



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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Commission Meeting
November 20 - 21
Key Largo, FL
Minutes

*A digital recording of the entire meeting is available upon request. Please contact the Community Relations Office at (850) 488-4676 for additional information.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) held its regular meeting November 20-21, 2014, at the Hilton Key Largo Resort, located at 97000 Overseas Highway, Key Largo. Chairman Richard A. Corbett called the meeting to order with the following members in attendance:

Ronald Bergeron, Fort Lauderdale
Aliese Priddy, Immokalee

Bo Rivard, Panama City
Chuck Roberts, Tallahassee

Richard Hanas, Oviedo

Senior and Presenting Staff:

Nick Wiley	Executive Director
Eric Sutton	Assistant Executive Director
Bud Vielhauer	General Counsel
Colonel Calvin Adams	Director, Division of Law Enforcement
Ernie Marks	Director, South Region
Thomas Graef	Director, Southwest Region
Steve Shea	Director, Northwest Region
Shannon Wright	Director, Northeast Region
Chris Wynn	Director, North Central Region
Diane Eggeman	Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management
Tom Champeau	Director, Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management
Jessica McCawley	Director, Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Gil McRae	Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
Dr. Thomas Eason	Director, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Doc Kokol	Director, Community Relations
Jackie Fauls	Director, Legislative Affairs
Melissa Recks	Section Leader, Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Martha Bademan	Section Leader, Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Harry Dutton	Alligator Management Program Coordinator
Cory Morea	Deer Management Program Coordinator
Dan Ellinor	Biological Administrator, Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Carol Knox	Section Leader, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Rae Waddell	Director, Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network

There were forty individuals registered to speak to the Commission during the two-day meeting.

Meeting Opening

Chairman Corbett called the November 20-21, 2014 meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Mrs. Diane Eggeman, Director of the Division of Hunting and Game Management, gave the invocation followed by Commissioner Priddy leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

New Commissioner Welcome

Chairman Corbett welcomed Commissioner Hanas to his first Commission meeting.

Commissioner Hanas thanked the Chairman for the warm welcome and expressed his eagerness to learn all of the important issues the Commission faces.

Adoption of Minutes

Upon a motion by Commissioner Rivard, seconded by Commissioner Priddy and carried, the September 2014 minutes were approved as written.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Priddy and carried, to adopt the November 2014 Commission Meeting Agenda as amended to remove item number one from the consent agenda and including it on the regular meeting agenda during day two.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Upon a motion by Commissioner Hanas, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and carried, the November 2014 Consent Agenda was approved with the removal of consent agenda item number one.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Corbett welcomed everyone to the Florida Keys as he highlighted some of the wonderful aspects of this area. He asked Mr. Eric Sutton, Assistant Executive Director, to provide a general outline of the discussions and the strategic areas that Commission staff will bring back for specific policy direction and consideration over the next year.

Mr. Sutton outlined the structure of the 2015 Commission Meetings relating to strategic initiatives and explained how the topics were placed with meetings based on several key factors. He then requested feedback from the Commission on any suggested changes to the proposed schedule.

Chairman Corbett thanked Mr. Sutton for presenting this information to the Commission and with no comments from the Commission, he asked Mr. Sutton to move forward with the proposed schedule.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Nick Wiley highlighted the following items from the Executive Director's report:

- Officer Lee Lawshe received the National Officer of the Year Award from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) at their recent meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.
- The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) held its annual conference recently in Destin, Florida. FWC hosted this conference, and a record number of attendees participated (over 700).
- Beginning November 24 and lasting through December 31, 2014, FWC will be offering the Lifetime Sportsman's license for users up to the age of 21 at half price.
- The Lovett E. Williams, Jr. Research Lab dedication was completed based on guidance from the Commission at the September meeting.
- Biscayne National Park coordination with FWC in regards to 7 proposals under consideration regarding the General Management Plan. Executive Director Wiley invited Superintendent Brian Carlstrom up to address the

Commission. Superintendent Carlstrom thanked the Commission and provided some key facts related to the Florida Keys specifically in reference to Biscayne National Park.

- Introduction of the new Regional Director, Mr. Ernie Marks, and farewell to Mr. Chuck Collins, his predecessor.
- Introduction of the new South Region Public Information Coordinator, Ms. Liz Barraco.

Commissioner Priddy recognized Ms. Kate Deloach, District Secretary for Representative Holly Raschein, who was in attendance at the meeting.

Council Reports

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC)

Ms. Martha Bademan, Section Leader with the Division of Marine Fisheries, provided an update on recent actions taken at the October council meeting including the Council's approval of recreational red snapper sector separation which would divide the recreational quota into sub-quotas for private anglers (and state-permitted guideboats) and federally-permitted charter-for hire vessels. Sector separation is now pending approval by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Staff also requested direction on the 2015 recreational red snapper season for state waters.

