

ACTION PLAN *Water & Sediment Quality*

WQ-5

Provide a Pump-out service to Live-aboard Vessels and Other Boat Owners

ACTION:

Provide sewage removal from vessels within the Lake Worth Lagoon (LWL) to live-aboard vessels through a pump-out boat.

BACKGROUND:

While no significant progress has been made on this AP since 2008, its importance cannot be overlooked. Pump-out boats can make a difference in maintaining water quality in LWL. Human waste and associated pathogens can severely impact water quality and public health when discharged directly to water bodies. A pump-out boat is a boat that pulls up to other boats and empties their waste tank into a holding tank on the pump-out boat. The pump-out boat takes the waste to a fixed unit on a dock or shore area and unloads the waste into sewer lines. Providing this service would help reduce waste loads while encouraging boaters to become more responsible stewards of the LWL.

Martin County has been very successful in establishing a County program that provides a free pump-out service to customers. The pump-out boat was purchased with grants from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Clean Vessel Act grant program (as part of the Clean Marina Program), and the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND). The grants paid for 75% of the initial start-up costs. Below are the highlights of this program:

- The pump-out boat is stationed in one of the marinas in Manatee Pocket Bay. Customers can arrange for service either by VHS marine radio channel or cell phone.
- Waste is transported to a county operated wastewater treatment facility.
- There is no charge for this service; however donations are accepted to help defray the cost of operating this program.

Since the inception of this program in 2000, approximately 165,000 gallons of raw sewage have been safely disposed through this operation.

STRATEGY:

STEP 1 Obtain a funding commitment from potential partners for the implementation of this program.

Potential Partners: MIA, FIND, PBC or Municipalities

- STEP 2 Apply for FDEP grants to offset start-up costs.
Potential Partners: Applicants
- STEP 3 Identify a public or municipal marina to dock the pump-out boat and bid out contract for services.
Potential Partners: Applicants
- STEP 4 Provide educational materials to boaters explaining how to use this new service and the importance of pump-out boats. Disseminate educational and cruising guide materials to boating clubs in the region.
Potential Partners: MIA, FDEP, PBC, Local governments, local boating clubs, Lagoon Keepers

SCHEDULE:

Interested parties will apply for the FDEP reimbursement grant once a commitment to the program has been finalized by the sponsoring Partner. The organizations listed above will be enlisted to evaluate educational materials and to implement the steps outlined.

COST:

The annual cost to run this program is estimated to be \$70,000/year. This amount includes a full-time contractor to run the service, and the associated costs for docking fees.

EXPECTED BENEFITS:

Providing sewage pump-out service for boaters will help reduce pathogens as well as nitrogen and solids in the LWL.

MONITORING ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSES:

Disposal receipts can be tracked to determine pump out volume. Receipts will be submitted to the FDEP's Clean Marina program.

REGULATORY NEEDS:

None anticipated.

FUNDING:

FDEP, Florida's Clean Vessel Act grant program, Florida's Clean Marina program, Palm Beach County Vessel Registration Fee, FIND grant program, PRTF.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES*:

FDEP, MIA, PBC, FIND, Local governments

*Listed Agencies have not committed funds and are subject to Agencies' budget approvals