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Brevard County Marine Advisory Council (BMAC)
August 20, 2009
Space Coast Room, Building C, Government Center, Viera, Florida

Members Present:

Jerry Butz
Joe Penovich
Mike Cunningham, Chair
Rick McCrary
Gary Hanlin, Vice Chair (via teleconference call)

Members Absent

Doug Jaren
Gene Cate
Jim Mazza
John Mongioi

Staff Present:

Ernie Brown, Director, Natural Resources Management Office (NRMO)
Matt Culver, NRMO Boating & Waterways Program Coordinator
Chris Koeppel, NRMO Environmental Management (NRMO)
Valerie Citta, NRMO Admin Support Services

Public Present:

Steve Haigis, Sebastian Inlet Marina
Bob Musser, Canaveral Port Authority Officer Travis Anklin, Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC)

Handouts

(Go to <http://natres.brevardcounty.us/bmac-minutes.cfm> to view the handouts.)

- 1st Annual Brevard County Derelict Blue Crab Trap Cleanup 2009 – Power Point Presentation provided by Chris Koeppel, Environmental Specialist, Brevard County Natural Resources Mgmt Office (NRMO)
- CM3P Ranking & Project Order Spreadsheet provided by Matt Culver, NRMO
- Sebastian Inlet Marina Launch Study Spreadsheet provided by Mr. Steven R. Haigis, Sebastian Inlet Marina

I. Call to Order

Chairman Mike Cunningham called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Cunningham moved to approve the 7/16/09 minutes and Jerry Butz seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

III. Agenda Items

1. New Business

a. *Summary Presentation First Annual Brevard County Crab Trap Cleanup*

Chris Koeppel, Environmental Specialist, Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office (NRMO) introduced himself and provided an overview presentation of Brevard County's 1st Annual Blue Crab Trap Cleanup recently held August 10th – 19th.

A number of volunteers from the public and state and local government employees joined to complete this project. Contractors were also involved in trap removal.

Project was result of a yearlong effort of working group made up of members of the public, representatives of the fishing and crabbing industry, and FWC staff. Working group formed to discuss plan for closing blue crab fisheries in Florida for short period of time to remove derelict crab-traps.

FWC held 10-day "closed season" period from August 10th-August 19th, with yesterday being last day to have derelict traps removed out of the water. Commercial and recreational crabbers were required to remove all working traps

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during these dates. Traps could be stored in advance at sites coordinated by staff near all causeways or on private property.

State of Florida was divided into 6 different regions to facilitate statewide cleanup. This local project covered region that included all of Brevard County to Palm Beach County. Brevard County area was divided into 3 regions.

Trap fees paid by crabbers largely subsidized the cleanup project.

FWC has similar cleanup project scheduled for 2010.

FWC Law Enforcement provided means for aerial assessment of Indian River Lagoon by Chris and Matt Culver (NRMO) for two days via helicopter.

Two areas were skipped in aerial assessment. They were area north of 528 at Banana River which was closed to flying and Mosquito Lagoon which was being cleaned up at the time by Merritt Island Refuge staff and Coastal Conservation Association volunteers.

North area of lagoon provided clear visibility. South area faced fresh water influx and provided less visibility.

Most traps found had been hit by boats.

Average weight of traps was approximately 30 to 70lbs. each, with the largest trap weighing over 100lbs. holding around 300 oysters.

Traps were taken apart to determine type of marine life existing. Brevard County provided FWC data sheet to all volunteers and contractors which listed characteristics of various types of crabs in order to help identify and track traps collected (ie: blue crab, stone crab, bait fish, commercial v. recreational). ID guides were also provided to help facilitate identification of species.

A number of exotic species were found and included: Diamond Back Terrapin, Australian Spotted Jellyfish, and Green-Lipped Mussels.

Some area biologists are placing Red Float Hydrophone devices in the lagoon. These devices record data about fish such as: how often fish has traveled by the device, how fast the fish swims and where it travels to. Many of these were noted and left in the water.

A total of 449 traps found in lagoon in Brevard County over a 3-4 day work period.

Tampering with traps is a felony even during "closed season". FWC provided authorization process for all participating in the project.

Special Thanks to all groups who partnered in this project which included: FWC, public volunteers, area contractors, SJRWMD, Coastal Conservation Association, City of Melbourne, Brevard County Departments of Parks & Recreation, Solid Waste, Road & Bridge and Krispy Kreme donuts.