Executive Director Wiley noted recreational red snapper season in Gulf state waters should be finalized at the April Commission meeting.

Commissioner Roberts asked how the federal season would be affected if the states are non-compliant. How would the federally-permitted charter sector be impacted? He noted the responsibility of keeping state waters open for stakeholders if the recovery of the species is on schedule or faster than we expect. He noted that the Commission should explore different options moving forward and how sector separation could impact the State of Florida. He added that the Commission did not support sector separation because it was not fully supported by the charter industry and resulted in an unacceptable outcome for private anglers.

Ms. Bademan responded that if all the Gulf States stay with the same current state seasons, the season length for private anglers in Gulf federal waters would most likely be one (1) day. If the Gulf States increase the length of their state waters seasons, private anglers could have a zero (0) day season in Gulf federal waters.

Commissioner Priddy asked about how the red snapper spawning season is impacted based on the opening of the recreational harvest seasons.

Ms. Jessica McCawley responded that peak spawning season is during April and May, and commented that many stakeholders at the public workshops commented that they would not like the recreational harvest season opened during spawning season.

Commissioner Bergeron asked if the commercial quota could be impacted by the recreational sector.

Ms. Bademan responded that if the recreational sector exceeds their quota they could potentially affect the commercial fishery, but there are safeguards in place to keep this from happening.

Commissioner Rivard asked about artificial reefs being placed in state waters instead of federal waters based on the more limited fishing opportunities in federal waters due to the closures that have occurred recently. He noted that reefs placed in state waters could provide anglers with more fishing opportunities throughout the year.

Ms. McCawley responded that with the recent Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) money being released to the state, the FWC will be able to help place over 5000 reefs in the Panhandle area of Florida over the next few years.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Bill Kelly with the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association addressed the Commission regarding the commercial king mackerel fishery. He asked the Commission to support an increase in the commercial trip limit for commercial king mackerel gill-net fishermen operating in Gulf federal waters.

Mr. TJ Marshall with the Ocean Conservancy addressed the Commission. He stated the Marine Resource Information Program (MRIP) data calibration workshop and the upcoming red snapper stock assessment will likely provide more accurate data and more quota and therefore result in a longer federal season in 2015 than the current one (1) day estimate.

Mr. Trip Aukeman with the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) addressed the Commission. He volunteered CCA assistance related to the placement of artificial reefs in state waters. He commented that regional management could be a good management option for the State of Florida once the details are filled in.

Ms. Pam Anderson with PCBA, NACO, and Member of the Bay County Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee addressed the Commission with concerns about sector separation. She asked the FWC's Council representative to pursue reallocation of red snapper so that the recreational sector has more quota during the season.

Mr. Mike Colby with the Clearwater Commercial Marine Association addressed the Commission. He recommended that the 2015 red snapper season in Gulf state waters stay the same in order to allow federally-permitted for hire vessels to fish in federal waters providing anglers without boats an opportunity to fish in federal waters. He noted his support for an active Florida artificial reef building program.

Mr. Dennis O'Hern, Executive Director of the Fishing Rights Alliance (FRA), addressed the Commission. He commented that the FRA intends to challenge Amendment 40 (red snapper sector separation) in court. He noted that he would like the Commission to increase the length of the state season significantly in 2015.

Mr. Jerry Sansom, Executive Director of the Organized Fishermen of Florida, addressed the Commission noting that fisheries are a dual-use industry providing both food and recreation. He also spoke against inter-sector trading.

Commission Discussion

Chairman Corbett asked Executive Director Wiley to summarize the Council's recent discussions and how the Commission will address some of these items in the future.

Executive Director Wiley noted that regional management is starting to move forward but will take some time. He also noted the timing of the 2015 Gulf red snapper season in state waters needs to be framed up to assist the local businesses and also provide access to the anglers. Staff will be working to bring forward options and ideas about the 2015 red snapper season in Gulf state waters at the February 2015 Commission Meeting.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)

Ms. McCawley provided an update on actions taken at the September SAFMC meeting. Final actions taken by the Council included adjustments to the snowy grouper rebuilding plan, gray triggerfish management measures, and Spanish mackerel commercial management measures. The Council also continued to discuss an amendment that would allow anglers to bring dolphin and wahoo back from the Bahamas as fillets and an amendment that would remove species from federal management. No specific direction was requested from the Commission at this time.

Commissioner Roberts asked if removing species from federal management and having the FWC take over management of these species would be restricted to specific areas or would it be statewide.

