

Summary of Lower Matecumbe Key Association Meeting

Tuesday March 19, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Sue Miller announced that President Mark Riley has resigned as president. She asked for a volunteer to organize a nominating committee for an election for 2020. No volunteer - so Sue volunteered to find volunteers before the 2020 board election.

Peter Frezza, Environmental Resources Manager for the Village, gave an update on issues of concern on Lower Matecumbe.

Sand Pile across from Sea Oats Beach – already being removed. The original intent was to store the sand there so it could be used to supplement the renourishment of Sea Oats Beach. However, that project cannot be started until FDOT does repairs to the articulating blocks on the shoreline. The permitting for the renourishment is complicated as so many agencies must approve, potentially taking 4 – 5 years to get permits and grant funding.

Peter researched many alternatives – storing the sand somewhere else, using the sand elsewhere on Village property, selling it, providing it to a state park. None of those alternatives proved to be reasonable solutions. Therefore the Village contracted with LaRocca Enterprise to use some of the sand to stabilize a silt barrier that LaRocca will install on the land side of the beach near the highway shoulder. Forestek donated fencing for the project. This barrier will prevent sea turtles from getting onto the highway in search of a place to nest. The remainder of the sand will be removed by LaRocca and the bike path will be repaired. The entire project will be completed within three weeks.

The repairs scheduled for this area by FDOT is expected to begin in September 2020. The highway will be repaved and the articulating blocks on the shoreline will be replaced in order to return the area to the condition it was in pre-Irma.

The long-term fix for the highway at Sea Oats Beach is not scheduled to be started until 2026. While there is no specific plan for the long-term fix, it is anticipated that the road will be elevated in excess of 1 foot. There is no plan to move the highway or widen it.

Power Lines along Sea Oats Beach are to be moved from the ocean side to bay side of the highway by the Florida Keys Electric Co-op prior to the 2020 highway repairs. One of the power poles became dislodged during Irma making this a priority.

Bubbler system on the canal between Cortez and Columbus has permits in place, the supplies have been ordered and the system could be installed by the end of June. The bubbler system that was destroyed at Matecumbe Resort is more complicated as to when/if it will be replaced. The canal must be dredged first.

Canal debris removal in Islamorada is complete. The Department of Agriculture provided a \$50 million grant for the work (County-wide). There was extra funding so the village submitted a request to have numerous canals in the village dredged of sediment caused by the storm. Only two in the village were

approved – both on Lower Matecumbe – Sunset and Iroquois and at the Islamorada Resort. The village is hoping their list will be reevaluated and additional dredging done.

Lt. Liz Lyne discussed the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,

FWC is a Florida government agency that manages and regulates the state's fish and wildlife resources and enforces related laws.... helping both wildlife and the people that enjoy nature, protecting both animals and habitat.

There are over 800 FWC conservation officers in the state with full police power. The commission is responsible for

- Resource protection, both salt and fresh water, particularly plants and animals that are threatened or endangered.
- Environment protection such as sea grass, mangroves and ship wrecks
- Boating and waterway safety including boat theft and title fraud
- Public safety

Because of the experiences of FWC officers here in the Keys, the equipment they have and the fact they love the outdoors and don't mind sleeping in tents with no A/C.... they are well equipped to help other areas in the aftermath of hurricanes.... And so willing to help.

The most common equipment currently at risk of being stolen – Yamaha 250 4-stroke engine lower units seems to be in great demand!

Contacting FWC: The best way to help FWC – report violations as they are happening. While Monroe County has more FWC officers than any other county in Florida, they can't see everything.

***FWC** or **#FWC** on your cell phone (depending on your carrier) will get you the nearest FWC dispatcher – closest to where you are calling from.

888-404-3922 will get you Miami dispatch. Click on 7 to get as human and that you are calling about a violation in progress in Monroe County. Leave your number and an FWC officer will call back.

Txt a tip – tell what and where – txt to tip@myfwc.com

Cell phone APP – download “Fishrules” application (identified by a shadow of a grouper head). The APP is free and will tell about any changes in the law and regulations at your location.

Hot topics –

- iguanas can be killed but it must be humane – with a pellet gun hit the head.
- Lion fish – no need for a fishing license;
- pythons – rarely seen in the Keys

Crocodiles in the 1970s there were only 70 breeding pairs. They are shy, eat mostly fish, occasional small animals. There has been no confirmed attack of a human by a crocodile in Florida. Discourage all human interaction with crocodiles.... Never feed them. FWC can tell if crocodiles do not have a fear of humans and will move them from residential neighborhoods.

Wheel Ditch behind Robbies – State Park rangers keep the mangroves trimmed. There was discussion about closing it several years ago but the distance to get out to deeper water makes it too popular with boaters.