



**COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

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

**MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**APPROVED**

**RESUME OF MEETING MINUTES**

**June 09, 2014, 5:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:**

Earle Rader		District 1/Commissioner Wilson Robertson
Cathy Watson		District 1/Commissioner Wilson Robertson
Sidney Clopton		District 2/Commissioner Gene Valentino
Merrick Van Landingham	Chair	District 2/Commissioner Gene Valentino
Eilene Beard		District 3/Commissioner Lumon May
David Dodson		District 4/Commissioner Grover Robinson IV
Dave Mucci		District 4/Commissioner Grover Robinson IV
Walt Woodfin	Secretary	District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry

**Staff Present**

Robert Turpin		CED/ Marine Resources Division Manager
Ryan Lavoie		MRD Intern
Shelly Marshall		MRD Head Intern

**Absent Excused**

Lynn Laird		District 3/Commissioner Lumon May
Gabe Jackson	Vice Chair	District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry
Ed Fish		County Interim Administrator

**Absent Unexcused**

**Visitors Present**

Rick O'Connor		Florida Sea Grant
Anna Clark		Coast Watch Alliance
Bryan Clark		Coast Watch Alliance

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 5:40 pm
2. **Attendance:** A quorum is present.
3. **Minutes Approval:** Sidney Clopton made the motion to approve the May meeting minutes as written. Elaine Beard seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
4. **Perdido Key Gulf Snorkeling Reef:** Waiting for suitable weather/water conditions to deploy the remaining 9 reef modules.
5. **Mahogany Mill Public Boat Ramp Construction:** Nearing final completion. Not “officially” open, but barricades are removed, and facility can be used in conjunction with final contractor work. Ribbon-cutting scheduled 10AM 25 June 2014.
6. **Perdido River Public Boat Ramp Design/Engineering/Permitting:** Corps approved storm water design, therefore design/engineering may resume.
7. **10836 Lillian Highway Public Boat Ramp:** Awaiting FWC ranking of grant submissions.
8. **Natural Resources Damage Assessment - Oil spill Restoration & Recovery:** State and federal agencies still working on Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.
9. **Waterways Access Management:** Additional public comment?
10. **Lionfish:** Escambia County Marine Resources Division has developed lionfish awareness/reporting signs for boat ramps, fishing piers, and snorkeling reefs.

Bryan Clark shared his observations on artificial reefs and lionfish:

- There have been reports of a decrease in population of shovel nose lobster, as well as reports of shovel nose lobster in the stomach contents of lionfish.
- Port St. Lucie has asked that their reef sites be added to lionfishmap.org
- Coast Watch has plans to sponsor lionfish categories in upcoming fishing tournaments and rodeos to encourage participation.
- MTB Dive Shop conducted a tournament with a lionfish category in which the top three catches of lionfish were 240, 138 and 100.
- Also noted again is the increased presence of sea turtles in the Gulf.

Dave Dodson asked: Is it known what, if anything, a lionfish would bite on hook and line?

Bryan Clark stated that there has been lionfish reportedly caught on a #6 hook and cut bait.

Cathy Watson stated that her brother in-law had a chum line out and witnessed two lionfish at the surface behind his boat.

11. **Old Business:** None

12. **New Business:** Tugboat Ocean Wind available for reefing. Uncertainties for total cost (estimated \$65k-\$95K) due to unknown extent of PCBs. Short and unknown window of opportunity, thus MAC should review tonight. Project opportunity arose after MRD budget was determined for FY15, but private sector fundraising underway.

Merrick Van Landingham stated that \$10K of private pledges to reef the tug. Pledges of support are still being solicited to fund the purchase and reefing. Kerry Freeland presented the proposal to the Escambia Board of County Commissioners. Commissioners Valentino and Robinson were not present. The intention is to meet with the two absent commissioners in the upcoming days.

Robert Turpin stated that the cost to reef the tug is currently unknown, but an estimation would be in the \$65K to \$95K range.

Merrick Van Landingham stated that a previous sale agreement on the tug with another party is on hold pending a decision by Escambia County.

Cathy Watson made a motion to resolve the following:

*“Whereas, artificial reefs are beneficial to the economy and recreational opportunities of Escambia County and whereas, considerable private funding has been pledged to the purchase and reefing of the tug “Ocean Wind”, the Escambia Marine Advisory Committee supports the Escambia Marine Resources Division performing due diligence on the potential purchase and reefing of the tug “Ocean Wind”, if private sector funding or a private/public partnership to fund the potential project cost can be met.”*

Dave Mucci seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Dave Dodson: Asked what would it cost to construct and reef a **replica** tug or other vessel to eliminate the concerns over PCB’s and/or other environmental issues?

Anna Clark stated that she likes the idea of a mock ship to avoid the concerns and cost of mitigating environmental issues associated with reefing of retired vessels.

Robert Turpin questioned whether or not anyone would know of a historically significant vessel that could be replicated for reefing.

Bryan Clark proposed that the MRD consider budgeting future cleanups of existing reefs to benefit anglers, divers and marine species alike, as well as removal of lionfish. This effort would mostly benefit the less popular reefs, as divers fairly well maintain the popular reefs.

- 13. Adjourn:** Earle Rader made the motion to adjourn. Dave Mucci seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.