



**COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

**Escambia County Central Office Complex  
3363 West Park Place  
Pensacola, FL 32505**

**Marine Advisory Committee**

**APPROVED**

**RESUME OF MEETING MINUTES**

**January 13, 2014, 5:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:**

Earle Rader		District 1/Commissioner Robertson
Cathy Watson		District 1/Commissioner Wilson Robertson
Merrick Van Landingham	Vice Chair	District 2/Commissioner Gene Valentino
Eilene Beard		District 3/Commissioner Lumon May
Lynn Laird		District 3/Commissioner Lumon May
Dave Mucci		District 4/Commissioner Grover Robinson, IV
Walt Woodfin	Secretary	District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry
Gabe Jackson		District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry

**Staff Present**

Robert Turpin		CED/ Marine Resources Division Manager
Rick O'Connor		Sea Grant Agent for Escambia County
Shelly Mitchell		MRD Intern

**Absent Excused**

David Dodson	Chair	District 4/Commissioner Robinson IV
Sidney Clopton		District 2/Commissioner Gene Valentino
Ed Fish		County Interim Administrator George Touart

**Absent Unexcused**

**Visitors Present**

Andrew Blewer	Resident
Andy Ross	Niuhi Dive Charter
Anna Clark	Resident
Bryan Clark	Resident
Vince Lucido	Alabama Gulf Coast Reef Foundation
Chandra Wright	Alabama Gulf Coast Reef Foundation
	Mississippi / Alabama Sea Grant

1. **Call to Order:** Merrick Van Landingham called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm
2. **Attendance:** A quorum is present.
3. **Minutes Approval:** Earle Rader made motion to approve the November minutes. Gabe Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None opposed.
4. **Casino Artificial Reef Site Permit:** No change. Awaiting Army Corps permit.
5. **Bay Snorkeling Reef 'Historic Shipwreck Replica':** No change. Seeking large anchor and funding for subsequent development.
6. **Perdido Gulf Snorkeling Reef Construction:** No change. Contractor finishing upgrades to new reef deployment vessel. Reef will be constructed as soon as he is ready and weather is suitable.
7. **Escambia County Southeast Artificial Reef Site:** No change. Awaiting Army Corps permit.
8. **Mahogany Mill Public Boat Ramp Construction:**  
Docks completed; R. Turpin requested plans to lower elevation of eastern dock and terminal 40 feet of western dock. Road construction is underway. Final completion expected May 2014.
9. **Perdido River Public Boat Ramp Design/Engineering/Permitting:**  
Consultation with permitting agencies continuing. Update at Feb EMAC meeting.
10. **Hurst Hammock Paddlecraft Access Launch Design & Permitting:** No change, awaiting funding.
11. **10836 Lillian Highway:**
  - Marine Resources Division will apply for next FBIP grant (RFP expected Feb 2014). Invite MAC action to support grant proposal for Design/Engineering/Permitting.
  - Andrew Blewer presented his concept of design and wants to ensure the County Commission provides LOST monies to develop the property.
  - Robert Turpin expressed the need to pursue grant monies to develop the property. Mr. Turpin supports promoting a portion of LOST or other monies as matching funds in an application for grant monies.
  - Lynn Laird expressed concerns over the cost of engineering due to the water depth.
  - Merrick Van Landingham made a motion to “promote the use of LOST or other monies as matching funds in an application for grant monies.” The motion was seconded by Eilene Beard. All voted in favor, with the exception of Lynn Laird who opposed.
12. **Natural Resources Damage Assessment - Oil spill Restoration & Recovery:**  
A public meeting is scheduled for 28 Jan 2014 at the Pensacola Civic Center.
13. **Bayou Chico Navigation Hazard:** No change. No response from email correspondence sent to the Coast Guard.

**14. Escambia River derelict vessels and associated debris:**

No response to last two requests from contractor for project update.

**15. Waterways Access Management: MAC discussion. Public Input?**

- Eilene Beard made a motion to pass a resolution stating:  
Whereas the voluntary fee collection on the Pensacola Fishing Bridge is not effective, request the county convert the fee to a Pay to Park fee, with a request for enforcement to be provided by the Escambia County Sheriff Office Parking Enforcement officers.  
Gabe Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with no one opposed.
- Brian Clark expressed embarrassment as a county resident, due to the unwillingness of other county residents not paying the fee.

**16. Lionfish update:**

- Robert Turpin stated that a new coalition has been formed to promote control of the lion fish population, to be known as the “Gulf Coast Lion Fish Coalition”
- Andy Ross with the G.C.L.F.C. stated: The coalition is made up of divers, chefs, charter captains and others. The coalition is working with local commissions and Reef Org in Key Largo on setting up lion fish rodeos and planning educational presentations.
- Brian Clark demonstrated the website he is developing for the G.C.L.F.C. to identify where the lion fish are at and are not. The website will be “lionfishmap.org”. The site will be rolled out at the end of January.
- Rick O’Connor stated Sea Grant / IFAS would be providing G.C.L.F.C. with education support. Mr. O’Connor sees the benefit of citizen scientist’s many eyes providing data of value to researchers.
- Robert Turpin stated that the G.C.L.F.C. would bring together lion fish suppliers and consumers, restaurants and seafood markets, together.
- Eilene Beard made a motion to pass a resolution stating:  
Whereas the state has removed the fishing license requirement for the harvesting of the lion fish, the state should be encouraged to take the next logical step. Whereas the lion fish is out of control and endangering the marine environment and whereas divers harvesting the lion fish are a service to the state, it would benefit the state to remove the seafood license requirement for the selling of lion fish, to encourage divers to harvest more of the lion fish as a greater service to the state.  
Merrick Van Landingham seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with no one opposed.

**17. Old Business:**

Local Option Sales Tax: Expected increases (county-wide) approx. 1% above LOST 3 appropriations.

- 18. New Business:** Vince Lucido, Alabama Gulf Coast Reef Foundation, stated that Alabama has recently sunk the Lulu and has been approached with a proposal to sink the Titanic. Alabama would like to partner with Escambia County Florida to sink the vessel in Florida reef sites as they are in water closer to shore and is deep enough to accommodate reefing of the vessel.

**19. Election of Officers for 2014: Business:**

- **Secretary:** Gabe Jackson nominated Walt Woodfin to continue as EMAC Secretary. Cathy Watson seconded the nomination. All voted in favor, with no one opposed.
- **Vice Chair:** Merrick Van Landingham nominated Gabe Jackson to serve as EMAC Vice Chair. Walt Woodfin seconded the nomination. All voted in favor, with no one opposed.
- **Chair:** Gabe Jackson nominated Merrick Van Landingham to serve as EMAC Chair. Dave Mucci seconded the nomination. All voted in favor, with no one opposed.

**20. Adjourn:** Earle Rader made the motion to adjourn. Dave Mucci seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with no one opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.