

# Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team

NOAA SE Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC)  
Statistics Building Conference Room  
75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149

August 17, 2016

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Phil Everingham, Chairman of the BBRCT, called the meeting to order. Introductions were made by attendees.

## 2. Port of Miami Dredging Case; Port everglades Project; DEP Water Quality Rule:

Rachel Silverstein, Executive Director, Miami Waterkeeper, gave a presentation on “status of the Port of Miami Dredging Case; where are we as of now; status of Port Everglades Project; and update on the DEP water quality rule”.

### **Water Quality Rule**

The Seminole Tribe has filed a Petition to challenge the rule. If the challenge is unsuccessful, the rule will go to the EPA to accept or reject.

### **Port of Miami Dredging**

Dredging impacts resulted in sediment impacts as far as 750 meters from the channel; the USACE had estimated impacts out as far as 150 meters. 93% of the corals near the channel had partial mortality and 8.3% had total mortality. The USACE severely underestimated the number of staghorn corals present; they estimated 31, whereas there were actually at least 235. Only the initial 31 were relocated. In July 2014 FDEP investigated and found “a considerable part of the colony is dead due to accumulation of sediment”; “60-70% of the colony is dead”. Plaintiffs filed a 60 day notice to sue in July 2014. Monitoring found extensive damage. NOAA issued an emergency notice to relocate the corals; the USACE agreed to pay NOAA to relocate the corals, but there was delay due to a dredge ship parked over the corals; eventually 211 colonies were relocated. Dial Cordy, a USACE contractor, stated in their August 2015 Sediment delineation Report that there was only 1.25% coral mortality. NOAA, in a September 11, 2015, letter to the USACE stated that the report “selectively chose certain results to downplay the permanent effects of sedimentation to the area corals “and that the “summary fails to acknowledge that up to 94% of colonies have sediment related partial mortality at some sites”.

A December 2015 survey and the associated April 2016 report by NOAA found that 95% of the surveyed area is no longer a functional habitat for coral recruitment, including staghorn.

EPA noted 125 violations in the USACE’s offshore disposal practices.

### **Port Everglades**

Concern that the same situation will develop as in Miami. The USACE again predicts an impacted area of 150 meters; USACE is relying on the 2010 Dial Cordy staghorn surveys; no surveys for

newly listed corals since 2010. A lawsuit was filed recently against the USACE for NEPA and Endangered Species Act violations.

Rachel's presentation will be found, upon receipt, in the BBRCT section on The Task Force website under the October presentations at:

[http://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/content/brrct\\_handouts.html](http://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/content/brrct_handouts.html)).

**3. New Marine Conservation Curriculum**

Jennifer Tristhammer, Director, Deering Estate, gave a presentation on Deering's "New Marine Conservation Curriculum". The learning program curriculum is focused around Marine Conservation. The units include marine debris, ocean acidification, coral reef health, ocean dead zones, mercury toxicity, overfishing, ichthyology, coastal development, climate change, and invasive species. The goal is to develop the learning program curriculum for easy and effective integration and implementation into other organizations at no cost to the organizations. The curriculum trains next-generation informal educators as well as providing activities for students from kindergarten through graduate school.

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**4. Update – Social network Analysis of Organizations of Individuals Associated with Biscayne Bay:**

Brent Stoffle, Ph.D, Anthropologist – Social Science Research Group, NOAA Applied Fisheries, wants to create a network analysis to help with the collaboration of individuals and organizations working towards the same goals or conducting similar research. He has created a list of people and organizations involved with Biscayne Bay over the years and conducted interviews. He is also compiling reports and articles related to Biscayne Bay research and management. He is hoping to develop a network analysis to look at individuals and organizations and to create a story to make the relationships meaningful. It would include the history of the BBRCT, Biscayne issues, industry's role (i.e. the marine industry), Deering Estate involvement, and National Park Service involvement.

There were no slides accompanying Brent's presentation.

**5. Southeast Florida Action Network:**

Kelly Montenero, NOAA Coral Management Fellow gave a presentation on the Southeast Florida Action Network (SEAFAN). SEAFAN is a citizen reporting and response network ("We're all connected – Keep it protected"). SEAFAN makes sure the reports of various incidents including algal blooms, ghost traps, marine debris, vessel groundings, anchor damage, fish kills and disease, unusual thermoclines, coral diseases and bleaching, discolored water, and invasive species get to the appropriate organizations and agencies. SEAFAN's goals are to establish an observer network, enhance marine debris cleanup efforts, enhance reef restoration and protection efforts, and

improve understanding of the reefs. It covers Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. They want to hear about marine incidents from anyone out on the water. People are asked to record as much information as possible about the incident, including coordinates and the common site name with a photo if possible. SEAFAN also does targeted outreach, i.e. educating boaters and fishermen at boat ramps. The public can report incidents on [seafan.net](http://seafan.net) or call 1-866-770-7335.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair.