

**Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee (MPPRC)
Minutes of May 21, 2008**

Committee Attendees: Brett Bibeau; Richard Bunnell; Judith Futerfas; Lynda Green; Bob Karl; Kate L. Mansfield, Ph.D.; Manny Prieguez (Chair); Dick Townsend (Vice Chair); Julia Zaias, DMV, Ph.D. (sign in sheet attached)

Seaquarium Staff: Andrew Hertz, General Manager; Jodi Linvill, Animal Care Supervisor; Sara Green, Education Manager; Michael Renner, DVM; Eric Eimstad, Vice President, Sales and Marketing

County Staff Attendees: Susan Markley, Ph.D. (DERM); Craig Grossenbacher (DERM); Lisbeth Britt (DERM); Molly Messer (DERM); Forrest Shaw (DERM), Alyssa Turteltaub (Park & Recreation Dept)

Other Attendees: A sign in sheet was provided for public sign in (copy attached)

1. A quorum was established. The meeting agenda is attached and made a part by reference hereto. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Manny Prieguez at 1:45 P.M. The meeting was recorded on video and audio tape.
2. The Committee was welcomed to Seaquarium by the General Manager, Andrew Hertz who expressed his and Seaquarium's commitment to preservation of the manatee through public education and animal rehabilitation.

The Committee was then led to the Manatee "Celebrity Pool" Exhibition area by Jodi Linvill, the Animal Care Supervisor. Jodi introduced the three female manatees in the two tanks, 50 year old Juliette who has always lived at Seaquarium and two injured manatees. Phoenix was severely injured by a boat in 1993 and can not be released because she does not have a tail. Phyllis has been disfigured by entanglement in plastic strapping and continues to have health issues as a result. The three animals are part of all of the public education presentations given at the facility. All three females have been temporary surrogate mothers to orphan calves that are ultimately released.

Jodi explained how the animals are cared for and why there are release problems for long term captives or after animals have become familiar with human care . Seaquarium works as an authorized responder for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (along with Lowry Park in Tampa and Sea World in Orlando) and in conjunction with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to answer local calls for injured or entangled animals. The average number of calls is one per week. The animal is treated on site and released if at all possible. Injured animals can be very difficult to find if they are still mobile and tracking can take days or months. The tracked animal is tagged, if possible, and then the veterinarian teams are dispatched immediately. Severely injured animals are transported for long term care. They are released at the determination of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

FWC keeps the records on mortality, necropsies, and how and where the animal was injured if that can be determined. Some animals are found after dead or if they have survived may not be at the site of injury, so information on each animal is not

always available. Jodi reported that the majority of injuries that Seaquarium treats are due to boat collisions, or entanglement by monofilament fishing line or polypropylene buoy ropes. Mr. Prieguez and Ms. Mansfield asked that further information be provided to them on all response data and injury types. The Committee was then invited to feed the three animals before moving on to the rehabilitation tanks, which are restricted from public access.

There are three rehabilitation tanks, currently two are occupied. Senora was brought to the facility in 2006 with blunt trauma from a boat hit which fractured her ribs and damaged her lungs, resulting in pneumothorax and pyothorax, air trapped and an infection in the chest cavity that is very difficult to treat with antibiotics. She is not able to float or swim well, because her buoyancy is impaired by her lung injury. A surgical drain is implanted to allow veterinarians to withdraw the fluids that accumulate. However, she has improved and gained weight, and there is hope that she will recover completely. She has required very labor-intensive care by the facility but they are committed to keeping all animals alive.

Two males are in one tank. Males are kept separate from females to prevent breeding. This decision is made to prevent healthy calves from taking space or care giver time that needs to be reserved for injured animals. So far the facility has not had a problem exceeding their capacity for animals. Romeo, who came to Seaquarium with Juliet in 1958 is used as a companion animal for injured or orphan males. Attempts are always made for each animal to have a companion. Tequesta is a young male in the tank who will probably be released.

