



Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit The Action Summit

INTERIM REPORT

*Prepared by Luiz Rodrigues
BBMHS Founder & Summit Coordinator*

March 2020



BBMHS STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Founder & Summit Coordinator - Luiz Rodrigues; **Members** - Albert Gomez; Camila Quaresma-Sharp; Dave Doebler; Emilio Lopez; Irela Bagué; Patrick Shearer; Scott Stripling; Steve Sauls; Dr. Tiffany Troxler

INTRODUCTION



Two years ago, close to 50 local concerned Biscayne Bay lovers and activists, representing environmental NGOs, government entities, private businesses and educational institutions, joined forces and, together, implemented the **Inaugural Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit**. The purpose of that **Summit** was to initiate discussions regarding the ongoing challenges the Bay was experiencing - including trash, pollution and seagrass die-off.

Over 270 stakeholders came together and had **three significant outcomes**. They are:

1) Biscayne Bay Task Force – Miami-Dade County Commissioner Rebecca Sosa spearheaded the creation of the **Miami-Dade County led 'Biscayne Bay Task Force (BBTF)** which is made up of nine members who have reviewed relevant data, prior studies and reports related to Biscayne Bay and determine how various issues may affect residents and property owners. The BBTF will prepare a written report with recommendations to the Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners identifying problem areas, prioritizing projects and providing recommendations regarding state and federal legislation, activities and appropriations.

2) Annual Biscayne Bay Report Card - This report card is currently being drafted by Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) and is expected to provide a transparent, timely, and detailed assessment on the health of the Biscayne Bay.

3) Broad-spectrum Recommendations Report - this report consolidated all ideas from the 270 participants into a single recommendations report to be used by any entity that can benefit from the ideas developed.

On September 20, 2019, we hosted a second summit: **The 2019 BBMHS Action Summit**. The main goals of the **Action Summit** were to identify, advocate for and recommend best management practices, advance solutions for research & technology, and to propose policy recommendations for the **BBTF** in order to create a long-term, sustainable plan with the financial and political support needed to restore and maintain the health of the Bay for the long run. Approximately 250 people attended the Action Summit - including officials from several Miami-Dade County municipalities surrounding Biscayne Bay, state and local agencies, state and local elected officials, heads of local and national environmental NGOs, businesses and educational institutions and the news media, amongst many others. A list of the Summit's overarching recommendations is listed in this **Report**. A final and more detailed report, the **Summit Proceedings, being developed by Dr. Tiffany Troxler from FIU**, is forthcoming.

Concurrently, the **State Attorney's Office**, led by **Katherine Fernandez-Rundle**, initiated a **Grand Jury** investigation on the state of the bay. The Grand Jury, whose primary role is to conduct legal proceedings and investigate potential criminal conduct, spent months interviewing scientists, activists, and stakeholders and released a scathing report cementing the case the **Summit Steering Committee** has been making for years.

Our efforts and commitment to a healthy Biscayne Bay are ongoing. And this is why the **BBMHS Steering Committee** has developed a **POST SUMMIT PLAN OF ACTION** that will consist of three main approaches:

- 1. Advocacy:** To work with local, state and federal stakeholders towards the implementation of the Summit's recommended strategies in order to improve Biscayne Bay water quality through preservation and restoration efforts. **Proposed strategies:**
 - **Biscayne Bay Task Force:** Present our recommendations directly to the task force and continue to advocate for a comprehensive plan of action (done earlier this year).

- **Advocate for Individual Actions / Policies:** Specific challenges to Biscayne Bay are obvious. The ecological needs of Biscayne Bay remain urgent, so we will continue to work with those responsible for stormwater pollution controls and maintenance; advance legislation that reduces pollution; and advocate for habitat restoration including living shorelines.
2. **Communication:** Keep Summit attendees informed about Biscayne Bay health-related initiatives through the creation of a monthly newsletter. **Proposed strategies:**
 - **Citizens for Biscayne Bay News:** develop and disseminate an online newsletter, for which **YOU** will be the “main contributor”, that will consolidate BB stakeholders’ post-Summit actions as well as news related to Biscayne Bay health. Thus, submissions are strongly encouraged.
 - **Social Media and Website:** post all newsletter articles on our social media sites.
 3. **Education:** Share with Summit attendees post-Summit actions being proposed, considered or implemented by key Biscayne Bay stakeholders in order to restore, preserve or protect BB against human-related impacts. **Proposed strategies:**
 - **Workshops:** coordinate and host workshops to communicate status, work on individual components, or give a platform for mitigation and recovery efforts addressing important issues related to the health of Biscayne Bay. We are particularly interested in partnering with our stakeholders to hold community forums on the recommendations of the Biscayne Bay Task Force once they have been finalized.

This is our **COMMITMENT TO YOU** and to the recovery of **BISCAYNE BAY**.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank our Steering Committee - Albert Gomez, Camila Quaresma-Sharp, Dave Doebler, Emilio Lopez, Irela Bagué, Patrick Shearer, Scott Stripling, Steve Sauls and Dr. Tiffany Troxler – for their incredible commitment and dedication to the health and recovery of Biscayne Bay, as well as all those who sponsored and supported the implementation of the **2019 Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit**. A special thanks goes out to Florida International University for hosting and supporting the summit.