Ms. McCawley responded that the species in this report have very low or no landings and are not related to the species currently being discussed by the joint-council South Florida committee. The species in this report have already been removed from federal management in the Gulf by the Gulf Council. If directed by the Commission, staff will bring back a request to extend state waters regulations into federal waters for these species once this amendment is approved by the Council.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Bill Kelly addressed the Commission. He commented on the need of the FWC, the South Atlantic Council, and the Gulf Council to provide the Keys region with more consistent regulations that take into account the economic needs of the area. He spoke in opposition of removing important south Florida species from federal management.

Ms. Gail Feddern with the Florida Marine Life Association addressed the Commission on the spearfishing restrictions in the Upper Keys. She requested the FWC remove these restrictions.

Federal Consistency

Ms. Bademan presented information on a proposed rule that would set the recreational red grouper bag limit at two fish per person per day in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Ms. Bademan noted that this action would make state recreational grouper regulations in the Gulf of Mexico consistent with federal regulations that were approved at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's October meeting and are now pending approval by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Rob Hammer addressed the Commission in opposition of staff recommendation. He stated his opposition to dropping bag limits of species like red grouper when he is already limited on what species he can target due to closures on many species.

Mr. TJ Marshall addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation. He noted that many recreational anglers and charter captains along Florida's west coast support this bag limit reduction.

Mr. Trip Aukeman addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation. He stated CCA's support of the bag limit reduction in an effort to lengthen the federal red grouper season in future years.

Mr. Brad Gorst addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation. He noted that reducing the bag limit would keep that federal season open longer and be the best option for anglers fishing in the Naples area.

Mr. Dennis O'Hern addressed the Commission in opposition of staff recommendation. He noted that the issue is not overharvest of red grouper, but NOAA Fisheries' methods for calculating harvest.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Bergeron commented that having the recreational Gulf red grouper fishery open year round with a two-fish bag limit would be more beneficial to the majority of the fishermen.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bergeron, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and carried, the Commission approved the staff recommendation.

Special Recognition

Chairman Corbett recognized Mr. Jack Curlett, Vice Chairman of the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, and asked him to speak to the Commission about the recent BlueGreen Event held at Commissioner Bergeron's ranch.

Mr. Curlett spoke of the highly successful event held recently which raised money for the youth conservation centers of Florida. He noted that Adam Putnam was recognized as the "Man of the Year" at this event.

Commissioner Bergeron thanked Chairman Corbett for all the contributions to this cause. He added that his family is honored to put on this charitable event every year. He also thanked Rodney Baretto, Chairman with the Wildlife Foundation of Florida.

Commissioner Hanas reminded everyone of how important support for this effort is in relation to youth conservation.

Marine Habitat Management in the Florida Keys

Coral Research and Management

Mr. John Hunt with the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute presented a report on the efforts to monitor and restore corals in the state of Florida.

Ms. McCawley provided information on where this process goes from here to begin listing these corals as Threatened species.

Commissioner Priddy asked what FWC's ability to make a positive impact on the species is. She also asked because of the listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), how much funding the federal government provides for restoration of these species.

Mr. Hunt responded that the strategy is to find ways to create sufficient pockets of corals in strategic locations. He noted that because these species are so newly listed, the federal funding provided is minimal at this point. However, with other listed corals, he noted that federal funding levels are significantly higher.

Commissioner Priddy asked for a quick list of projects currently underway.

Mr. Hunt responded with the types of projects that are underway with staff from the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Ms. McCawley introduced Mr. Sean Morton, Superintendent of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Status of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Superintendent Morton provided an informational presentation on Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on agenda items 6A and 6B:

Mr. Bill Kelly addressed the Commission related to coral restoration.

Mr. Henry Feddern with the Florida Marine Life Association addressed the Commission in reference to the artificial reef program and control of invasive species, specifically orange cup coral.

Staff Reports

Spiny Lobster Commercial Dive Fishery

Ms. Melissa Recks with the Division of Marine Fisheries Management presented information on the moratorium on issuing new spiny lobster commercial dive (CD) endorsements. Staff recommended the Commission direct staff to return in February with a draft rule to extend the moratorium on issuing new CD endorsements indefinitely and make the existing endorsements transferable. Staff also recommended the Commission not give further consideration to requests to legalize the use of casitas when harvesting lobster.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Jim Higgins addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation.

Mr. Bill Kelly addressed the Commission in support of continuing the moratorium on issuing new CD endorsements indefinitely. He also supported the transferability of the CD endorsements. He noted opposition to the use of casitas and recommended an endorsement for bully netters in regards to the Lobster fishery.

Mr. Rob Hammer addressed the Commission in support of casitas for harvest of lobster.

