

January 6, 2009  
Milton, Florida

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

#### Blackwater River Marking Program

Danny Kite and Tom Scott gave an update on the Blackwater River Pirates progress for river channel marking and stated they had most of the permissions necessary from the property owners and are working on sign proposals. Hunter Walker suggested they work with Christina Verlinde on the permitting process and Jeff Marker said they should bring it back to the Marine Advisory Committee when they have an amount to request for funding the project. The MAC could then make a motion to take the request for funding to the Board of County Commissioners.

#### STAFF UPDATES

Jeff Marker asked for an update on the Symphonia. Walker said it is still in litigation. Marker requested Whitfield look at the Oriole Beach Boat Ramp. He said that trailer wheels are falling off the end again. Avis Whitfield stated he will take a look at it but it usually is a problem caused by the winter tides. The water is not deep enough to launch. Marker asked if the ramp can be extended. Whitfield said he will look into the possibility of a 25 cubic yard maintenance dredge at the end and the possibility of adding rock.

Dan Wakley gave a report on vessel registration fees and how fees can be spent (see FS 328.72 and 328.66 attached). He stated that 2 years ago the county had about 14,000 registered boats of various sizes. Of that amount about 350 are commercial and the remainder is pleasure. Walker said the number fluctuates from year to year. Marker said fees went up this year. Walker said the budgeted amount is about \$66,000 because the state requires an estimated amount but whatever we get goes into that fund and can be used as noted. Dan Wakley said that he called Patricia Harrell who is in charge of the Annual Reporting which is now required for this fund and the grant program. Ms. Harrell advised him that it cannot be used for artificial reefs of any kind. It can be used for derelict vessels, land acquisition and channel markers. There are also grants available for derelict vessels and channel marking. Jeff Marker asked if parking areas would be included as land acquisition and how much money is available in that fund. Walker said he will include that information in the update at the next meeting.

Jeff Marker stated that the FWC hand cuffs the counties on how the money is spent and he would like to take a letter to the next FWC meeting asking them to redefine how the money can be spent to specifically include boater safety. Pascoe Gibson made the motion to support a letter from the Marine Advisory Committee. Rick Harris seconded. The motion was approved without objection.

Christina Verlinde noted that the US Fish and Wildlife is working on their Coastal Program Funding and making a bank of projects. They have a survey that we can identify sites for restoration and she asked that the committee be thinking about sites to include.

Verlinde also stated the Florida Boating Improvement grants tentative call for proposals will go out on February 2nd and will be due April 2nd. She encouraged the committee to start thinking about ideas for proposal.

#### Other Business

Scott Mason advised there will be a Gulf Council meeting on January 28th and 29th and a FWC meeting on February 4th and 5th. He would like the county's support for a new study or survey on Snapper in our region. Harris made a motion for a letter in support of a new survey on fish in our area and changing the regulations on Snapper in our region from the Marine Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Pascoe Gibson and it was passed without objection. Jeff Marker will hand deliver the letter at the FWC meeting.

Mark Griffith updated the MAC on his efforts to obtain a Marine Sanctuary with a snorkeling area in the new Navarre Beach Park.

#### Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2009, at 5:00 p.m.

#### Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting adjourned at 6:17.