

**Marine Advisory Committee
April 2, 2013
Milton, Florida**

The Marine Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Jeff Marker, Rick Harris, and Scott Mason. Also present were the County Administrator, Hunter Walker; Chris Verlinde, Marine Extension Agent; Roger Blaylock, County Engineer and Avis Whitfield, Public Works Director. Chairman Jeff Marker called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The minutes of the February 5, 2013 meeting were approved.

GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL SEASHORE UPDATE

Matthew Johnson, Marine Ecologist, Gulf Islands National Seashore, 3500 Park Road, Ocean Springs, Mississippi, updated the committee on Gulf Islands National Seashore. He mentioned that the seagrass project is still underway in Santa Rosa Sound, Big Sabine and explained that the reason for the update is to advise the committee about a new program that will permit spear fishing inside the Gulf Islands National Seashore in the Gulf, SR Sound and Pensacola Bay for Lionfish only. They will provide training prior to permitting and it will exclude hard areas (piers, etc.). He explained that Lionfish are an imported aggressive fish that are endangering the local species and they are allowing spear fishing in an effort to get the public to help control the Lionfish. Visitors will be required to check in and out and go through a short training program in order to see how much interest there is in this project. The fishermen will be allowed to keep their Lion fish catch.

MARINE SANCTUARY REEF PROJECT UPDATE

Robert Boston, 7136 East Bay Blvd., Navarre provided an update on the Marine Sanctuary reefing projects (see attached). He pointed out that Byron Clark of MarineCompass will do a sidescan and bottom analysis gratis which should make the permitting process move through the system faster. He asked that the Marine Advisory Committee make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to support funding the \$7,000 needed to apply for the permits.

Mr. Walker pointed out that this committee only makes recommendations on money available through Boater Registration Fees and this project does not qualify for funding from those fees.

Rick Harris made a motion for the MAC to support the project within the means available to the Committee. The motion was seconded by Scott Mason and passed without objection.

CHAIRMAN/MEMBER ISSUES

Chris Verlinde noted that several people went out with the Nature Conservancy to look at some of the oyster reef projects but inclement weather did not allow them to look at all of them. Rick Harris noted that over harvesting is a problem in our area as well as Georgia and Alabama and hopefully DEP will continue to focus on East Bay and our local oyster beds.

Avis Whitfield reported that Engineering is looking into permitting for the parking lot at Live Oak and he noted that work at Chumuckla Springs is finished. He also reported that his department recently completed some repairs on the boardwalk at the Garcon Point boat ramp and that he was disappointed at the quality of the materials used at that location previously and how easily the material had deteriorated.

PROJECTS / ISSUES UPDATE

Boater Registration Fees as of March 31, 2013 is \$82,167.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.