

**Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting
January 23, 2001
Best Western Hotel, St. Simons Island, GA**

Attendance:

- SAC Members Present: Jim Henry, Judy Wright, Doug Rader, Bing Phillips, Henry Ansley, Dave Cinalli, Joe Kimmel, Matt Gilligan, and Patty McIntosh.
- SAC Members not present: Ann Frick and George Sedberry
- NOAA Gray's Reef staff in attendance: Reed Bohne, Marcy Lee, Cathy Sakas, Becky Shortland, Alex Score, and Greg McFall.
- Other NMSS staff in attendance: Rod Ehler
- Public in attendance: None

Distributed Materials: One packet including

- Agenda
- November 9, 2000 meeting minutes
- Letter from Sanctuary Director
- Minutes from SAMFC
- Visitor Center proposal
- Research Coordinators workshop agenda
- SAC Coordinators meeting agenda
- Sanctuary Habitat Conservation Workshop: agenda, participants, issue description, and draft report
- Sanctuary Species Conservation Workshop: issue description
- Workshop participant list
- Reference Materials: 1. Gray's Reef Goals and Objectives 2. List of Prohibited Activities.

Chairman Jim Henry called the meeting to order and minutes were approved from the November 9, 2000 SAC meeting. Jim welcomed Rod Ehler and Research Coordinator Greg McFall.

New Business-

Reed Bohne mentioned that Dan Basta has been selected as Director of the National Marine Sanctuary System. Dan is extremely supportive of Sanctuary Advisory Councils.

Reed discussed the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council November meeting and the upcoming meeting of the Council's Marine Reserves Committee. Dave Cinalli is now a member of that committee. It is anticipated that our relationship with the Council on the marine reserves issue will be further discussed at this upcoming meeting.

Reed discussed the meeting held in Savannah recently for the proposed visitor center on Hutchinson Island. Jim Henry, who also attended to meeting, mentioned that he wished the rest of the council had been there. Reed said that Dan Basta hopes to incorporate the Skidaway

Institute of Oceanography and other like institutions into the preliminary plans, creating an advisory group for the visitor center.

Matt Gilligan made a formal motion that the SAC put together a list of possible members for the visitor center advisory group. Joe Kimmel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously accepted. Reed asked the SAC when the list should be completed. Jim Henry suggested it be assembled before the February 28th Species Conservation Workshop. The group decided to accomplish this through email.

Becky Shortland noted that the visitor center concept is different from the Marine Protected Area Center that is being established at NOAA's Coastal Services Center in Charleston. A west coast center for science is being established in Santa Cruz, Calif., and the headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Doug Rader asked if staff was familiar with the recently announced initiative by U.S. EPA to designate special ocean sites. One of the sites suggested by EPA is the Right Whale critical habitat off of Georgia and northern Florida. Doug was asked to forward information to the staff that is not familiar.

Reed Bohne introduced Research Coordinator Greg McFall, and noted that Cathy Sakas is now a Federal employee as Gray's Reef NMS Education Coordinator.

Greg McFall offered a few comments on the upcoming Research Coordinators meeting. The purpose would be to develop a Sanctuary database and to put together a research plan for Gray's Reef.

Jim Henry then mentioned the expected outcomes of the upcoming SAC Chair and Coordinators meeting. Jim will give a "snapshot" presentation. He also noted that in comparison to other sites, Gray's Reef has many fewer issues.

Henry Ansley noted that there might be some interest in a fiber optic cable project off Georgia. He will pass on information to the staff. Reed Bohne offered to relay information gained in the Sanctuary System from fiber optic cable projects.

Socioeconomic Profile

NMSS Economist Rod Ehler then presented the first draft of the socioeconomic profile for Gray's Reef. After discussion, the group agreed to send Rod any suggestions and comments for inclusion in the report by Feb. 2nd. Henry Ansley also noted that he would be willing to add data on boat registrations, which has been difficult to find. Henry noted that he would like to have others at GA DNR review the report before offering comments. Becky Shortland asked Rod if a final version would be ready for the next workshop. Rod thought that it would be reasonable. Doug Rader suggested giving definitions for such things as "commercial" and "recreational" and the need to explain fishing methods such as spear, etc. Reed mentioned that the next phase of the socioeconomic assessment would be more specific. Henry suggested that we inform the public

that the study is still ongoing and the first/draft version is not the final version. Doug Rader suggested including ecotourism companies.

Sanctuary Habitat Conservation Workshop Review

Tim Goodspeed reviewed the strategy development workshop of December 19, 2000 on Sanctuary Habitat Conservation, and asked for comments on the "pros and cons" of the workshop format for improvement. Bing Phillips noted that the fishermen might have felt uncomfortable in the sessions, believing the discussion may have been pre-programmed. Joe Kimmel mentioned that he was disturbed by the lack of public comment. Reed Bohne explained that staff had thought long and hard about where to place the public comment time so that everyone was available to participate. The middle of the day was chosen; however, there were no individuals who had not already been incorporated into the discussions. Becky Shortland asked if there is a need for more public notice. The group agreed that public notice should be increased somewhat, and the public's need for comment will be well accommodated. Dave Cinalli noted that he thought the forum was very productive.

Sanctuary Species Conservation Workshop

Becky Shortland discussed the next workshop and how the topics bottom fishing; recreational fishing only, spearfishing, research reef, artificial reefs and bottom tending gear came to be grouped under the issue "Sanctuary Species Conservation." Becky Shortland noted that minutes from the November SAC meeting reflected that the members wanted to somehow include the topic of water quality in these workshops. It was decided that water quality could be included in the programmatic workshop on research, which will take place after the issue workshops.

The SAC and staff were then led by facilitator Tim Goodspeed through the problem statements, synopses of the problems, and outcomes. The following were agreed upon by consensus:

PROBLEM STATEMENT #1: FISHING IS AN ACTIVITY THAT CAN ALTER THE ABUNDANCE AND SPECIES COMPOSITION OF BOTH FISH AND INVERTEBRATE COMMUNITIES IN GRAY'S REEF NMS.

OUTCOME #1: INCREASE PROTECTION FOR BOTTOM DWELLING REEF SPECIES IN GRAY'S REEF NMS.

OUTCOME #2: INCREASE PROTECTION AS APPROPRIATE FOR PELAGIC FISH SPECIES IN GRAY'S REEF NMS.

PROBLEM STATEMENT #2: THERE ARE NO NATURALLY OCCURRING, LIVE-BOTTOM SITES WITHIN THE SANCTUARY EXCLUSIVELY ESTABLISHED FOR RESEARCH.

OUTCOME: INCREASE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCRIMINATE SCIENTIFICALLY BETWEEN NATURAL AND HUMAN-INDUCED CHANGE TO SPECIES POPULATIONS IN THE SANCTUARY BY ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH CONTROL SITE.

Suggestions were made to change the text of the issue description and synopses; staff will follow through and asked that additional changes are submitted ASAP.

The group also reviewed the suggested list of invitees to the workshop and submitted more detailed suggestions.

Next Meeting

Matt Gilligan moved that two additions be added to all SAC meeting agendas: approval of the agenda and SAC final comment. Joe Kimmel seconded the motion. Matt amended the motion to include public comment and change "Final Comment from SAC" to "Final Comment from SAC and Public". All approved.

Reed Bohne suggested that the next SAC meeting be held after the Species Conservation Workshop. It was decided that the meeting would be on March 21st at the Sanctuary office.

SAC members also expressed an interest in a dive this summer at Gray's Reef.

Public Comment

No public comment.

SAC Chair Jim Henry adjourned the meeting.