two main differences were the change in frequency of meetings and the addition of addressing information/science needs through webinars.

Change of meeting frequency: Meetings were planned to be 4-hour long and in person once per quarter. Now with virtual meetings of only 2 hours, this might have to change to two meetings per quarter.

The points of discussion for meeting #3 will be the problems identified today; those agreed on as well as the outliers. Following that meeting there will be public meetings held to see if it all resonates with the public and see if anything new arises.

Participants were reminded about their role as ambassadors to talk to their fishing network to let them know what they are doing and ask about the state of the reef and the biggest threats identified.

To address the science: Short webinars about information that participants choose can be created for committee members to watch online in their own time, so that they can come back to the meetings with this information. It is therefore important for the meeting organizers to know what the topics that interest the participants are. The OFR recommendations will also be brought in to discuss.

Stakeholder: There was a presentation given to FWC about coral reefs and diseases and it was a great overview.

Will you be willing to meet twice per quarter?

Stakeholder: We need to get together. It's an important issue and we need to meet twice per quarter. I want the science to know what is going on and I don't mind looking at webinars. That is the only way to get informed.

Stakeholder: We need at least two meetings quarterly if they are going to be 2 hrs.

Stakeholder: Science is the key. If we can get key webinars to watch again it would help people out to better understand the issues. We need the science for actions.

Stakeholder: There is a lot of resistance to MPA but I think there is something we can do with it. Not with climate change. But networks of MPAs would be possible like the Keys National Marine Sanctuary has developed.

Stakeholders will be emailed to gather more information about what webinars and science information they want to hear about.

Participants were reminded that the process is in a discussion phase, and no matter what topics come up, there are no decisions being made about any of them. They will be informed when decisions are being made.

Committee members

All seventeen stakeholders present agree to being members of the committee.

Two stakeholders wanted to bring another fishing stakeholder into the process.

Stakeholders will be contacted to know what the best way to communicate with them is.

Meeting summary will be sent within two weeks.

There will also be a new schedule sent out that matches a change to having two meetings per quarter.

They will be contacted to ask about the scientific information required for webinars.

Appendix

Fisheries and Conservation in the SE Florida Reef Tract: A New Stakeholder Process – Meeting 2



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

 **SERC**
SCHOOL OF FOREST RESOURCES & CONSERVATION

1.



2.



Agenda

- 6:00 Welcome and Introductions – Joy
- 6:40 Perceptions of reef ecosystem status and threats
- 7:30 Committee needs and feedback
- 7:35 Committee participants and identity
- 7:45 Housekeeping and Wrap up
- 7:50 Public Comment

3.

Introductions

Committee

- Name
- Affiliation
- Favorite trip

Guests

- Name
- Affiliation



4.

Group Norms

Customs, habits and expectations for how things will be done



- Listen carefully
- Consider each idea
- Everyone participates
- No one dominates
- Tough on the issues, not on the people
- Minimize distractions

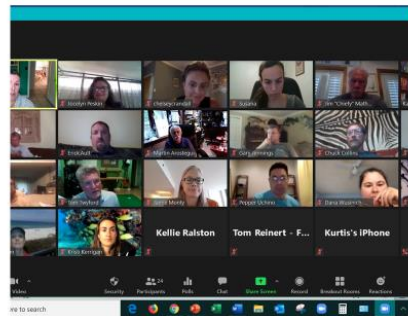
Zoom Related

- Keep your camera on
- Wave your hand to make a comment
- Unmute to speak

5.

Photos

- We will be taking photos of meetings for use in presentations and meeting reports
- If you agree to let us use your photo, please send Susanna a private message in chat or send her a separate email
- If you don't agree please send Susanna a private message in chat or a separate email



6.

Sunshine Laws

- Public can attend the meeting
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7.

Looking Back

What did we discuss in the first meeting?

- Welcome and Introductions
- Project Overview and Q&A
- The Future of the Florida Southeast Coral Reef
- Committee Formation and Additions



8.

Describe the state of the reef and related fisheries

- Individual Writing
 - Write one sentence that describes the state of the reef
 - Write 5 threats facing the South Florida Reef Tract
- Small Group Work
 - In groups of three discuss and list all of the threats



9.

Original Planning for Committee: Year 1

Committee Meeting 1: Committee membership, mode of operation

Committee Meeting 2: Committee member perceptions of reef ecosystem status, management/conservation issues and options

Public meetings to inform the wider fishing public about the project and the committee, and to obtain input on perceptions of reef ecosystem status and management/conservation issues and options from the wider public.

Committee Meeting 3: Review of scientific information on reef ecosystem and fisheries status & review of broad OFR management action recommendations

Committee Meeting 4: Identify potential recommended management actions for fisheries

10.

New Normal Planning for Committee: Year 1

Committee Meeting 1: Committee membership, mode of operation

Committee Meeting 2: Committee member perceptions of reef ecosystem status and threats

Committee Meeting 3: Management conservation options

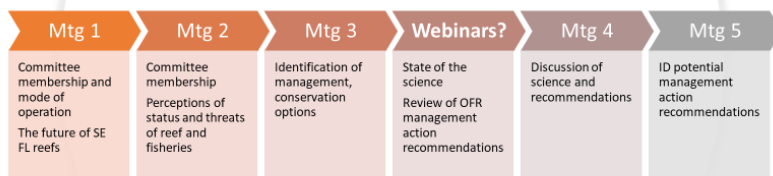
Public meetings to inform the wider fishing public about the project and the committee, and to obtain input on perceptions of reef ecosystem status and management/conservation issues and options from the wider public.

Committee Meeting 4: Review of scientific information on reef ecosystem and fisheries status & review of broad OFR management action recommendations – *How do we do this?*

Committee Meeting 5: Identify potential recommended management actions for fisheries

11.

Process Proposal: Our New Normal



12.

Questions for the Committee

- Short webinars, live and recorded, on key scientific information & topics
 - Review of broad OFR management action recommendations
 - What key scientific topics?
- More frequent meetings?



13.



Committee member perceptions of management and conservation options

Next Meeting

When and how?

14.