

Name _____

Date _____

Stakeholder Role Descriptions

Read all of the stakeholder role descriptions below. As you read, consider the pros and cons from each perspective. Circle your assigned stakeholder description. First, decide if your assigned stakeholder is “for” or “against” extending the Merritt Island MPA and label it accordingly. Then, in the space provided, write an “O” next to the stakeholders that you think will *oppose* your point of view. Write an “S” next to the stakeholders that you think will *support* your point of view.

_____ **Commercial Crabber**

My livelihood is catching and selling crab to local fish markets. My crabbing grounds are along the boundaries of this currently restricted area. What I really want is access to the whole area when the space center closes. I finally paid off the debt on my crabbing boat and have full ownership. I plan to pass the boat on to my children, who are committed to taking over the family business. As a local, I am very passionate about these waters. While I want to keep a healthy fishery, I do not see any reason to have MPA boundaries where commercial fishing activity could be taking place. I have witnessed one regulatory proposal lead to another as more and more restrictions have been placed on the commercial fishing industry. The refuge has always been a good neighbor, but my concern is about my children’s future. This way of life has sustained generations before me; continued regulations will likely force me and my family, as well as many others, out of our homes.

_____ **Local Business Owner (Boat Building Company)**

I design boats specifically for Florida fishers and fishing guides. Our company builds the most popular fishing boats in the region and has revolutionized the shallow-water fishing industry. Our team of employees includes dedicated fishers and outdoor enthusiasts. Our boats allow anglers to do things they have never been able to do in other boats. The boats are ideal for catching shallow-water fish, and are also noted for allowing fishers easy access to fish that no other boats can reach. Every year, I work with officials from the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge to sponsor and spearhead a cleanup of the area. I am able to engage the fishing community to help as volunteers and sponsors. We recognize the importance of keeping these waters clean. We conserve marine life and do not pose threats to navigation. But we do not want any more fishing grounds to be taken away.

_____ **Sport Fisher**

I have fished these waters all of my life. Since the no-take zone was established, the fishing areas adjacent to the wildlife refuge have become a hotspot for catches of record-sized game



Stakeholder Role Descriptions, continued

fish. Fish are older, larger, and more abundant than in other Florida waters. In fact, I hold several world- and state-record catches of red and black drum fish—all from the areas just outside the no-take zones. This is all the evidence that I need to prove the spillover effect works. It also shows that once-overfished areas can recover from MPA status. As long as I can continue to fish the boundaries of the MPAs, I am okay with expanding the marine protected area in this region.

Concerned Citizen #1

I am angry about the amount of garbage in our ocean. Every day, I find new trash washed up on the beach near my house. My family has lived here for many generations and I have a strong sense of place. I believe in the idea that marine protected areas are valuable and desirable in their own right. They help preserve habitats, communities, and diversity. They provide places for humans to go and appreciate nature. Personally, I would love to see more land set aside for conservation. In fact, I hope that more of this location will become a no-take area so it can be used for ecotourism. This would then provide new jobs for locals as tour guides, naturalists, restaurant and hotel staff, or boat drivers.

Concerned Citizen #2

The local government is being pressured to place our waters under protection as a marine reserve. It is a top-down process instigated by environmentalists. It is based on false assumptions and exaggerated benefits that ignore the real problems with our oceans—severe and rapidly worsening pollution from land and marine debris. With all the pollution from land, marine reserves cannot work to protect biodiversity. When you don't factor in the other large threats to our waters, you are bound to make mistakes. Marine reserves are a mistake. My goal in this process is to expose what I believe are lies and fallacies.

Recreational User (Birder)

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is known for its abundant bird life and is a major destination for birders from all over the world. Over 300 species of birds have been documented here. Hundreds of thousands of migratory birds use the refuge for the entire winter season or as a temporary rest stop. This creates new and diverse tourism opportunities. I love to go birding in this area and, over the past several years, I have noticed more of my favorite birds. I want to help the MPA process because I believe it will ultimately help to sustain the ecosystem that I so enjoy. In fact, I would like to see the MPA boundary expanded along the coast for even more birding opportunities. I believe that our MPA can serve as a leading example of how nature and modern humans can coexist with great benefit to the health and well-being of both.

