



GRAY'S REEF NMS – ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – JULY 26, 2013

Emergency Meeting via Conference Call
Proposed Comment Letter on Right Whale Ship Strike Rule

Advisory Council Members Present

Danny Gleason, Living Resources Research (Advisory Council Chair)
Mary Conley, Conservation
Michael Denmark, Sport Fishing
Emily Kroutil, K-12 Education
Randy Rudd, Sport Diving
Doug Lewis, GA DNR LE
Rick DeVictor, NOAA Fisheries SE Region (Advisory Council Vice-chair)
Anna George, Conservation (Advisory Council Secretary)
Pat Geer, GA DNR CRD
Al Samuels, NOAA OLE
Jene Nissen, U.S. Navy
Christine Laporte, Citizen-at-large
Tim Goodale, University Education
William Cliett, Citizen-at-large
Warren Hupman, Charter/commercial Fishing

Members Absent

Scott Noakes, Non-living Resources Research
Chuck Hopkinson, Sea Grant (*Note: Dr. Hopkinson attempted to join the call, but no conference lines were available.*)
Suzanne VanParreren
LT Mike Mastrianni, USCG SRFTC

Gray's Reef and ONMS Staff Present

Greg McFall, Sanctuary Superintendent
Becky Shortland, Resource Protection Coordinator
Jody Patterson, Administrative Assistant
Brad Cabe, Stellwagen Bank NMS

Public Present

LT Morgan Fowler, USCG D7 LMR Officer
Patty Forrestal, GRNMS Volunteer

Welcome and Council Business

Council Chairman Danny Gleason called the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) Advisory Council meeting to order welcoming members, public and staff present. Because Stellwagen Bank NMS

Advisory Council is expected to submit a comment letter on the proposed right whale ship strike rule, Brad Cabe (Stellwagen staff) is joining the call to be available for any questions. A quorum of voting members was confirmed.

Danny Gleason asked for a report from the ad hoc Right Whale Ship Strike Working Group. Working group members (Christine Laporte, Rick DeVictor, Michael Denmark, Emily Kroutil, Randy Rudd and Mary Conley) reported on the process and primary topics that were discussed including a timeframe to review the regulation in the future. There was extensive discussion among working group members about whether the sunset clause should or should not be removed from the existing regulation that requires vessels 65 feet or longer to slow to 10 knots during certain times of the year and in certain locations to protect the highly endangered North Atlantic right whale.

Rick DeVictor explained the burden of a sunset clause vs. periodic review of a regulation. Pat Geer noted that without a specified timeframe (e.g., required assessment at 7-year intervals) it is likely the assessment will not be done. Several other members agreed with the concept. Danny Gleason suggested that the comment letter be amended to state that periodic review of the regulation should not exceed 10 years.

Public Comment

Patty Forrestal spoke in favor of the comment letter and protection of right whales.

Council Action

Randy Rudd made a motion to amend the comment letter as suggested by Danny Gleason and to send the letter to NOAA Fisheries. The motion was seconded by Anna George. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Greg McFall thanked the council for participating in this important issue on short notice and developing a sound consensus. Greg also noted that Regional Director Billy Causey had hoped to join this virtual meeting but could not. Billy has been following the progress and is very pleased with the outcome.

ONMS Site Nomination and Evaluation Process

Council members were asked if they would like to convene the same process for developing comments on the proposed ONMS Site Nomination and Evaluation Process. Because the council had already sent a letter of support for reactivation of the Site Evaluation List, members determined that it was not necessary to develop comments on the Site Nomination and Evaluation Process.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM.