

**GRAY'S REEF NMS
SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting, September 1, 2004
10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Sapelo Island Visitor's Center
Sapelo Island, Georgia**

Distributed Materials

- Meeting Agenda
- GRNMS Advisory Council member list
- January 28, 2004 Meeting Minutes
- Advisory Council Seat Vacancy Announcement
- National Advisory Council Meeting materials
- Draft Management Plan strategies
- GRNMS Program Organization (July 2004)

Advisory Council members present

Clark Alexander, Henry Ansley, Will Berson, Venetia Butler, Joe Kimmel, Bing Phillips, Judy Wright, Danny Gleason, LT Eric Johnson (for LCDR Scott Rogers)

Advisory Council members not present

Doug Rader, Leslie Sautter

Public present

Buddy Sullivan, Manager Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve (SINERR)

Staff present

Reed Bohne, April Fendley, Gail Krueger, Becky Shortland, Jim Sullivan, Leah Cooling

Welcome, Agenda, and Minutes

Advisory Council Chair Judy Wright called the meeting to order at 10:15am. Judy welcomed everyone and called for introductions. The group welcomed LT Eric Johnson who is replacing LT Mark Gordon as the U.S. Coast Guard alternate.

SINERR Manager Buddy Sullivan also welcomed members and guests to Sapelo Island Visitor's Center. Buddy spoke briefly about the Visitor's Center and its relationship with SINERR, as well as about the Research Reserve itself. Sapelo Island is primarily accessible by ferry and is state-owned and managed. Buddy also commented on the SINERR Advisory Committee; GRNMS Manager Reed Bohne is an ex-officio member of that committee.

Judy briefly reviewed the meeting agenda. She called for a motion and second to approve the January 28, 2004, meeting minutes. The minutes received unanimous approval.

New Advisory Council Seats

GRNMS Manager Reed Bohne discussed the structure of the GRNMS Advisory Council. He noted that two existing seats will be vacant in the near future, and opened the floor to discussion on new

and existing council seats. Becky Shortland reminded members of previous interest in seats for commercial fishing, SINEER, and recent mention of a Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) law enforcement seat; any change would require a change in the charter. Reed also noted that members should consider overall size of the council in the discussion.

Joe Kimmel asked for clarification of charter amendments and for the current number of voting members. Clark Alexander agreed that a member from SINERR would be beneficial as a non-voting member to facilitate communications between the two councils. Danny Gleason also agreed that an SINERR member would be very valuable to promote connectivity between the research reserve and the sanctuary. Henry Ansley reiterated that this member should be non-voting but that a connection of the resources is beneficial; Venetia Butler agreed that a member of this type is essential. Henry Ansley offered a motion to add a SINERR ex-officio representative; Bing Phillips seconded the motion. The addition of this new seat was unanimously approved.

Discussion ensued regarding a commercial fishing seat. Joe Kimmel and Henry Ansley commented on the difference between charter fishermen versus commercial fishermen and noted that this representative would bring a different perspective to council discussion. Clark stated that he was unsure of the benefits of selecting an individual to represent such a broad constituency; many interests can exist under the title of “commercial fishermen.” Bing said that this type of representative would be a good idea as long as he/she represented the entire spectrum. Joe Kimmel noted that he separates charter fishing from commercial fishing as more of a sport fishing category. Venetia Butler commented that the council wants a well-rounded representation; a commercial fishing seat brings in an important perspective. Henry reminded the council that sport fishermen are the primary user group in the sanctuary. Bing stated that the council should consider a member to represent the charter boat community, since a larger number of charters run to the sanctuary. Clark noted he was unsure that a commercial fishing representative would represent a large constituency and agreed that a charter boat representative would be beneficial.

LT Eric Johnson suggested creating a working group to encompass representation from the various sectors of commercial fishing and having a current council member chair the working group. Bing suggested clarification of duties and representation of a recreational fishing seat and a commercial fishing seat, i.e. recreation fishing seat represents anglers, spearfishing, etc, and commercial fishing seat represents commercial fishing, charter boats, shrimping, etc. Danny Gleason inquired about the cohesiveness of the commercial fishing industry. Clark commented that the discussion was leaning more toward a charter boat representative rather than a commercial fishing representative. Joe agreed with Bing’s suggestion for a sport fishing representative and a commercial fishing representative. Judy suggested having a general fishing representative and a general diving representative to represent both commercial and recreational aspects. Bing reiterated that fishing is such a large user group and should be better represented.

Buddy Sullivan commented that members should consider who the stakeholders are at Gray’s Reef; he noted that both commercial and recreational fishing have a large stake in the estuary, and both representatives have valuable input on their committee. Henry Ansley offered a motion to establish a commercial fishing seat that includes charter fishermen. Bing seconded the motion. Clark commented that if the council does create a commercial fishing seat, it would most likely be filled by a charter boat representative which may not be fully representative of the commercial industry. Henry Ansley withdrew his motion, and Bing withdrew his second to postpone a decision until further discussion.

Will Berson stated that his perception from this discussion was that commercial and charter fishing are two separate entities and probably should have separate seats. Eric Johnson noted that competition in a general fishing seat would gravitate towards who has the largest interest in the sanctuary. Venetia suggested asking around to see how the public feels about a commercial fishing seat.

Reed suggested that the council hold a decision on creating a commercial fishing seat and move forward with the decision to include a representative from SINERR. Becky Shortland will compile the options discussed for fishing and diving seats and send that information out to members for consideration and a decision at the next meeting.

Judy Wright noted that a GADNR law enforcement seat was also suggested. Reed stated that the council currently has a U.S. Coast Guard seat. Henry offered to speak to GADNR LE regarding this proposed seat. GRNMS Enforcement Coordinator LT Peter Fischel commented that the overall jurisdiction actually rests with NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE); Henry asked that staff put those issues in writing for further discussion.

National Advisory Council Meeting

Judy Wright commented on the National Sanctuary Advisory Chairs and Coordinators meeting, which is scheduled for February 2005 in San Francisco. She asked for ideas for the case study she is to present on behalf of GRNMS. She briefly reviewed the case study guidelines and asked that ideas be sent to Becky Shortland by email. A decision will be made at the next meeting. Judy also reviewed the proposed changes to the Council of Chairs charter, which guides the advice session held during the national meeting.

GRNMS Programs Status

Marine Research Area Concept Working Group

Reed Bohne revisited the discussion of the Marine Research Area Concept Working Group. Joe Kimmel commented on the May working group meeting. Another meeting will be held October 6-7, 2004, in Savannah for further and more narrowed discussion on the research area. All members should have received minutes from the first meeting. Reed briefly commented on the administrative sequence of establishing a research area.

Public Comment to Advisory Council

Chair Judy Wright opened the floor to public comment. Other than SINERR Manager Buddy Sullivan, no additional public were present.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch.
Reconvened at 12:50pm.

GRNMS Programs Status (cont'd)

Operations and Enforcement

LT Peter Fischel commented on current operations and enforcement at GRNMS. Pete just returned from Mobile, AL, to look at the construction progress of GRNMS's new boat. Pete also commented on the current boats being used at GRNMS: *Joe Ferguson* and *Go Fast*. LT JG Keith Golden is the new marine operations officer at GRNMS who came to Savannah from Hawaii.

Pete also commented on the status of the new remote sensing system. Skidaway Institute of

Oceanography will mount and maintain the radar system for GRNMS.

Pete noted that GRNMS has been working with the NOAA OLE regarding the joint enforcement agreement with GADNR. Pete mentioned that overflight data continues to come in from the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Exhibits and Events

Communications and Outreach Coordinator Gail Krueger discussed the upcoming Savannah Ocean Film Festival, September 10-12. The festival program was distributed, and additional program details can be found on the Gray's Reef web site (<http://graysreef.noaa.gov>). Reed noted that Gail has done a good job organizing and promoting the festival. Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) will provide the Trustees Theater for use during the festival. Gail reminded council members about the sanctuary volunteer's reception on Saturday night, to which all members are invited.