Mr. Monty Dale addressed the Commission in support of extending the moratorium and transferability of the endorsement. He commented that casitas should be considered an allowable gear type for the fishery. He noted that the relevant agencies have been able to coordinate on the issuance of permits for submerged land leases and they should be able to do the same for casitas.

Mr. Russell Moore, President of the Environmentally Concerned Commercial Divers (ECCD), addressed the Commission. He commented that jurisdictional issues should not be the limiting factor to restricting legalizing the use of casitas for lobster harvest. ECCD supports transferability of the CD endorsement.

Mr. Walter Revell addressed the Commission in regards to near shore bully netting and dangers to property owners. He suggested Commission staff hold workshops with stakeholders in the affected area to allow additional research and communication on the bully netting topic in order to come back to the Commission with suggestions for change at a future meeting. He suggested abolishing the sport season. He also recommended a 300 foot buffer around private property for the entire season.

Mr. Jerry Sansom with Organized Fishermen of Florida addressed the Commission and echoed the need to look more into bully netting. He noted support of staff recommendation.

Mr. Albert Ponzoa addressed the Commission in support of transferability of CD endorsement. He requested clarification as to whether or not the CD endorsement holder has to be present on the vessel during harvest.

Commissioner Priddy asked Law Enforcement and Marine Fisheries staff to answer Mr. Ponzoa's questions.

Mr. Charles Causey addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation of transferability of the endorsement and extension of the moratorium. He noted concerns related to the safety of property owners and citizens in regards to bully netters illegally harvesting and unsafely navigating the waters for the purpose of harvest.

Mr. Jeff Cramer with the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association Board of Directors addressed the Commission in support of transferability of the CD endorsement. He spoke in opposition of casitas.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Priddy asked about bully netting near residences and who has authority to regulate this.

Mr. Bud Vielhauer, General Counsel, explained that the Commission held the authority to regulate harvest of species and the local governments have some authority related to public safety within their local area.

Commissioner Rivard asked if there is a demand for reissuing CD endorsements that have been returned to the agency due to not being renewed by the fisher.

Ms. Recks noted that the endorsement was originally established to limit growth and get a handle on the fishery as well as to document participation and stabilize the fishery.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Bergeron and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendations.

Commission Discussion continued

Commissioner Roberts suggested moving forward with workshops related to bully netting and potential increase in CD endorsements, researching whether it would have a negative impact on the fishery.

Commissioner Priddy asked for clarification on the question of the CD endorsement holder having to be present and whether or not the lobster had to be measured.

Executive Director Wiley commented that staff will move forward with workshops as directed by the Commission. Law Enforcement and Marine Fisheries staff will coordinate to determine the current legal requirements related to the CD holder's presence on the vessel and provide additional guidance to the CD endorsement holders.

Commissioner Bergeron asked what specifically would be discussed in the workshops related to bully netters.

Ms. McCawley responded that everything related to bully netting can be addressed in these workshops.

Executive Director Wiley noted the development of a team to review the issue regarding the Village of Islamorada.

Lunch Break

Chairman Corbett called the meeting back to order at 2:29 pm.

Barracuda

Ms. Recks provided a summary of stakeholder concerns related to the status of the great barracuda population in South Florida along with a series of management options for Commission discussion. Staff suggested the agency hold public workshops and consider rulemaking for barracuda.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Christopher Mallory addressed the Commission in opposition to imposing additional regulation on barracuda harvest based on the concerns that the commercial fishery for barracuda is such a small portion of the harvest.

Mr. Bill Kelly addressed the Commission and noted the different markets that drive the low demand for this species. He suggested looking at the requirements for obtaining a Saltwater Products License (SPL) to ensure the criteria is appropriate. He added support for getting additional information on this species and moving forward with a management plan.

Mr. Brett Fitzgerald with the Snook and Gamefish Foundation addressed the Commission. He commented that having fishery data before making the regulation decision is vital.

Mr. Dennis O'Hern addressed the Commission with concerns about discrimination between gear types.

Mr. Richard Schenna addressed the Commission in support of continuing to allow commercial harvest of the species.

Mr. William Benson, Secretary of the Lower Keys Guides Association, addressed the Commission. The Lower Keys Guides Association is pleased that the Commission is willing to review possible regulations on this species and added support of staff recommendation.

Mr. Steve Trippe, Director of the Florida Keys Keeper, addressed the Commission. He requested temporary guidelines be put in place while official regulations are being discussed and determined.

Mr. Aaron Adams, Director of Operations for Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, addressed the Commission. He strongly recommended Commission direction to staff to conduct these workshops in order to avoid major problems with the fishery in the future.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Roberts noted to stakeholders that this staff report is requesting direction to begin workshops in order to gather all of the information from individuals who have an interest in the topic. The Commission will make a decision once that information is gathered and an official draft rule is presented.

