

Minutes: Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Council Protected Status Committee, October 13, 2010

On October 13, 2010, the initial meeting of the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Council Protected Status Committee was held at the Coastal Zone Conference Room. In attendance were;

Julio Maaz – WCS and EDF, Julie Stockbridge – Oceana, George Myvett – Fisheries Department, Craig Hayes, Paul Robertson and Mustafa Toure’ – Turneffe Atoll Trust, Gianna Gomez – APAMO, Lindsey Garbutt – Fisheries Advisory Board, Melanie McField – Healthy Reefs, Leandra Cho-Rickets – UB, Lawrence Epstein – EDF, Alex Martinez – TNC, David Carl & Orié Enav – Turneffe Island Lodge

Unable to attend and sending regrets were; Birgit Winning – Oceanic Society.

Minutes from the September 1, 2010 meeting were reviewed and accepted as written with a clarification per below about the appropriateness of establishing a Marine Reserve rather than a Marine Protected Area.

The makeup of the committee was discussed and once again the need for full representation by the commercial fishing sector was emphasized. Ovel Leonardo and Allan Bevens/Green had been invited but apparently could not attend due to scheduling conflicts.

The first TICAC meeting since 2003 was held earlier in the day and a discussion ensued about the separation between TICAC and Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Council. In summary, it was agreed that although many goals may be similar, the two entities serve different and necessary purposes. The hope of all participants is that the two entities will be able to work cooperatively on many issues going forward.

Further discussion was held about the most appropriate way forward in pursuing protected status for Turneffe Atoll. A Marine Reserve appears to offer both the ability to include the entire Atoll and also allow for variety of uses (zones) within the Reserve. That being the case, it is the feeling of the committee that a Marine Reserve is the designation to be pursued.

Craig briefly reviewed the tentative financial commitments made by three Turneffe resorts for a fisheries enforcement program.

The committee agreed that we need a Strategic Plan for developing a Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve. As such, Turneffe Atoll Trust will submit a draft proposal to all members in the near future. Craig suggested the following as a tentative mission statement. “to establish the best form of “protected status” for Turneffe Atoll through a fully participatory process with all stakeholders leading to sustainable environmental and economic benefits for Belize.”

Identified as important issues to be considered were the following; economic, legal, public relations, enforcement, scientific/research and funding/budgeting.

The next meeting has been set for December 8, 2010 at 1:30 in the Coastal Zone Conference Room. A T.I.C.A.C. meeting is scheduled that same morning.