

APPENDIX C

**CARIBBEAN FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
268 MUÑOZ RIVERA AVENUE, SUITE 1108
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00918-2577**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF A MARINE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT IN THE U.S.V.I.**

**JUNE 9, 1998
ST. JOHN, U.S.V.I.
SUMMARY MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m., by Mr. Viridin C. Brown, representing the Chair of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. The meeting took place in the conference room of the Legislature Building in St. John, U.S.V.I.

Mr. Viridin C. Brown gave a brief introduction and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to take statements regarding the options presented for the establishing of a marine conservation district in the U.S.V.I.. Mr. Patricia Skov, Council member, was also present at the meeting.

Ms. Graciela García-Moliner, Special Assistant to the Executive Director in FMP Development, explained to the people present the proposed options being considered by the Council.

Fifteen persons were present at this hearing.

Following are the comments of the deponents:

1. Mr. Darrell Tasman - Clearwater Productions and ReefKeeper International

Mr. Tasman read a statement which is attached to these minutes.

- Supports a no-take MCD

2. Mr. Haynes Small - Commercial Fisher, St. John, U.S.V.I.

- In support of option A. Give up the Hind Bank as is.
- Proposes that since they have so many sandy areas it would be a good idea to make reefs in those sandy areas for fishes to come and hide, hatch and spawn, etc.

3. Mr. Jason Dalmida - Commercial Fisher, Blue Water Seafood, St. John, U.S.V.I.

- Disagrees with all the options because his source of income is fishing.
- SCUBA diving does more damage to the coral reef, the lobster and the conch than the fishing and the anchoring.
- Suggest Trunk Bay as an alternative since it is already closed.
- Does not want any restrictions. Wants to be able to go and provide a living for his family the way his father and grandfather have done.

4. Mr. James Dalmida Jr. - Commercial Fisher, St. John, U.S.V.I.

- Believes there is a need for some kind of conservation to protect the continued growth of the marine life in the Virgin Islands for future generations. But this is not the way to go about it by creating a hardship on the fishermen without any compensation.
- The diving operations will continue to make a living at the expense of the fishermen. There is going to be a social problem, locals against diving operations.
- It is important to take into consideration the well being of the fishermen.
- Cannot force the fishermen to collect stamp and welfare at the expense of the sportfishing industry or the diving industry, cannot do that, it is going to create a social problem.
- There are other ways to have the closure, but there is a need to take into consideration the well-being of the fishers and offer some type of compensation to get them to cooperate and work.

5. Mr. Peter Jackson - Diver, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- The fishermen and the dive industry should not be against each other. The closure should be for everybody, including divers.

- Would like to see a lobster season in the U.S.V.I. Have seen the depletion of the lobsters from the reefs, either caught by fishers or divers.

6. Mrs. Lucia Roberts - Director of Environmental Enforcement

- Strongly suggests that the MCD be a no-take zone and a no-user area for the purpose of enforcement. If there is no expectation to find a vessel there in the MCD, enforcement becomes much easier. The enforcement resources are very limited, therefore, if it is a closed area it should be closed to all users and it should be a complete no-take zone.

**CARIBBEAN FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
268 MUÑOZ RIVERA AVENUE, SUITE 1108
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00918-2577**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF A MARINE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT IN THE U.S.V.I.**

**JUNE 10, 1998
ST. THOMAS. U.S.V.I.**

SUMMARY MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m., by Mr. Viridin C. Brown, representing the Chair of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. The meeting took place at conference room of the Legislature Building in St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

Mr. Viridin C. Brown gave a brief introduction, and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to take statements regarding the options presented for the establishing of a marine conservation district in the U.S.V.I. Mrs. Patricia Skov, Council member, was also present at the meeting.

Ms. Graciela García-Moliner, Special Assistant to the Executive Director in FMP Development, explained to the people present the proposed options being considered by the Council.

Sixty persons, approximately, were present at this hearing.

Following are the comments of the deponents:

1. Mrs. Conchita Benjamin - Recreational Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Favor option A. A total closure on the current hind bank in the west.
- Any additional closures in the waters surrounding St. Thomas/St. John, would only cause undue hardship on the local fishers that use these waters for a living.
- The waters surrounding the Islands should remain open.

2. Mr. Peter Jackson - Representing ReefKeeper International (a Coral Reef Conservation Organization)

- Favors option A or option C.

- Mr. Jackson read a letter stating the position of ReefKeeper International, which is attached as part of these minutes.

3. Mr. Alvin Newton - Acting Director, U.S.V.I. Division of Fish and Wildlife, DPNR.

Mr. Newton said that, “I am not here to take a position in any of the options presented, but to explain that regarding the statement of Mr. William J. Tobias at the last set of public hearings that took place in October 1997, he had no authority to speak on behalf of the Division of Fish and Wildlife or the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.” Mr. Newton asked that to be reflected in the record.

Mr. Newton asked the Council, in the decision making process, to use a very humane and simple approach to their situation. The fishers have concluded among themselves that there is a need for a closure. The fishers have also recognized the need to have the environment policed, basically by themselves and enforcement units. He also asked the Council in making a final recommendation to the Secretary of Commerce to consider those factors.

From the desk at Fish and Wildlife they do have an opportunity to augment their marine environment through artificial reefs, FADs, etc. He requested the Council to consider in their options a time frame that would allow them to augment their natural environment through the development of those, so that the fishermen eventually will have some place to say “we have contributed to the improvement of the environment.” “

Asked the Council, in their determination, to look at all angles and do a recommendation in total fairness. Also to have a “No-Use Zone.” This protects the welfare of all individuals and it avoids a social situation, and gives the reefs a true opportunity to rehabilitate themselves.

4. Mr. Michael Berry - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. - Tropical Trappin’

- Strictly against the closure of the south of St. John.
- Favors option A.
- The fishers will police the area themselves and stay away from it if the red hind bank is closed (option A), but will not get the same response by closing south off St. John (option C.)

5. Mr. Gregory Ledee - Commercial Fisher St. Thomas, USVI

- Prefers the Hind Bank to be closed (option A), but not forever.
- Closure should be for at least 10 years, then it should be opened again.

6. Mr. Julian Magras - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Totally against the closure of South off St. John.
- In favor of option A, the Hind Bank.

7. Mr. Leonard Magras - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A, Hind Bank closure.
- The amount of traps that people have put and the people who are scuba diving are catching anything in the bottom of the ocean.
- **Need to put a stop to SCUBA diving for lobster and conch.**

8. Mr. Jimmy Magner -Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A, Red Hind Bank as is. No use, no take. It remains as a breeding ground for many species. At no time should anybody be there.
- Offered other options like artificial reefs on both sides of the Island. There is a lot of maintenance that can be done to keep these fisheries working as a unit without closing an area.
- Management is a good word, closure is a terrible word. Once you close an area is very hard to re-open it again..

9. Mr. Kevin Campbell - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Against the closure of St. John (Option C)
- In favor of Option A, Red Hind Bank closure.

10. Mr. David Berry - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. - President of Tropical Trappin'

- In favor of option A.

- Suggests that it be a no-take, no-dive area.
- Would like the Council to consider opening it in ten years, and still close it for the three months that the hind spawns in that area.

11. Mr. Darrell A. Ruan - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A.
- Closed to all users, especially closed to divers. No fishing, no diving, no anchoring.
- Favors banning the use of SCUBA for fishing.

12. Mr. Rick Berry - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A, closure of the Red Hind Bank as is.

13. Mrs. Sandra Tarantino - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

Mrs. Sandra Tarantino, representing Mr. Joseph LaPlace, commercial fisher, read a letter sent by him. (Attached to these minutes.)

Speaking on her behalf, Mrs. Tarantino, commercial fisher and member of the Fishermen's Advisory Committee.

- In favor of option A, The Red Hind Bank area only, as it is right now. To increase the size of the area may harm the fishers that fish that area.
- Would like to see what studies have been done to verify that this would not hurt the fishers of the V.I.

14. Mr. Ricky LaPlace - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Against the closure at the south of St. John.
- In favor of option A. The Red Hind Bank, as is.

15. Mr. Bryan Kamin - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Against closure at south side of St. John.
- In favor of option A. Red Hind Bank closure only.

16. Mr. David F. Berry - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A.
- Closing anywhere around St. John would put V. I. fishers in conflict with Tortola's.
- The fishermen are not taking all the fish. The habitat is being destroyed.
- The problem with Nassau groupers lies on regulations, there is a need for protection to have multiplication.
- We cannot be under a regulatory department, we need to be under development and management.

