

**Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary**  
**Advisory Council Meeting**  
**August 26, 2014**  
Palm Key Nature Retreat  
Ridgeland, SC

*In Attendance:*

**Advisory Council Members**

Rick DeVictor, NOAA Fisheries SE Region (Chair)  
Michael Denmark, Sport Fishing (Vice-Chair)  
Anna George, Conservation (Secretary)  
Peter Auster, Living Resources Research  
William Cliett, Citizen-at-large  
Mary Conley, Conservation  
Pat Geer, GA DNR CRD  
Emily Kroutil, K-12 Education  
Christine Laporte, Citizen-at-large  
Jene Nissen, US Navy  
Scott Noakes, Non-living Resources Research  
Randy Rudd, Sport Diving  
Al Samuels, NOAA OLE  
Suzanne VanParreren, Sapelo Island NERR

*Members Absent:*

Tim Goodale, University Education  
Chuck Hopkinson, NOAA Sea Grant  
Warren Hupman, Charter/Commercial Fishing  
Doug Lewis, GA DNR LE

**NOAA and Gray's Reef Staff**

Sarah Fangman, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) Superintendent and Acting Science Coordinator  
LTJG Jared Halonen, Vessel Operations Officer  
Debbie Meeks, Financial and IT Coordinator/Webmaster  
Jody Patterson, Administrative Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator  
Amy Rath, Communications and Outreach Coordinator  
Todd Recicar, Marine Operations Coordinator  
Becky Shortland, Resource Protection Coordinator

**Public Present**

Sarah Webb, GRNMS *Volunteer of the Year*  
Bob Critmian, The Nature Conservancy

**Welcome and Introductions**

Council Chairman Rick DeVictor called the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) Advisory Council (council) meeting to order, welcomed the members present,

sanctuary staff, and the public in attendance. The meeting agenda was reviewed with no changes. A special introduction was made to recognize Sarah Fangman who has been named Superintendent for GRNMS. Fangman has worked alongside the sanctuary in a regional capacity since 2005 and assumed the additional duties of acting science coordinator and acting deputy superintendent for the site in 2013. She brings to her new leadership role more than a decade of experience in research, planning, and communications across the sanctuary system and internationally, and in leading and conducting dive research at GRNMS.

## **Council Business**

The meeting summary from the May 2014 council meeting was forwarded to the members for review. A motion was made to approve the summary without revision. The motion was seconded and approved.

The citizen-at-large seat for the council has been re-advertised to extend the application process through September 30, 2014.

### National Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit

Council Chairman Rick DeVictor reported that he attended the annual National Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit in Galveston, TX on June 2-4, 2014. During the summit, council chairs had the opportunity to share experience between sanctuaries. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) also provided a briefing on additional ways the councils can be involved in sanctuary management. DeVictor highlighted some of these initiatives for discussion.

DeVictor began the GRNMS council discussions by offering that ONMS has received over 18,000 comments in response to the Sanctuary Nomination process. A member asked what information is needed to start the nomination process and what makes a site worthy to move forward on the list. DeVictor offered that the Secretary of Commerce determines if a site is worthy of designation as a sanctuary. ONMS staff addressed this by saying that this process is only to determine if criteria for sanctuary designation have been met and not to formally designate. ONMS staff also suggested that advisory council members should understand the process so they can answer questions and that nominated sites should have time on council agendas for discussions. Discussion followed about the need for community support, who can make a nomination, who conducts the review, overlap with site expansion, and financial concerns. Sarah Fangman concluded that ONMS needs a broader support base and network, and that the whole system will be improved over time. In the short term there may be some growing pains.

Rick DeVictor went on to relate that there were sessions on “getting the word out” about sanctuaries with an emphasis on recreational use. “Branding” the sanctuaries was also discussed, along with examples of outreach tools such as Team Ocean.

### Call to Action

Rick DeVictor reported that another major focus of the 2014 National Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit was a statement on the value of marine protected areas to

recreation, tourism and coastal communities. Council representatives and Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee members convened to craft a “Call to Action”. The statement seeks to also reflect a collective commitment to ensure proactive management for marine protected areas (MPAs) with increasing recreational uses. All sanctuary advisory councils are asked to sign the “Call to Action”. Sarah Fangman offered that the language in the letter is final so “wordsmithing” is not the goal of this discussion; council members are being asked to agree to sign the document or not.

Much discussion followed on marine protected areas in general and the purpose of the letter. There were also questions about why the emphasis is on recreational use versus other uses of sanctuaries and potential conflicts with other regulatory limits, such as fisheries and whether the regional fishery management councils had been involved or asked to comment on the “Call to Action”.

The council was asked if they are interested in showing support for the statement. Members noted that overall they don’t see any “red flags” but also no real action. The council voted to sign the “Call to Action”.

## **Sanctuary Report**

### Recognitions

Superintendent Sarah Fangman took a few minutes to recognize the special efforts and achievements made by site staff and volunteers, including Sarah Webb who was nominated as GRNMS’ Volunteer of the Year for 2014. LTJG Jared Halonen, vessel operations officer for GRNMS, was recognized with a NOAA Corps Director’s Ribbon for his exemplary efforts during the 2014 NOAA ship *Nancy Foster* research cruise.

### Education Activities

Outreach and Communications Coordinator Amy Rath presented on educator workshops that the site hosted this past quarter including Rivers to Reefs, and Surface-Current Drifter Building with Georgia Southern University. Amy explained that as an outcome of both workshops, the participating educators are challenged to integrate the experience and data into classroom curricula.

Administrative Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator Jody Patterson presented a recap of the Marine Advance Technology Education (MATE) International Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Competition she attended in Alpena, Michigan. The 2014 competition mission objective was to map and identify an unknown shipwreck in Thunder Bay. Patterson is requesting that MATE host the 2016 international event in Savannah. If that occurred, the competition mission would be specific to GRNMS.

### New Technology

Marine Operations Coordinator Todd Recicar gave a presentation on the design concept of an underwater robot. Todd explained that the design developed after he considered the difficulties of using a tethered ROV in the swift currents moving through GRNMS. Subsequent conversations with sanctuary friend and marine robotics engineer, Ed Williams, resulted in a prototype being developed and tested for the site.

### Research Activities

Sarah Fangman reported on research conducted in GRNMS during the 2014 field season, including the recent deployment of a glider (Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV)) belonging to Dr. Catherine Edwards of Skidaway Institute of Oceanography.

### GRNMS Foundation

Fangman also provided an update concerning the development of a National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation chapter as a friends group for GRNMS. She noted that a draft business plan has been developed and that a local board of trustees would support the site through advocacy actions, financial development, and fundraising. The chapter application will be presented to the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation board for approval this fall and GRNMS staff hope to kick things off at the GRNMS Ocean Film Festival in January.

### Soundscapes

Resource Protection Coordinator Becky Shortland discussed the “soundscapes” letter that the council wrote and sent to ONMS Director Dan Basta concerning the need to establish baseline data on natural and human-caused sound across the program. Shortland thanked the council for their interest and involvement and reported that a national working group was established. Scott Noakes also gave an update on his efforts to collect baseline sound data in GRNMS.

### **Public Comment**

No public comments were received.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at noon.