

**BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK FISHERIES
MANAGEMENT PLAN
WORKING GROUP
January 27, 2004 Meeting #1**

TRANSCRIPT

Members Present:

Jack Curlett, Chair
Larry Adams
Marianne Cufone,
Bill Curtis
Pat Dorsy
Walter Flores
Alejandro Gattorno
Jamie Green
Rick Hill
Rob Killgore
Carl Leiderman
Monty Lopez
Jerry Lorenz
George Mitchell
Martin Moe
Mary Munson,
Ken Nedimyer
Ernie Piton

PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS:

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Only those at the tables are participants. Input from observers will be solicited in a variety of ways.
2. Be concise, need to assure balance of participation.
3. Turn off all beepers/cell phones-make/take all calls out of the room.
4. State problem/no "personalizing".
5. Don't repeat what has been said.
6. Listen with an open mind
7. Disagree respectfully but openly, not in private.
8. No side conversations, they are distracting to others and disrespectful to speaker.
9. Keep tone positive.
10. HAVE FUN!!!

DECISION MAKING PROCESS CONSENSUS RULES

- Every attempt will be made to make decisions by consensus
- Voting will only be used if consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable amount of time
- Consensus is defined as everyone having no less than 3 fingers showing during a ranking
- A quorum of voting members is needed to have a meeting; a quorum is defined as 2/3 of the voting members.
- 80% of voting members present (with a minimum of a 50% plus one of the current voting members) will be required to pass an item.
- Consensus shown as follows with a show of fingers:
 - 5 fingers means wholehearted support
 - 4 fingers means support
 - 3 fingers means neutral but will support fully to outside world
 - 2 fingers means you still have questions you need to ask
 - 1 finger blocks any decision (no middle fingers!!)

In the event anyone has a show of 1 or 2 fingers, discussion will continue to either answer questions or concerns of those blocking. If there are no 1's or 2's, then consensus is reached on that issue and you will move on to the next issue to be discussed.

GENERAL COMMENTS from the Group::

1. This is a joint process
2. No-take zone is synonymous with a reserve
3. Education/enforcement hopefully leads to compliance

SWOT EXERCISE

The Working Group was asked to consider the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of fisheries in Biscayne National Park. Each member was provided with a "post it" note pad and pen and told to write one idea per sheet. They were to indicate with which category the idea was affiliated by putting an "S", "W", "O", or "T" on the top of each sheet. All post it notes were placed on flipchart sheets that were labeled. Members were then given an opportunity to read the notes of their fellow members.

The results of this exercise follow.

STRENGTHS

Easy access to fishing grounds
Federal laws shall require in 2006 cleaner and quieter outboard motors. It will reduce stress on ecosystem.
The park has ability to provide food for families and has for many years
Beautiful environment
Great fishing
Unified goals (more fish)
Size
Positive experience
One of a kind
To be conservation minded
Rebound of nearby fishery is result of net-ban
Few people in park during weekdays: Mon-Fri
Catch and release is practiced by many recreational anglers
Feeling of getting away from the masses
Fertile fishing ground
Detailed personal knowledge of resources
Wide open and easily accessible
Large, strong bonefish
Weather
Larval distribution from downstream areas
Magnitude and diversity of existing fishing environment
A diverse fishery
A great place to make your living out of
Beautiful flats to fish
Diversity of fishery resources
Non-populous (few visitors)
The resources are close to good research facilities
Resource opportunity
The species found in the park can teach the public a lot about how the public affects the environment.
Opportunities throughout the Bay
Recreational fishermen often flyfish or "spin" fish which requires no bait to be used
Great, well educated superintendent and staff

WEAKNESSES

Badly marked shallow/hazards
Storm water runoff dumped into Bay - lower salinity levels
Lack of fresh water sheet flow

Bay receives run off of phosphorous from Central Florida sugar cane
Health dependent upon other ecosystems to the north
The Park is getting abused through uneducated people
Lack of strong boater education
Lack of fishery regulation enforcement
Lack of enforcement
Not enough properly marked flats and channels
Inability of managers to overcome the recreational fishing lobby when writing fishery management plans.
Rangers called off to do homeland security
The Park gets not enough money for law enforcement
Existing rules regulation enforcement inadequate
Lack of enforcement
Lack of coordination with sanctuary, other jurisdictions
Not enough enforcement
Lack of law enforcement
Lack of law enforcement
Poor scientific knowledge of stocks
Reduction in bonefish stocks
Proximity to human population
Clean pristine water
Enforcement
Research needs not well addressed
Location to population center encourages overharvest
Great human impact
Individual agendas
Shallow coral reefs
Shallow areas
Lack of park funding
Lack of fish
Water quality diminishing
Environmental challenges
Not enough enforcement - especially vs. jet skis
Insufficient enforcement
More people coming
The fishery has been depleted illegally
Mosquitoes
Raccoons
Lack of enforcement
Not enough law enforcement
Money
Utilization limits