17. Mr. Thierry Ledee - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A to close the Hind Bank.

18. Mr. Christopher Berry -Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Totally against the closure in the south of St. John.
- In favor of option A, Red Hind Bank closure.

19. Mr. Joseph (Spike) Herbert - Recreational Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A.

20. Mr. Jean Maynard - Commercial Fisher aboard the “Moondancer.”

- Opposed to closure in the south of St. John.
- In favor of option A.

21. Mr. Kenny Thomas - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A, as it is.
- Totally opposed to the closure in the south of St. John.

22. Mr. Christopher Berry - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A.

23. Mr. Warren Quetel - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A.
- The National Park waters alone provide the fish that migrate offshore into the waters that they all fish in.
- Totally against the closure in the south of St. John.

24. Mr. George Richardson - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Totally against the closure on the south of St. John.
- In favor of option A.

25. Mr. Mernel Barnes - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- SCUBA divers extract most of the wildlife when fishing. They act like vacuums, and they take

everything in sight.

- In favor of option A. Close the Hind Bank and leave open the area on the south of St. John.

26. Mr. Neville Smith - Commercial Fisher, Frenchtown, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Not in favor of any closure at all, but if there is a need to chose one area he favors option A.

27. Mrs. Sheward Ledee - St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A, Red Hind Bank as is.

28. Mr. Wilburn Thomas - St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A.

29. Mrs. Monica Lester - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I., Tropical Trappin'

- Against closure on the south of St. John.
- In favor of option A, if there has to be a closure.
- Wishes the Council to take into consideration the number of individuals that came forward and expressed their opinion when they make their decision.

30. Mr. Henderson Smith - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- Totally against the closure on the south of St. John.
- In favor of option A.

31. Mr. Louis Blanchard - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of no closure, but since they have to have a closure favors option A.

32. Mrs. Eleonor Donastory - Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- In favor of option A.

33. Mr. Jimmy Magras - Commercial Fisher, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

- The commercial fishers are not the only takers.
- The Council needs to look at gear restrictions and build artificial reefs.
- In favor of option A.

After hearing all the deponents the hearing was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

**CARIBBEAN FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
268 MUÑOZ RIVERA AVENUE, SUITE 1108
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00918-2577**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF A MARINE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT IN THE U.S.V.I.**

**JUNE 11, 1998
ST. CROIX, U.S.V.I.
SUMMARY MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m., by Mrs. Patricia Skov, representing the Chair of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. The meeting took place in the conference room of the Caravelle Hotel, St. Croix, U.S.V.I.

Mrs. Patricia Skov gave a brief introduction and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to take statements regarding the options presented for the establishing of a marine conservation district in the U.S.V.I.. Mr. Viridin Brown, Council member, was also present at the meeting.

Ms. Graciela García-Moliner, Special Assistant to the Executive Director in FMP Development, explained to the people present the proposed options being considered by the Council.

Ten persons were present at this hearing. Two persons provided their comments and suggestions regarding the proposed option presented.

Following are the comments of the deponents:

1. Captain William Mackay - Fisher, St. Croix, U.S.V.I.

- Who will do the enforcement?

2. Mr. Harry Clinton - Chairman St. Thomas/St. John Fishery Advisory Committee.

- The option of the red hind bank was brought forth by the Fishery Advisory Committee as a self-policing endeavor.
- In favor of option A. It fits more closely what will suit the wide majority of users in all the user groups in the St. Thomas/St. John area.
- The fact that there will be some effort toward self-policing and the people are going to support

that, because it is their idea, becomes a very strong issue in regard to the decision that the Council makes in support of that option as opposed to a very unsupported option on the south of St. John. There is no evidence that has been presented that supports the fact that the area south off St. John offers any viable additional attraction as opposed to Both offer very similar protective devices to the fishing environment there. the Red Hind Bank. Therefore, it appears as it would be by far a better option to take the Red Hind Bank area.

- In support of option A.
- The Fishery Advisory Committee submitted some alternatives that will work in relationship to the Red Hind Bank. That would be inshore closure areas. They come very strongly recommended by Dr. Joshua Nowlis. The St. Thomas/St. John Fishery Advisory Committee, and the fishing community is very much in support of those additional closure areas. This is a self-policing/self-establishing program. The Council should take this into consideration as it considers these various options.