We hope you will continue to be part of the change by staying involved. Together we will restore Biscayne Bay! Thank you!

Luiz Rodrigues, BBMHS Founder & Summit Coordinator



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019 SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

“Our bay is suffering and the health of our citizens and visitors are at risk. The following recommendations are an attempt by local stakeholders to lay a foundation of regeneration and to help our residents better understand the importance of healthy ecosystems in Biscayne Bay and the relation to our personal health and human security.” - Albert Gomez, Chair, Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit Education and Outreach Working Group.

The **Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit Working Groups** were created during the **2017 Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit**, and brainstormed solutions. Since then, the **Summit Working Groups**, totaling over 600 stakeholders, convened four times to discuss, further synthesize and vote upon all 2017 recommendations. On September 20th, 2019, we came together once again to develop and vote on the top **2019 Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit Committees' Official Recommendations**. They are:

Government Policy & Recommendations

Moderators: Steve Sauls & Irela Bagué

- 1. Establish Permanent Biscayne Bay Restoration Authority using working groups to:**
 - a. Serve as collaborative entity and advocate for Biscayne Bay health and restoration
 - b. Restore Water Quality
 - c. Develop Restoration Action Plan
 - d. Implement best fast tract option of a TDML, BB MAP or RAP
 - e. Development of mechanics to support/implement Summits
- 2. Develop and Implement a Public Outreach & Education Campaign that will:**
 - a. Identify and leverage local leadership
 - b. Deploy effective messaging
 - c. Communicate
 - Drinking Water Risks
 - Importance of Resilience
 - Bay Health Report Card Updates with data points across time
- 3. Encourage Short-term Actions that Promise Results, such as:**
 - a. Model municipal ordinances that can be implemented and shared with other local municipalities. Authorization of Dedicated Funding for a Biscayne Bay Enhancement Trust Fund: Example: Biscayne Bay License Plate.
Other shovel-ready innovative engineering infrastructure projects to enhance support living shorelines and coastal resilience

Infrastructure & Public Works

Moderators: David Doebler, Emilio Lopez & Patrick Shearer

- 1. Create Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP), Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP), or equivalent**
 - a. Establish regional water quality goals and pollution reduction targets
 - b. Implement plan
 - c. Restoration projects
- 2. Prevent nutrients and trash from exiting stormwater systems**
 - a. Identify and address existing nutrient and trash hotspots
 - b. Cleaning of storm drain systems
 - c. Implement storm drain pollution prevention technologies
- 3. Address canals as large conveyors of pollution**
- 4. Fix sewer and septic systems**
 - a. Increase sewer fees
 - b. Upgrade outdated infrastructure
 - c. Transition off septic
- 5. Prioritize living shorelines and living seawalls** over traditional seawall replacements

Education & Outreach

Moderator: Albert Gomez

The Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit Education and Outreach Committee recommends to the Miami-Dade County Biscayne Bay Task Force and the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners to pass or execute policy related to the following motions for resolutions and ordinances:

1. **Declare Biscayne Bay an Environmental Health Emergency.**
2. **Increase the budgets for the enforcement of current laws** that protect Miami Dade County coastal communities, Biscayne Bay and associated spoil islands.
3. **Approve an environmental education grant agreement in the amount of \$2 million** to focus on Biscayne Bay Health.
4. **Create the Biscayne Bay Marine Health Community Coalition** to help advance all sustainable programs in support of Biscayne Bay Health in Miami Dade County.
5. **Create a committee focused on education and volunteer opportunities** related to Biscayne Bay Health.
6. **Mandate an environmental sustainability best practices for all events on public properties.**
6. **Mandate an oil spill kit on every recreational maritime vessel**

Research & Research Needs

Moderator: Dr. Tiffany Troxler

1. **Conduct a socioeconomic study of Biscayne Bay ecosystem services**
2. **Secure “bold” institutional support for research coordination, implementation and application including interdisciplinary research and data infrastructure:**
 - a. Create “a world-class research and monitoring system for a world-class city” that is proactive, preventative, anticipatory and equitable
3. **Prioritize Biscayne Bay research and monitoring using a community resilience lens and quality of life outcomes:**
 - a. Public health-focused research and monitoring outcomes – examples: increased temporal and spatial frequency of nearshore and real-time monitoring of contaminants of concern, beach closures, infrastructure failure incl. septic, metals, water quality (nutrients, coliform) and circulation/dispersion of those contaminants from the source; relate to hospitalizations and other health indicators; pollution affecting consumed recreational/commercial fish
 - b. Economic-focused research and monitoring outcomes – examples: toxic algae/pathogens/water quality and perception e.g., translating real-time monitoring to communication campaigns – SE Florida is open for business and your health is not at risk; value of recreational fisheries and water quality/bacteria impact; real estate/property values, hospitality and tourism industry and water quality/bacteria impact; direct BB-based jobs e.g., ecotourism, water taxi
 - c. Recreation-focused research and monitoring outcomes (interrelated with economy and health) – examples: plastics and polluted water destroy aesthetics and ability to connect with nature; quality time spent kayaking, snorkeling, paddle boarding, boating with friends and family depend on good water quality, to view productive seagrass and benthic/marine organisms and how these organisms are affected by pollution; management plan that connects coastal habitat degradation and loss with waterway/shoreline access
4. **Create a Living laboratory for Bay health:**
 - a. Train and inspire the next generation of scientists, eco-engineers and environmental stewards through sustainable/resilient policies, business practices, etc.

