



**Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council Meeting
November 16, 2012
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Coastal Resources Division
Brunswick, GA**

Advisory Council Members Present

Clark Alexander, Non-living Resources Research (Vice-Chair)
Danny Gleason, Living Resources Research (Chair)
Venetia Butler, K-12 Education (Secretary)
Mary Conley, Conservation
Doug Lewis, GA DNR LE
Rick DeVictor, NOAA Fisheries SE Region
Bill Cliett, Citizen-at-large
Randy Rudd, Sport Diving
Anna George, Conservation
Tim Goodale, University Education
Michael Denmark, Sport Fishing
Pat Geer, GADNR CRD
Warren Hupman, Charter/Commercial Fishing
Jason Holstead, U.S. Coast Guard SRFTC

Members Absent

Al Samuels, NOAA OLE
Suzanne VanParreren, Sapelo Island NERR
Chuck Hopkinson, Sea Grant

Gray's Reef NMS Staff Present

George Sedberry, Superintendent
Becky Shortland, Resource Protection Coordinator
Jody Patterson, Administrative Assistant

Public Present

Tom Wright
January Murray, GADNR CRD
Dan Watson, U.S. Coast Guard SRFTC
Michelle Rice, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Charleston

Welcome and introductions

Council Chairman Danny Gleason called the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) Advisory Council meeting to order welcoming members, staff and public present. Introductions were made and the agenda reviewed with no changes.

Council business

Council Chairman Danny Gleason asked for approval of the August 2012 meeting summary. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Council officers: Council members were asked for nominations to the vice-chair and secretary positions on the council being vacated by outgoing Non-living Resources Research Representative Clark Alexander and K-12 Education Representative Venetia Butler who has served *many* years as secretary. Rick DeVictor was nominated and elected as vice-chair of the council. Anna George was nominated and elected as secretary, effective at the end of this meeting.

Membership/charter subcommittee recommendation: The council membership/charter subcommittee was tasked with considering the addition of a non-voting government seat for the U.S. Navy. Subcommittee chair Venetia Butler made a recommendation on behalf of the subcommittee to add this seat. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Danny Gleason noted that it will be beneficial to offer the U.S. Navy a small scale perspective in terms of ocean management. GRNMS staff will begin amendment to the council charter for inclusion of this non-voting seat.

Regarding the membership/charter subcommittee, Danny Gleason and Venetia Butler are the only remaining members of this subcommittee so Danny asked if others would be willing to serve on the subcommittee. Council members Michael Denmark, Randy Rudd, and Pat Geer offered to serve.

Council seat recruitments: GRNMS Resource Protection Coordinator Becky Shortland discussed the council seats that are currently being recruited: K-12 education, non-living resources research, and a second citizen-at-large seat. Input is sought from the council on the kinds of expertise and qualifications we should look for in another citizen-at-large. The seats are advertised through the federal register, social media outlets, website, and email list serve. Council members were asked to be sure to make their constituents aware of this and future recruitments. After some discussion, members identified marketing, outreach, advocacy, fundraising, and dedication as expertise and qualities that would be beneficial. The executive committee will review applicants and make recommendations to the GRNMS superintendent.

The discussions also involved communication protocols both at the staff (e.g., getting the messages out about the advisory council) and advisory council (e.g., what council members can and cannot do) levels. Mary Conley and Michael Denmark suggested having a session during a future meeting on those protocols, so that the council may consider ways to better help GRNMS. Others concurred and suggested the new communications and outreach coordinator be a part of that discussion at the next meeting if possible.

Member biographies and pictures: The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) has a new policy requiring all sanctuary sites to post council member photographs and biographies on their websites. ONMS and each site are revamping webpages to more prominently feature advisory councils. This information is requested from each member no later than March 1, 2013. Danny Gleason has a profile that was developed, which was passed around for members to review. George Sedberry suggested head-shots that might depict a member's interest for the photograph. Other good examples can be found on the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary website: <http://cordellbank.noaa.gov/council/members.html>

National SAC Summit: The annual National Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit will take place in Santa Cruz, CA, December 4-6 with council chairs and regional directors attending to discuss national priorities of the sanctuaries program. Council Chair Danny Gleason will be attending and will address any specific items that the council feels relevant to the discussions. He will report on the Summit at the next council meeting.

