

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Minutes of the Commission Meeting

December 6-7, 2006

Key Largo

A regular meeting of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission was held at the Marriott, 103800 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, Florida, on December 6-7, 2006. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m., by Chairman Rodney Barreto with the following members in attendance:

Mr. David K. Meehan, St. Petersburg	Mr. H. A. "Herky" Huffman, Enterprise
Ms. Sandra T. Kaupe, Palm Beach	Ms. Kathy Barco, Jacksonville
Mr. Brian S. Yablonski, Tallahassee	Mr. Richard A. Corbett, Tampa

51 persons registered as guests/speakers during the two-day meeting.

Chairman Barreto welcomed the Commissioners, staff and guests to Key Largo.

Mr. Nick Wiley gave the invocation. Commissioner Yablonski led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Special Presentations and Recognition

Mr. Ken Haddad introduced Dr. C. Tom Rainey, a member of the Board of Directors of the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, who presented the 2006 Louise Ireland Humphrey Achievement Award to FWC law enforcement Officer John Snow. Since 1999, this award is presented annually to an employee of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission who has made outstanding contributions to the protection and preservation of Florida's fish and wildlife resources. The award includes a \$1,000 check and a bronze statue of a quail in flight.

Officer Snow was honored for his work in helping train and establishes the FWC's K-9 resource protection unit, the largest of its kind in the world. Since 1992, Snow has been the primary FWC officer responsible for training K-9 teams for wildlife and fisheries resource protection in Florida. Officer Snow is one of five officers in the nation chosen to help train the FBI's agents in using K-9 teams to recover missing children and track criminals.

Chairman Barreto asked Colonel Julie Jones to introduce Mr. Jack Beal of the Shikar-Safari Club International, who presented the Club's 2006 Officer of the Year Award to Officer Rick Francis. Col. Jones stated she recommended Officer Francis for his stellar reputation, work ethic, leadership skills and abilities, according to a nomination letter she wrote in August. In the past year, he has worked on a variety of cases, including fisheries violations in fresh and salt water, alligator hunting, boating under the influence, driving under the influence, boating accidents, sex crimes and suicide.

Mr. Beal presented Officer Francis a special recognition plaque for his outstanding efforts to protect the state's fish and wildlife resources.

Officer Francis thanked the Shikar-Safari Club International and Col. Jones for this honor.

Mr. Haddad introduced the following employees to the Commission from the South Region: Law Enforcement—Officer Gordy Sharp and John Murphy; Fish and Wildlife Research Institute—Marie-Agnes Tellier, Kerry Maxwell, Dr. Michael Feeley, and Robert Glazer; Community Relations—Carol Pratt; and the South Region's Director—Chuck Collins.

Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Chairman Barreto asked for approval of the September 13-15, 2006 Commission meeting minutes. Upon motion of Commissioner Corbett, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the minutes.

Chairman Barreto asked Mr. Vic Heller to announce a change to the Consent Agenda. Mr. Heller mentioned the report on the stock assessment on stone crab; Rule 68A-13.003, Hunting Regulations for Ducks, Geese, and Coots; Rule 68A-13.008, Hunting Regulations for Migratory Birds Other than Ducks and Coots; and he proposed removing Rule 68A-2.015, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Grants Program, for consideration to be reviewed further and returned

with a defined draft rule at the February 2007 Commission meeting. Mr. Heller asked the Commission to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

Upon motion of Vice Chairman Meehan, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the Consent Agenda as amended.

Chairman Barreto asked for approval of the meeting agenda. Commissioner Meehan made the motion, seconded and carried, and the Commission approved the agenda.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Haddad presented an abbreviated version of the Executive Director's Report:

Division of Marine Fisheries Management (DMFM)—The DMFM and the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) have been actively participating in the revision process of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) as recommended in a National Research Council report last spring. In August, a panel consisting of DMFM and FWRI staff, representatives from NOAA Fisheries and numerous stakeholders held a two-day meeting in St. Petersburg to address improvements in gathering and analyzing data on recreational fishing in Florida. FWC staff was represented at a national workshop in Denver in early September and strongly advocated positions considered important to Florida. FWC will continue to be a lead and important participant in the MRFSS revision process.

Division of Hunting and Game Management (DHGM)—2006 Alligator Egg Collections: Results of New Nest Quota Establishment Methods—In an effort to reduce operational costs and unnecessary risk to staff, and to streamline the process associated with establishing nest collection quotas, Alligator Management Research staff formulated and subsequently received approval from executive leadership to implement new quota establishment procedures that no longer require program staff to conduct aerial surveys. Based on these new methods, a total of five areas could no longer support egg collections. Despite the removal of these areas, alligator farmers collected a record number of eggs (45,730 eggs, a 28% increase over 2005). This increased collection effort netted the agency a total of \$228,650 in revenue. This exceeded the agency's projections by more than six percent. Staff will be intensively monitoring trends in recruitment for each area annually to ensure collections are sustainable under these new methods.

Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management (DFFM)—The Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management is tentatively planning for the dedication and grand opening of the Florida Bass Conservation Center (FBCC) on Friday, February 23, 2007. Key legislators, county commissioners and others who have been crucial to the financing, planning and creating of the facility will be invited. The ceremony will showcase the agency's state-of-the-art freshwater fish hatchery and research facility. This new facility will be one of the most efficient warmwater hatcheries and research facilities in the United States and will allow staff to better serve Florida's natural resources and users. Presentations will highlight the vision of the FBCC and the capabilities of this high-tech production facility that greatly reduces water use and pollution. Following the dedication, staff will provide tours

of the facility, highlighting the fish culture facilities, 65 renovated rearing ponds, fish health/genetics labs, 80-foot raceways, harvest pavilion, environmental chambers, boomerang-shaped display aquarium and interpretive area.

Division of Law Enforcement (DLE)—The Manatee Protection Law Enforcement Forum was held October 3-4 in Deerfield Beach. The forum was initiated by FWC's Division of Law Enforcement to promote new ideas; develop networks; discuss consistent and effective enforcement philosophies and methods between federal, state, and local marine enforcement; and improve coordination with manatee recovery efforts. Over 129 municipal, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies, biologists, and others attended. There were several ideas presented that could be implemented immediately.

A conference initiated by staff and co-hosted with Florida Sea Grant, the University of Florida IFIS, and University of Florida College of Law was held November 1-3 in Cocoa Beach. This conference was developed to target local governments and their legal staff to discuss issues pertaining to waterway management. Programmatic topics included boating access, waterways master planning, mooring/anchoring, rights of navigation, derelict vessel management, and local government funding opportunities. Over 140 governmental employees attended.

Division of Habitat and Species Conservation (DHSC)—Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program Award—In September 2006, Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne announced that more than \$67 million in Section 6 grants had been awarded to 27 states to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife, and plants. These grants are awarded through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund and will benefit species found across the U.S. ranging from orchids to bull trout. The grants are tools to conserve threatened and endangered species and increase our ability to successfully preserve imperiled species habitat. Of the \$7.5 million available through the Habitat Conservation Planning (HCP) Assistance Grants Program (established to reduce potential conflicts between conservation interests and land development and use groups), Florida's award is for development of a multi-species habitat conservation plan covering 20 miles of beaches in Walton County which addresses conservation of sea turtles, beach mice, and piping plovers. FWC will serve as the conduit to provide \$446,000 in federal assistance funding to the county; the total grant amount was \$654,000.

Florida's Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program—FWC launched its Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Tall Timbers Research Station in October. Florida's Safe Harbor Program for red-cockaded woodpeckers is a voluntary program designed to involve private landowners in the recovery of the imperiled red-cockaded woodpecker. In Florida, private lands provide habitat for as much as 10 percent of the red-cockaded woodpecker population. By engaging private landowners in activities that will benefit the woodpecker, more habitats will be created to help existing populations.

Ivory-billed Woodpecker Search—In November 2006, a team chartered by Dr. Geoffrey Hill (Auburn University Biological Sciences Department) will initiate a

search in two areas located within the Choctawhatchee River Basin (Choctawhatchee WMA) to determine if the ivory-billed woodpecker is present; if present, whether definite proof of its existence can be gathered; and, if present, whether a search for evidence of nesting can be found. From January 2006 through May 2007, the team will search for ivory-bills and, in July of 2007, Dr. Hill will provide FWC with an annual performance report consisting of the team's findings, a breakdown of costs, and a list of any equipment purchased with FWC funds.

Second Pet Amnesty Day (PAD) and Non-native Pet Registry—Release of exotic animals by pet owners remains a significant pathway for introduction of non-native species. Frequently, exotic pets are released by well-meaning members of the general public who are unaware of the legal, moral, and biological ramifications involved in their actions. The Non-native Pet Registry is a pet adoption program allowing for quick placement of unwanted creatures at any time during the year to close this particular pathway of non-native species introduction, which in turn will minimize the effects of exotic species on native species.

This second PAD is scheduled for March 24, 2007, and staff from all participating entities will set up in the parking lot of a City of Clearwater park. Exotic fish amphibians, reptiles, and birds will be received from owners who concede complete release of the animals. Depending on the nature of the pet, animals will be sent to reputable exhibitors or research facilities, adopted through our statewide registry, quarantined for disease treatment, or discreetly euthanized. A key element in the success of the program is public awareness and information; therefore, advertising will be required, and literature will be available to pet owners.

