

Seagrass Protection and Restoration Steering Committee Meeting #2

December 18, 2013 9:00 am – 11:00 am Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve Office

Attendees: Heather Stafford, Mindy Brown, Keith Laakkonen, Dr. James Douglas, Al Durrett, Joy Hazel, Robert Brooks, Chris Griffin, Cheryl Clark (phone), Althea Holting (phone)

Thank you Heather and CHAP for allowing us to use your call in number for the meeting.

- Heather recapped last meeting, 10/11/13 for everyone.
- Water Quality discussion
 - o Cheryl spoke with Monica Parchment from DEPs non-point source department and determined that WQ data collected by Marinas would be in OCULUS. Al said he collects the WQ data himself and he does not do nutrients because it is an extra cost to him and DEP does not require it. It was decided that this may not be the best source for WQ data.
 - o Heather suggested adding another volunteer WQ site to collect data in Estero Bay.
 - o Dr. Douglas wants to put all the WQ data together so we can analyze it.
 - o Joy wants to get a visual representation of WQ in EBAP
 - Mindy said you can use water atlas to do this
 - o We need to look at specific parameters for all the WQ data collected compared with seagrass data.
 - o Keith said to look at data based on rainfall years he thinks the base line for Estero Bay was determined to be in the 1990's-it is in the rule.
 - o Heather doesn't think that looking at past WQ data in depth is worth the time
 - o Dr. Douglas asked if there have been correlations between WQ and seagrass and indicated that he would perform the analysis if provided with EBAP data.
 - Mindy said that salinity was the only factor that effected seagrass in CHAP area when she conducted her analysis.
 - o Keith said there has been more protection for seagrass and increased WQ standards in the recent past which has contributed to the increase in seagrass recovery.
 - o Mindy talked about CHNEP seagrass targets which should be integrated into the Estero Bay plan.
- Seagrass Protection/restoration
 - o We want to target realistic goals
 - o Target NICMZs to start as an achievable goal
 - Add NGP for NICMZ's to ftp site (Cheryl will do this).
 - By marking zones prop scars are going to recover and so active restoration should not be required.
 - Heather - The zones are all about dredging. They are intended to be put in place prior to dredging using the NGP.
 - Heather does not want to restore prop scars in NICMZs – the purpose was to have passive restoration.
 - Keith said that we cannot test a control unless we only mark ½ the NICMZ however the NGP says the zones must be completely marked.

- Heather said that we should create a control outside the NICMZ and mark half of it
- Treatments: NICMZs, not in a NICMZ, restoration in and out of NICMZs
 - Each treatment has two or three factors
 - Heather/EBAP wants to see restoration in areas outside the NICMZs to show restoration alone works because this is how mitigation projects are proposed and areas currently being scarred may not benefit from restoration alone – prop scarring will continue.
- Try caution seagrass signs on some areas and no signs on other prop-scarred areas to see if people will adhere to the signs – look at successfulness of signs.
 - Thea said there is research on enforced areas and caution signs and they were both equally effective (Thea will put papers on ftp site). If we want to do it in EBAP this would simply be a test on the population.
- Prop scar data in our area needs to be updated, last done in 2003.
- Heather indicated that Chuck does want to put the zones into effect.
- Al thinks it is more about education than enforcement.
 - Keith said Keys National Marine Sanctuary is a good example of education working.
 - Heather said the enforcement is important because it will play into the analysis of how successful the zones are.
 - Education should be prioritized and start with boat rentals and marina owners and then go to boat ramps.
 - We need to get a head start with education so people do not feel like government is taking over their waters.
 - Write article for state angler magazines. (Joy will write for waterline and ? when needed)
 - Get rental companies to provide Lee County and Manatee apps to public.
 - Discussion about a uniform education program or certification process for marinas and boat rental companies, but Joy hinted that this may not work in Lee County. (Charlotte Co. seems to be better than Lee Co. when it comes to education (I could not hear some of this discussion))
 - Make a list of targeted stakeholders for education (Joy?)
- Al wants to make sure that there is ingress and egress for the NICMZ areas.
 - We need to let people know ahead of time that this was considered when the zones were created and you cannot put a pass through the zones due to depth. Zones are small enough and have access around all sides so ingress and egress is adequate. To change the zones now would require opening the rule.
- Restoration Techniques/Monitoring
 - We want to measure prop scars now and after the NICMZs are initiated.
 - Use annual aerial photographs or map each scar by boat, there will also need to be data on the depth of the scars. Joy can talk to WCIND for education funding and Thea will ask Chuck to fund research.
 - Dr. Douglas suggested using gridded maps to hand record prop scars in the field and/or a balloon with a camera mounted on it to take photos of the zone to do mapping.

- Current WMD flights are in the winter and after a heavy rain season and flights should be in the summer to show grasses. Trouble with visibility during the summer months though.
- Cheryl suggesting using a Trimble or other device with similar accuracy to measure prop scars in the field. This would enable us to track and monitor individual scars. This would also allow all data to be collected in the field and uploaded into GIS with geographical accuracy and minimal data entry errors.
- Monitor both seagrass abundance and presence of prop scars.
- Wulfert Flats seagrass methodology may be helpful to look at and side scan sonar may work but you need deeper water. Keith thinks that WMD may have side scan sonar of EBAP NICMZs. ACA is contracted through FGCU to do aerial flights and Dr. Douglas will check to see if they are mapping prop scars or he will try to find alternate funding to do that. The best method would be to conduct ground surveys.

• **Make sure proper people and agencies are credited for their work!**

Task for next meeting:

Cheryl

- Add NGP for NICMZ's to ftp site
- Create Doodle Poll for February meeting and add Karen Bickford and Eric Milbrandt to the contact list
- Create GIS file with available seagrass data

Joy

- Create list of people we need to educate

Mindy

- Put EBAP transect data to ftp site

Dr Douglas

- Add FGCU, SeaGrant monitoring proposal to ftp site

Keith

- Talk with Lee Co to get water quality data

Thea

- Add research papers on seagrass signage and enforcement to ftp site

Bob Swett sent an e-mail on December 16th with a link to the Florida Sea Grant and FWC recreational boating survey data map for Estero Bay. The link to the web map is a follows: <http://ufl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=6a6ac4d796ab4719928b28a36d4351fc>

If you have data to share please save it to the incoming ftp site <ftp://ftp.dep.state.fl.us/pub/incoming/CAMA/EBAP/> - there are directions at the top of the ftp page

to view the site in Windows Explorer which will allow you to transfer/paste your files to the site. The spreadsheet for the metadata is located on the public files ftp site http://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/CAMA/Estero_Bay/. Please add your metadata to the “[EsteroBaySeagrassDatabase_Blank.xlsx](#)” spreadsheet and save it with a file name similar to your data files or your last name “EsteroBaySeagrassDatabase_**LastName**.xlsx” on the incoming ftp site. I will compile all the information from the incoming files and move it to the public files for everyone to access.