



COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

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

Marine Advisory Committee

APPROVED

RESUME OF MEETING MINUTES

November 18, 2013, 5:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Cathy Watson		District 1/Commissioner Wilson Robertson
Sidney Clopton		District 2/Commissioner Gene Valentino
Merrick Van Landingham	Vice Chair	District 2/Commissioner Gene Valentino
Eilene Beard		District 3/Commissioner Lumon May
Lynn Laird		District 3/Commissioner Lumon May
David Dodson	Chair	District 4/Commissioner Robinson IV
Dave Mucci		District 4/Commissioner Grover Robinson, IV
Walt Woodfin	Secretary	District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry
Gabe Jackson		District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry
Ed Fish		County Interim Administrator George Touart

Staff Present

Robert Turpin	CED/ Marine Resources Division Manager
Shelly Marshall	Intern/ Marine Resources Division

Absent Excused

Absent Unexcused

Earle Rader	District 1/Commissioner Robertson
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Visitors Present

Keith Johnson	Wetland Sciences, Inc.
Bill Myrick	Resident
Bryan Clark	Resident
Anna Clark	Resident
Taylor Wachtel	NIUHI
Pearce Barrett	FDEP

1. **Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm**
2. **Attendance:** Quorum Present
3. **Minutes Approval:** Eilene Beard made the motion to approve the October minutes. Ed Fish seconded the motion. All voted in favor with no one 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 and road construction underway.
9. **Perdido River Public Boat Ramp Design/Engineering/Permitting:**
 - **Pearce Barrett** update: Met with the design firm today and met with the Army Corp of Engineers last month. Construction is scheduled to start in the summer of 2014. The facility will be ready for use the summer of 2015.
 - **Gabe Jackson** commented on the tightness of the load/unload area and the benefits of pull thru parking.
 - **Bill Myrick** asked if the Herdon property was included into the current design. Mr. Barrett responded that it was not, but the county may plan to develop it as an expansion to the current design.
 - **Bill Myrick** requested that there be additional lighting for security. Mr. Barrett stated that the current design has lighting at the dock only. Robert Turpin commented that the lighting is kept to a minimum to avoid disturbing the wildlife.
 - **Dave Dodson** suggested installing empty conduit under the drives for future electrical and water usage.
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
12. **Natural Resources Damage Assessment - Oil spill Restoration & Recovery:**
 - **Pearce Barrett** update: Environmental reports will be released next month. The projects will be announced soon.
 - **Lynn Laird** questioned if fishing docks would be provided. Mr. Barrett responded that they were not in the current designs, but would be considered on future designs. Mr. Laird stated Commissioner May's desire to provide for shore fishermen as well as boat fishermen.

- **Robert Turpin** stated that the Perdido had a fishing dock, which was removed, due to limitations by state law and the state's fast track permit process. The fishing dock is intended to be added back later.

13. Bayou Chico Navigation Hazard: No change. No response from email correspondence sent to the Coast Guard.

14. Proposal from owner of M/V Titanic for artificial reef: No MAC action, no funding, to be removed from agenda.

15. Proposal of ex-military submarine for artificial reef: No MAC action, no funding, to be removed from agenda.

16. Escambia River derelict vessels and associated debris: No change. Contractor experimenting with methodologies in preparation for suitable river water level.

17. Waterways Access Management: MAC discussion. Public Input?

- **Robert Turpin** communicated to the committee, that the voluntary payments at the Pensacola Bay Fishing Bridge has been declining. The pay to fish honor system was meant to offset the costs to provide trash collection, lights, portable sanitation facilities, etc... Escambia County pays for the services. A suggested alternative would be a per vehicle parking fee, enforceable by the parking patrol officers, to be considered at future committee meetings.
- **Taylor Wachtel** uses the ramp at Texar and expressed concern over the deteriorated condition of the facilities (pot holes, low hanging tree limbs, etc...) As the Texar ramp is a city facility, the matter will need to be addressed by the city of Pensacola. Ms. Wachtel also suggested the use of larger vs. smaller vessels for reefing as they will last longer. (reference items 14 and 15)

18. Old Business:

- **Lionfish update:** Lionfish invasion more serious now that they have been observed in local estuaries. Robert Turpin and Rick O'Connor attended and participated at Florida Lionfish Summit last month. Additional threat to reef program from marine debris particularly lost fishing line & tackle. MAC provided draft Lionfish Resolution language for consideration of Board of County Commissioners. MAC supported MRD development of separate BCC Resolution regarding marine debris.
- **Brian Clark**, who dives deep sites, has seen lionfish up to 14 inches long with distended bellies. In his recent dives, he has noted no Red Groupers and few Gag Groupers. He has noted a large variance in the lionfish populations from site to site. Some sites may have none to one lion fish, while the next may have hundreds. Mr. Clark is currently working to develop a website to facilitate reporting of lionfish sightings and/or kills. **Dave Mucci** commented on the benefits of both private and commercial consumption of lionfish, as a means of population control. **Sidney Clopton** stated that he knows of lobster fishermen in Key West catching lionfish in lobster pots and selling the filets for \$10 per pound.

- **Anna Clark**, who is a diver and environmental scientist, would like to see a public sector effort to monitor and promote control of the lionfish population. She believes there must be a group or committee focused on the issue.
- **Eilene Beard made a motion** to have a resolution written to address the lionfish issue, to be refined by **Mr. Turpin**. **Dave Mucci seconded the motion**. **Brian Clark** commented that he would like to see more specifics and less vagueness in any resolution. He also stated a desire to see a person or group with the responsibility to set targets and coordinate efforts. **Mr. Turpin** commented that any task force would require funding and that too many specifics in any resolution could hinder any flexibility in the options to be considered.
All voted in favor, with no one opposed.
Resolution to be appended to the minutes.
- **Dave Mucci made a motion** to have a resolution written to address the debris on the local dive sites. **Merrick Van Landingham seconded the motion**. **Brian Clark** commented on the severity of the trash and debris.
All voted in favor, with no one opposed.
Resolution to be appended to the minutes.

19. New Business:

- **Local Option Sales Tax IV:** Marine Resources Division submitted requests: \$20M artificial reefs and \$30M for waterways access (boat ramps, non-motorized access, fishing piers, etc.)
- **FWC Artificial Reef Construction Grant Application:** MRD considering proposal for concrete materials of opportunity for lobster habitat in LAARS East and/or West. MRD seeks input and action by MAC.
Eilene Beard made a motion for Escambia County to apply for the grant. **Dave Mucci seconded the motion**. **All voted in favor, with no one opposed.**

20. Adjourn: Walt Woodfin made the motion to adjourn. Dave Mucci seconded the motion. All voted in favor with no one opposed. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.