Administration

Reed Bohne commented on the directions being taken on the draft management plan. He discussed staff/program reorganization into a team concept (refer to Program Organization handout). Reed also commented on the proposed regional structure for the National Marine Sanctuary Program. Reed will officially address issues for the Northeast/Great Lakes region when office-level elevation is approved by the Department of Commerce. Jim Sullivan discussed his role in the regional structure design and implementation. In response to a question from Henry Ansley, Reed briefly commented on next year's budget.

Oceans Commissions Report and Legislation

Jim Sullivan introduced himself and provided a brief career and personal history. Jim discussed general information about the Latitude 3130 project. He stated that the goal is to help establish the context within which GRNMS exists; we need to understand what goes on around GRNMS to understand what happens in GRNMS. Reed noted that former advisory council member Dr. George Sedberry just completed an expedition to continue data collection and measurements roughly along this latitude. Jim said that he will also be working on the maritime heritage program with Dr. Erv Garrison of the University of Georgia, as well as ocean observation systems. Jim and Greg will be working on water quality monitoring and hope to involve Savannah State University students in various research projects at GRNMS. Jim has also been involved in the research area concept working group.

Jim also discussed the U.S. Oceans Commission Report which has just been released. Major recommendations have been made by this Administration-appointed panel that call for changes in the areas of science, education, policy and ecosystem-based management.

Student Ocean Council

Education Intern Leah Cooling gave a presentation about the 2003-2004 Student Ocean Council and activities in which they participated.

FY05 Advisory Council Work Plan and Future Meetings

Becky Shortland initiated discussion about the duties and structure of the Advisory Council and scheduling of future meetings. Bing Phillips asked about the status of the management plan. Reed responded that he hopes to have a final plan by the end of this year but offers no guarantees. Reed noted that some outreach opportunities will probably arise to educate the public if and/or when the

management plan is approved. Becky emphasized the importance of communicating with various constituent groups. Reed suggested that the council focus an entire meeting on outreach questions, issues, and methods. Venetia noted that not all members are likely to attend every meeting; however, a focused meeting may encourage contribution from those who are interested in that focus.

Judy asked Becky to create a list of areas in which Advisory Council input may be needed or beneficial. Becky commented that draft management plan strategies were included in the distributed materials and requested input based on review of these strategies.

Becky also suggested that the council meet once per quarter in the next fiscal year, which starts October 1st. Joe asked that the meetings occur after the SAFMC meetings in December, March, June, and September. Becky will review other calendars and submit dates for consideration based on the suggestion by Joe Kimmel.

Council Member Notes / Updates

Henry Ansley noted that the King mackerel tournaments have been a highlight; a prized fish was caught at GRNMS this summer. It was a king mackerel weighing 75¾ lbs and is now the state record for this species in the Men's Division. The old record was 63½ pounds. The new record was caught in June at GRNMS by Joe Bell of Statesboro... unfortunately there was not a tournament going on!!!

Venetia Butler recently attended the Gray's Reef teacher's workshop with Education Coordinator Cathy Sakas. Venetia stated that this workshop was a good outlet for state-wide outreach. Venetia also noted that Oatland Island Education Center will soon introduce a high school oceanography education program.

Bing Phillips commented that Yellow Bluff marina will be closing; he noted that limited access to the water exists in the area.

Joe Kimmel will attend two ecosystem meetings over the next couple of weeks: one with a GIS focus and one with stock-assessment focus; the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council will be meeting in South Carolina in October.

Will Berson briefly discussed a proposal to evaluate Coffee Bluff marina; the real question is access, i.e. does one have to own waterfront property to get to the water? Will also commented that the Georgia Conservancy is looking at what Barrier Island resources are protected and that harbor deepening of the Savannah harbor has been delayed again.

Danny quickly noted that he is continuing his research at GRNMS.

Judy Wright stated that she held five dive charters to GRNMS this summer and that most divers were from out of town.

Public Comment

No public was present for comment.

Adjourn