Local Government Representative

Our marine reserve is being touted as a wonderful example of local government solving its own problems. It is certainly a step in the right direction, but I have concerns. Despite all of this positive sentiment, perhaps we have established a lightweight, feel-good program that is not bold enough. I worry that the MPA will not actually save the fish and marine animals we are trying to protect. I believe we need to increase the boundaries of no-take zone coastline in order to better protect the region.

Save-the-Manatee Club Member

I am a member of the Save-the-Manatee Club. We are dedicated to public participation in conservation efforts to save manatees from extinction. The West Indian manatees are endangered species that frequent the no-motor zone of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. There are only about 3,000 West Indian manatees left in the United States. The largest problem facing these unique creatures is humans. Speeding boats run over many manatees that are submerged just below the surface, either killing them with the boat impact or by slicing into their bodies with the propellers. Fishing lines and other trash discarded in the water are also responsible for manatee deaths. Manatees are also impacted by harassment from skin divers, fishermen, and boaters. This can interrupt feeding and mating activities. Our club believes that a vital component of the recovery efforts for the manatee is increasing public awareness. Cooperation among boaters, skin divers, fishermen, and anyone else using the rivers and coastal waters is also essential. With growing awareness and positive action, the manatee can be saved for generations to come. The manatee observation deck at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is one spot in the state to see and learn about manatees. Interpretive panels provide important information to locals and tourists about these endangered species.

Fishery Scientist #1

I conduct research on the fish communities in these waters. Fish tagging studies have clearly demonstrated that the spillover effect occurs. This is the result of restricting access to the waters in and around the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and either limiting or prohibiting fishing. It is obvious to me that no-take marine reserves can serve to increase fish catches in surrounding areas. The Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is the oldest fully-protected marine reserve in the United States. It serves as a model of how reserves can benefit commercial and recreational fisheries. This area should remain a no-take zone long after the space center is closed. That way it can provide a long-term undisturbed site for control and

Stakeholder Role Descriptions, continued

baseline studies. This would allow for evaluation of the effectiveness of MPAs for fishery and conservation goals. Establishment and evaluation of MPAs would stimulate new research. This research could teach us where fish travel during their life cycles and lead to the development of new techniques for monitoring populations and ecosystem functions.

Fishery Scientist #2

We recently published research refuting the theory that no-fishing zones are viable fisheries management options. The research was conducted at the no-fishing zone near the Kennedy Space Center. This is the same area that proponents have been using to claim that replenishment does occur. Our comprehensive research was conducted over ten years. During that time fish were tagged and examined to assess fish moving into and out of a no-fishing zone. Recapture rates suggest that more individuals may move into the protected habitats than move out. This has the exact opposite effect of what proponents have been claiming. I strongly believe that there are far better management options available to restore and manage saltwater fisheries, such as spawning and other seasonal closures, daily and seasonal take limits, and size limits. There is no reason to go to the extreme of prohibiting all fishing.

Biomedical Researcher

I represent the pharmaceutical industry. We believe that partial-protection MPAs can have a great value to biomedical research. On the other hand, no-take zones are detrimental to new biomedical discoveries. Many of the organisms found in this region can be used in medicinal product development. In recent years, bioprospecting in this region has yielded a considerable number of drug candidates that fight human diseases and pathogenic infections. We encourage the MPA managers to allow scientists into the areas where these important species exist in order to take samples for biomedical research. Much of the profit margins from these products will go back into the local economy.

Local Business Owner (Restaurant)

My great grandparents helped to establish this community. My family owns several businesses in the area. I rely on the local fishermen to provide me with fresh fish for my restaurant. My son runs a marine animal and bird viewing tour company. And, my cousin owns a waterfront hotel where all of the rooms overlook the refuge. The extra tourists each year give our businesses a boost, so I would certainly consider additional marine protected areas, but my preference is to maintain the status quo, because I don't want to see anymore of the local fishing jobs taken away.