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI)—The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute was awarded a five-year, \$4.73 million grant to conduct research on nutrients and Florida's red tide from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Dr. Cynthia Heil of FWRI will lead a team of nine scientists from seven different institutions in examining the causes of red tide and determining how different nutrient sources affect all stages of blooms. The NOAA grant will supplement funds committed by the state of Florida for red tide research and monitoring, and will enable the purchase of cutting-edge technologies such as remote water quality detectors with 24-hour-a-day Web reporting capabilities.

Restoration of the Keys Marine Laboratory from Hurricane Wilma continues. FEMA has completed preparation of the 20 separate project worksheets and several of the projects have been finalized. Major planning for the electrical systems is complete and the electrical restoration scheduled for the near future. Waterfront restoration is still awaiting some permits; but detailed planning is under way with local civil engineers.

Community Relations Office (CRO)—The 8th Annual Florida Black Bear Festival was held in Umatilla on October 7. FWC has been actively involved with the festival every year. This year, the agency's presence was a cooperative effort among Community Relations, Habitat and Species Conservation, FWRI and the Ocala regional office. Staff operated displays and exhibits, gave presentations on co-existing with bears and guided field trips into bear habitat in the nearby Ocala National Forest. This year's festival drew an estimated 10,000 visitors.

The Media Services section has produced four 30-second television public service announcements featuring boating safety messages. They will be aired by select cable TV service providers throughout Florida. Media Services will soon be producing a Spanish-language version of the PSA's.

Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Inc. (WFF)—The Wildlife Foundation has taken a strong step into the hatchery arena, specifically the private sector, to raise funds for saltwater issues. Also, WFF is assisting with the Florida Bass Conservation Center, soliciting individuals to create a visitor's center and continue the funding efforts for the center.

The Foundation has advertised for an Executive Director in the past, yet was unable to find the right candidate for this position. In the meantime, the Foundation is recruiting a full-time accountant to manage their complex finances. Commissioner Huffman asked Ted Forsgren to research a potential candidate from the saltwater industry to get involved with the Foundation.

Chairman Barreto complimented Mr. Haddad for his efforts in moving the Wildlife Foundation of Florida in the "right direction." He also congratulated Commissioners Kaupe and Huffman for their participation and support of the Foundation and challenged the Commissioners to get involved with the Foundation.

Commissioner Yablonski recognized Tim Breault for his work on the red cockaded woodpecker safe harbor agreement. He mentioned the safe harbor agreements include species-by-species agreements and it appears there may be an opportunity to establish a habitat-based safe harbor agreement, rather than trying to include a large number of species one at a time, which takes years to complete. Mr. Haddad agreed that this may be a viable opportunity and staff will research further.

Commissioner Huffman requested the Commissioners plan to attend the opening of the Florida Bass Conservation Center scheduled for February 23 in Webster, Florida. Chairman Barreto mentioned he assisted in obtaining a bass boat for the opening of the Florida Bass Conservation Center to raffle as part of the event's fund raising effort.

Incoming Governor Charlie Crist's Transition Team Report—The Transition Team met with the FWC Senior Leadership Team on Monday, December 4, to present information about FWC. Incoming Governor Crist's team includes the following individuals:

Roberto Martínez, Chair of the Transition: Mr. Martínez is a shareholder in the Colson Hicks Eidson law firm. He is a member of the State Board of Education, and formerly served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Miami-Dade College, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, the Chairman of Attorney General-Elect Crist's Transition Team in 2002 and the General Counsel of Governor-Elect Jeb Bush's Transition Team in 1998.

Kathleen Shanahan, Vice-Chair of the Transition: Ms. Shanahan is the Chief Executive Officer of the WRS Infrastructure and Environment, Inc. She is a member of the State Board of Education, and formerly served as Chief of Staff for Governor Jeb Bush, Senior Vice President Public Affairs/Government Relations with Paine Webber Incorporated, Deputy Secretary of Economic Development with the California Trade Commerce Agency, Senior Vice President with The Wexler Group, Special Assistant to Vice President George H.W. Bush, Staff Assistant with President Reagan's National Security Council, and Chief of Staff for Vice President Cheney.

George LeMieux, Transition Executive Director: Mr. LeMieux has been the Chief of Staff for the Crist-Kottkamp Campaign. He served as the Chief of Staff and Deputy Attorney General for the State of Florida from 2003 through 2006. LeMieux oversaw more than 450 lawyers and 1,300 total staff. From 1994 through 2003, he was a member of the Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart law firm, most recently as a shareholder managing the firm's litigation practice in the Fort Lauderdale area. He will oversee the transition of the Executive Office of the Governor.

Christopher Kise, Transition Deputy Executive Director: Mr. Kise is a partner in the law firm of Foley & Lardner LLP and chair of its National Appellate Practice. Kise served as Florida's Solicitor General from 2003 through 2006 and held the Richard W. Ervin Eminent Scholar Chair at the Florida State University College of Law. In 2002, he served as the Executive Director of Attorney General-Elect Crist's Transition Team. Among other things, Kise will be responsible for the transition of the General Counsel's office.

Monesia Brown, Transition Director for the Lieutenant Governor-Elect: Ms. Brown has recently served as the Director of Legislative Affairs and Special Counsel to Attorney General Charlie Crist. She is currently on a leave of absence from that position and will resign effective Monday, November 13, 2006. She formerly served as Special Counsel to the General Counsel at the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, and as the General Counsel at the Department of Management Services.

Dean Colson, Transition Chair of Appointments: Mr. Colson is a partner in the law firm of Colson Hicks Eidson. He is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Miami and previously served as Chairman of the University's Executive Committee, Chairman of the Academic Affairs Committee and Chairman of the Law School's Visiting Committee. In 2000, Mr. Colson was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush to the Florida Commission on Ethics. Two years later, Mr. Colson was appointed by Governor Bush to the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission, and in 2004 he was elected its Chairman. In 1995, he received the Mayor of Miami's "Citizen of the Year" award for his commitment to the betterment of his community.

Arlene DiBenigno, Transition Director of Appointments: Ms. DiBenigno has been the Political Director for the Crist-Kottkamp Campaign. She formerly served in two senior-level positions in the Office of Governor Jeb

Bush. From 2000 through 2002, Ms. DiBenigno was External Affairs Director where she managed the scheduling, community and outreach operations for Governor Bush. From 1999 to 2000, she was the Appointments Director, responsible for advising the Governor on all senior administration positions as well as executive appointments to state boards and commissions. She has advised various presidential campaigns on Florida politics and Cuba policy since 1992.

Vivian Myrtetus, Transition Communications Director: Ms. Myrtetus served as Press Secretary for the Crist-Kottkamp campaign since last November. Before joining the campaign, Myrtetus worked as Deputy Communications Director for the Office of the Attorney General, Communications Director for the Department of Education, and served as spokesperson for the Florida Department of Agriculture. Prior to that, she spent many years in the private sector managing communications programs for mid- and large-sized organizations, as well as more than a decade working in broadcast television news. Myrtetus received her Bachelor's degree in Communications from San Francisco State University in 1992.

Garrett Walton, Transition Advisor: Mr. Walton is an attorney and businessman in Pensacola, Florida. Mr. Walton's business interests include real estate and investments. From 1977 to 1994, Mr. Walton was a partner and shareholder in the Emmanuel, Sheppard & Condon law firm in Pensacola. Mr. Walton received both his undergraduate and law degrees at the University of Missouri and an L.L.M. in Taxation from New York University. He and his wife Catherine have two children. Mr. Walton was one of the founders and, for the past two years full-time, volunteer director of Rebuild Northwest Florida, a not-for-profit disaster recovery organization assisting need based hurricane victims in West Florida.

Clarence McKee, Transition Advisor: Mr. McKee is a member of the Ruden McClosky law firm. He has an extensive background of accomplishment and expertise in law, media, corporate, government, legislative and political affairs. He has applied his experience meeting challenges and solving problems in a wide range of disciplines including broadcasting, government, public and community relations, diversity, affirmative action and marketing. He is particularly skilled in the effective use of electronic and print media. His articles on political and current events have appeared in national and Florida news publications. In addition, Mr. McKee is a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator and Qualified Arbitrator. He served on President Reagan's transition team, and he currently serves as Team Leader for the Federal Home Loan Banking Board.

Chairman Barreto asked staff to ensure the "top level" issues are presented to the Transition Team, including the agency's Financial Business Plan.

Rules

Under Rules, Chairman Barreto asked Mr. Kipp Frohlich to present the Duval County and Associated County Zones rule.

(1) 68C-22.027, Duval County and Associated County Zones (Parts of Clay and St. Johns) Zones (Duval County Manatee Protection Rule) - The proposed rule changes would conform state manatee protection zones to existing federal manatee protection zones in the St. Johns River between the Fuller Warren Bridge and Reddie Point.

