

Coral ECA Fisheries Stakeholder Committee - Meeting 10 part 2

Virtual meeting via Zoom
6-8 pm, Tuesday February 10th 2022

Summary – February 10th

Overview

On Tuesday, February 10th the second part of two of the tenth Fishery Stakeholder Committee meetings was held virtually via Zoom. Project principal investigator Kai Lorenzen, facilitator Joy Hazell and co-facilitator Susana Hervas attended the meeting.

Fourteen committee members, five members of the public, two Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff, and three Florida Department of Environmental Protection employees attended the meeting.

The meeting objectives were to:

- Review emerging recommendations
- Co-develop survey for constituency

Welcome

The start of the meeting was a quick presentation with an explanation and clarification of the meeting agenda and objectives, reminder of group norms – adding a new one, to stay on task - and sunshine law (Slides in Appendix 1.).

Group Activity

The group started from where they left off. They were presented with the remaining fisheries recommendations from the last meeting that had not been addressed and seven other recommendation ideas that ranked high in the support that they had from the committee's survey.

To better stay on task, committee members were reminded that these are draft recommendations, that there should be a balance between discussion and moving forward and to specifically think about the wording and how specific the recommendation is.

Some recommendations were presented by theme so that the group could decide on whether combining ideas or defining them separately.

Recommendation:

1. Develop a network of key groups, CCA, ASA, fishing clubs, tropical fish collectors to standardize a process of reporting fishing information and trends - managed by FWC

(NB. Already done, but not in a formalized way.)

Notes:

- Not mentioned billfish foundation or IGFA.
- Those could have been examples of groups. Because list should be more extensive. E.g. commercial and charter groups.
- E.g. captains for clean water
- Support it if not just limited to that list. That are more groups to be added – can be determined later.
- Commercial diving can be added too.
- Reword for more inclusivity. Not try to list all groups but examples.
- Develop communication network, not just a network where people in these groups and people in general can come to FWC and communicate. Would get more data periodically
- Link tied to public to report and monitor
- This exists through third party apps but FWC could work on that
- Be inclusive of recreational divers, dive boats. No need to be seen as excluding them
- So much of what we talk about is being done.
- Catches must be reported to NMFS
- These things exist
- Synthesize better the information – a big ask.
- Good recommendation if streamlined
- Standardize and/or synthesize*
- Find out gaps and synthesize what is being done
- Data comes in from third party sources, but could do with providing extra information that data collection is not currently showing as anglers in the water see it. Could be improved, but a lot of it is already happening.

2. No anchoring on the reef *(NB. No anchoring allowed, but maybe enforcement is an issue?)*

(Other recommendation related to the topic of anchoring)

“Educate users with signage at boat ramps and marinas identifying the importance of using mooring buoys and not anchoring adjacent to the buoys”

Notes:

- Signage is so overwhelming people don't read it anymore

- Not sure another sign is the best answer. We need to get the information out but not sure in the form of a sign
- There is a publication that identifies bottom surfaces
- There is room for more of them (signs)
- Inland or shallow reef situation?
- Divide up areas where you supply buoys, and if designated as mooring field, then cannot anchor by definition
- Run into state law complications. Would need special management zones where you put buoys on each corner. Gulf stream can take them away.
- Without sign and buoys it is not enforceable, people won't know where it is possible to anchor
- Already being done. Challenge with mooring buoys is not installation or equipment but maintenance.
- Should have more, lots of opportunity in nearshore reefs to prevent anchoring on coral.
- Mooring field, unless usage specific, people will tie to it and never leave. Like they do in inshore mooring field. May have enforcement issues. Could have sailboat tied to it for weeks at a time.
- Could be addressed as: cannot anchor overnight.
- Florida Coral Reef Protection Act. Cannot anchor, DEP enforces Act. Small staff to enforce. Minimal staff on water. FWC does not enforce it.
- Already illegal to anchor on reef. Designate safety zones to keep spectator vessels on a certain area to anchor on sand. Slow progress. When block areas, they can anchor on the edge (still on reef)
- More enforcement success with commercial vessels. Little reporting about recreational anchoring.
- Increase enforcement capabilities.
- Everything should have an enforcement component, but no capability to comment on how.
- Casitas example, there is a way to move around enforcement
- Unless you see the coral, you cannot enforce anchoring. Unenforceable. Unless whole section that is prohibited to anchoring. Difficult to enforce, unless shallow clear water. (like the Keys)
- Develop education program
- Mooring fields – no anchor zones – special management – education
- Most people would obey the law if they know it. So education is important. Every agency has an education program Information overload.
- Keep up with trends. How do they communicate? Social media. Not each agency in a vacuum, but agencies should work together. How do we develop a different way to communicate necessary information to the public.
- Not committee's job to create operationalized recommendations, but make them operationalizable.
- Education is key and might need a whole new program
- Efficiency component – create a more comprehensive idea to get that type of knowledge because each agency has a budget.
- Notes from zoom chat:
 - o Public: Outreach-wise, billboards and radio ads could reach a new audience including tourists who rent boats. However, that doesn't mean they'll know where sand is versus hard bottom.

