

Channel Caye Site Visit-25 March 2009

In reference to Chrysalis development; proposed dredging sites.

Persons present:

- Justino Mendez-SEA
- Mary Toy-PCSD
- Lisa Carne-Independent consultant/biologist
- Dermin Shivers-licensed fly fishing guide
- Julian Cabral-owner fly fishing resort Whipray Caye (Whipray Caye Lodge), licensed fly fishing guide
- Lincoln Westby-owner fly fishing resort on NE Caye (Blue Horizon Lodge), licensed fly fishing guide
- Daniel Cabral-licensed fly fishing guide
- George Eiley, Jr (Benji)- licensed fly fishing guide
- Dalton Eiley

The map provided in the LLES was mislabeled - Little Channel Caye unnamed (referred to as "Small Caye") and incorrectly labeled part of Big Channel Channel Caye as Little Channel Caye.

No coordinates were provided for dredging sites but Lincoln Westby had consulted with new owners (developers) and was familiar with where and why they wanted to dredge: to allow access for 100ft boats -- to create a channel ~1 mile above (north), and closer to (Big Channel Caye) the natural, existing channel.

This first site was marked using NAD27 Datum and UTM coordinates: 375869, 1839790.

This proposed dredging site is <1m on the ridge and about 2m at the drop off, and covered in finger corals (*Porites sp.*) and sea grass (*Thalassia*). Small clumps of red mangroves exist on this ridge, as well as the following coral species: *Montastrea annularis*, *M. faveolata*, *Manicina areolata*, *Siderastrea siderea*, *Porites astreoides*, *P. porites*, *P. furcata*. Other organisms encountered and associated with these corals included juvenile spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*), juvenile angel fish, juvenile parrotfish, juvenile grunts & snappers. Additional invertebrates included: what may or may not have been the Atlantic Black Seahare (*Aplysia moria*, listed as uncommon) but was definitely not the more common spotted seahare (*A. dactylomela*) based on its size: nearly 30 cm (see photographs), and an abundance of sea biscuits (*Clypeaster rosaceus*).

The second proposed dredging site was for "fill material" and marked using NAD27 Datum and UTM coordinates: 376056, 1839166. This site is a shallow patch/flat reef know to the fishermen as "Permit City" and indeed a school of permit were encountered during the survey. The patch is dominated by *Siderastrea siderea* colonies that are greater than 3m in diameter representing 100's of years of growth. All of the above listed coral species were also encountered here as well as lobster, large grunts and snappers, and unusual sponge species (see photos) on the edge. Benthic cover is low-medium density

seagrass and sand. While the group was there a separate fly fishing boat with two tourists landed a permit.

It should be emphasized that this entire area is part of the South water Caye Marine Reserve, which is also one of the seven MPA's that comprise the Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site. This site survey documented old and new coral growth with good health, nursery habitat for lobster and fish, and unusual and important species (permit and uncommon seahare). Therefore dredging should not occur *at or near*, either site.

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