

Key West Water Quality Improvement Plan

Alison Higgins, Resiliency Manager, 305-809-3726

History:

In response to the priorities identified in the Key West Forward Strategic Plan, the City Resiliency Manager formed the Key West Water Quality Recommendations Team consisting of representatives from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Florida Dept of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission, Monroe County Marine Resources and Extension Service, College of the Florida Keys and Mote Marine. Over the course of a year the team met and reviewed the Sanctuaries Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP) priorities, NOAA's Marine Debris Plan, the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Action Plan and interviewed the Counties Marine Resources staff. This resulted in 11 ranked goals, with action items and timelines under each goal.

Priorities:

- 1) Increase Partnerships to address Marine Debris and Derelict Vessels
- 2) Ensure Adequate Staffing and Support to Effectively Manage/Advance the KW WQ Improvement Plan
- 3) Improve Data Management
- 4) Maintain Adherence to Best Management Practices/Technology for Stormwater Management
- 5) Evaluate Existing Water Quality Improvement Program
- 6) Incorporate Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) into Monitoring Programs
- 7) Strengthen Regulations to Reduce Marine and Boater Pollution
- 8) Advocate for Upstream Water Quality Improvements
- 9) Determine Water Quality Risks and Mitigation Actions Derived from Climate Change
- 10) Participate in Targeted, Shared Educational Campaigns
- 11) Maintain Adherence to Best Management Practices/Technology for Wastewater Management

Completed National Marine Sanctuary WQPP Strategies To Date:

- ✓ Connect package plants & septic tanks to advanced treatment, deep injection, central wastewater system.
- ✓ Ensure wastewater systems are able to accept wastewater from marine sanitation devices.
- ✓ Create ordinances prohibiting dumping leaf litter, fish scraps, etc into canals, marinas & nearshore waters.
- ✓ Ensure historical WQPP monitoring data not yet loaded to the State database is added in a timely manner.

FY25 Operational Budget

The majority of the operational goals hinge upon achieving on Goal #2: Ensure adequate staffing to effectively manage/advance the Key West Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP). Action items are marked:

Goal 1: Address Marine Debris & Derelict Vessels

- ✓ Promote Conch Republic Marine Army
- Annual Keyswide Debris workshop (Dec 25)

Goal 2: Ensure Adequate Staffing to Effectively Manage/Advance the WQIP

- ✓ Budget \$75,000 for contracted assistance
- ✓ Budget \$10,000 for operational supplies
- ⇒ Secure consultant for Water Quality Monitoring Program (next page)

Action Items Key:

- ✓ Checkmark items are considered complete or ongoing.
- ⇒ Arrow items are underway
- Bullet items will occur later in the year

Goal 2: Continued: RFP Scope for Water Quality Monitoring Program (advertised 3/20, submissions due 4/17)

A) Geographic Areas of Concern (GOC):

- Task 1: Review current relevant data across all GOCs and Identify Opportunities
- Task 2: Identify Actions that may Mitigate Pollutants
- Task 3: Design Water Quality Monitoring Programs

B) Beach Monitoring:

- Task 4: Increase Availability of Recent Beach Reports
- Task 5: Increase Community Knowledge of Data/ Beach Report Implications
- Task 6: Assist with Design of New Beach Water Quality Monitoring Plan

Goal 3: Data Management

- ✓ Ensure all new data can be utilized in state public database
- ✓ Act as liaison with Water Quality Monitoring Partners
- ⇒ Upload all qualifying historical data from marinas and landfill to state public database
- ⇒ Track and post City progress through summary reports from quarterly marinas and landfill data

Goal 4: Best Management Practices for Stormwater Management

- ⇒ Support Utilities in upgrading Stormwater Fee Tiers
- ⇒ Rainbarrel Campaign (April 25)
- Fertilizer Campaign (Summer 25)
- Encourage citizens to report dumping (Fall 25)

Goal 5: Evaluate WQIP Efforts

- Annual Report (Dec 25)

Goal 6: Incorporate Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC)

- ✓ Partner with College of the Florida Keys to monitor oxybenzone near City beaches
- Partner with Sanctuary Technical Advisory Committee to address CEC priorities (Summer 25)

Goal 7: Reduce Marine/Boater Pollution

- ⇒ Partner with County to identify and price trash cans that better secure their contents.
- Partner with County to Ensure Well Utilized Marine Pump Out services (Fall 25)
- Partner with County to Ensure Right Sized Marine Pump Out Rules for Small Marinas (Fall 25)

Goal 8: Upstream Advocacy

- ✓ Liaise quarterly with FKAA to Stay Current on Turkey Point Saltwater Plume Development.
- ✓ Participate in quarterly meetings of the South Florida Ecosystem Connectivity Team.

Goal 9: Climate Change Risks

- ⇒ Ensure nearshore waters are covered in Adaptation Plan Environmental Chapter

Goal 10: Shared Educational Campaigns

- ✓ Participate in NOAA WQPP Educational team
- ✓ Create internal Outreach Plan

Goal 11: Best Management Practices for Wastewater Management

- ⇒ Find funding for Resiliency Upgrades for Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and system.
- Encourage 3rd party research that examine the nearshore water quality efficacy of the privately owned shallow injection well located in unincorporated south Stock Island.