Next meeting: Our next quarterly meeting is being planned for January or February to overlap with the science advisory group meeting, and is anticipated to be held on the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography campus. GRNMS staff will circulate a Doodle poll to the council to determine date availability.

GRNMS draft management plan

GRNMS Superintendent George Sedberry gave a background presentation of the GRNMS management planning process, which requires review and revision every five years. We have current information, such as the condition report addendum, to help drive development of portions of this plan. Public scoping meetings were held and topics noted were related to marker buoys, lionfish, public awareness, marine debris prevention, and right whale critical habitat. Guiding the management plan is the vision and mission established by sanctuary staff and the council, along with six goals. Staff are drafting action plans to achieve these goals and developing the plan towards themes (e.g., maintain and improve all sanctuary resources) rather than programs (e.g., research). Staff is seeking input on the framework, format, and content developed thus far, as well as project priorities.

Council members broke into two groups for discussions lead by GRNMS staff and then reconvened as a full group to report on discussions and recommendations. Public in attendance were invited to listen in on discussions and offer comments during the public comment period allotted on the agenda.

The full council reconvened in the afternoon and reported on the ideas and recommendations made during the break-out period. Staff will review the recommendations and work to incorporate those into the draft plan, which will be reviewed at the next sanctuary advisory council meeting. Advisory council members were asked to be sure to read the plan and be prepared at the next meeting for discussion. Staff should also plan a significant amount of time for the topic at the next meeting. Randy Rudd also suggested that everyone look at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan, which was developed to be more "user-friendly." Becky Shortland sent the link to the Thunder Bay plan again.

Superintendent's report

Superintendent George Sedberry announced that Michael Jordan had been hired as the new GRNMS outreach and communications coordinator; he will start after January 2, 2013. He also noted that Skidaway Institute of Oceanography will be merging with the University of Georgia, which will mean some changes for GRNMS and staff.

ONMS Campaign of Engagement: George Sedberry reviewed the many GRNMS activities since the last meeting including the ocean film festival, new exhibit at the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center, and the exhibit of Deputy Superintendent Greg McFall's underwater photographs at the Jepson Center. He also provided updates on the Sanctuaries Classic (a contest to encourage family fishing activities in sanctuaries that ran through summer 2012 and is expected to continue next summer); and the best fishing practices workshop held on November 10. A question was posed concerning recreational fishing by-catch and if there is greater mortality resulting from commercial fisheries. Sedberry noted that is not necessarily the case, but that by-catch mortality has been documented on commercial vessels through the NOAA Cooperative Research Program and on-board observers.

SEL reactivation: A letter of support from the council for reactivation of the ONMS Site Evaluation List was sent to ONMS Director Dan Basta for transfer to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce. Dan Basta responded to the council with thanks, although reactivation has not gained any momentum yet.

Friends group: George Sedberry noted that a GRNMS "friends" group that might be tasked with fundraising and other objectives to support sanctuary programs would be beneficial. He met with the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation (NMFS) concerning the establishment of a NMFS chapter for GRNMS to serve as a friends group. A follow-up with the NMSF director is needed to develop the language and by-laws of the group.

Law enforcement working group

Becky Shortland reported for Capt. Doug Lewis who had to leave for an emergency. Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) law enforcement officers conducted patrols over the last quarter that resulted in two fishing violations at GRNMS. Jason Holstead reported for the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) that there were three patrols conducted by Coast Guard Cutters *Yellowfin*, *Tarpon*, and *Kingfisher* resulting in two boardings but no violations. Overflights from Air Station Savannah continue. Jason also explained that a job aide is in development for Air Station Savannah pilots. Becky Shortland noted that the bulk of the work is being done by LT Brandon Fisher, which is greatly appreciated. LTJG Michelle Rice explained that she will be attending council meeting on behalf of USCG Sector Charleston, which works more on the operational and enforcement side, whereas, LT Holstead and LT Fisher represent the USCG Southeast Regional Fisheries Training Center (SRFTC).

Public comment

Tom Wright recognized the USCG and gave them kudos for their ongoing efforts. He went on to note that the GRNMS community will likely support the sanctuary, but they must know what is being done and what the priorities are. This needs to be better communicated. He also stated that the organizational structure should be clear. He believes the management plan is heading in the right direction.

January Murray, who is the GADNR Coastal Resources Division alternate, commented that she appreciates the opportunity to attend the meeting and enjoyed the discussions.

Adjourn

A motion was made and passed at 4:00 PM to adjourn.