Commissioner Priddy commented with concerns about instituting regulations when overfishing is not apparent. There are other issues the agency needs to address that are a higher priority for use of staff resources.

Ms. McCawley responded that workshops would be a less expensive measure compared to a large educational outreach campaign.

Mr. Gil McRae, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, commented that a stock assessment on this species would be extremely expensive.

Executive Director Wiley commented that staff is working to provide suggestions on a good starting point for gathering additional information on the species. He thanked Commissioner Priddy for the comments toward evaluating the best use of resources before committing to workshops.

Commissioner Priddy noted concern for going through the exercise of workshops if we will not end up with any additional information. She stated that the agency doesn't typically begin review of a species by first starting with stakeholder workshops and wants to ensure the Commission has a valid purpose for proceeding with this process.

Commissioner Bergeron commented that this issue was brought to us by the stakeholders and he didn't see fault in holding workshops to hear more about the issue before making decisions.

Commissioner Rivard commented that Monroe County is unique with the fishery and hearing the feedback from the users in this county at a workshop is important if it can be conducted at minimal expense to the agency.

Executive Director Wiley noted staff can take direction from the Commission to work with Monroe County stakeholders in relation to gathering more information.

Commissioner Roberts commented that if stakeholders bring the issue to staff and staff felt it appropriate to bring it to the Commission then it warrants an opportunity for the workshops to take place and bring back the information for the Commission to make a decision on how to move forward at a future meeting.

Chairman Corbett suggested staff work with Monroe County stakeholders to gather additional information.

Item Requiring Action – Pinellas County Manatee Protection

Ms. Carol Knox with the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation presented draft rule 68C-22.016, Pinellas County Manatee Protection.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Dennis O'Hern addressed the Commission with the suggestion of better warning signs instead of increasing restrictions and opposed staff recommendation.

Ms. Elizabeth Fleming with the Defenders of Wildlife addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation in hopes that the proposal is not weakened before implementation. She read comments on behalf of the Chair of the Local Rule Review Committee, Ms. Terri Skapik, who was unable to travel to the Commission Meeting.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Priddy, seconded by Commissioner Bergeron and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendation to publish the proposed rule and hold at least one public hearing in Pinellas County.

Strategic Discussion Follow-up Conflict Wildlife – Lionfish and American Crocodile

Mr. Dan Ellinor with the Division of Marine Fisheries presented information on the efforts of FWC to address the presence of nonnative lionfish in Florida waters.

Next, Mr. Harry Dutton with the Division of Hunting and Game Management provided an update on the status of the American Crocodile population and the agency's current approach to resolving crocodile-human conflict situations.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Priddy asked what the recovery criteria were that would allow the American Crocodile to be considered fully recovered and removed from federal listing.

Mr. Dutton commented that the recovery process for the American Crocodile was not as simple as reaching a certain number of individuals of the species and asked for assistance in addressing this question from Fish and Wildlife Service staff that were present at the meeting.

Mr. John Wrublik with the Fish and Wildlife Service responded that he would get the recovery criteria details for the American Crocodile and distribute them to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Bergeron commended FWC staff on the recovery of this species. It is a tremendous success story.

Executive Director Wiley commented that the goal of the FWC is to work towards success of the species in coordination with the Fish and Wildlife Service with an end goal of species recovery and management at the state level.

Strategic Discussion Follow-up Efforts to Increase Diversity

Ms. Rae Waddell, Director of the Florida Youth Conservation Center Network (FYCCN), recognized a partnership with a local Community College highlighting diversity within FYCCN. She introduced the Florida Keys Community College President, Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, and Jack Seubert to address the Commission.

Dr. Gueverra spoke in gratitude of the agency assisting in providing an opportunity to students at the age of 10-12 who would not normally be exposed to the type of environment in the Florida Keys.

Commissioner Bergeron noted the importance of reaching the youth of the state at an early age.

Ms. Waddell also commented on the National Shooting Sports Foundation Hispanic Shooters Outreach Program currently going on in this area.

Next, Mr. Tom Champeau, Director of the Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management, provided additional information on diversity efforts within FWC with assistance from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

Finally, Mr. Doc Kokol, Director of the Office of Community Relations, along with Captain Diego Toiran, addressed a wonderful opportunity which would help bridge the efforts to increase diversity in South Florida related to the Hispanic community.

Captain Toiran addressed the Commission and spoke of the goals of his fishing show to reach the diverse Spanish speaking audience and how he will partner with FWC to assist in education of the citizens of Florida.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. David Garrett, president of Lionfish Eliminators Organization, Inc., addressed the Commission.

