

Dear Debbie and LRRC members,

First of all I'd like to truly thank you all as well as Scott Calleson and the other FWC participants.

I do not feel our job is finished though. I have many of the same concerns as Susan Snyder and look forward to receiving the reply to her questions.

In addition, I felt that in yesterday's meeting we rushed through everything to finish "on time". I'm not sure why we couldn't have tried to fit in one more meeting before the deadline, or why we couldn't have had the deadline extended.

Many of us who had things to say, the general public, Susan Snyder and I, for example, were pushed by some committee members to "make the comments short" and argued with us rather than just letting us speak.

Furthermore, I thought we would have the opportunity to comment on the May 13th minutes, as it was on the Chairman's agenda and we received minutes of that meeting a few days earlier.

I was told at yesterday's meeting, not before, that "technically" there were no minutes since there was no quorum.

***What happens to all of the testimony from the general public, including those from the fishing captains and from Clam Bay advocates from that meeting?***

***Will we have minutes from our May 20th meeting? When will we meet to approve those minutes and approve the corrections for the other meeting minutes that we discussed yesterday?***

Finally, I'm concerned about the whole process regarding the permits for the fishing captains. We really should have invited them early on and perhaps had an entire 2 hours or more, with a member of the FWC present, to actually have had a discussion.

Please understand that I'm not passing blame, since I feel badly that I didn't think of asking if they had been informed, or if we should make a motion to invite them to one of our longer meetings early the process.

I really think we missed out on an educational process for all involved. We could have had a great exchange with the fishing captains of beneficial information regarding manatees, manatee zones, how the permits affect those zones, how the manatees and their food sources are affected, the views / challenges that the captains face and suggestions from both the captains and the LRRC members.

Instead, the fishing captains came to the last couple of meetings with understandable frustration, concern and sometimes anger.

After hearing from the captains, I did have some questions and don't understand why the LRRC members were not allowed to ask any questions or to have any discussion with them. I thought that the FWC said that we could make our own procedural decisions.

Anyway, I am very glad that the captains wrote letters and others came to speak. I believe, after reading their letters and listening to them, that those thirty-three captains currently holding permits, should be allowed to keep them, even if the FWC restricts future permits. I do recall, of course, that one of our LRRC members had asked that if future permit restrictions would take place, that the current captains could be grandfathered in. We, as a committee, didn't agree at the time. I feel that we made a mistake. I think that if we had had the information we have now, we would have put the motion through to restrict future permits, with the exception of the current permit holders who would be allowed to continue renewing their permits.

I am confused though about the LRRC vote that passed yesterday regarding the fishing guide permits. I thought that the LRRC members were voting for future permits to be opened to ALL captains, not just the current permit holders. Is that correct? That is what I thought and thus I didn't vote since, without further information, data and discussions, I don't believe that additional permits over and above the 33 current permits should be allowed. Please clarify the vote.

Now, the process will continue with the FWC. I hope that those thirty-three permit holding captains will be contacted soon by the FWC staff . All of those captains need to understand that the FWC will make the ultimate decision regarding the permits.

In closing, I would just like to say that, although perhaps we did the best we could with the time we were given, I am disappointed that we didn't take any time to have a discussion amongst ourselves, the LRRC members.

We didn't give ourselves an opportunity to get to know each other a little better and to learn from each other. We could have made time for that with an additional meeting somewhere along the way, probably best at the beginning of the process.

I don't what the next steps will be. I do know that the ten of us have a variety of experience and knowledge about manatees, fishing, conflicts between the two, manatee zones, conservation issues, etc. I think it's a shame that we didn't take time to share our knowledge with each other.

Perhaps then, we could have not only learned a lot more and perhaps had been able to come up with some solutions to existing problems, but had had more patience with each other during this entire process.

All the best,

Nancy

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