



**GRAY'S REEF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 23, 2016**

<p><u>Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) Attendees</u></p>	<p><u>Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS), Office of National Marine Sanctuary (ONMS) and other NOAA Staff and Presenters</u></p>
<p>Rick DeVictor, Chair Michael Denmark, Vice-chair Anna George, Secretary Mona Behl LT Warren Fair Mary Conley Tim Henkel Warren Hupman Kevin Mitchell Scott Noakes Mark Padgett Dustin Rhyan Tim Tarver Suzanne VanParreren Capt. Bob Lynn Pat Geer</p>	<p>Sarah Fangman John Armor Billy Causey Russell Dunn Kim Iverson Jared Halonen Jody Patterson Becky Shortland Todd Recicar Michelle Riley George Sedberry Kim Roberson Chris Hines</p> <p><u>GRNMS Foundation</u> Vicki Weeks</p> <p><u>GRNMS Volunteers</u> Alissa Johnson</p>
<p><u>SAC Members Absent</u> Peter Auster Emily Kroutil Jene Nissen</p>	<p><u>Public in attendance</u> Paulette Hamilton Larry Schnabel Lon Morey Gail Holland Vernon J. Baxter Linda Dew Ron Dew Heather Olmr Hunter Hall David Bealin Paulita Bennett-Martin Tom Wright Bill Dillan Ken Edwards Larry Yawn Jeff Soss Alison Scott</p>

Advisory Council Business

Council Chairman Rick DeVictor called the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) Advisory Council meeting to order. He and Superintendent Sarah Fangman welcomed members, staff and public in attendance. Acting Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) Director John Armor and Regional Director Billy Causey also offered opening remarks emphasizing the value of sanctuary advisory councils. Skidaway Island State Park Superintendent Holly Holdsworth also welcomed everyone to the park. Rick briefly reviewed the agenda and outlined the meeting objectives.

Recreational Fishing Session

NOAA Recreational Fishing Policy and Implementation Plans

Russell Dunn, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS; NOAA Fisheries Service) National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fisheries, gave a presentation on recreational fishing policy and implementation plans. He noted the efforts between NMFS and ONMS to communicate and coordinate efforts with each other to create integrated programs and that they are working to dispel the belief that sanctuaries are no fish zones. NMFS' goal is to achieve the greatest overall benefit to the nation while ensuring healthy and sustainable living marine resources. Changing NOAA approaches are broadening NMFS' historical focus on commercial fisheries to more fully incorporate recreational fisheries. The National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy was developed through extensive public input and resulted in a set of tangible commitments on a regional and national basis.

Mr. Dunn then responded to questions from council members on the plan's commitments, developing fishery allocations and the number of saltwater anglers in the Southeast and the US population.

Artificial reef workshop

Mr. Dunn continued with a review of the national artificial reef workshop that was held earlier this year. He noted that the discussion of artificial reefs was focused primarily on the context of fisheries management and the goal was to get an overview of the research to identify research needs and knowledge gaps. NMFS is currently trying to determine if there is a role fisheries can or should play in artificial reef development and management. He emphasized that the objectives of an artificial reef program should be clear (e.g., for the purpose of diving, habitat enhancement, etc.). Workshop participants were supportive of the idea of NMFS' involvement as a clearing house to facilitate information between branches and regions. There is also a desire to consider the potential for streamlining the permitting process. In conclusion, Mr. Dunn mentioned that NMFS and ONMS are planning a "roundtable" meeting with sportfishing representatives of sanctuary advisory council members to be held late this year.

Mr. Dunn again responded to questions from council members about artificial reefs including funding problems, research needs and permitting.

National marine sanctuaries and recreational fishing

Acting ONMS Director John Armor emphasized that while the number one job of sanctuaries is to protect these special places, when combining the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act it results in a powerful and flexible tool to maintain access and responsible use of these resources. Mr. Armor noted that he believes the two statutes do not conflict and users will come to see the benefits. The biggest challenge for ONMS is to dispel the perception that sanctuaries are "off-limits." ONMS recognizes there is much to learn from recreational fishermen.

Mr. Armor responded to questions from council members about the mandate to allow compatible uses in sanctuaries and the strong relationship between fisheries and sanctuaries in the Southeast.

Marine Resources Education Program (MREP)

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Public Information Officer Kim Iverson then gave a presentation on the MREP Southeast fisheries training program. Developed initially in New England by fishermen for fishermen, the workshop-based training provides both classroom and hands-on learning that enables two-way information exchange between fishery scientists, managers and users. She noted that the program includes recreational and commercial fishermen, charter captains, fishing-related business owners and manufacturers, and others interested in learning more about fisheries management and the science used in making management decisions. At the conclusion of her presentation she was asked about the participation of Sea Grant programs, which are included.

GRNMS Recreational Fishing Working Group

Sanctuary Advisory Council Sport Fishing Representative and Recreational Fishing Working Group Chair Tim Tarver reported that the working group has been formed by the council and is expected to meet this fall. The goal of the working group is to try to improve relations and communication with the sport fishing community. Mr. Tarver would like to see the Gray's Reef experience improved for fishermen. Tim also spoke about consumer demands for safe quality food and the potential for artificial reefs to provide that need.

Public Comment

One charter boat captain commented that MREP is a most effective and inspirational educational tool and that by the end of the training he participated in he had new and valuable information and concepts to work with as a charter boat captain. Other commenters noted concern for the regional approach to red snapper fishery management that may unequally impact Georgia's fisheries and the economic impacts. Presenters responded that each state collects data themselves, along with commercial fisheries data, and it is submitted to NMFS to incorporate into fisheries management. The socioeconomic impacts are important but they are not the only factor in fisheries management. There are also efforts to try to increase involvement of recreational anglers in reporting catches.