- Committee member: I agree with a cohesive message and a education program between agencies

3. Encourage agricultural industry to establish and adhere to best management practices

Notes:

- Asking ag industry is like asking the fox not to eat the chickens! Should pass laws, not just best practices.
- Unfixable
- Have had best practices in the book for 25 years. They say they adhere but government doesn't check. They check themselves.
- Encourage a law to get passed that says if you use water for commercial use, you must send it back in the same state you got. I.e. clean the water. This we could recommend. Clean your water before you want to back pump it.
- Law has been on the books for 25 years. You cannot back pump water. But who is enforcing it?
- State to require license for anyone who is doing commercial / fertilizer / herbicide / pesticides. Should go to school to learn impact and appropriate use of products.
- Pesticides are all licensed.
- Herbicide and fertilizer applicators are licensed.
- Not sure of large scale ag.
- Recommendation to improve monitoring and enforcement of agricultural industry best management practices
- There are bills that are going to pass that would kill that
- Could reword recommendation
- Like Tom's recommendation
- By writing that it recognizes that this is an issue

4. Promote mechanical methods to remove vegetation

(Other recommendations related to the topic of herbicides)

"Have a goal to decrease herbicide use (amount or percent) through best practices"

"Create an education program for homeowners to reduce herbicide use and herbicide best practices"

"Use more manual removal of debris"

"Create incentives for native vegetation use to reduce herbicide necessity"

"Use triploid carp vegetation control"

Notes:

- Eliminate entirely spraying and go to mechanical removal and manual removals
- Not to decrease spraying but to eliminate it entirely
- Good to relocate manatees to control water vegetation, since there is a lack of food for them and it is safe for them.
- Companies dealing with mechanical weed removal could get lobbyists or political support. If these people get together, they could accomplish more.
- Used to get grass carps in canals and kept it clean. It's cost effective and low maintenance. Can use triploid carp vegetation control.
- They guys that go up and down scooping garbage, they have to teach them how to remove debris because they drive back and forth only stirring it up
- Some systems (e.g. C-100) have carp in them. 12-18 inch and get to 30-40 lbs.
- There are bulldozers in the water that also get hydrilla
- The C-100 opens up into Biscayne Bay which can be a problem for manatees but mechanical removal and carp are good for the recommendation
- We are looking at two different recommendations: fertilizers and herbicides.
- Residential use of fertilizers like phosphorus and nitrogen entering waterways and local ordinances saying how much can be used, etc.
- And herbicides for large scale spraying of vegetation that clogs waterways and invasive to natives.
- Wording regarding herbicide should be something like we encourage agencies, because there are many agencies, not just FWC that have spraying activities. So wording like "encourage agencies to transition to mechanical harvest of this nuisance vegetation and find uses for the harvested materials".
- Mechanical harvest is a lot more expensive and cumbersome than spraying it with a herbicide.
- There has to be some financial incentive for people like what who chuck talked about that have these mom and pop operations to mechanically harvest.
- There needs to be some incentive and maybe finding uses of the material they're harvesting and being rewarded for that.
- A lot of manatees would be hungry for the vegetation removed – it could be fed to them instead of letting it sink to the bottom got to encourage these agencies to transition to mechanical harvest and there has to be a financial incentive for them to do it, otherwise it probably will never happen
- There are a lot of thumbs up in the group for this
- Can't get the manatees up the canals because they would be squished that's why there are grates, although many of these are now broken
- I remember what a major logistical thing it was to just get rid of the hydrilla at blue lagoon
- I don't even know how expensive it is anymore, but it's a lot of money, access to and from. I agree with what everybody's saying here, but public funding would be something that keeps these things operating.
- What is the value of losing fisheries versus the cost of mechanical removal?
- There is huge value disappearing because of round up chemicals.