Questions & Answers

Mr. McCrary asked Mr. Koeppel how many traps a recreational crabber can possess.

Mr. Koeppel verified recreational crabbers can possess 5 traps or less and must have proper identification on the traps.

Officer Franklin verified that proper identification includes owner name & address.

Mr. Koeppel stated that approximately 47% of traps pulled specifically by Natural Resources' volunteers were commercial. Most commercial traps did have proper identification. In other areas of the county, other volunteer groups pulled slightly higher percentage of commercial traps. There have been a few cleanup projects

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in Federal waters in the past that yielded different results with higher percentage of recreational traps being collected.

Mr. McCrary asked Mr. Koeppel if any traps found were fish traps, for example: pig-fish traps.

Mr. Koeppel stated that he found one pig-fish trap. A number of other unique traps were found. One was a dog kennel bearing Wal-Mart tags with floats on it. A number of Hav-A-Heart traps were found largely in south part of county. Many homemade traps were found with proper recreational identification. Many of these home made traps were still deemed illegal because they lacked necessary components such as escape hatches, d links.

Mr. Penovich stated that he has seen quite a few floats that are partially submerged and often encrusted with barnacles particularly in the area south of SR 528. He stated that he is glad to see those being removed. Mr. Penovich asked Mr. Koeppel how he was able to find those.

Mr. Koeppel agreed it is difficult to see those in certain parts of the lagoon. He noted that 171 "suspected" float/trap points were identified from aerial flights. Contractors were directed to location of these points for removal. Mr. Koeppel does not have the GPS numbers collected by contractor teams but verified over 50% of traps identified aerially were removed. Collectively, 91 points were reached. In the past, similar projects headed by MI Refuge located approximately 100 traps. During the course of removing approximately 50 traps located by aerial flight, an additional 50 traps were located. Mr. Koeppel stated that aerial flight is a good tool for locating the traps while actually getting to the traps via boat still presented some challenges. This is scheduled to be an annual event.

Mr. Jerry Butz asked Mr. Koeppel if traps were disposed of or auctioned off somehow.

Mr. Koeppel stated there was front-page newspaper coverage last week and that a number of calls had been received. FWC requires traps to be disabled by volunteers once out of the water. Traps must remain in possession of project volunteers from the time they are removed from water until properly disabled and disposed of in dumpsters so that they may be properly disposed of finally in landfills.

Mr. Brown clarified the issue of "salvage." He stated that if derelict items are being removed from waters for destruction, it does not constitute "salvage". If items are collected for the purpose of refurbishing or to be sold or given away, the item can become defined as "salvage". This presents a very different legal issue and legal ramifications. The point of this project was to remove old crab traps that cause environmental concerns, present hazards to navigation, recreational users, and lessen impact of ghost-fishing on already struggling crab industry.

Mr. Brown explained that locations near causeways were made available two weeks in advance for crabbers to store traps during closed season. This year, no one opted to do so.

Mr. Koeppel stated that next year's event might present improved opportunity for more people to store their traps using this option. He also described some of the significant damage observed on a lot of traps that indicated serious damage had occurred to boats, specifically from traps that have become embedded.

Mr. Penovich stated that he did observe a number of traps stacked near Pineda Park. Mr. Koeppel stated that those were traps collected as a result of initial efforts of FWC law enforcement on Day 1 of the project. FWC used this site as a

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photo opportunity for this project. Brevard County has the highest number of animal entanglements in the state and is 2nd in the state for crabbing areas.

Mr. Brown stated that Indian River Lagoon has the highest numbers of fish/crab landings in the state, with Mr. Koeppel adding that approximately ¾ of all crabs in the lagoon coming from Brevard waters.

Mr. Culver also stated that those traps were not being stored. They were collected for removal and ultimately disposed of properly.

Mr. Culver also added that two different types of traps were observed. There were wire traps and vinyl traps. He noticed that many of the vinyl traps removed weighed around 70 lbs in weight or greater. Barnacles often covered and completely filled these types of traps making them extremely heavy and difficult to load onto boats.

Mr. Koeppel learned from members of crabbing community that these types of traps are typically designed to last 1-2 years. At a recent cleanup in the Wakula area, traps were collected that were often over 20 years old. Basically, many of the traps in our area have been there longer than intended. There are approximately 15,000 traps per year placed into Brevard's waters. Even with 5% loss rate, many traps still exist in the water.