OPPORTUNITIES

Protect natural resources
Re-establish connections with Florida Bay via Manatee Creek and other creeks
Increase enforcement - especially in Stiltsville
Plan and act in timely and effective manner
More and bigger fines for breaking rules in Park
Manage fishery
Protect endangered marine species
The Bay was a great place to grow up in. It can still teach if properly regulated.
Ocean zoning
Peace of mind
Educating our young
Great place to make your living
Seasonal
Preserver remaining intact bottom communities
To help law enforcement
There's still time to fix the problems
Enjoyment of the park
Ability to manage resources (strength of Park control)
GMP process
Inclusion of all customers and stakeholders in planning and implementation of effective management of resources
Save it for the future
Collaborative work
Consensus on management

THREATS

Too many people moving into area
Boat traffic (2)
Too close to a land fill
Fresh water dams being opened
Pollution from water discharge
Jet skis and other "thrill" craft
Unregulated access
Overfishing by recreational fishermen
Too many fishers
No more mackerel in Bay
Overfishing

Continued deterioration of species and fish stock.
Use of destructive fishing gear tearing bottom
Pollution
Not doing anything to improve fishing
Powerplant
Reduction of shrimp stocks
Fresh water run off
Increase of resource users from Caribbean areas
Storms
Development of wetlands adjacent to Bay (runoff, no filtering)
Too many boaters allowed at marinas
Removal of filter feeders from Bay (sponges)
Little to no enforcement (on a federal level) of pollution
Not enough bonefish
Huge recreational fishing population will overfish all fisheries if unchecked
Reduction of sea trout population
Boater knowledge
Octopus
Increasing local recreational fishing/numbers of anglers
Boaters who can't read charts
Huge numbers of boaters
Bottom damage from power boats
No concern for Park on mini Lobster season
Pollution from runoff from dump
Coastal development
Not enough snappers and groupers
Too many people
Snappers and groupers too small
Size limits smaller than reproductive size
Groundings from drunk boat drivers
Changes from global warming
Advancement of flats fishing
Pollution (2)
Over/unnecessary regulation
Overfishing

Members were given the definition of an “issue”: “A point or matter of discussion, debate or dispute.” They were asked to generate a list of issues related to the Bay and fisheries. Post it notes were once again utilized. Members were instructed to either take those items they thought were issues from the SWOT sheets and move them to flipcharts designated for issue ideas, or generate

new ideas on their post it notes, again, one idea per note sheet. Once all issues were identified, the Group as a whole was asked to place the issues generated under the Categories contained in the current draft document: *Fishery Issues and Potential Future Conditions of Fishery Resources and Fishing Experience in Biscayne National Park*. If any of the issues did not seem to fall under one of the drafted categories, members were instructed to place them on a blank sheet and give that grouping a name if possible.

The results of this exercise are shown below:

ISSUES BY CATEGORY:

1. POPULATIONS OF EXPLOITED FISH AND SHELLFISH

1.1 The abundance and average size of fish (that are subject to take and spend a significant portion of their lives within the Park) relative to those fish in similar fished habitats outside the Park

No more mackerel in Bay
Overfishing
Manage fishery
Poor scientific knowledge of stocks
Size limit on certain species
Size and bag limits
How to qualify and quantify with reliable scientific data the proposed recommended new rules and regulations concerning future benefits
Bag limits on recreational catch
Declining fish populations
Mangrove snapper need to be 12" to keep
Yellowtails need to be 14" to be legal
Size limits on fish

1.2 Future abundance and average size of fish within the Park (that are subject to take and spend a significant portion of their lives within the Park) relative to current levels

Continued deterioration of species and fish stock.
Reduction in bonefish stocks
Possibility that researcher will manipulate data to obtain grants for research
Make all size limits larger than species reproductive size
Lack of adequate science - need to have goals - there are none. No true stock assessments.
Closed seasons for overfished stocks

Make size limits of snappers and groupers larger
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1.3 *The long-term abundances of spiny lobster, blue crab, stone crab and pink shrimp within the Park*

Too many octopi in the Bay killing shellfish
Spiny lobster recreational fishery
Lobster mini-season

2. COMMERCIAL FISHING ACTIVITY

2.1 *Numbers of commercial fishers within the park*

Overfishing
Wing netters need restrictions
Historical commercial fisheries/fishermen
Limiting commercial fishing more than at present
Stop netting of shrimp in park

2.2 *Bycatch amount and bycatch-related mortality associated with commercial fishing gear*

Use of destructive fishing gear tearing bottom
Protect endangered marine species
Removal of too much shrimp & bycatch from the bay
Seagrass habitat damage from rollers
Bycatch mortality
Ban on destructive or nonselective gear types

3. HABITAT CONDITIONS (ALTERATIONS TO THE PHYSICAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BY RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHING ACTIVITIES)

3.1 *Impacts from roller-frame trawling* Group Renamed these: **SEAGRASS IMPACTS**

Boater safety knowledge anchoring and standing on coral
Impacts of roller-frame trawl
Ways to prevent seagrass from being scarred by motors
Boats running aground on the reef

This group did not use the already drafted sub categories. They proposed their own with names and issues as follows.

