



WEST PALM BEACH FISHING CLUB

~ Established 1934 ~



March 24, 2017

Lisa Gregg
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Dear Lisa,

On behalf of the over 1,400 members of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club (WPBFC) I wanted to share our comments regarding the Boater Access Channel Dredging Project being proposed by the Town of Palm Beach. Please let this letter serve as a follow-up to the comments that I emailed earlier. The WPBFC has no problem with improving boating access to residences along the waterfront. In fact, we have been very supportive of many boater access improvement projects through the years. Our concern with this project is related to where the dredged material will be placed. The WPBFC does not support depositing the dredged spoil into the John's Island dredge hole, or any other dredge hole in the Lake Worth Lagoon. The material being dredged from the areas identified in the permit is of poor quality and will be very challenging to manage if it is redistributed in the Lagoon. In our view, re-introducing this material into the Lake would be a mistake. The John's Island dredge hole, along with several others in that portion of the Lagoon are utilized by a variety of recreationally important fish, especially during the winter months. Jack crevalle, sand perch, pompano, black drum, tarpon, ladyfish and bluefish are among the species noted by area guides and anglers fishing in that location.

The WPBFC remains concerned that this dredged material will be reintroduced into the lagoon under the guise of 'enhancement'. We believe disposing this material at an upland location is the better solution. While the WPBFC supports environmental restoration efforts in the Lake Worth Lagoon, such as capping some muck laden areas to promote sea grass growth, we have cautioned Palm Beach County's Environmental Resources Management Department on the filling of many dredge holes in the Lake Worth Lagoon. There is still much we do not fully understand about the ecological role these deeper holes play in our local estuary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Respectfully,

Tom Twyford
President

Cc: Pete Schulz, WPBFC Chairman
Jennifer Smith, FDEP
Monica Sovacool, FDEP
Rachel Hickey, FDEP
Rob Robbins, Palm Beach County ERM
Commissioner Hal Valeche, Palm Beach County Commission
Commissioner Paulette Burdick, Palm Beach County Commission