The facility veterinarian, Dr. Michael Renner, then joined the Committee for a question and answer session. Dr. Renner is the only vet on duty today for all of the animals at the facility. Seaquarium does not have a full-time veterinarian exclusively dedicated to manatee care, but rather they are responsible for all of the animals at the facility. Dr. Renner explained that the original vet at Seaquarium, Jesse White, pioneered manatee medicine. During the 1990s Dr. Renner said the facility predominantly treated orphan calves. That has changed and he now predominantly treats injuries from boat strikes. He is not sure why they see a reduced number of calves now; but it could be due to improved reporting and response. He would still expect to see calves because South Florida is where the population comes in the winter to have their calves. Dr. Renner's remaining comments and the Committee's questions and discussion focused on the importance of vessel speed zones and enforcement. Dr. Renner noted that he had personally observed regular violations of the "slow speed" manatee protection zone adjacent to Seaquarium, even though there is a prominent sign in the area. He believes that enforcement of existing zones is very important to manatee protection. Dr. Markley remarked that although everyone could agree that more enforcement would be helpful, that more manatee protection zone tickets are issued by law enforcement officers in Miami-Dade than any other county. Dr. Renner had to return to work and the Committee moved on to the Seaquarium classroom.

3. Seaquarium Education Manager, Sara Green, gave an overview of education at the facility. Ninety thousand (90K) children come to through the facilities education programs each year. The programs include 1) Scouting Overnights, 2) Day Care,

3) Summer Eco-explorer Camp, 4) Mommy and Me, and 5) Monster Splash which includes a fund raiser for manatees. Each program includes at least one day of instruction on manatee anatomy, population status, reason for endangerment, rehabilitation and boating injuries, and education on entanglement and monofilament recycling.

Jodi Linvill then gave a presentation on the mortality or rehabilitation and release for 2007, which included eight (8) animals. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service makes the decision on the release location and it is usually near where the animal was found. Two rescue animals died due to extreme boat injury.

Andrew Hertz discussed the manatee spinal injuries Seaquarium has handled and the high healing capacity of the manatee. With the help of University of Miami's neurologist Barth Green, they have treated two animals with spine injuries, though one later died from kidney failure. Mr. Hertz feels that the manatee healing capacity can be studied for insight to human spinal rehabilitation.

4. Dr. Markley from DERM then gave a presentation on carcass recovery and human mortality causes in Miami-Dade since 1974 and presented the data as before and after the implementation of the State approved local Manatee Protection Plan in 1995. The slide presentation, which includes maps of where carcasses have been recovered, is attached and made a part of the minutes by reference. Initial spatial analysis of vessel-related mortality indicates that a greater proportion of the carcasses have been recovered in the area of the Miami River and Port of Miami than other areas, particularly in the period from 1995 to present. There has been a significant reduction in the number of manatees killed by canal control gates since the South Florida Water Management District and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed gate retrofits. Lynda Green asked that the Committee get more detailed necropsy reports on each of the mortalities and Dr. Markley indicated that these are available from the State.
5. Chair Prieguez then opened the floor for public comment or questions. There was no comment. The Chair expressed that he had not been able to attend the April 8th Public Hearing, but that he had watched the recorded proceedings and had been favorably impressed that the public had adequate time to express opinion. He thanked Vice Chair Townsend for smoothly managing the hearing.
6. Chair Prieguez then opened the meeting for Committee business. Mr. Bibeau requested a discussion on the budget and the Mote Marine Contract. Based on some of the comments at the Public Hearing and past meetings about costs of reviewing the MPP, he feels that the Committee needs further information about how those funds are being spent by DERM. He suggested that DERM staff costs should not be paid for by the allocated funds, but that they should be absorbed by the Department.

Chairman Prieguez expressed his opinion that the BCC is responsible for explaining to the public the funding for the MPP review. The Committee is not responsible for that and needs to focus on reviewing the pertinent data. The Chairman suggested that Mr. Bibeau take his concerns to the BCC as a private citizen. Lynda Green agreed and suggested that based on the comments from the public, they are much more concerned with why the Committee is reviewing an

already good plan. Dr. Markley clarified for the Committee that DERM does not receive general revenue, but rather is supported by fees for specific services, such as permit application review or water management. She stated that it would not be legal to use these fees to pay for manatee protection activities, and that is why county staff and other services must be covered by the allocation included in the MPP review ordinance.