Mr. Frohlich explained that the purpose of the proposed rule changes would revise current state zones to conform to federal zones. Existing FWC manatee protection zones were adopted in 2000 as part of the Manatee Protection Plan the City of Jacksonville approved in 1999. Federal zones established in 2003 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) were more restrictive than the state and local zones and prompted the City of Jacksonville to issue a notice of intent to sue. An agreement was reached in January 2005 between the USFWS, the City, and FWC that resulted in amendments to the federal zones in April 2005 to make them less restrictive. As part of the agreement, FWC agreed to propose revised state zones that would be the same as the revised federal zones. The rule development process began in October 2005, followed by the creation of a Local Rule Review Committee (LRRC) in February 2006. The City decided to use the existing Waterways Commission zones. On February 24, 2006, FWC staff sent a preliminary rule proposal to the LRRC. The LRRC met three times and submitted its final report on May 1, 2006. LRRC voted to support the preliminary rule proposal, recommended adoption by FWC, and asked the agency to evaluate the need for zones east of Exchange Island. In June 2006, the FWC Commissioners directed staff to formally propose the amendments as contained in the preliminary rule proposal. The proposal was published on August 4, 2006. Staff conducted public hearings in Jacksonville on September 20, 2006, with no comments provided at the hearing. Mr. Frohlich stated the benefits of amending this rule would include no restrictions being added over what exists currently by federal, state, or local rule; reduced confusion; and allowing for more consistent and coordinated enforcement of zones.

Mr. Frohlich asked the Commission to approve Rule 68C-22.027 as advertised and direct staff to file the rule changes for adoption with the Department of State by January 2007.

Commissioner Barco stated she has an issue with the rule. The issue is citizens of St. John's County are being forced to accept the updated FWC regulations to match federal regulations. Water sports are now being restricted in the Arlington area. Signs were posted before the agreement was finalized. This was not a unanimous decision with residents of this island area in question. Therefore, Commissioner Barco did not approve the proposed rule. Mr. Frohlich explained the process to Commissioner Barco related to working with the federal government and the rule change. For the record, Commissioner Barco did not approve of the rule changes.

Public Comment

Robert Tate (The Phoenix Environmental Group, Inc.) supported the rule and asked FWC staff to consider rules in Jacksonville to facilitate law enforcement to better enforce regulations that address the incidents of manatee mortalities.

Mr. Frohlich stated Mr. Tate referred to the locally approved and Commission approved Duval County Manatee Protection Plan that has a provision stating that any time there are five or more watercraft-caused mortalities within a 12-month period, it is a "red flag" to assess the situation and take proper action. FWC is planning a meeting after the holidays with Duval County and the Fish and Wildlife Service to look at the mortalities and have their consultant, Dr. Quintin White, present during the meeting. Additionally, Mr. Frohlich mentioned that the adoption of the rule would not resolve the issue Mr. Tate mentioned.

Pat Rose (Save the Manatee Club) expressed his concern that the manatee protection areas are being eliminated and urged the Commission to provide better law enforcement and work toward educating the public.

Commission Discussion

Commissioners Barco and Meehan discussed manatee fatalities in the St. Johns River and the need for additional boater education.

Upon motion of Commissioner Meehan, seconded and carried, the Commission approved Rule 68C-22.027 as advertised and directed staff to file the rule changes for adoption with the Department of State.

Chairman Barreto asked Major Paul Ouellette to present the following rule:

(2) 68D-24.144, Monroe County Boating Restricted Areas – The proposed rule would establish a no anchoring zone for sailboats and other vessels with masts in that area between Big Pine Key and Little Torch Key, and south of U.S. Highway 1.

Major Ouellette explained that the Monroe County Commission and the Utility Board of the City of Key West passed resolutions petitioning the FWC to initiate rulemaking to create Rule 68D-24.144. Also, a provision was offered stating that, should the overhead power lines be removed, the zone would no longer be in force or effect.

Major Ouellette asked the Commission to approve adoption of Rule 68D-24.144 as advertised.

Public Comment

Angela Lagan did not support the proposed rule. She stated restricting access to this area will discriminate against sail boat owners and jeopardize boater safety due to imposed anchoring restrictions. Sail boat owners should not be forced to suffer the consequences caused by this lack of attention to detail from the original construction of the power lines. She suggested several solutions: re-engineering the placement of the lines to the leeward side of the highway or leaving the lines as currently configured but raising them to a height that would protect them in the event a vessel does drag anchor or building a raised fishing pier or bike path structure that would serve the public for recreational purposes and keep the public from being in contact with the lines. Another option would be to ill a secure mooring field for the sole use of boats with masts tall enough to endanger the

occupants and the power lines themselves. She urged the Commission not to create a no-anchor zone policy in an attempt to correct it.

Richard Jones (Marine Resources of Monroe County) supported the proposed rule. Mr. Jones mentioned this would be an ideal area for a mooring buoy field. They have not been able to identify the shore side facility required to serve that mooring field. This is a life safety issue. The access will not be restricted, just the anchoring activity. The sail boats would still have access, particularly south of the no anchor zone.

L. B. Pokorski (Big Pine Key Civic Association) provided the Commissioners a picture of the Big Pine Key area after the hurricane. He stated there is a constant problem with vessels cutting the power lines in this area from due to high winds from hurricanes tossing the boats around during the storm. Also, he complimented Officer David Dupree for his assistance regarding cleaning up the unattended vessels.

George Garrett (Marine Resources for Monroe County) supported the rule and urged the Commission to approve.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Huffman mentioned the area has power lines everywhere. If the agency proposes regulations on a "No Anchoring" rule in the Big Pine Key area, the boaters will anchor somewhere else. Mr. Garrett responded to Commissioner Huffman stating this is the only area in the Keys where there is the potential for this to occur. Mr. Garrett and Mr. Dale Finnegan with Marine Resources for Monroe County replied that there is no more space on the poles and the power lines could not be moved higher on the pole due to code requirements. Replacing the poles would cost over \$1.7 million.

Upon motion of Commissioner Huffman, seconded and carried, the Commission approved Rule 68D-24.144 as advertised.

Commissioner Barco asked how old the power lines were. Mr. Garrett stated the poles were installed in 1985 when Keys Energy inter-connected to the mainland. These are concrete poles so there are no future plans to upgrade them.

Major Ouellette stated there are provisions in the rule stipulating that these options were incorporated and the rule would be repealed.

Issues

Mr. Nick Wiley made the next presentation on the 2007-08 proposed rules for wildlife management areas.

Mr. Wiley explained the criteria included in the "Off-Year" Rule submittals and the biennial rule process "Off-Year" schedule for 2006 and 2007. Mr. Wiley described the following proposed rule changes to wildlife management area regulations for the 2007-08 seasons:

- 68A-4.0071, Temporary Closures of Certain Areas
- 68A-9.007 (4), Special-use Permits; Short-term Use Permits; Fees, Special-Opportunity Hunting and Fishing
- 68A-11.005 and 11.0051, Use of Tracked Vehicles in the South Region
- 68A-15.061, Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas-Southwest Region
- 68A-15.062, Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas-North Central Region
- 68A-15.063, Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas-Northwest Region
- 68A-15.064, Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas-South Region
- 68A-15.065, Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas-Northeast Region

Mr. Wiley asked the Commission to approve the proposed rules for advertising in the Florida Administrative Weekly (F.A.W.) and to direct staff to continue working with the public to refine proposals. The rules changes will be presented for adoption at the February 2007 Commission meeting.

Public Comment

Dave Rosier (Broward County Airboat Club) supported the proposed rules changes.

Peter Hora (Dade County Fall Track) supported the proposed rules changes, specifically Rules 68A-11.005 and 11.0051.

John Rosier (Broward County Airboat Club) supported the proposed rule changes. He also offered to construct tents and host the re-registering of buggies for the agency.

Albert Bryan (Full Track Club of Dade County) supported the proposed rule changes. He stated their club is working on a Code of Ethics for track owners. Also, he asked the Commission to add a rule change for the ATV flags. Chairman Barreto stated staff would follow up with Mr. Bryan regarding his request.

Alan Rigerman (HerpFauna Plus) stated that people need to be more educated about how to live with wildlife and conserve their habitat.

Byron Maharrey (Florida Airboat Association) supported the proposed rule changes. He also discussed roller chopping in the Cecil Webb/Babcock Ranch area and the benefits to its wildlife.

Upon motion of Commissioner Kaupe, seconded and carried, the Commission approved proposed Rules 68A-4.0071, 9.007 (4), 11.005, 15.061, 15.062, 15.063, 15.064, and 15.065, directed staff to advertise in the F.A.W. and to continue to meet with the public to refine proposals.

Chairman Barreto asked Mr. Kipp Frohlich, Leader of the Imperiled Species Management Section of the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, to present the draft rule pertaining to the Marine Turtle programs.

Mr. Frohlich explained the types of activities that FWC currently permits and why staff proposed an amendment to Chapter 68E-1. The amendment will provide more detail and clarity, expand and clarify evaluation criteria, and address concerns of individuals and stakeholders. Mr. Frohlich asked the Commission to approve the proposed recommendation to direct staff to move forward with the rule amendment process, which includes: advertising the proposed rule, holding public hearings, and returning with a final proposed amendment at the April 2007 Commission meeting.

Upon motion of Commissioners Kaupe, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the proposed amendment to advertise in the F.A.W. Chapter 68E-1, directed staff to move forward with the rules process, and return with a final proposed amendment at the April 2007 Commission meeting.

The next agenda item was a presentation on issues associated with vessel anchoring. Lt. Colonel Jim Brown, Deputy Director of the Boating, Waterways and Field Offices with the Division of Law Enforcement, and Captain Alan Richard with the FWC Legal Office will present the issue.

