



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
33 East Quay Road
Key West, FL 33040

April 1, 2013

Mayor George Neugent
Monroe County Board of County Commissioners
25 Ships Way
Big Pine Key, FL 33043

Kevin Claridge
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas / Director
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 235
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to provide the support of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary for a project to restore channel and bank habitats in the Florida Keys as proposed by Bonefish and Tarpon Trust in partnership with CSA Ocean Sciences, Inc. (Dr. Mark Fonseca, Principle Investigator). Funding for this project would address and implement elements of the Damage Assessment and Restoration Action Plan from the 2007 Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan.

The Damage Assessment and Restoration Action Plan identifies strategies and activities to protect and restore Sanctuary resources. Specifically, Strategy B.22 lists three activities that this proposal would address including restoring grounding-impacted seagrass meadows, monitoring restoration, and reintroducing indigenous living corals and seagrass. In turn, the applicants propose ecological and economic benefits that will be demonstrated through multidimensional monitoring. It is important to note that the project will require future permit approval from FKNMS as well as other state and federal agencies; we would look forward to working with the project proponents in discussing and developing a successful permit application.

The Management Plan and Damage Assessment and Restoration Action Plan were developed after extensive public input, support from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and adopted by the State of Florida and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 2007. The proposed project would promote the implementation of the Sanctuary's goals and should be considered a high priority for the Sanctuary and the Florida Keys community.

Sincerely,

Sean Morton
Superintendent

