



**COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

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

**MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**DRAFT**

**RESUME OF MEETING MINUTES**

**December 14, 2015, 5:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:**

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
Kerry Freeland		District 4/Commissioner Grover Robinson IV
Walt Woodfin	Secretary	District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry
Gabe Jackson	Vice Chair	District 5/Commissioner Steven Barry
Ed Fish		County Interim Administrator

**Staff Present**

Robert Turpin	CED / Marine Resources Division Manager
Shelly Rofrits	Marine Resources Division

**Absent Excused**

Bill Myrick	District 1/Commissioner Wilson Robertson
Lynn Laird	District 3/Commissioner Lumon May

**Absent Unexcused**

**Visitors Present**

Michael Pinzone	Pensacola Beach Gulf Pier (Owner)
Christopher Lucero	Pensacola Beach Gulf Pier (Manager)
Bryan Clark	Coast Watch Alliance
Rick O'Connor	Florida Sea Grant
Andy Ross	Dive Charter Captain

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm
2. **Attendance:** A quorum was present
3. **Minutes Approval:** David Dodson made the motion to approve the October meeting minutes as written. Eilene Beard seconded the motion. All voted to approve.
4. **Perdido River Public Boat Ramp:** MRD Update: Paving is delayed due to wet subsurface soils. After wet soils are resolved, paving can be done. Striping will be applied after asphalt cures.
5. **10836 Lillian Highway Public Boat Ramp:** MRD Update: R. Turpin met with FWC and verified the draft contract will be provided soon.
6. **Natural Resources Damage Assessment - Oil spill Restoration & Recovery:** MRD Update: Draft contract from FWC is scheduled for BCC approval in January 2016.
7. **Reefs at Pensacola Beach Fishing Pier:**
  - Mike Pinzone spoke on his proposal to install 50+ piling reef modules (aka EcoReef) 100' from the "T" of the Pensacola Beach Gulf Pier. (See appended document) Other resorts and/or hotels are interested in supplementing the proposed project with reef installations in the Gulf out from their properties. The installation at the pier will be primarily to attract fish to the pier. The other installations will be geared more toward diving and snorkeling. Robert Turpin stated that as the reefs will also attract kayakers, their needs must also be taken into consideration.
  - Merrick Van Landingham voiced his support of the proposal and would like to see Mr. Pinzone continue the due diligence in the planning, approval and permitting of the project.
  - Merrick Van Landingham stated that any use of taxpayer or NERDA monies will require consideration of all public use and access. Dave Dodson stated that use of private monies may limit usage.
  - Mike Penzone stated that public funding is being pursued as a possibility. Merrick Van Landingham questioned if there were any negatives to a supporting resolution without an identified source of funding. Eilene Beard proposed supporting the project concept without consideration of funding.
  - Brian Clark stated that as marine debris is an increasing issue, he would like to see cleaning and maintenance be considered in the permitting and installation of all new reefs.
  - Robert Turpin stated that the approval and permitting process must be started, while looking at funding, as a permit in hand will make to project shovel ready and then eligible for available funding.
  - Merrick Van Landingham questioned if there may be any National Seashore issues. Robert Turpin stated that there would be no installation at the National Seashore and that the Santa Rosa Island Authority has riparian ownership of the affected submerged lands.

- Eilene Beard made a motion to support Mr. Pinzone’s proposal. Kerry Freeland seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the resolution as written below.

**“The Escambia County Marine Advisory Committee supports the proposed design, permitting and installation of approved reefs at the Pensacola Beach Gulf Pier and other sites, to support pier fishing, kayak fishing, snorkeling and diving activities, by Mr. Penzone and partners, with future determination of funding of said project.”**

**8. Waterways Comprehensive Management:** MRD Update: Observations of overnight camping, long-term occupancy indicates abuses of Annual Pass privileges. These need to be resolved

**9. Lionfish Issues/Developments:** MRD Update: Spring Lionfish Workshop will be held in conjunction with April 2016 MAC meeting.