Lt. Colonel Brown explained the four types of anchored vessels and the problems associated with unregulated anchoring as well as derelict vessels. Captain Alan Richard explained the legal issues pertaining to vessel anchoring as well as local government, state and federal agencies with authority to regulate anchoring but primarily in specific locations or for specific reasons. FWC's authority to regulate anchoring is limited to reasons of public safety. Local governments may regulate live-s-boards and vessels in permitted mooring fields. Lt. Colonel Brown described current and potential solutions including a model ordinance.

Lt. Colonel Brown recommended potential solutions be proposed to the Commission for consideration during the 2008 Legislative Session.

Public Comment

Bonnie Basham (Boat US) stated the boaters and cruisers are concerned about this proposal and urged the Commission to hold workshops for public input.

John Sprague (Marine Industries of Florida) suggested creating managed mooring buoy fields as the solution to this problem. The challenge is obtaining permits to build the fields due to state lands issues.

Commission Discussion

Commissioners Kaupe and Barco discussed the idea of managed mooring buoy fields with Lt. Colonel Brown and Captain Richard. Chairman Barreto stated this issue should be on the list of agency priorities and asked staff to provide solutions to this issue at a future Commission meeting.

Commissioners Barreto and Corbett congratulated Lt. Colonel Brown and Captain Richard for their informative presentation.

Upon motion of Commissioner Corbett, seconded and carried, the Commission directed staff to work with stakeholders and the agency's government partners to evaluate options for managing vessel anchoring areas and develop proposed management recommendations prior to the 2008 Legislative Session.

Mr. Harry Dutton provided the next issue on the agenda covering the alligator management program review and review process. Mr. Dutton presented a brief history of the Florida alligator, overviewed the review process, and detailed the program's established goals and objectives. He also discussed the use of a 45-question web-based survey that was created with the assistance of professional survey consultants to obtain input on important alligator management resource issues from the public. 638 persons provided input through the survey, representing a diverse set of stakeholders and the general public. The overall response indicated that the current approach to alligator management, as defined by the comprehensive set of goals and objectives in the eight key areas, was about right. There were indications from respondents that the program may not be going far enough to provide recreational harvest of the resource, adequate education about co-existing with and public awareness about alligators, and sufficient public safety measures. Additionally, there was some indication that fees charged to both recreational and commercial users of the resource might be too low. After reviewing the results of the survey, the Alligator Management Standing Team formulated a suite of possible ideas to augment the current program, consistent with established program goals and objectives. The proposed ideas are designed to provide additional hunting opportunities statewide, less restrictive participation requirements for both recreational and commercial users, a full range of alligator management options on private lands and non-FWC managed lands, greater options for homeowners and communities to handle nuisance alligators, and will begin the process for changes that cannot be achieved in the near-term.

Mr. Dutton sought Commission support of the review process and plans to engage stakeholders and the general public utilizing open and targeted public meetings over the next three months to gather additional input and ideas regarding alligator management in Florida. The results of these meetings and draft recommendations for program changes, if any, will be presented to the Commission in June 2007 as part of another progress report.

Public Comment

John Woolard (Florida Alligator Trappers Association) urged the Commission to review the future of Florida alligators when making their decision.

Kevin Clark (Critter Control) stated most wildlife complaints are handled by animal control in the private sector. He mentioned trappers don't get paid enough. Most alligator trappers can not meet the demand. Mr. Clark supported delisting the alligator and asked the Commission to consider his assistance when a committee is formed. Also, he commended Mr. Dutton and staff for their work.

Dr. Jerry Lorenz (Audubon of Florida) provided a copy of a letter from Audubon of Florida to the Commissioners proposing the Commission not approve a list of issues related to alligators.

Albert Bryan stated he likes to hunt alligators and works in the Florida Everglades to perform environmental studies. He suggested a new structure of processing permits online. He stated his concern regarding the alligator hunting permit process last season: the system displayed someone who had purchased over 600 permits. Also, he urged the Commission be more vocal regarding the airboats on FTA's.

Patricia Knapp and Thomas Saluta supported the proposed plan.

Phil Walters (Gator Guides) supported the alligator program and stated Mr. Steve Stiegler and Mr. Dutton are a pleasure to work with. Alligators are also a resource of the people of Florida and he mentioned more people should have access to this resource. He did not feel the public is well educated by the agency regarding alligator hunting.

Commissioner Huffman discussed his concern regarding opening up alligator hunting to the public. Vice Chairman Meehan agreed and recommended the public hunt with an experienced alligator trapper.

Upon motion of Commissioner Meehan, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the program review process and plans to further engage stakeholders and the general public through public meetings to garner additional input that might lead to development of proposed program changes, if warranted.

Chairman Barreto stated his concerns regarding public injuries and suggested a stronger public awareness program.

Commissioner Yablonski suggested home owner associations may be able to pay to trappers directly to protect residents in their neighborhoods.

Col. Julie Jones presented a report on the strategic focus of the Division of Law Enforcement. Col. Jones explained the details of the Law Enforcement Strategic Plan, which included the vision, mission statement, guiding principles, values, leadership expectations, core missions, goals and strategies, strategic framework, and organizational components.

The Commissioners discussed the challenges presented to the Division of Law Enforcement in 2006, including injuries and fatalities related to alligator hunting and how the agency responded to alligator incidents. Chairman Barreto suggested the agency strengthen the current public relations campaign informing and educating the public on how to live among Florida's wildlife.

Col. Jones introduced Ms. Carol Pratt, the new Community Relations and Law Enforcement Public Information Coordinator. Ms. Pratt will work with the Division of Law Enforcement to provide proactive communications regarding the agency to the general public.

Chairman Barreto commended Col. Jones and her staff for their dedication and work in taking the Division of Law Enforcement to the next level. Chairman Barreto asked Col. Jones to contribute articles regarding the agency's law enforcement initiatives in the *Florida Wildlife* magazine.

Commissioner Yablonski asked Col. Jones to present a brief summary of the visit to Florida by Haley Barbour, the Governor of Mississippi. Col. Jones stated Governor Barbour addressed Florida's law enforcement officers, including wildlife, sheriffs and police officers who assisted Mississippi during Hurricane Katrina. The Governor commended the agency for their assistance in providing law enforcement to the State of Mississippi after the hurricane. He stated his own agency came to FWC asking for assistance in creating the same type of program to use in the future. Commissioner Meehan complimented the agency for receiving this recognition.

A video was presented showing the joint operation with the agency's law enforcement boating program and the U.S. Coast Guard. The video and photographs were produced by Tim Donovan and Gus Holzer of the FWC Community Relations staff.

Public Comment

Alan Rigerman stated he is happy to hear one of the agency's priorities is a pay increase for law enforcement officers.

Ms. Karen Gustin, the Superintendent of the Big Cypress National Preserve, presented a report on the status of the General Management Plan for the Addition Lands of the Preserve. Ms. Gustin stated the effort to develop a general management plan for the Addition is ongoing. The Addition consists of approximately 147,000 acres that were added to the Preserve by the Addition Act of 1988. Since that time the National Park Service (NPS) has been acquiring lands, with the majority of the lands being transferred to federal ownership through the Florida – Arizona Land Exchange that was completed with the Collier family in 1996. Based on input from stakeholders requesting additional detail in the plan concerning motorized access, NPS has expanded the scope of the general management plan to include a wilderness study and an off-road vehicle management plan. Information will be presented by NPS in the spring of 2007.

Public Comment

Byron Maharrey thanked Ms. Gustin for her work. He suggested the area should be open for simultaneous recreation and off-road vehicles.

Barbara Jean Powell stated it has been pleasure working with Ms. Gustin. She stated their concern in relation to wilderness is that Congress makes the decision of designating the wilderness classification. As soon as the Department of Interior determines that it is suitable for processing, wilderness management automatically "kicks in" in the interim before Congress makes its decision. Sometimes it takes a decade or more.

Commission Discussion

Chairman Barreto thanked Ms. Gustin for her assistance in moving this plan forward.

Commissioners Huffman and Kaupe asked Ms. Gustin to give a brief description of the term "wilderness designation" and whether the entire area is designated so or just specific areas. Ms. Gustin provided a detailed description of this designation, including the vehicles allowed and hunting restrictions. Specific areas can be designated rather than the entire area. A separate legislative action must take place to formally designate a wilderness.

Upon motion of Commissioner Meehan, seconded and carried, the Commission directed staff to continue monitoring the progress and work with Chairman Barreto and the National Park Service Plan.

The next three agenda items dealt with the proposed work plans for three of the FWC divisions for 2007-08. The first presentation was made by Darrell Scovell for the Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management (DFMM). Mr. Scovell explained that fiscal year 2007-08 will be an "on year" for rule development under the biennial rule development process. A conceptual review of major proposed rule changes will be presented in September 2007, with a more detailed review summarizing input received from the public, stakeholders and others on specific proposals to be presented in November 2007, and proposed rules to be presented for final adoption in February 2008. DFFM staff is continuing to work with freshwater fishing interests to build public support for developing and implementing strategies to protect or enhance Florida's three million acres of lakes and 12,000 miles of rivers and streams. Fisheries management is actually management of three major components involving: people, fish or habitat. Mr. Scovell presented issues for fiscal year 2007-08 concerning people management or regulatory issues. Mr. Scovell announced the opening of the Florida Bass Conservation Center on February 23, 2007 and invited everyone to attend the event.