Chairman Cunningham extended a well-deserved thank you to everyone involved for such a good job!

Mr. Penovich asked if any lion fish were found.

Mr. Koeppel stated there were no lion fish found.

b. Comprehensive Maritime Management Master Plan (CM3P) Work Group IV

Mr. Culver distributed "Ranking & Project Order" handout to all and stated that three Working Groups have been completed. Working Group No. 4 is scheduled to start on September 23. Working Groups are already scheduled based on funding and facilitation resources received from Indian River Lagoon Program (IRLP). IRLP prefers not to sponsor some topics shown on the list of goals. At this time, goals ranked 6 and 8 will be skipped. The next Working Group will be moving on to goals ranked 4 & 5 in order to ensure continued funding and facilitation resources from IRLP. Mr. Culver wanted to make everyone aware of this and make sure all are in agreement with the order of Working Group goals going forward. Mr. Culver reminded everyone to check out Boating & Waterways website at http://www.brevardcounty.us/environmental_management/CM3PWorkingGroupUpdate.cfm to review complete drafts of results from Working Groups.

Mr. Brown asked if any members of BMAC are interested in sitting on Working Group No. 4 and asked Mr. Culver if Professor John Windsor will continue to sit on that group.

Mr. Culver stated that Professor Windsor planning to take part in the group. A different facilitator, Professor Maul, will actually be facilitating the Working Group. Mr. Culver stated that there is still a need for one additional volunteer and asked BMAC if anyone would be interested. The topics of Working Group No. 4 will be the goals ranked as nos. 4 and 5 described:

GOAL Ranked No. 4 – Managing waterways to safeguard their ecosystems.

GOAL Ranked No. 5 – Engage all relevant planning and regulatory agencies to find solutions to access issues in a regional perspective.

Mr. McCrary asked where Working Group Meetings are held.

Mr. Culver stated that Working Group Meetings are held at the Government Center in the Natural Resources Management Office every other Wednesday starting at 5:00 p.m. and ending at 8:00 p.m. Mr. Culver will be present at every Working Group Meeting. Members of the public may also attend Working Group meetings without being a member of the group.

Mr. Culver asked for member's agreement to move forward as proposed.

Chairman Cunningham stated he is in agreement and stated the importance of accomplishing as much as possible while the group still has funding in support of these goals. Funding may exist in future for some of the other goals being skipped now.

Mr. Brown clarified with Mr. Culver that the First Segment includes first 4 Working Groups. Mr. Brown laid out the plan for First Segment to approach Steering Committee. The Steering Committee acts as "go-between" between BMAC and Working Groups. The First Segment will work with Steering Committee to identify where data gaps may exist in recommendations. At that point, recommendations will be presented to BMAC. It is important for BMAC to be ready to carefully review recommendations presented at this point. BMAC will ultimately be taking this data to make recommendations of First Segment to Board of County Commissioners. These recommendations will represent approximately 50% of the Management Plan. It will include comprehensive plan changes, regulatory changes, MPP changes. BMAC will ultimately be presenting items to Board of County Commissioners to identify areas of improvement and data will be critical to back up recommendations.

Mr. McCrary volunteered to be on Working Group 4.

Mr. Culver acknowledged Mr. McCrary's request and thanked him.

c. *Space Coast Boating Week & Waterfest, 2010 Venues and Events*

Chairman Cunningham again asked the BMAC to start considering various venues and events for next year's boating week. Planning must get started soon for Boating Week & Waterfest due to the time involved in planning. Requested ideas specifically for events for next year. Chairman Cunningham has contacted the Rowing Club and they have interest in participating.

Mr. Brown asked who was in charge of last year's event.

Mr. Butz stated that Mr. Hanlin stepped up and took control of last year's event.

Mr. Brown recommended that BMAC be more intentional about concepts for next event and suggested that all members draft a list of ideas to share at next month's meeting. Mr. Brown conceptually used the example of Space Coast Waterfest Fishing Tournament held at the Port.

Mr. Butz agreed with Mr. Brown's recommendation and added that an additional step be taken for each member to select an event of interest to "champion". An

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opportunity exists for BMAC to gain more exposure and interact more with the community. Everyone can gain an appreciation of the time and effort involved in planning this type of event.

Chairman Cunningham agreed with Mr. Butz' suggestions and added that similar event opportunities exist in his area.

