



**Gray's Reef National Marine
Sanctuary Advisory Council
10 Ocean Science Circle
Savannah, GA 31411**

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*The council is an advisory body
to the sanctuary superintendent.
The opinions in this letter do not
reflect the position of the Gray's
Reef National Marine Sanctuary
and the National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration.*

April 15, 2010

Dr. George Sedberry
Superintendent
Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
10 Ocean Science Circle
Savannah, GA 31411

Dear George:

At the October 2009 and January 2010 Gray's Reef NMS (GRNMS) Sanctuary Advisory Council meetings, members of the Advisory Council expressed concern that the increasing work load of the Sanctuary Research Coordinator, Greg McFall, is impacting Sanctuary research programs. New and ongoing research is critical to understanding the Gray's Reef ecosystem, resources and condition and in making informed management decisions. The Sanctuary Research Coordinator is the manager and advocate for the Sanctuary research agenda and is a critical participant in the ongoing process of establishing a no-take research area in the Sanctuary. It is important to maintain a full-time position to support these efforts.

The Advisory Council congratulates Greg on his recent appointment as the Deputy Superintendent of GRNMS, but realizes that with this new assignment his duties grow to include day-to-day management of Sanctuary operations. Greg continues to function as the Sanctuary Research Coordinator and, in addition, serves as the National Ocean Service Line Office Dive Officer and Chair of the NOAA Diving Safety Control Board. This latter assignment takes Greg away from his Research Coordinator and Deputy Superintendent duties, and from the Sanctuary itself, with regularity. Each of his three assignments appears to require full-time attention.

To address our concern, the Advisory Council recommends that GRNMS actively pursue filling the position of Research Coordinator in order to maximize scientific use of the Sanctuary and the proposed no-take Research Area. The timing of this request is significant as the Sanctuary staff and Advisory Council work to communicate the necessity for a closed area within the Sanctuary. We believe this step is critical to the successful implementation of the GRNMS research program.

Sincerely,

Clark Alexander, Ph.D.
Chair, GRNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council