Upon motion of Commissioner Meehan, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the DFFM 2007-08 work plan.

The next work plan was presented by Mr. Nick Wiley for the Division of Hunting and Game Management (HGM). The HGM staff will coordinate the development of proposed rule changes to be presented for Commission consideration in September 2007 with a detailed review in December 2007 and proposed final adoption in February 2008. Establishment orders for new WMAs/WEAs or disestablishment of existing WMAs/WEAs will be proposed as needed. HGM staff will continue to work with the hunting community and other stakeholders to develop and implement initiatives that will address the many challenges facing the future of hunting in Florida, including coordination of deer management issues and tracking progress on implementation of Florida's statewide deer management plan. In August 2006, Alligator Management Program staff, working through the Alligator Management Standing Team, initiated a complete "top to bottom" review of the program with stakeholders and the general public. In December 2007 or February 2008, HGM staff will provide an update on current conservation management issues with an overview of process and content of the

draft strategic plan for waterfowl management. In June 2007, staff will report on anticipated early and late migratory bird seasons at the September 2007 Commission meeting. An update on bobwhite quail management will be presented in December 2007 or February 2008. The update will include Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative and Florida's Step-down Bobwhite Plan and new projects that will aid bobwhite recovery such as the Upland Habitat Restoration Project.

Mr. Wiley asked the Commission to approve the proposed Division of Hunting and Game Management work plan for 2007-08.

Upon motion of Commissioner Huffman, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the Division of Hunting and Game Management work plan for 2007-08.

The last work plan was presented by Col. Jones for the Division of Law Enforcement (DLE). The proposed work plan for 2007-08 emphasizes boating safety and captive wildlife issues. The Boating and Waterways Section of DLE will focus on two rule requests: Martin County 68D-24.143, F.A.C., and Withlacoochee River 68D-24.109, F.A.C. The Martin County residents asked the agency to review the existing rule for possible removal or revision of obsolete zones within the Intracoastal Waterway. The residents of Citrus County requested the agency propose an update to the rule based on data from new hydrological stations. The updates will ensure the agency has accurate triggers to activate boating safety zones during high-water periods. Col. Jones presented the boating safety 2007-08 proposed agenda schedule related to rulemaking.

Col. Jones presented the Division of Law Enforcement's plan for captive wildlife regulations for 2007-08. Last year, the FWC established the Captive Wildlife Technical Advisory Group (CWTAG), a technical assistance group consisting of 11 experts representing stakeholders from veterinary medicine, wildlife exhibition/sale, humane and agricultural organizations to review captive wildlife regulations and address current captive wildlife issues. The agency proposed a three-phase rulemaking process for captive wildlife rules. Phase one will be completed this year. For next year, the agency proposes to combine phases two and three into one final phase. Col. Jones described the final phase and the proposed rulemaking schedule.

Col. Jones asked the Commission to approve the 2007-08 work plan for the Division of Law Enforcement.

Public Comment

Alan Rigerman stated he was happy to hear that the agency is looking into a wildlife sanctuary. Mr. Rigerman provided several articles regarding sanctuaries.

Upon motion of Commissioner Kaupe, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the Division of Law Enforcement work plan for 2007-08.

Mr. Tim Breault provided information on the next agenda item to the Commission regarding a land acquisition proposal to acquire the 1,306-acre Barry's Ranch mitigation park. Mr. Breault presented a history of the agency's land

acquisition process and described the proposal to obtain Barry's Ranch. Mr. Breault asked the Commission to approve the acquisition contingent upon final approval of the appraisals and upon execution of an option or an assignment of option contract and approval by the Board of Trustees.

Upon motion of Commission Huffman, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the purchase of the Barry's Ranch property contingent upon final approval of the appraisals, execution of an option or assignment of the option contract and approval by the Board of Trustees.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

Byron Maharrey offered assistance to the agency to obtain pay increases for law enforcement officers. He recommended the alligator trapping licensing be changed to selling one permit the first week, selling another permit the second week and the last week being a "free for all." The system should be available in the evening hours to open it up to more individuals who are not able to go online or use the phone from work.

George Garrett provided a handout with information about the Hurricane Wilma Marine Disaster Recovery Project Vessel, Trap and Debris Removal for Monroe County and the Florida Keys. He thanked FWC's Division of Law Enforcement for their assistance and effort identifying vessels abandoned after the storm. He discussed the relief effort and future hurricane preparedness plans.

Alan Rigerman provided a copy of an article titled, "There Is No Business like the Animal Business."

David Grix (Fishing for Freedom) stated the agency lacks constitutional due process, does not provide adequate assistance to disabled fishermen and discussed his concern regarding the two-inch mesh issue. He asked for a response regarding the two-inch mesh issue and Mr. Antista of the FWC Legal Office responded that he would follow up with Mr. Grix regarding his concerns.

Barbara Jean Powell discussed airboat recreation and the legislation addressing discrimination against this class of vessel. She asked the agency to dedicate a seat to a representative of the airboat industry on the Boating Advisory Council. Also, she discussed an article published recently where she was quoted regarding panthers and stated the information misinterpreted her comments. The reporter did not quote her as saying the existence of the panther enhances our lives.

Bonnie Basham spoke on behalf of the airboat owners and operators requesting a member of her organization be represented on the Boating Advisory Council. She supported the law enforcement pay increase. Also, she mentioned Boat U.S., Standing Watch and the Florida Council of Yacht Clubs are supporting a legislative bill adding marine supplies to the list of the Florida "No Sales Tax Day" in preparation for future hurricanes. It would encourage people to also purchase a personal flotation device.

Commission Exchange

Commissioner Huffman stated he attended the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) conference with other FWC staff in Colorado in September. He said he was impressed by the attendance and information provided during the conference and urged the Chairman and at least one Commissioner to attend each year. Commissioner Huffman stated representatives from all of the Wildlife Commissions from the United States attend this one conference. Chairman Barreto asked if FWC could host the conference in the future. Mr. Haddad stated it rotates around the states and Florida hosted in the 80's. It would be many years before it comes back around to Florida. Commissioner Huffman added that he learned there are only three states with constitutional authority: Florida, Arkansas and Missouri. He listened to comments from states without constitutional authority and was amazed to hear the increasing challenges they face every time an issue is brought before them. He urged the Commission to protect the agency's constitutional authority. Also, he mentioned the comment he received from the conference, "the greatest threat to our wildlife and fisheries resources in the future are exotics." He also discussed the dangers of zoonotic diseases (*an animal disease that can be transmitted to humans*) from exotics.

Commissioner Corbett commended Col. Jones and the agency for doing so well nationally regarding exotic issues.

Commissioner Kaupe congratulated Col. Jones for the fine work provided in the Strategic Plan presentation.

Commissioner Barco discussed the agency's financial budget and the review of heavy equipment with Mr. Breault. She stated that, due to Mr. Breault's assistance, they have been able to organize the equipment information, determine what the annual usage is and have received the base work to come up with a plan to research if there is a better way to manage the inventory, and either buy or rent the equipment to make the process more efficient.

Commissioner Yablonski thanked Mr. Wiley for his assistance in partnering with Tall Timbers for the Youth Field Hunting Day in October. Over 200 children came and he took his kids to participate. It was a worthwhile experience. He also mentioned that he attended a conference on recreational fishery management out west with Ms. Julie Morris and others from around the world and one of the things they reviewed was the management of fisheries and alternatives to a more "rights based" system. He stated he would review some of the ideas they came up with during the February 2007 Commission meeting.

Commissioner Meehan mentioned the meeting ran very efficiently and it all has to do with the staff working with stakeholders in public workshops prior to Commission meetings. He also mentioned several stakeholders from his area (Tampa) are interested in the goliath grouper issue scheduled for tomorrow's meeting. He offered the Commissioners an opportunity to view a video presentation from Mr. Dennis O'Hern regarding grouper in the agency's press room.

Chairman Barreto thanked everyone for a concise meeting. He mentioned Governor Jeb Bush told him he was impressed with the agency's response to

constituent concerns. He thanked Mr. Haddad and staff for their assistance with the process. Chairman Barreto thanked Ms. Karen Gustin for her attendance and presentation.

Recess

Chairman Barreto recessed the meeting at 4:15 p.m. to reconvene at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, December 7.

Chairman Barreto reconvened the meeting at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, December 7. A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the lives lost during the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941. The election of the Commission Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2007 followed.

Mr. Jim Antista, General Counsel, provided instruction and options for conducting the election process. Commissioners discussed renewing both Chairman Barreto and Vice-Chairman Meehan's terms by roll-call. Commissioner Meehan recommended the Commission take his name off of the ballot for Chairman in 2007 and nominated Mr. Rodney Barreto to continue his term as Chairman. Upon motion by Commissioner Meehan, seconded and carried, the Commission approved renewing Rodney Barreto's term as Chairman. Commissioner Corbett made the motion, seconded and carried, and the Commission approved the renewal of David Meehan's term as Vice-Chairman for 2007.

Vice-Chairman Meehan presented a glass plaque to Chairman Barreto from the Commission for his dedication to the agency in 2006. Chairman Barreto thanked the Commission and discussed the agency's accomplishments, current issues and future plans. He congratulated agency staff for their dedication and team efforts in 2006.

Commissioner Huffman and Chairman Barreto discussed the current challenge of retaining recent graduates of the law enforcement academy but having other agencies and sheriff's offices recruit these individuals by offering higher salaries.

Chairman Barreto requested staff research changing the location of the September 2007 Commission meeting to the St. Petersburg area. Mr. Heller stated he would work with staff regarding this request and report back to him whether this is an option.

Items Requiring Action

Mr. Bill Sharp, Fisheries Management Analyst with the Division of Marine Fisheries Management, presented Rule 68B-24.009 extending the suspension of the spiny lobster trap reduction program. At the September 2006 Commission meeting, staff was directed by the Commission to proceed to a Final Public Hearing with draft rule language that amends the present spiny lobster rule 68B-24.009, F.A.C. The amended rule will extend the current suspension of the annual reduction of spiny lobster traps by one year. The rule is currently scheduled to expire at the end of the 2006-2007 license year. Mr. Sharp gave a timeline and update on the process of amending the rule. Staff recommended the Commission consider adopting the rule as amended with a January 2007 effective date.

Public Comment

Scott Zimmerman (Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association) thanked the agency for their scientific work and staff assistance in helping the community understand the intricate details for natural resources and Florida's fisheries are constantly changing. Chairman Barreto spoke on behalf of the

Commissioners, offering support to the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association.

Ernie Piton (Monroe County Commercial Fishermen) asked the Commission to consider not reducing traps for this next year. Last year produced the biggest reduction in years. It is not economical for fishermen. He stated they need to fish their traps.

James Etchells stated the agency's law enforcement officers have done a great job. He urged the Commission not to reduce lobster traps.

Jerry Sansom offered his support of staff recommendation to adopt the rule as amended.

Upon motion of Commissioner Kaupe, seconded and carried, the Commission approved Rule 68B-24.009 as advertised.

Issues

Mr. Sharp continued with an update on the recommendations of the Spiny Lobster Advisory Board. Mr. Sharp reviewed the progress of the *ad hoc* Spiny Lobster Advisory Board (SLAB). The Board assists FWC staff in the development of management recommendations resulting from the agency's comprehensive evaluation of the state's spiny lobster fishery. Mr. Sharp reviewed the progress of the Board, including scheduled meetings, reviewed components of the spiny lobster rule 68B-24, F.A.C., topics of discussion, the lobster trap certification program, the allocation of landings among fishing sectors, season length, harvestable size limit, fishery effects on the environment, trap specifications, new entrants, the commercial dive fishery, the recreational fishery, commercial bully net fishery, other lobster species and the results of the public workshops. Staff asked the Commission to approve the continuation of working with the *ad hoc* Spiny Lobster Advisory Board and the public to complete the assessment and the recommendations of the Board.

Public Comment

Gary Sands expressed his concern regarding the recent closing of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park and discussed the lobster tagging system. He experienced a delay in receiving his tags from the agency and lost business due to the delay. Mr. Robson replied that he would research this issue and follow up with Mr. Sands. Also, he asked the Commission how he can transfer his fishing certificates to his children without buying them back. Mr. Antista stated he would follow up with him following the meeting.

Ernie Piton stated the commercial fishermen can not produce an income without the proper equipment.

Ricky Hill (Key Largo Fisheries) requested a 10-day trap soak time for the lobster fishermen and asked the agency to research Cuban fisheries. Commissioner Corbett asked staff to research commercial fishing in Cuba, as well as other areas located near Florida's coastline.

Jerry Sansom congratulated Chairman Barreto for the approval of his renewed term. He discussed the trap issue and urged the Commission to research the history of trap reduction of this fishery. He mentioned the only way reduced traps can produce the same number of lobster would be if the lobster stock density increases. Also, he thanked the agency for waiving the certificate and tag fees for the lobster and stone crab industry as a result of the hurricanes.

Jerome Sharp distributed a handout regarding the Casita programs and the benefits to lobster fishermen. He proposed the Casita program for specific coastal areas.

Russell Moore stated there is too much emphasis on the recruitment down south. Casitas give life to the area. Also, he mentioned that he mailed a letter to FWC pertaining to the Casita program and how it would benefit the fishery. Casita programs would eliminate the illegal activity.

George Scott stated he was able to trap a large number of lobsters back in 1962 and now there are very few available. He urged the Commission to shorten the lobster trap season.

Walter Rentz mentioned the public is against reducing the trap season and to begin the soak period earlier in the season.

George Beach urged the Commission to keep the regulations as they are currently specific to snowy grouper, grey tile fish and golden tile fish. He asked how the sand tile fish as included into the aggregate. Chairman Barreto asked Mr. Beach to speak with Mr. Robson.

Bobby Pillar (Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association) thanked the agency for covering the cost of lobster tags due to the devastation from the hurricanes.

Peter Bacle (Stock Island Lobster Company) stated they currently have 34 lobster boats that dock from his property. He stated his concerns regarding the lobster trap issue. They are having a problem recruiting young people into this industry. He commented that the reduction of traps will eliminate trapping eventually. If you leave traps as is, the industry will adjust and go into the hands of young people.

Bob Charles discussed his concerns regarding tying ropes on divers to fish and the dangers involved. He also mentioned Cuba's managed fishery using shelter habitat to build up their fishery. He asked the Commission to research this artificial habitat option. Also, he asked the Commission to add a representative from the lobster industry to the Spiny Lobster Advisory Board.

Randy Robertson supported the two-day lobster tagging program and the effort to legitimize the lobster habitat.

Peter Cone expressed his concern regarding lobster trap fishermen being forced to fish illegally due to the trap reduction. He stated he is in favor of artificial

habitats and has not replaced illegal habitats already in the water. Also, he urged the Commission to control the way stone crabs are harvested. They are being caught, the claws are being ripped off and they are left to die because they can not feed themselves.

Shane Sweety stated the reduction of lobster traps would cause fishermen to lose their license. He supported the Casita program and urged the Commission to create this program in the Florida Keys.

Russell Moore described Casitas and asked the Commission to implement this program.

Jim Sharpe asked the Commission if he could fill the current opening on the Spiny Lobster Advisory Board. This seat was left vacant by Mr. Manny Ravelo. He stated his concern regarding the continued vacancy and the lack of proper representation from the diving industry and recommended several alternatives. Chairman Barreto asked what the Board decided regarding filling the vacant seat. Mr. Bill Sharp said the Board recommended the seat stay open as they were too far into the issues to bring in a new member. Chairman Barreto recommended Mr. Sharp fill this seat immediately with an individual from the commercial diving industry. Also, Mr. Sharpe mentioned he was against any illegal habitat and recommended stiff penalties.

Debbie Harrison (World Wildlife) urged the Commission to allow the enforcement officers to remove the existing illegal Casitas and not allow moving forward with any Casita program. Also, she thanked the Commission and Chairman Barreto for his leadership in establishing the Dry Tortugas Research Natural Area.

Cy Dougherty discussed the mini-lobster trap season and the economic impact to the Florida Keys. Chairman Barreto added that he believes the 300-foot buffer in the Keys has eliminated the complaints regarding trappers.

Commission Discussion

Chairman Barreto introduced the following guests:

- Elaine Higgins, District Secretary with Representative Ron Saunders' office.
- Donna Hanson, Executive Assistant to Monroe County Commissioner Sylvia Murphy.

Commissioner Yablonski and the Commissioners discussed barriers to enter into the Casita market the allocation issue between the recreational and commercial sectors and the Casita program.

Chairman Barreto asked staff to provide the Commissioners with a better understanding of how sponging inter-links with the lobster industry and the effects; Casitas, specifically the environmental impact, legal issues, and if there are other agencies involved; and what kind of effects Casitas will have on fisheries.

Vice Chairman Meehan asked staff to provide the Commissioners a schedule of upcoming *ad hoc* Spiny Lobster Advisory Board meetings.

Upon motion of Commissioner Huffman, seconded and carried, the Commission authorized staff to continue to work with the *ad hoc* Spiny Lobster Advisory Board and the public to complete the assessment and the recommendations for the fishery. Staff will also work with the Board over the next year to explore options to reduce capacity in the trap fishery, proactively manage landings allocations among groups, and make recommendations to better manage the two-day mini-season.

The next item included a report by Mr. Gil McRae on the red tide events that impacted the Gulf coast in 2005. Mr. McRae explained the effects of prolonged red tide event that occurred in 2005 on the recreational fisheries in the southwest area of Florida. Based on the findings, Mr. McRae stated the low abundance of juvenile red-drum and spotted seatrout in Tampa Bay in 2005 may reflect red tide-related mortality. Data from 2006 show seatrout may be recovering. Snook juvenile abundance showed no evidence of a severe red tide-related mortality. This may reflect their use of low salinity nursery habitats which are generally outside the range of red tide occurrence. Of the "Grand Slam" species, spotted seatrout showed the strongest evidence of a red tide-related reduction in recreational catches. This trend was not evident for red drum or snook. An important spotted seatrout spawning site in Tampa Bay was greatly impacted by the 2005 red tide. Data from 2006 shows recovery may be slow.