Mr. McCrary asked if events will be countywide and suggested north area location across from area formerly called the Parish Park area.

Mr. Butz answered yes and used example of event at C-54 for the south area.

Mr. Brown reminded that the event does not have to be limited to one week. It can be extended to two or three weeks and can even tie into other events like last year's event led into Safe Boating Week. Mr. Brown stated that Gary is working on some of the contacts involved in coordinating the events and remaining with Mid-May timeframe.

Chairman Cunningham agreed with idea to tie Boating Week into Safe Boating Week.

Mr. McCrary volunteered to contact Auxiliary Coast Guard Station in Titusville regarding participating in next event.

Mr. Brown explained that the Auxiliary receives missions through Active Duty Coast Guard and advised Mr. McCrary to keep in contact with previous contact BM1 Rif allowing them to manage hub of Safe Boating Week. A new division has been created that will improve communications of all Coast Guard Auxiliary locations within Brevard County, and is no longer tied to Orlando.

Mr. Penovich stated that off-shore season starts with various tournaments in May that can also easily tie into Waterfest. This year, a month long Dolphin Tournament was held in May. A large Dodge tournament also kicks off in May that can tie into this event.

Mr. Brown explained the importance of tying educational events together to increase awareness in the community of ecological, economical, and recreational importance of Brevard's waterways.

Mr. McCrary asked if another event will be coordinated at Ski Island like last year and if coordination will be needed with Port Authority.

Mr. Musser stated that Port Authority would greatly appreciate being included in coordination of plans for similar event.

Mr. Butz recommended early engagement and coordination with proper staff at Port Authority for similar event and felt strongly that Boating Brevard would be sponsoring similar event this year.

Mr. Brown asked Mr. Musser if there were any significant problems with last year's event.

Mr. Musser stated that the biggest concern last year was related to ferrying persons to and from Ski Island. Often persons could travel to but not from the island via ferry. Mr. Musser stated that the preference of the Port Authority would be not to

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have a ferry available. He asked that if it had to happen at this year's event, make ferry available at all times to resolve this issue this year.

Mr. Butz asked that each member bring an idea for an event to next month's meeting for a mini working session and clarified that the event could also be led by individuals off the board like Ron Morgan or Mike Huck. Event to be held roughly around second week of May.

Chairman Cunningham agreed.

Mr. Brown stated that an email reminder be sent to remind members of this homework assignment.

Mr. Hanlin stated that he would be working with members of the Assistance Committee (Ron Morgan and Mike Huck) via email. Mr. Hanlin intends to return to the area in late September and will have additional information to report to board at that time.

Mr. Hanlin needed to end conference call and quorum dissolved at 650PM.

2. Old Business

a. *South County Boat Ramp*

Chairman Cunningham has contact Greg Minor. Mr. Minor did attend a Grant City Council meeting. The council is satisfied with progress being made. Mr. Minor is also working with FDOT and has resolved issues with their agency. Dredge material is still drying out. Most of docks and ramps are in. Project is in good shape.

b. *Inc. Magazine Best Businesses Recognition to member Mr. Jerry Butz*

Each year, Inc. Magazine ranks around 5000 "Best Businesses in United States". Mr. Butz' operation, "Boater's Exchange", was one of only two Brevard businesses recognized on the list. Congratulations were extended to Mr. Butz.

IV. Reports

1. Staff Report – Matt Culver, Natural Resources Management Office (NRMO)

a. *Statewide Artificial Reef Summit*

A summit will be held at Cocoa Beach Hilton on January 21st – 23rd, 2010. FWC is sponsoring the event and is currently requesting donations and sponsorships. Mr. Culver is unaware if there will be a cost to attend this event. FWC will soon be asking for presenters for this event as well. Mr. Brown stated that NRMO plans to present at this event. Topics to include projects for two local reefing projects and derelict vessel project.

Chairman Cunningham recommended contacting Mr. David Roach to assist funding that might be needed. Mr. Brown agreed to contact Mr. Roach to investigate.

b. *Derelict Vessels*

Mr. Culver stated 5 or 6 derelict vessels are scheduled to be removed at end of next week. Mr. Butz asked if these vessels are part of the count of 8 identified last month. Mr. Culver stated that 8 vessels were removed last month. Additional funding exists to collect additional vessels being removed.