Ms. Gail Feddern addressed the Commission related to restrictions on spear fishing of lionfish in the Northern Keys and requested FWC action to reverse that restriction.

Executive Director Wiley directed staff to coordinate with Ms. Feddern to work on several issues of concern related to lionfish.

Ms. Elizabeth Fleming addressed the Commission and thanked the Commission for the presentation related to the American Crocodile and the challenges with progress in relation to the species.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission and spoke of the challenges of educating the public on both the American Crocodile and Alligator species.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

The following individuals addressed the Commission on items not on the agenda:

Mr. Newton Cook with the United Waterfowlers of Florida addressed the Commission with concerns about Lake Toho and habitat for ducks. He commented that he has been speaking with FWC staff and is willing to work on this issue to come up with a solution for all parties involved.

Mr. Bill Kelly addressed the Commission related to spiny lobster trap issues in the Florida Keys.

Mr. Ernie Piton, President of the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association, addressed the Commission related to spiny lobster trap issues and areas being closed to commercial fishing.

Commissioner Bergeron commented that closures have to have science based data in order for the Commission to review the request for changes to fisheries. However, the Commission does not have control over all of the areas of the Florida Keys, and we coordinate with other entities and provide our comments to those agencies in reference to closures.

Mr. Jerry Sansom addressed the Commission. He asked for subjects to be added to the spiny lobster workshops which will be held in the near future in the Florida Keys. First is an increase in tag traps fishing for trap lobster (stone crab traps turned into lobster traps). Second is abandoned trap retrieval issues and increases in fees for abandoned traps. He also requested a re-assessment of the Brevard County manatee speed zones. Finally, he asked for assistance locating the rule language allowing fishing in the Canaveral National Seashore national park.

Mr. John Sprague with the Marine Industries Association of Florida addressed the Commission regarding restrictions on boating with speed zones and the economic impacts to the state.

Commissioner Bergeron commented that in South Florida the FWC authority on lands and water is limited due to the number of national parks and preserves. The agency should utilize the authority it has in regulating the water and land, and should have the appropriate science based data to review the restrictions.

Commissioner Priddy asked Nick to give a report on our efforts in the success as we weigh in on the federal lands and access and use issues at the next Commission Meeting.

Executive Director Wiley confirmed that an overview of this topic will be provided at the February Commission Meeting.

Mr. Curt Harbsmeier addressed the Commission and commended staff working with the reptile industry in captive wildlife.

Ms. Betty Bauman, Founder of Ladies lets go fishing, thanked the Commission for the support of the program.

Commissioner Exchange

Commissioner Roberts thanked the stakeholders for taking the time to speak today and staff for providing the details for all of the items on the agenda. He noted that recently the Governor was at the HQ office of FWC to meet staff and show support of the agency in its mission. Both Commissioner Roberts and Vice Chairman Yablonski were happy to participate in this visit.

Commissioner Rivard again welcomed new Commissioner Hanas to his first meeting. He thanked the stakeholders for all the comments today.

Commissioner Bergeron commented on an informational packet that he created and distributed to all the Commissioners related to the Everglades. He thanked staff for working to make this a great meeting so far.

Commissioner Hanas noted that the Commission has a lot of items under their authority, and the coordination and dialogue with stakeholders is very strong. He noted the importance of accepting change and incorporating new ways of thinking about the issues that arise within the Commission's charge.

Chairman Corbett suggested participating in field trips related to the Commission's roles and responsibilities to learn more about the agency and the programs that are under FWC purview.

Commissioner Bergeron congratulated Commissioner Hanas for his appointment to the Commission, Mr. Ernie Marks who was hired as the new South Regional Director, and recognized Mr. Chuck Collins the previous South Regional Director for a job well done.

Recess Thursday's Portion of the Meeting

Chairman Corbett adjourned the meeting at 5:49 p.m. to reconvene at 8:30 a.m., Friday, November 21, 2014.

Friday, November 21, Reconvene

Chairman Corbett reconvened the meeting at 8:28 a.m.

Special Announcement

Chairman Corbett invited Mr. Chris Wynn, Northeast Regional Director, up to the podium to speak about a recent educational trip to Canada to learn more about the breeding grounds for ducks that migrate to Florida.

Regional Director Wynn highlighted the important topics of discussion that took place with our partners of Ducks Unlimited Canada related to waterfowl that provide major benefits for the citizens of Florida.