Col. Julie Jones presented the next issue including a review of a draft rule to eliminate a loophole in the current language of F.A.C. rule 68B-4.009, "Monofilament Net Line and Netting: Prohibition of Intentional Discard, Recovery Requirements, and Recommendations for Appropriate Disposal." This loophole has hampered prosecution of illegal net transit and possession cases. Col. Jones described the current rule language and the challenges law enforcement has experienced prosecuting violators due to the loophole. Col. Jones presented the proposed rule language requesting the addition of specific procedures in the recovery of monofilament fishing line or netting. Staff requested the Commission approve the proposed rule change as advertised for final public hearing at the February 2007 Commission meeting.

Public Comment

Ted Forsgren congratulated Chairman Barreto and Vice Chairman Meehan on their reinstatement to the Commission. Mr. Forsgren supported the proposed draft rule.

Byron Maharrey asked for clarification on the specifications of netting on board a vessel.

Upon motion of Commissioner Kaupe, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the draft rule and directed staff to conduct a workshop on the issue and advertise the rule for a final public hearing at the February 2007 Commission meeting.

Chairman Barreto requested the agenda be amended to address item B., (5), C. Federal Issues, followed by the review of stock assessment for spotted seatrout. Upon motion of Commissioner Corbett, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the agenda as amended.

Mr. Mark Robson presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FWC and National Park Service's Dry Tortugas National Park that establishes the performance measures, scientific studies and reporting scheduled for evaluating the effectiveness of the Research Natural Area (RNA) in achieving its stated goals. Mr. Robson stated the goals of RNA are to protect near pristine shallow water marine habitat, ensure species diversity, enhance the productivity and sustainability of exploited fish populations throughout the region, and provide a unique unexploited area that will be used to help assess the effects of fishing on exploited areas. Mr. Robson asked the Commission to grant delegating authority to the Executive Director so that he may approve the MOU between FWC and the National Park Service's Dry Tortugas National Park.

Mr. Robson introduced several speakers: Superintendent Dan Kimball and Robert Johnson from the Dry Tortugas National Park Research Center.

Public Comment

Ted Forsgren said he worked with Mr. Robson in drafting the MOU and stated his concern regarding the evaluation process to ensure the effectiveness of the plan.

Superintendent Dan Kimball congratulated Chairman Barreto and Vice Chairman Meehan on their re-appointment to the Commission. He reiterated the Park's desire to adhere to high performance standards and discussed how they are moving forward to ensure the effectiveness of the plan including funding. He mentioned the Park reserved two trailers for FWC law enforcement in the Key Largo Ranger Station. There may be another opportunity at the Key West Ranger Station for joint funding for a law enforcement housing facility.

Superintendent Kimball presented a framed photograph and plaque to Chairman Barreto and Mr. Robson from the National Park Service and stated they appreciated the support and assistance from the Commission and Mr. Robson. Chairman Barreto conveyed that it was a pleasure working with Superintendent Kimball.

Upon motion of Commissioner Huffman, seconded and carried, the Commission authorized delegation of authority to the Executive Director to approve the MOU between the FWC and National Park Service's Dry Tortugas National Park.

Commissioner Yablonski added that the MOU includes a three- to four-year assessment to review the effectiveness of the agreement. Mr. Ted Forsgren mentioned the agreement expires after five years with a report to the Governor of Florida with the results of the assessment to determine continuation.

Chairman Barreto asked Ms. Jessica McCawley, Fisheries Biologist with the Division of Marine Fisheries Management, to present the next agenda item

regarding the most recent stock assessment for spotted seatrout. Ms. McCawley presented a review of the stock assessment by the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI), including a review of the regions studied on Florida's coast, biology, the fishery, and the current regulations for the species. The results of the assessment showed spotted seatrout are meeting the management objective of 35% Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) for all four regions; commercial harvest remains less than 1% of total harvest; number of recreational trips has increased since 1996 in all regions; the proportion of fish released alive ranges from 78-93% of the total catch across all regions; and the estimated number of seatrout that die after release is as follows: NW and NE equal 30%, SW equals 68%, and the SE equals 105% of the landings. The next assessment for spotted seatrout is due in three years or 2009. Staff asked the Commission to direct staff to form a workgroup to review the assessment and suggest potential management measures for the future of the fishery.

Public Comment

Ted Forsgren pointed out that the redfish, snook and seatrout are the top fish of Florida and it is nice to see one of the species exceeding the management goal. Mr. Forsgren urged the Commission to continue the seatrout management plan.

Tim Adams (Organized Fishermen of Florida) supported formal working groups. He suggested he and Ronnie Day be added to the working group once it is formulated. Chairman Barreto relayed his desire to Ms. McCawley.

Upon motion of Commissioner Corbett, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the spotted seatrout stock assessment and directed staff to develop a seatrout working group to provide the Commission with management options and recommendations for the future.

Commission Discussion

Chairman Barreto asked staff to research the option of bringing another decommissioned naval vessel to sink off of one of the Florida coasts as FWC successfully accomplished with the recent sinking of the *USS Oriskany*. Mr. Haddad stated he would research the option and follow up with the Chairman.

Mr. Robson presented the proposed 2007-08 work plan for the Division of Marine Fisheries Management. Mr. Robson reported on Commission-approved issues for 2006-07. Several are on hold and other issues will continue into 2007-08. Mr. Robson summarized the DMFM agenda for the 2006-07 Commission meeting scheduled, carry-over items, high/medium/low priority issues, new issues and federal issues. Staff asked the Commissioners to approve the DMFM 2007-08 work plan.

Public Comment

Ted Forsgren thanked Mr. Robson for moving the gulf grouper issues from a medium priority to a high priority as well as moving the goliath grouper issue up. He said the Commission staff has been all over the state on the redfish issue

holding hearings. Also, he urged members of the Commission to increase Marine Fisheries Management staff to effectively manage Florida's fisheries.

Spencer Slate discussed the sinking of ships to build artificial reefs for recreational and commercial diving. He stated, based on his estimates, the real estate market and retail industry benefit from the development of artificial reefs. Also, he expressed his support of the work of the Commission related to the commercial and recreational diving industry.

Dennis O'Hern (Fishing Rights Alliance) congratulated Chairman Barreto and Vice Chairman Meehan on their re-appointment to the Commission. He offered his group's assistance with funding efforts. He stated goliath grouper are becoming nuisances. Also, he asked the agency to develop a special activities license so that a limited scientific collection can begin. He requested the Commission direct FWRI staff to develop a scientific research program on goliath grouper biology and life history; direct the FWC and FWRI to work with NMS to develop a coordinated plan for a limited scientific goliath grouper sample collection program across state and federal waters; and send a letter to the Gulf of Mexico's Fishery Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service requesting their immediate approval of and participation in the scientific collection program for goliath grouper.

Captain Fred Lifton (Marco Island Charter Captains Association) stated he can not catch fish due to the large number of goliath grouper eating other fish. He urged the Commission to do something about this problem. Chairman Barreto said the agency is working on this challenge. Captain Lifton recommended selling a tag for a nominal fee instructing fishermen to call a designated number to report the tag number, fish and location.

Bill Parks suggested Mr. Luiz Barbieri, Leader of the Marine Fisheries Research Section of the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, get together with Dr. Koenig regarding methodology for obtaining data. He discussed the east coast population with laser locators to analyze goliath groupers. Also, he suggested obtaining a lot of stomach contents data as well. He provided a video tape about goliath grouper to Commissioner Meehan for the Commissioners to view at their convenience. Chairman Barreto asked Mr. Tim Donovan to copy this onto DVD's and send it to the Commissioners.

Grady Sullivan urged the Commission to carefully research the fishing of jew fish.

Wilt Stearns (*Underwater Journal*) stated he is a photographer and can remember a time when goliath groupers were almost non-existent, now the numbers are going up. He provided the Commissioners two maps of Palm Beach County showing where the fish is dwelling.

Commission Discussion

Upon motion of Vice Chairman Meehan, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the Division of Marine Fisheries Management work plan for 2007-08.

Chairman Barreto deferred agenda item 10. C. Update on the Future of Hunting in Florida to the next Commission meeting in February 2007. Mr. Wiley was not able to make the presentation due to a previously scheduled commitment. The Vice Chairman made the motion, seconded and carried, to approve the amended agenda.

Ms. Sharon Lobello presented the next agenda item regarding the final recommendations for the agency's financial business plan. She reviewed the background of the plan and the proposed funding strategies. The funding strategies include: specialty license tags, conservation decals, fishing and hunting licenses and check-offs, remove shoreline exemption, and create an outdoor heritage program. The overall projected plan would generate over \$17 million at the end of year three for the agency. The plan also includes partnerships with AARP and other organizations to promote the youth program. Also, the Wildlife Foundation of Florida will receive a portion of funds from this program. Ms. Lobello stated, if the Commission approves the proposed plan, the next steps would include: seeking legislative approval for these funding strategies (January – April 2007); meeting with stakeholders (January – March 2007), rolling out marketing programs (February – August 2007), and matching recurring funding to recurring expenses (on-going).

Public Comment

Ben Mostcoff urged the agency to enforce the requirement to carry a fishing license.