Fishing Damage

Damage from lost or discarded hook and line fishing gear
Derelict spiny lobster and crab traps
Lobster mini season
Damage caused by divers during lobster mini season
Spearfishing impacts

Water Issues

Too close to a land fill
Fresh water dams being opened
Pollution from water discharge
Re-establish connections with Florida Bay via Manatee Creek and other creeks
Storm water runoff dumped into Bay - lower salinity levels
Lack of fresh water sheet flow
Bay receives run off of phosphorous from Central Florida sugar cane
Health dependent upon other ecosystems to the north
Runoff water and sewage
Appropriate levels of salinity for fisheries
Open connections with Long Sound and wetlands on east side of US 1
Having a partnership with water management regarding discharge of canals into Biscayne National Park
Restore "historic" freshwater flow
Improve water quality
Water salinity in Bay
Freshwater intrusion
Pollution
Support for Everglades restoration projects that benefit fisheries

Marine Zoning

Protect natural resources
Badly marked shallow/hazards
Easy access to fishing grounds
Develop MPAs (Marine Protected Areas)
No motor zones
Zone management will provide good opportunity to see the effects of fish vs. no fish zones
Coral reef protection zones

Social and Human Population Issues

Too many people moving into area
Boat traffic (2)
Overpopulation (2)
Proximity to human population
Seek more charter boat captain input
Limit the amount of people using marinas
Too much boat traffic in the wrong places
Unsuccessful in being "heard" at state level by legislature about water issues

Environmental Habitat Monitoring

Habitat degradation
Lack of science baseline data
Opportunity to manage area to increase biodiversity
Coral disease/loss
Loss of biodiversity

4. RECREATIONAL FISHING EXPERIENCE

4.1 Quality of experience of Park visitors engaged in recreational fishing

Jet skis and other "thrill" craft
Overrestrictive measures imposed upon recreational angling (I.e. "No Motor Zones")
User conflicts
Possible limited entry program for guides or fishermen
Marinas should have a maximum boat per marina to keep boating traffic down in the Park
Jet ski/fishermen conflicts
Too many fishing people

4.2 The portion of flats fishers experiencing a "private and tranquil" experience

Recreational fishers running over flats taking the short cut home
Too many boats
Cannot possess bonefish in Park
No motor zones (extent of)
Too many people

4.3 Fishing public's knowledge of fishing regulations in the Park

Unregulated access
The Park is getting abused through uneducated people
Make anglers pass a test prior to recreational saltwater license
Fishing permits - issue BNP fishing permits and limit number
Educate novice fishermen
Using Stiltsville for boater/fisher education
Limited access fishing

4.4 Fishing public's compliance with fishing regulations in the Park

Overfishing by recreational fishermen
Too many fishers
Lack of strong boater education
Lack of fishery regulation enforcement
Lack of enforcement
More new people moving into South Florida that have never had a boat. Maybe having them go to a boating school if a first-time buyer.
Uneducated people pressure
Bilingual laws and signage

Two new categories were formed:

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FUNDING

Plan and act in timely and effective manner
More and bigger fines for breaking rules in Park
Rangers called off to do homeland security
The Park gets not enough money for law enforcement
Existing rules regulation enforcement inadequate
Lack of enforcement
Lack of coordination with sanctuary, other jurisdictions
Not enough enforcement
Lack of law enforcement
Lack of law enforcement
Not enough enforcement
Law enforcement at every public marina
More enforcement in Stiltsville
Funding for rangers
Weak enforcement
More enforcement

Ways to get rangers to respond to reported violations
Multi-time violators should be required to take education classes
Enforcement capability
Rangers and information should be bilingual

PARK OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Increase enforcement - especially in Stiltsville
Not enough properly marked flats and channels
Inability of managers to overcome the recreational fishing lobby when writing fishery management plans.
Establish an emergency fund for special issues (<i>I.e.</i> wrecks, spills, etc.)
Rotate mooring buoys
Jet skis still in Park
Need better signage
Boats running aground on the flats and reef
Destructive fishing practices which have been "grandfathered" in (<i>I.e.</i> <i>sponging, poaching</i>)
Potential licensing for boaters
Perception that spear fishermen are the cause of overfishing
Education
Control the gear to be used for spearfishermen - sling vs. guns
Insufficient science
Allegation that recreational fishermen cause "over" fishing when many are catch and release

Additional issue that was left unplaced: Better use of Ocean zoning