Items Requiring Action

Consent Agenda Item 1- 68A-12.002, General Methods of Taking Game: Prohibitions

Mrs. Eggeman provided a brief presentation on the final rule proposal.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Buck Holly with C&H Precision Weapons addressed the Commission in support of this proposal.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission in support of the proposal.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Hanas, seconded by Commissioner Priddy and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendations.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Priddy to approve use of Executive Order to implement the new rule, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendations.

Draft Rule – Proposed Rule Changes for Hunting 2015 - 2016

Mrs. Eggeman presented proposed rule changes for hunting for the 2015 – 2016 fiscal year.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission with a request to include special opportunity turkey hunts in this proposal.

Mr. Newton Cook addressed the Commission with concerns of the loss of check stations on Dupuis Wildlife Management Area. He noted the need for these check stations in order to get the data that is needed to make proper changes to hunting regulations.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Priddy asked Mrs. Eggeman to address some of the concerns of the special opportunity turkey hunts. If these are not included in the proposal, she asked how long it would be before these would get added to the regulations.

Mrs. Eggeman responded that the turkey hunt portion had a lot of support; however, there was some concern over quality of the hunt on these hunting areas. Staff recommended a conservative approach in regards to expanding shooting hours in order to evaluate how the areas respond with the quality of the hunt. She also noted that the information for the evaluation would be available after a few years.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Hanas and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendations.

Draft Rule – Deer Management Units within Zones A, B and C

Mr. Cory Morea with the Division of Hunting and Game Management presented a proposed rule related to Deer Management Units within Zones A, B, and C.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Newton Cook addressed the Commission thanking staff for working with stakeholders on this issue and expressed support for the proposals and requested continued review of the DMU boundaries in Zone A. He also suggested a tag and reporting system.

Mr. Robert Andreu, President of the Southwest Florida Outdoorsman Association, addressed the Commission with support of the proposal other than the three points on one side requirement on Webb due to buggy and dog hunting being common on the area. Suggested making Webb forked horn.

Mr. Frank Denninger with the Jetport Conservation and Recreation Club and the Everglades Coordinating Council addressed the Commission. He thanked FWC staff from the West Palm Beach office for communicating on this process. He requested that changes be delayed in Deer Management Unit A2 in order to get additional information on the current deer population in that zone.

Mr. Lyle McCandless with the Big Cypress Sportsmen's Alliance addressed the Commission. He thanked Cory for communicating some of the changes proposed to protect the young bucks in relation to the deer herd. He requested to keep Big Cypress within one DMU.

Commissioner Priddy commented that the northern boundary of the Big Cypress has issues related to access. It is almost impossible to get to the northern part of that unit.

Commissioner Bergeron noted that six miles North of Interstate 75 is where the habitat changes from wetlands to better habitat. He commented that DMU A2 should include the Addition Lands.

Mr. McCandless mentioned the proposal of the tag and reporting system brought up by the DMTAG that did not get approved previously and requested it be reconsidered for adoption.

Executive Director Wiley commented that the agency chose to go in another direction several years ago (improved harvest survey instead of a tag and reporting system) and would like to get with Lyle to discuss his concerns related to this issue.

Mr. John Rosier, President of the Dade County Fulltrack Conservation Club and President of the Everglades Coordinating Council, addressed the Commission. He thanked staff and Commissioners Priddy and Bergeron for their efforts. He spoke on Zone A and presented the official support position of the ECC of changes to DMU A1. In DMU A2 there is a big issue in relation to Big Cypress. The ECC requests that the regulation remains at a spike for right now based on his opinion that very little of the area is hunted and additional surveys on that area are needed to get additional data. The ECC also asked that the Big Cypress area stay within one DMU. Finally, the ECC would like to keep the Webb and Corbett area requirements as a forked horn.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission in support of the proposals. He voiced concerns with antlerless deer days and large private lands needing to be included in the regulations that the DMUs are adjacent to. He supports a reporting system, whether it be to record the number of kids hunting or the number of deer harvested, etc. It could be a free process, but it is important to have the reference to show the number of youth experiencing the opportunity to hunt.

Mr. Byron Maharrey with the Everglades Coordinating Council addressed the Commission. He announced that he was finally able to hunt in the addition lands. He commented that the Corbett hunt area was recently changed to a forked horn and less doe days. He voiced concerns with changing to a three point restriction so soon after the previous changes. He commented in support of keeping Webb at a forked horn as well. He requested the DMU boundary line be changed to include all of the Addition Lands in DMU A2.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Priddy commented on the dramatic difference between the habitat of her property which is located near Big Cypress and the Big Cypress Preserve, and would like to see all of the Big Cypress Preserve within one DMU.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the fork horn and the three point clarification. He questioned if it would be possible to wait on enacting the three point regulation on Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Mr. Morea responded that moving to a three point requirement would better protect the young deer in the area and increase the number of older deer for harvest. He indicated that it would take less time to see results of a three point regulation since the area had been under a forked antler rule for two hunting seasons. He also noted that the online poll results showed strong support among Corbett hunters for the three point regulation.

