



State of Florida  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

R. ELTON J. GISSENDANNER  
Executive Director  
Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32303

GEORGE FIRESTONE  
Secretary of State  
JIM SMITH  
Attorney General  
GERALD A. LEWIS  
Comptroller  
BILL GUNTER  
Treasurer  
DOYLE CONNER  
Commissioner of Agriculture  
RALPH D. TURLINGTON  
Commissioner of Education

September 27, 1983

Mr. Jono Miller  
Conservation Chairman  
Sierra Club - Manatee Sarasota Group  
Post Office Box 627  
Sarasota, Florida 33578

Dear Mr. Miller:

Re: DBS 83-71, Midnight Pass

This is in response to your letter of September 21, 1983, regarding Midnight Pass and to advise you that upon the completion of the permit application requirements the staff of the Division of Beaches and Shores intends to recommend favorably upon the proposed excavation activity to assist the natural inlet reestablishment for the purpose of saving Midnight Pass.

We would be more than happy to share with you any information which we have from our continuing studies of Midnight Pass and other dynamic barrier inlets including general information on inlet hydrodynamics, littoral processes, and inlet stability. This information should address all of the concerns that were set forth in your letter of objection.

Midnight Pass is a natural "wild" inlet which, although extremely dynamic, has enjoyed fluvio-hydrographic stability in recent years. In fact, while we have observed significant natural migrations of the inlet from our historical aerial photography taken over the past 40 years, the inlet has not reflected instability. However, since Easter of this year the inlet has experienced a dramatic trend of instability as evidenced by its wild northward migration and elongated north-south channel alignment which has caused dramatic growth of the north end of Casey Key and extreme shoreline recession along the Gulf fronting south end of Siesta Key. When a natural inlet migrates in the manner taking place at Midnight Pass, creating a long shore-parallel channel, the inlet hydraulic impedance increases to significantly reduce the ebb and flood discharge and eventually the inlet will close or eliminate effective water exchange between the Gulf and, in this case, Little Sarasota Bay. There does exist an old inlet channel immediately north of the current inlet site that provides evidence that this process has already previously occurred here before and resulted in inlet closure.

Mr. Jono Miller  
Page Two  
September 27, 1983

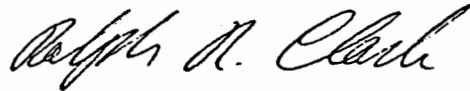
Because the existing unstable channel alignment reflects the instability process of a dying barrier inlet it is critical to help reestablish the inlet channel in the area of historical hydrodynamic efficiency. Obviously, while the currently proposed attempt may fail to hold open a new cut long enough for the inlet's tidal flows to reestablish the natural channel, the proposed activity will not have any adverse hydrographic impact on the inlet system.

To allow the inlet system to die will either result in eventual closure or a substantially reduced flow which would be expected to have a dramatic impact on the water chemistry and physiology of Little Sarasota Bay, as well as, significantly alter the migrational dynamics of any aquatic life previously affected by the inlet. In addition, the historical public small craft and recreational benefits of the inlet will be lost.

An additional major concern is that should the inlet close, a major storm event could by overtopping the coastal barriers with a storm surge, create a new inlet at another location which would have a major adverse public impact to the area and require major public funding to correct.

I feel I have only paraphrased our general concerns for saving Midnight Pass; however, I would be more than happy to review with you any information we have.

Sincerely,



Ralph R. Clark, P.E., P.L.S.  
Chief, Bureau of Coastal  
Engineering and Regulation

RRC/js