

**GRAY'S REEF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Recommendations to NOAA in Response to
Recommendations for the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory
Council from the Advisory Council Marine Research Area Concept Working Group
June 22, 2005**

Recommendation 1

Significant research questions exist at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) that can only be addressed by establishing a control (research) area. Therefore, it is the finding of the Sanctuary Advisory Council based on the recommendation of the Marine Research Area Working Group to NOAA that the research area concept should be further explored through a public review process.

Recommendation 2

The Sanctuary Advisory Council recommends that as many appropriate tools as feasible, especially the GIS-based site evaluation tool and the Research Area Working Group, be used to investigate a research area in GRNMS with proper siting criteria.

Recommendation 3

The Sanctuary Advisory Council recommends consideration of the diversity of habitat (with emphasis on high relief habitat) as the primary siting criterion. Should NOAA decide to proceed, the Research Area Working Group should be maintained to support NOAA in consideration of these various criteria (e.g., habitat, size, existing research and monitoring sites, bottom fishing data) in developing proposed options for a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS).

Recommendation 4

The Sanctuary Advisory Council recommends minimizing impacts to user communities including fishing, diving, research, and resource management and considers this a priority under the research area concept. The Sanctuary Advisory Council also endorses the Research Area Working Group finding that non-bottom impinging activities are not viewed as conflicting with the primary objectives of a proposed research area.