Chair Prieguez then introduced two new members on the Committee and asked them to provide details of their appointments.

Judith Futerfas was recently appointed by Commissioner Moss. Judith did her master thesis at FIU on *Correlates of Boater Knowledge and Views Regarding the Florida Manatee and Manatee Related Issues*. She collected her data at Brickell Key.

Lynda Green has spent 16 years as a manatee researcher and boater. She was appointed by Commissioner Jordan. She is concerned that the situation is not getting better for the manatee even with the MPP in place.

The Chair then opened the floor for a review of the draft minutes of April 8, 2008. Mr. Bibeau wants the words "1st Public Hearing" stricken from the title because all of the meetings are public. Dr. Markley explained that the title or minutes need to reflect that this hearing was required by ordinance specifically to allow the public time to express their opinions to the Committee, and is distinct from regular meetings. Mr. Bunnell suggested a title: Special Purpose Public Hearing. Chair Prieguez moved that the word 1st be removed from the title. The motion passed. The vote was as follows:

Brett Bibeau – no	Richard Bunnell – no	Judith Futerfas – yes
Lynda Green – yes	Bob Karl – yes	Manny Prieguez – yes
Richard Townsend – yes	Julia Zaias – yes	Kate Mansfield – not present for the vote

Mr. Bibeau also does not think that the summaries of the percentages of viewpoints are adequate for characterizing the comments of the speakers and are subjective. Chair Prieguez asked Dr. Markley to explain the format of the minutes. She explained that she always discusses the format with the Chair and that in this case she and Vice Chair Townsend had made a determination together that a very general summary of comments would be preferable, since individual speakers would not be able to review the minutes and assure that their concerns were properly reflected. Anyone who wished to learn in more detail about the comments can view the video record, which would be the most accurate. She also said that the Committee is free to amend the minutes in any way they vote to do so.

Chair Prieguez agreed with Mr. Bibeau that the comments from the speakers, while mostly straight forward, did include a range of issues not covered by the statistics and perhaps they are too black and white. Mr. Bibeau pointed out that there were also comments asking that the plan be made even stricter.

Dr. Zaias commented that there is no doubt that the majority of the speakers were in support of not changing the plan, but that the statistic does leave out nuance. Still, overall, she believed the statistics are an accurate representation of the hearing. Dr. Zaias also pointed out that the minutes, in some cases, did not identify that they worked for or represented some agencies, including University of Miami, NOVA, and Coral Gables Business Owners Association.

Vice Chair Townsend agreed that there was a clear majority in favor of not changing the plan, and that it is important to reflect that this is more than a simple majority. However, the more protective issue was not on the table at the hearing and if it had been, he thinks that more people might have wanted stricter provisions.

Ms. Green was not supportive of the minutes reflecting the individual comments. However, Chair Prieguez determined that the minutes should be revised to be more reflective of the individual speaker's statements and make the title change and submit the edits to the Committee for consideration.

Chair Prieguez then asked the Committee members and Dr. Markley for suggestions for next meeting date and agenda topics. Mr. Bibeau suggested his topics from the February meeting. Dr. Markley suggested that DERM can give a report on the 1st quarter results of the Mote study in the future, but that this would not be available until June. DERM should be able to get the necropsy reports and additional data on manatee deaths and distribution for the next meeting. However, it will take more than one month to organize a meeting to include a presentation by law enforcement.

Mr. Bibeau then asked for a status report on the Committee's resolution for a time extension. Chair Prieguez explained that he personally presented a letter based on the Committee's motion to Chairman Barreiro. Chairman Barreiro had suggested that the Committee wait until at least this fall before he is willing to take the resolution to the BCC to give the Committee time to see what they can accomplish. The matter should not be presented to the BCC until it is very obvious that the Committee can not complete their review.

Mr. Bibeau then suggested that the Committee should be meeting every month starting in June because the required format of the early meetings has prevented getting any real work done. Dr. Zaias suggested that the Committee debate the agenda items at the next meeting.

Chair Prieguez motioned for the next meeting to be held tentatively on Wednesday July 16th at 1:30 P.M. and requested DERM to contact committee members who were not in attendance to determine their availability. Most of the Committee members indicated still present at the meeting stated that they will be available.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.