Other comments and questions involved the MREP program participation, descending devices and fishing hooks to reduce bycatch mortality and fishing industry involvement. A commenter also noted appreciation for protection of Gray's Reef and asked about the work being done in the Research Area as well as long-term management of the area.

A final comment was made that fishermen want to know how their voice can be heard beyond that involving the gathering of statistics. Staff responded by noting how much the public's participation is appreciated and needed and asked people to attend future meetings.

Advisory Council Business

Last meeting summary approval

The July 2016 council meeting summary was approved.

Special recognition

Although Emily Kroutil was unable to attend this meeting due to her move from the coastal area, Rick DeVictor and Sarah Fangman applauded her efforts over the last few years as the K-12 education representative. A framed Gray's Reef photo will be sent to Emily to thank her for her service since she will be rotating off the council. The seat vacancy will be advertised starting on November 1.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs Webinars

Rick DeVictor reported that as another outcome of the January National Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit, the chairpersons have been engaged in ongoing communications through ONMS led webinars. The next webinar will take place on September 26 and the topic is the ONMS Strategic Plan. He noted that Gray's Reef Superintendent Sarah Fangman was critical in developing the draft along with a select few from around the program. Ms. Fangman

noted that she hopes it will move the program and the site forward in meaningful ways and that the plan strongly reflects what Gray's Reef staff and management values. There will also be regional plans.

GRNMS sanctuary advisory council charter (council action)

Becky Shortland reminded council members of the process over the last several months to develop the revised Gray's Reef NMS Advisory Council Charter. A draft of the proposed Charter was sent to all members for review. Ms. Shortland also described the changes in this version from the 2011 Charter. Discussion followed a suggested statement about seeking diversity and inclusivity in membership. It was decided that the topic would be directed to the National Advisory Council Coordinator for national discussion and consideration of placement in recruitment materials if appropriate. With one typo noted for correction, and consideration of a diversity statement as a possible future amendment or inclusion in recruitment materials, the council unanimously voted to approve the 2016 Revised Charter.

Council Members' Report

NOAA Fisheries report

Rick DeVictor gave an update of fishery management-related topics that included actions or proposed actions for hogfish, mahi mahi and lesser targeted species. He also reported that NOAA Fisheries is embarking on regional action plans in response to climate change, which might be the topic for a future presentation to the council.

Acoustically-sensitive species inventory

Mona Behl reported that a Georgia Sea Grant recipient, Rachel Wang, has been working to prepare an inventory of marine animal acoustic activities. This is a collaborative effort between Sea Grant and the ONMS. They would like to scale this up to a national effort.

GRNMS and ecotourism

Mark Padgett reported that he met with Sarah Fangman and Becky Shortland to explore ideas to enhance ecotourism experiences with GRNMS information. Tourism is the second largest industry in Chatham County. Discussion followed about incentives for ecotourism operators, how other sanctuaries are incorporating ecotourism and Georgia Sea Grant's efforts to look at sustainable coastal ecotourism. The group concluded that we need to learn more before we can choose what to do and who we want to reach. Mona Behl and Mark Padgett will work together to narrow down ecotourism goals.

Working Group Reports

Law enforcement

Sgt Mark Carson, LT Warren Fair, and Kevin Mitchell gave updates on law enforcement and compliance efforts by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement respectively.

Resource protection program evaluation

Resource Protection Evaluation Working Group Chair Pat Geer reported that the working group met over the summer with a final meeting in person on Skidaway at the end of August. The working group was tasked with evaluating Gray's Reef's resource protection program that utilizes specific tools – regulations, law enforcement, interagency coordination, direct resource protection, permitting, and zoning. He explained the process and identification of target resources and target audiences. Staff will work toward a final report and plan to be discussed in more detail at the next or future meetings.

Gray's Reef NMS Foundation

Vicki Weeks was introduced to the council as the new Executive Director of the Gray's Reef NMS Foundation.

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Vice President Allison Alexander gave an overview of the national foundation's activities over the past year including Capitol Hill Oceans Week (CHOW), Oceans Live and the Hollings Grant. At the conclusion of her talk, she was asked if any new sanctuary foundations may be developing. Ms. Alexander responded that groups for Flower Garden Banks and Monterey national marine sanctuaries are in the early stages of discussion.

GRNMS Report

Staffing

Sarah Fangman introduced Kim Roberson who recently joined Gray's Reef staff as the research coordinator. She also noted that the deputy superintendent's position maybe filled very soon. Ms. Fangman went on to announce that Becky Shortland will be transitioning to part time work and another staff person will be tasked with sanctuary advisory council coordination before the end of the year. Ms. Fangman and council members thanked Becky for her years of service to the council.

Mobile exhibit

Ms. Fangman showed a mockup of the mobile exhibit, which is in the early design phase and asked for any suggestions for locations to place the exhibit.

Milestones and progress since 2014 retreat

Ms. Fangman discussed the multitude of actions and activities that Gray's Reef staff, along with council support and guidance has been able to accomplish over the past year.

Climate change and GRNMS

Becky Shortland led a quick session to gain some ideas for advancing the climate change discussions within the advisory council. The conclusion was that there are currently no specific actions to be taken and that continuing education is the best approach for now. A presentation will be planned for the next meeting.

Next meetings

The next Gray's Reef NMS Advisory Council meeting will be a two-hour webinar on Tuesday, November 8. Following that another webinar is scheduled for January 12, followed by an in-person meeting suggested for March 2. The hope is that the annual Science Advisory Group meeting can be held March 1.

Public Comment

Tim Tarver commented that a new term might be considered other than "artificial reef."

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4PM.