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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS



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BISCAYNE BAY MARINE HEALTH SUMMIT

September 20th, 2019

FIU Biscayne Bay Campus - Wolfe University Center, Mary Ann Wolfe Theater
3000 NE 151st St, North Miami Beach, FL 33181

SUMMIT AGENDA

08:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Registration / Breakfast / Exhibitor Fair
8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening, Introductions & Overview of the Day: MC Irela Bague Welcome Remarks: Mr. Mark B. Rosenberg, President of Florida International University Elected Officials & Sponsors' Recognition Brief Review of major 2017 Summit Recommendations
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	<p>STATE OF THE BAY: Discussion with focus on Action Steps <i>Moderator: Jane Gilbert - City of Miami Chief Resilience Officer</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sea Grass Study: Pamela Sweeney, DERM Water Quality Impact: Chris Kelble - NOAA Biscayne National Park: Water Quality & Related Coastal Projects: Erik Stabenau, Biscayne National Park Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve Management Plan: Laura Eldredge, Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve, FDEP
10:00 AM - 10:20 AM	BREAK
10:20 AM - 11:10 AM	<p>MARINE DEBRIS: Moving the Needle <i>Moderator: Dave Doebler</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative Solutions & Projects: J. P. Brooke - Ocean Conservancy & Tom Sprehe - KCI Technologies
11:10 AM - 11:45 AM	<p>SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grand Jury Report: K. Fernandez Rundle - State Attorney for Miami-Dade County - Introduction by Steve Sauls Biscayne Bay Task Force: Irela Bay - Biscayne Bay Task Force Chair
11:45 AM - 12:15 PM	<p>BREAKOUT SESSIONS CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examining "Best Practices" and Make Recommendations for the Final Plenary Session: Albert Gomez Exhibitors' Recognition: Luiz Rodrigues & Emilio Lopez Important Information on Breakout Sessions & Lunch
12:30 PM - 02:00 PM	<p>SOLUTIONS LUNCH <i>Moderator: Dr. Todd Crowl: FIU Institute of Water & Environment, Director</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief Remarks on Solutions : Spencer Crowley, Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND); Joe Llewellyn, Superintendent Biscayne National Park; Bahram Charkian, SFWMD Exploring Solutions: Partner Exhibitors
02:00 PM - 04:00 PM	<p>BREAKOUT SESSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Policy & Recommendations: Irela Bague & Steve Sauls Infrastructure & Public Works: Dave Doebler & Emilio Lopez Education & Outreach: Albert Gomez Research & Research Needs: Dr. Tiffany Troxler
04:15 PM - 05:15 PM	<p>CLOSING PLEANARY SESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconvene all for Reports/Recommendations/Consensus Building on 6 - 8 major Priority Goals: Irela Bague & Steve Sauls Develop Consensus on Priority Recommendations for the Biscayne Bay Task Force, Board of County Commissioners, etc.: Steve Sauls & Irela Bague + all Summit Attendees Clarification of Priority Recommendations & Action : Steve Sauls & Luiz Reaffirmation for Engagement In & Support for the Biscayne Bay Marine Health Coalition: All Summit Attendees Final Charge for Action: Steve Sauls Major Partner Action Commitments: City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez
05:15 PM - 06:30 PM	<p>ADJOURN <i>Steering Committee Team</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Photo Op: Outside Wolfe Student Center - all Summit Attendees Summit Reception: Hospitality Management Dining Room - all Summit Attendees

BISCAYNE BAY
MARINE HEALTH SUMMIT: THE ACTION SUMMIT
 Creating Solutions Through Collaboration, Education and Innovation

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 - 8 AM TO 6 PM

FIU BISCAYNE BAY CAMPUS
 Wolfe University Center, Mary Ann Wolfe Theater
 3000 N.E. 151st Street, North Miami, FL 33181

JOIN US AS WE COME TOGETHER
 ...to identify and create long term and sustainable initiatives which aim to protect and preserve Biscayne Bay waters against marine debris and water pollutants.

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS
 State Attorney, Katherine Fernandez Rundle
 City of Miami Mayor, Francis Suarez
 City of Miami Beach Mayor, Dan Gelber
 President of Florida International University, Mark B. Rosenberg

A PLASTIC-FREE & ZERO WASTE EVENT!










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