Commission Discussion

The Commissioners asked Ms. Lobello and Ms. Jackie Fauls for clarification on license fee increases, estimates of revenue generated for the agency and when the stakeholder meetings are scheduled.

Chairman Barreto discussed the Outdoor Heritage program and asked if there was a way to embellish the program and perhaps provide something more attractive to the public for the money they invest. He suggested membership would include an annual subscription to the *Florida Wildlife* magazine or a discount or pass to Florida parks. Ms. Lobello stated they are working on providing a package to the public. However, the law states the magazine can not be provided for less than \$12. Commissioner Corbett added we should do whatever we can do to raise funds. Chairman Barreto suggested it may be possible to propose to the Legislature that this package include the magazine. It would be a "gift" package to Florida seniors for a minimal contribution.

Commissioner Barco and Ms. Lobello discussed the fee increases and the decals with respect to legislative approval.

Chairman Barreto urged staff to develop an attractive decal for the public to purchase and display on their vehicles. Ms. Lobello stated they are working on contracting with an artist to produce this decal.

Upon motion of Commissioner Corbett, seconded and carried, the Commission approved the final recommendations for the agency's Financial Business Plan, and authorized the Executive Director in consultation with the Chairman to work with the House, Senate and Governor's Office to determine the final recommendations to be considered in the 2007 Legislative Session.

Dr. Thomas Eason, Conservation Initiatives Coordinator with the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, presented an update on Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative. Dr. Eason explained the mission of the Legacy Initiative and the agency's areas of priority. The agency is leading the way by identifying the following priority starting points for the Initiative: use the Initiative framework to coordinate natural resource conservation within Florida; facilitate habitat conservation efforts on the high priority habitats to achieve their long-term ecological sustainability; enhance performance measure monitoring of priority species and habitats by developing a tracking system for species and habitats; develop a new GIS tool that merges existing GIS planning tools to identify the most important cooperative conservation focal areas for Florida's terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems; and fill data gaps on the life history, status, trend, population dynamics, and management needs for Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Goals and measurable objectives are being developed as starting points for these priorities and will guide implementation of the Initiative over the next three years. The ultimate aim is to conserve our native wildlife and habitats through measures emphasizing non-regulatory, voluntary, and incentive-based actions designed to create partnerships.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Corbett congratulated Dr. Eason for his work on the upland grassland habitat for both timber and grasslands.

Mr. Robson presented an update on the Future of Saltwater Fishing in Florida. Staff is scheduling a series of meetings with stakeholders to review and finalize a vision document for the future of saltwater fishing in Florida. The purpose of these meetings will be to develop a list of "action items" that can be implemented by agencies and stakeholders, and to identify priority areas in the vision statement that require further elaboration or immediate attention. Mr. Robson reviewed the list of action items identified by stakeholders and developed as measures of success in implementing new strategies for managing Florida's fisheries. A series of public meetings will be conducted around the state starting in January 2007 to gather additional public input and comment on the proposed vision. Once finalized, FWC will continue to work with stakeholders and other resource management agencies to implement the plan and measure progress toward the shared vision.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

H. T. Pontin asked why the agency is extending its jurisdiction beyond some areas of the Florida Keys regarding vessel anchoring. He requested a correction on jurisdiction and a response from the Commission. Commissioner Yablonski assured Mr. Pontin that the agency's general counsel would follow up with him.

Troy Zinzer stated he is interested in getting more involved in the *ad hoc* Spiny Lobster Advisory Council.

Alan Rigerman provided several articles regarding wildlife.

Ms. Jackie Fauls provided the last agenda item, reporting on legislative issues. Ms. Fauls discussed the proposed legislative package for approval by the Commission regarding the issues associated with the Financial Business Plan, which will be in one bill, and the blue crab bill. The other issue involves the protection of seagrasses from propeller scarring. Mr. Smith has coordinated this issue for the agency in association with the Division of Law Enforcement, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI), and the Legal Office, the Department of Environmental Protection, and with stakeholder groups for almost two years. There is draft legislation; however, because of the priority of the Financial Business Plan issues, Ms. Fauls requested that the Commission give staff direction as to whether it would support the legislation during the 2007 Session, rather than it being part of the Commission's legislative package.

Ms. Fauls introduced Mr. Kent Smith, Biological Administrator, Marine/Estuarine Subsection of the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation. Mr. Smith explained the ecological value of Florida seagrass meadows, defined propeller scarring, and described the effects of propeller scars. A 1995 FWRI propeller scarring report was presented summarizing the levels of damage in specific areas of Florida. A stakeholder working group was established in February 2005. Mr. Smith listed their proposals. The consensus working group recommended simplified citation, non-criminal penalty for minor violation, defined willful vs. minor violations, and violation fines to fund restoration, enforcement, and education. Legislation was drafted based on the Department of Environmental Protection's State Lands oversight authority provided in 253.04, F.S. The legislation defines propeller scarring, establishes a penalty fee structure for minor violations with increased fines for repeat offenders, establishes "willful or wanton" damage as a first degree misdemeanor (consistent with careless boating and driving regulations), and citations on uniform boating citation form. Collected fines will be deposited into the Internal Improvement Trust Fund for use in enforcement, seagrass damage restoration, and boater education. Staff recommended Commissioners support the legislation to benefit the resource.

Colonel Julie Jones discussed the types of violations (citations) and the education campaign.

Public Comment

Ted Forsgren stated his group was very actively involved in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's effort to develop pole-troll zones to protect seagrasses from propeller scarring in Mosquito Lagoon. He stated his concern for the proposal is in regard to individuals who operate their vessels in these areas when the water is cloudy and unmarked, that they should not be penalized if they incidentally strike the bottom and damage seagrass. He suggested the entrance to areas such as Cockroach Bay and Tampa Bay are perfect examples of propeller scarring. The channels need to be marked in and out of these waterways. He urged the Commission not to move forward with this issue this year.

Jerry Sansom stated he agreed with Mr. Forsgren's comments. He offered the Florida Inland Navigation District's assistance in partnering with the Commission on the east coast of Florida for additional channel marking in some of these major areas. The cost of funding this project could be shared with another partner.

Commission Discussion

Commissioners Huffman and Barco asked about the recovery time for seagrass. Mr. Smith discussed the current study regarding a faster recovery time. The agency is applying for State Wildlife Grants to address the problem in the Keys and the Panhandle region.

Commissioner Huffman recommended Mr. Smith contact Dorn Whitmore to assist in obtaining aerial photographs of the seagrass scarring.

Chairman Barreto discussed his thoughts regarding seagrass propeller scarring with Ms. Fauls. Ms. Fauls stated the Commission will receive an update on the issue of seagrasses in February 2007.

Chairman Barreto mentioned he received an email message from Lou Dombrova offering assistance with the snook stamp increase. Chairman Barreto asked staff to draft a letter for him to respond directly to Mr. Dambrova.

Commission Exchange

Commissioner Corbett commented that one of the most significant agency priorities is the economic future. He requested staff work to get this through the Legislature in 2007.

Commissioner Yablonski thanked Chairman Barreto for hosting this meeting in Key Largo. He also thanked Chuck Collins and his staff for assisting in the success of the meeting. Also, congratulations were offered to the Chairman and Vice Chairman on their renewed term on the Commission.

Commissioner Kaupe stated she always looks forward to the Keys meeting every year. She said the "catch phrase" for the Commission for next year should be "Resource, Resource, and Resource."

Commissioner Barco thanked the Chairman for the wonderful reception and dinner at his home the night before. She urged staff to continue producing the "Commission Meeting Briefing" tapes for the Commissioners' review. Also, she suggested staff reduce the amount of paper and information provided to the Commissioners for future meetings.

Commissioner Huffman also thanked the Chairman for hosting the reception and dinner at his home. He agreed with Commissioner Barco that he listens to the Commission Meeting Briefing tapes and would urge staff to continue producing this information. He thanked Tim Donovan and Gus Holzer for their assistance in producing the tapes and recording the Commission meetings.

Vice Chairman Meehan stated he refers to the Commission notebooks to review upcoming meetings and works directly with his regional director, Greg Holder, in reviewing the information in detail prior to the meeting date. Commissioner Barco reiterated the idea would involve providing the Commissioners one meeting notebook for their review prior to each Commission meeting and sending updates or new reports to Commissioners as needed, which would reduce the paperwork. She suggested the Commissioners provide Kathleen Hampton their "old" briefing tapes to recycle. Also, Vice Chairman Meehan asked Chairman Barreto to relay his appreciation to his wife, Sheila, in opening her home last evening. He thanked the Commissioners for supporting their decisions and he looks forward to next year. He will be attending the Florida Bass Conservation Center's grand opening in February 2007.

Chairman Barreto expressed his appreciation to the Commissioners for their support and confidence, and looks forward to the coming year. He reminded the Commissioners that he instituted a process several years ago for regional directors to schedule pre-Commission meeting briefings and encouraged the Commissioners to meeting with the directors and Mr. Heller to ensure they know they have all of the information they need prior to Commission meetings. He thanked staff for their assistance in providing another successful meeting and wished everyone a happy holiday.

Adjournment

Chairman Barreto called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Huffman offered the motion to adjourn, which was seconded and carried. The meeting was adjourned.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Rodney Barreto, Chairman

Kenneth D. Haddad
Executive Director

Respectfully submitted:

Commission Secretary

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