Commissioner Bergeron commented that moving the line as Commissioner Priddy stated in order to complete the process of having all of Big Cypress in one DMU would be a tremendous benefit. He noted that north of the Big Cypress Preserve in DMU A3, it is a majority of private lands which tend to have conservative actions regarding the age of deer that are harvested.

Mr. Morea responded that recent changes in Zone D came up with the 10 inch main beam as a way for dog hunters to easily identify appropriate deer for harvest and that was to be included on Webb and Corbett where dog hunting and buggy hunting are present.

Commissioner Hanas added that quality deer management has to be the priority with this action. He supports staff proposal with the quality of the deer hunting experience in mind.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Priddy amending the proposal to include Big Cypress Preserve as a whole included in Deer Management Unit A2, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendations as amended.

Legislative Issues

Ms. Jackie Fauls, Legislative Affairs Director, presented additional proposals for consideration for the 2015 Legislative Session.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Ms. Elizabeth Fleming addressed the Commission in high support of the changes in the wildlife feeding penalties. She questioned why there was no information on Florida Administrative Code (FAC) language changes in relation to intentional feeding.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission with concerns related to the Alligator Management Program statutes. He noted specific language that may still require some amendments. He also questioned the appropriateness of the current fees related to alligator egg collections from public waters, using recent competitive bids for egg collections on Babcock

Webb WMA and Fort Drum as examples of the current market value of the wild egg resource to justify adjusting the fees upward.

Mr. John Sprague addressed the Commission regarding anchoring and mooring in relation to Legislative Issues.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Hanas and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendations.

Staff Report – General Counsel Report

Mr. Vielhauer provided an update to the Commission on current legal matters related to the agency.

Future Agenda Items

Mr. Sutton reviewed potential agenda items for the upcoming February 2015 Commission Meeting which will be held in Jacksonville, Florida.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

The following individuals registered to speak on items not listed on the agenda:

Mr. Newton Cook addressed the Commission regarding use of drones while hunting. He asked for clarification on this topic by FWC staff and a determination if any action is needed related to drones.

Mr. Raymond Lovell addressed the Commission and presented a piece of artwork for the Commission to display in one of the FWC offices. He requested assistance from the Commission to take a stand against Big Sugar because of the negative effects on the state of Florida.

Mr. Lyle McCandless addressed the Commission regarding an effort to get the attention of the National Park Service related to Big Cypress issues. More information will be provided on this effort in the future. He requested additional communication from FWC staff presenting Deer Management items and the DMTAG committee.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission related to importation of deer into the State of Florida.

Mr. Daniel Parker with the Reptile Keepers in Florida addressed the Commission and thanked staff related to rules for reptile breeding and importation. He asked to be proactive related to future rules related to reptiles and breeding of regulated species of turtles.

Mr. Robert Andreu addressed the Commission related to hunting issues at Babcock Webb WMA. He offered tours of the area if any Commissioner is interested.

Commissioner Exchange

Executive Director Wiley commented about Amendment One in regards to the agency. FWC plans to engage this issue with the Legislature to assist in management of lands and resources of the State of Florida. He welcomed Commissioner guidance on this topic.

Commissioner Bergeron thanked the other Commissioners in making the decisions at this meeting. He again thanked Chuck Collins for his dedication to the State of Florida. He reminded the Commission about the importance of getting ahead of conservation easements in relevance to Amendment One.

Commissioner Priddy asked staff to ensure the Legislative proposals for 2016 get added to calendars for future meetings.

Ms. Fauls responded that these proposals are brought to the Commission at set meetings throughout the year. These come to the Commission in June and September of each year.

Executive Director Wiley noted some late breaking news on the shooting range at Corbett WMA. He thanked Mr. Anthony Pinzino, FWC Attorney, who worked hard on this issue to close the deal with several partners.

Chairman Corbett thanked the Florida Channel for broadcasting the meeting, and thanked the Florida Keys for hosting the meeting. He also noted thanks to the Foundation with new leadership of Rodney Baretto in moving the FYCCN forward. He asked that each of the Commissioners communicate with Mr. Wiley and Mr. Sutton on involvement with Amendment One.

Commission Administrative Matters

The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting is set for February 4-5, 2015 in Jacksonville, Florida, commencing at 8:30 a.m. each day.

Adjournment

Chairman Corbett adjourned the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

Richard A. Corbett
Chairman

Nick Wiley
Executive Director

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Zullo
Commission Assistant