5. Use Florida Keys initiatives in septic to sewer conversion to lead by example to promote and encourage other areas

(Other recommendations related to the topic of herbicides)

“Find government assistance and/or creative marketing (e.g. lottery) where local municipalities/counties could match the funding for septic to sewer conversion”

“Create wholesale buying power where conversion cost would be reduced when large groups of people chose to convert septic to sewer”

“Create outreach efforts through media outlets and academia to support the conversion”

Notes:

- There's a lot of old sewer systems that are leaking you're in whatever in the water bodies constantly so it's not just residential areas where septic tanks are a problem it's the sewer system.
- In my neighborhood we've had grinder pumps for 18 years
- Upgrading aging systems
- in coral gables it will cost billions of dollars, plus somewhere between 20 and \$40,000 per homeowner per household to attach to that system,
- it's going to require some kind of a federal court order for any of this thing to ever happen, and maybe we should be making a strong recommendation
- It is not going to be resolved by leading by example.
- super expensive and there's probably going to be areas where it's just not possible because the infrastructure from the municipality or the city or the county is just not there, but we definitely need to encourage some kind of.
- financial assistance so that should remain in the wording of the recommendation
- the cost of that can be amortized over a period of time, and this adds value to your property. So there is an incentive
- the wording should be condensed and it won't happen without financial assistance
- In Green K and Wakodahatchee in PBC there are two examples of how to treat wastewater naturally by connecting to marshes and using a creative way to manage wastewater.
- When property value goes up, property taxes go up as well, so government should be behind this
- In Key Biscayne, a conversion costed 6k, the Key paid for part of the expense.
- In Hollywood, they do “package deals” for several houses that do the conversion at a time.
- Encourage municipalities with aging systems to upgrade infrastructure
- Compile a database of conversion incentive programs

6. Standardize names and definitions for spatial management

Notes:

- Essential so we can have a common language
- Important for ourselves to have a common set of language

- Let's tread lightly and not make announcements before we are certain because it brought miscommunication in the past

Wrap up and Adjourn

Discussion comments from meetings 10.1 and 10.2 will be taken by the project team to distill into further drafted recommendations.

Appendix 1





Review emerging recommendations

Co-develop survey for constituency

Objectives



Agenda

- 6:00 Welcome: Agenda and Reminders
- 6:15 Group Activity
- 7:15 Break
- 7:20 Group Activity
- 7:55 pm Adjourn

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

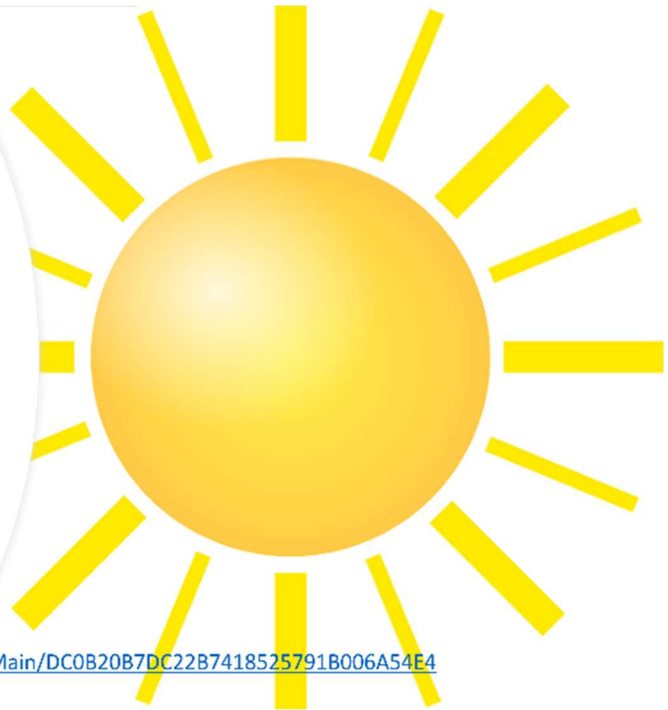
New

- Stay on task

Sunshine Laws

- 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.

<https://myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf/Main/DC0B20B7DC22B7418525791B006A54E4>



Where we left at...

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Group Activity

Objective:

- To begin finalizing recommendations

Activity (30 mins)

In a large group discuss potential draft recommendations



Today's focus

Develop a network of key groups, CCA, ASA, fishing clubs, tropical fish collectors and to standardize a process of reporting fishing information and trends - data managed by FWC

No anchoring on the reef

Educate users with signage at boat ramps and marinas identifying the importance of using mooring buoys and not anchoring adjacent to the buoys

Encourage agricultural industry to establish and adhere to best management practices

Use Florida Keys initiatives in septic to sewer conversion to lead by example to promote and encourage other areas

Promote mechanical methods to remove vegetation

Standardize names and definitions for spatial management

Find government assistance and/or creative marketing (e.g. lottery) where local municipalities/counties could match the funding for septic to sewer conversion

Create wholesale buying power where conversion cost would be reduced when large groups of people chose to convert septic to sewer

Create outreach efforts through media outlets and academia to support the conversion

Structure



Everyone will be asked for feedback – just an ok is sufficient



Balance discussion with moving forward



Reminder: Drafting recommendations for public input



Think about:

Wording

Can it be more specific?



Next Steps

CM#11

March 1st and 3rd