- Rick O’Connor shared that the FWC’s “Lion Fish Removal and Assessment Day” will be in Pensacola again in 2016. He also stated that Sea Grant is involved in supporting and funding of lion fish trap research. Sea Grant, with input from Robert Turpin, is drafting an Escambia County Lion Fish Management program.
- Mr. O’Connor has noticed a slowdown in the commercialization of lion fish and are looking at the potential of selling lion fish through Coastal Watch. Brain Clark stated that the supply vs. demand equation is starting to flip and that the Coast Watch has gotten grants to support lion fish efforts. Mr. Clark also shared that when Shelly Marshal and others who surveyed dead fish after the recent red tide event found that lion fish were the most common fish found. Rick O’Connor shared that a UWF study found that the more educated a consumer is, the more they are willing to pay for lion fish product. Andy Ross stated that commercialization of lion fish requires constant reinforcement to sustain the effort. Mr. Ross is now handling lion fish cleanup of some private reefs for charter captains. Kerry Freeland shared that there is a local businessman producing a lion fish dip, which utilizes the smaller lion fish. His supply of lion fish is strong in the summer months, but slack in the winter months. Mr. Freeland asks that everyone encourages awareness of the dip to support the commercialization effort. Mr. Ross stated that the winter months is the time that charter captains can harvest the lion fish, but they can’t harvest if they can’t sell them.
- Robert Turpin recommended that the April EMAC meeting would be good timing to hold the quarterly Lion Fish Symposium. Merrick Van Landingham suggested that we schedule now for April. Kerry Freeland would like to see the media contacted for coverage. Mr. Turpin stated that a press release would be sent. We will discuss further at February’s EMAC meeting.

**10. Ocean Wind Tug Reefing:** MRD Update: FWC coming to inspect the vessel for compliance with permit and grant agreement compliance. Tug can be deployed after it has passed inspection.

**11. Personal Flotation Device Regulations:** Merrick Van Landingham request that this item be removed from the agenda. Item to be removed without objection.

**12. FWC Largemouth Bass Min. Size Limit Proposal:** Merrick Van Landingham request that this item be removed from the agenda. Item to be removed without objection.

**13. Old Business:** None

**14. New Business:**

- Shelly Rofrits is now the MRD Intern Coordinator.
- Keith Wilkins has taken a position with the city of Pensacola.

**2016 EMAC Officers Election:**

- Chair: Merrick Van Landingham nominated Gabe Jackson.  
Gabe Jackson nominated Kerry Freeland.  
Kerry Freeland nominated Eilene Beard.  
**Gabe Jackson was elected as the new EMAC Chair.**
- Vice Chair: Dave Dodson nominated Kerry Freeland.  
**Kerry Freeland was elected as the new EMAC Vice Chair.**
- Secretary: Robert Turpin nominated Walt Woodfin.  
**Walt Woodfin was elected to continue as the EMAC Secretary.**

**15. Adjourn:**

- Merrick Van Landingham passed the gavel to Gabe Jackson.
- Eilene Beard made the motion to adjourn. Cathy Watson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm

TO BRING BACK THE FISH SPECIES IN ABUNDANCE THAT WE HAVE LOST SINCE THE OIL SPILL, NOT ONLY WILL THIS ENHANCE FISHING FOR THE FISHING COMMUNITY BUT IT WILL ADD TO OUR COMMUNITY AS A DIVING AND SNORKLING DESTINATION LOCATION

I would like to ask this board's approval and motion to be made to go in front of the Santa Rosa Island Authority to ask for permitting, not just for Pensacola Beach Gulf Pier reef but I also propose that we go ahead and ask permission for the three other snorkeling reefs for snorkeling only. Located at Portofino, Robert Rinke, and Julian McQueen at the Hilton and Marilyn Dewberry at Margaritaville. These reefs will attract the same species of fish that the Pensacola Gulf Pier will attract. These reefs will not be fished, they will be snorkeled only. So if I can obtain approval tonight to move forward with permitting for all four reefs then we would be able to get actual engineer drawings and start securing funds for these projects.

Sincerely,



Mike Pinzone

