

MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
MARINE & ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES TASK FORCE
Bay Oaks Recreational Campus
2731 Oak Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, August 13, 2025

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nusbaum.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Members present: Bill Althoff (virtually), Sharon Hegstrom, Robert Howell, David Nusbaum, Ed Rood, Jennifer Rusk and Leo Sand.

Staff: Environmental Projects Manager Chadd Chustz

MOTION: MERTF Member Hegstrom moved to allow MERTF Member Althoff to participate virtually, seconded by Chair Nusbaum.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approve The Agenda

MOTION: MERTF Member Sand moved to approve the agenda, seconded by MERTF Member Hegstrom.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

V. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – June 11, 2025

MOTION: MERTF Member Rood moved to approve the minutes, seconded by MERTF Member Althoff.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Public Comment – no public comment.

VII. Current Items

A. Elizabeth Fountain from J.R. Evans Engineering

Ms. Fountain described the company's wave mitigation system. She distributed the presentation to members and noted it was available on the town's website. She explained the design and benefits of the system, indicating that examples could be found at the north end of Hickory Island on Bonita Beach. She discussed how the system was constructed, the scour prevention feature, sea turtle nesting and cost. Ms. Fountain will keep MERTF involved.

MOTION: Chair Nusbaum moved to recommend that the town continue to pursue this path, seconded by MERTF Member Sand.

VOTE: The motion carried 4-3, with MERTF Members Hegstrom, Howell and Rusk dissenting.

B. Beach Renourishment Project – included in staff update.

C. Hazardous Materials Disposal

The date was August 8, 2025, and Projects Manager Chustz heard there was limited participation, but he would follow up with Community Services Director Jeff Hauge for more information. The next date is in February and it will be publicized more broadly.

D. Canal Dredging – continue to next month.

E. Shorebird Nesting

Chair Nusbaum noted the Snowy Plover brooding season was successful in his area of the beach. He was told that three nests hatched five chicks and three have flown the coop. Projects Manager Chustz reported that they had three Snowy Plover nests and one unknown nest. Six chicks successfully fledged. The fourth nest has three feathered chicks running around. One Wilson Plover's nest hatched but did not survive. All nesting has concluded for the Wilson Plovers. There were two Black Skimmer nests with eggs and several chicks. Over 130 chicks successfully fledged and about 100 chicks were close to fledging. The Least Turns nesting has concluded, with over 100 chicks successfully fledged and around 80 remaining in the colony. The herbicide treatment was successful with only 3% vegetation growth. Off-leash dogs, motor-powered paragliders and drones flushing birds were the biggest issues facing the birds.

F. Sea Turtle Nesting

There were 112 nests, 314 false crawls and 40 nests have hatched with 18 disorientations to date. Projects Manager Chustz reminded everyone to have amber lights both seaward and inland of Estero Blvd. Chair Nusbaum cautioned that turtle-friendly bulbs sold on Amazon are not necessarily FWC-compliant. Projects Manager Chustz said to look for manufacturer specs with 560 nanometers or greater.

VIII. Members' Items

MERTF Member Rood noted that the Friends of Little Estero Island created an award to give to MERTF award winners. He displayed a sample of the award and said they would continue to provide the awards unless otherwise notified. Chair Nusbaum thought they needed to run it by the town council and thanked MERTF Member Rood.

MERTF Member Howell invited everyone to check out the nature programs at Pink Shell. Projects Manager Chustz estimated the plants would go in at Pink Shell within a month or two.

MERTF Member Rusk indicated they received a contribution of over \$2,000.00 from the Chamber Water Program and the funds will go towards reprinting the children's activity book.

Chair Nusbaum asked about the press regarding the Mulholland Award and Projects Manager Chustz replied that another would be sent. He will talk about turtle cards at the next meeting.

No items from other members.

IX. Staff Update

The beach renourishment project will be done by the end of the month.

X. Public Comment – no public comment.

XI. MERTF Award – not discussed.

XII. Set Agenda for Next Meeting - September 10, 2025

Add turtle cards, MERTF award and beach entrance signs.

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION: MERTF Member Sand moved to adjourn, seconded by MERTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Adopted _____ with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote _____ Signature _____