Mr. Butz brought to the board's attention a large vessel named The Princess Grace. The Princess Grace is located just south of the SR528 causeway in the Indian River. Concerns exist about the potential hazards to private or public property posed by this ship(especially the nearby bridge). The ship is not in a secure spot and has been known to drift around. Mr. Butz asked about Natural Resources' official position regarding this ship. Mr. Culver has been coordinating with FWC Derelict Vessel Officer Jeff Luce. The ship has been floating and does shift positions each time it has been observed and is not sitting on the bottom, therefore it is not a derelict vessel or considered "abandoned". Mr. Culver contacted The Coast Guard last week to let them know of the position of the ship acutally in the middle of the channel observed recently during aerial flights for the crab trap cleanup project.

Mr. Brown stated that Coast Guard officials required the ship to be repositioned the day after Mr. Culver contacted them. Mr. Brian Moore moved the ship out of the channel. The Coast Guard has sent preliminary letter to advise of options. The ultimate plan is to move the vessel to a secure location out of our waters. The ship can only contain materials necessary for operation. Excessive fuel and some other items must be removed before vessel can be moved. Mr. Brown could not recall the locations the owner proposed for relocation. The Coast Guard has now elevated this issue to federal jurisdictional issue because it is currently middle of hurricane season and the ship has demonstrated its ability to go off mark with potential to cause damage to private and public structures and infrastructure. Mr. Brown will be sure to provide copy of final executed letter from Coast Guard when it becomes available.

V. Public Input

1. Sebastian Inlet Marina

Mr. Steve Haigis provided spreadsheet handout to illustrate the occupancy numbers in facility parking lot, following up on concerns originally presented in May regarding parking occupancy at marina. Spreadsheet does not show how many people launch from wet slopes. Facility only has 6 wet slopes and the number would be minimal. Spreadsheet captures data of car counts taken between hours of 1-2 p.m. along with number of boats launched.

Mr. Brown asked if Mr. Haigis will continue to collect this data. Mr. Haigis will collect this data each week. Mr. Haigis primarily collects data during peak times and does not collect data each day. Mr. Haigis stated that a proposal will be put together that includes this data to present to the BOCC.

Mr. Butz stated the current rule, which is a ratio of 2 slips to 1 parking space. Mr. Butz asked Mr. Brown what additional data needs to be collected to make a strong case to BOCC with an eye towards modifying current occupancy rules so that they will become less arbitrary (eg: parking spaces).

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Mr. Brown stated that Mr. Culver has done a lot of work on this issue and can assist with ensuring relevant data is collected in a manner that can be certified and strongly support recommendations brought forward.

Mr. McCrary recommended Mr. Haigis add numbers of cars to the spreadsheet which currently only notes numbers of boat launches. Mr. Haigis described challenges with manually obtaining car counts unlike boat launch counts which rely on automated software. Mr. Brown indicated that manual car counts will be extremely valuable information to collect. Mr. McCrary agreed that this have this correlation in the data will be helpful in illustrating recommendations. Mr. Culver stated that he has compiled similar data within US and outside of the country that would be very helpful to add to local data.

Mr. Brown stated that some of data Mr. Culver has collected contains formula information. A recent Boating Characterization Study was done that might also have data that could be useful.

Mr. Haigis and Mr. McCrary stated it would be important to compare data for facilities with similar types of boats being stored. Mr. Penovich and Mr. Brown agreed. Mr. Haigis will ask owner if an independent person can be hired to perform manual data counts needed.

Chairman Cunningham will coordinate with Mr. Culver to review some of the existing data.

Mr. Brown asked if there is a local wet marina dedicated mostly to wet slips that can be approached for information. Sundance, Titusville, and Telmar were recommended by a variety of members.

Mr. Culver added that standard formula exists to calculate parking space ratios.

Mr. Haigis stated that marina currently has 91 required parking spaces with 265 "permitted" boat spaces. In reality, number is closer to 235. Mr. Haigis closed by adding that the marina has great interest in being a venue for boating week.

2. FWC Office Benefit

Officer Travis Franklin reported on recovery of officer recently shot in the line of duty. Benefit to be held at the Elks Lodge in Titusville on August 29 at 2:00 p.m.

3. Ski Island Event Labor Day Weekend

Mr. Butz stated Boat Brevard is hosting another gathering of boats at Ski Island on Sunday, September 6. Mr. Butz recently visited Ski Island and stated how beautifully the island is maintained.

VI. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. McCrary. Mr. Butz seconded and the motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.