

**Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting
October 24-25, 2001
Charleston Place Hotel
Charleston, SC**

Attendance:

SAC Members Present:

Jim Henry, Henry Ansley, Ann Frick, Matt Gilligan, Joe Kimmel, and George Sedberry.
Lt. Mark Gordon attended for LCDR Dave Cinalli.

SAC Members Absent: Patty McIntosh, Dave Cinalli, Bing Phillips, and Doug Rader.

NOAA Gray's Reef staff in attendance: Reed Bohne, Marcy Lee, Cathy Sakas, Becky Shortland, Greg McFall, Mark Boland, and intern Ebony Henderson.

Public in attendance: Steve Booker, a Chatham County recreational diver.

Distributed Materials:

- Agenda
- July 31, 2001 meeting minutes
- Action Plan Strategies
- Possible management plan timeline
- SAC retreat report Sept. 2000
- Final site goals and objectives
- List of distributed materials Sept. 1999-July 2001
- Site Evaluation List regulations
- Site Evaluation List

Welcome

Chairman Jim Henry called the meeting to order and introduced Lt. Mark Gordon who is attending at the request of Dave Cinalli. LCDR Cinalli is unable to attend the retreat. Dr. Henry also introduced Ebony Henderson who is a new intern from Savannah State University working with Gray's Reef. He also introduced Ed Lindelof from headquarters.

Minutes from the July 31, 2001, SAC meeting were distributed as approved. The agenda was reviewed.

Election of Officers

Dr. Henry asked Becky Shortland to explain the current status of SAC officers. Ms. Shortland explained that the terms of the chair, vice-chair and secretary have expired

since the last SAC meeting. Because this meeting is a "retreat" and not a public meeting, SAC members cannot vote to elect new officers. It was agreed by all that the officers will be elected at the next (public) meeting of the SAC; that date will be determined at the end of the retreat.

Ms. Shortland further reminded Council members that all seats are up for re-appointment in August 2002. All members can compete for their current seats, but that new applications will also be accepted at the time.

Dr. Henry also discussed the agenda for the meeting. Reed Bohne then opened discussions on the new management plan.

New Management Plan Considerations

The strategies that have been identified through the management plan process were reviewed in detail with much discussion. Specifically, the afternoon was spent reviewing those strategies which may have regulatory actions and/or that may be controversial. SAC members provided staff with the following advice:

Anchoring - recommend prohibiting all anchoring at Gray's Reef NMS, and an experimental mooring buoy system.

Diver Contact - address through a diver information program; research on diver impacts is a low priority; no additional regulations are needed at this time; consider strengthening permitting to minimize impacts from research divers.

Marine Waste - address through a marine debris information program, education on aesthetic impacts and wildlife health impacts; identify areas in the Sanctuary to further research marine debris; consider strengthening marine waste management program if needed.

Fishing - recommend prohibiting all spear fishing at Gray's Reef NMS; consider language in regulation on the order of " if spear fishing gear is found on board a vessel in the Sanctuary, it is assumed persons are spear fishing" or "gear should be stowed"

Proceed toward analysis of restrictions such as those at Georgia artificial reefs limiting gear type and bag limits.

Explore status of spiny lobster take at Gray's Reef; is it illegal as an invertebrate? What about Spanish lobster?

Research Area - Proceed toward establishing a research area in Gray's Reef.

The meeting was concluded at 5:00 p.m. and the group proceeded to the South Carolina Aquarium for a tour.

The meeting was convened again at 8:30 a.m. on the morning of Thursday, October 25, with a continuation of reporting on possible elements of the new management plan.

Lt. Mark Boland provided a report on the Enforcement Workshop that was held at the Gray's Reef office on August 1, 2001. Following Lt. Boland's report, Research Coordinator Greg McFall gave an overview of research and monitoring programs for the new management plan; and Education Coordinator Cathy Sakas gave an overview of education and outreach programs for the new management plan. Many of these strategies had been presented at the previous SAC meeting, however, the discussion was very productive and provided additional information for consideration.

SAC Accomplishments Report

Becky Shortland highlighted the draft report on SAC Accomplishments since its creation in August 1999. Such a report is suggested for all Sanctuary Advisory Councils in the system through the SAC Implementation Handbook. She asked that members review the brief report and get back to her with any suggested changes or additions.

National Marine Sanctuary Program Site Designation Process

Becky Shortland briefly noted the information included in the distributed materials regarding the site designation process. She emphasized that headquarters intended to revisit both the existing list of candidate sites, which dates back to 1983, and the methods in the near future.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Update

Becky Shortland gave SAC members an update of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's activities. Regarding the process the Council has underway to designate marine protected areas, cancellation of the Council's September meeting has delayed things further.

Islands In The Stream

During lunch, Dr. George Sedberry presented information and film clips from the recent Ocean Exploration initiative "Islands in the Stream." The cruises on Harbor Branch's Seward Johnson with submersibles examined the Charleston Bump and an area off of Georgia at the 30-fathom ledge break termed the Savannah Scarp.

SAC Work Plan For SAC FY2002

Working group considerations - SAC members were presented with a list of possible working groups that might be established to enhance constituent participation in Sanctuary activities. The discussion began with the previously established Ocean Discovery Center Working Group, which is to be chaired by Dr. Matt Gilligan. Dr. Gilligan noted that no additional suggestions had been received for other working group

members. He will forward that request once again. Reed Bohne noted that funding for the proposed Center is still uncertain since the government is still functioning under Continuing Resolutions until Congress approves the Federal FY02 budget. Size and composition of the Ocean Discovery Center Working Group may depend on the final budget.

After much discussion, it was determined that the only useful working groups that might be established at this time are for education and outreach. Specifically, Anne Lindsay Frick may be called on to chair a working group on K-12 activities, and Dr. Matt Gilligan may be called on to chair a working group on University activities.

Regarding research and monitoring programs, SAC members requested that Greg McFall bring a list of priority projects to them so that they may aid in securing support. Mr. McFall mentioned that there was no real need for a research working group at this time and it may be more appropriate to assemble people based on type of research being addressed or in other words on a case by case basis.

SAC members further discussed the possibility of other projects to undertake in this new fiscal year, including support for a non-profit organization ("Friends" or foundation), continuing to monitor management plan development and the desirability of educational opportunities with a wider audience in mind. All members agreed that the SAC work plan for fiscal year 2002 (Oct 1, 2001- Sept. 30, 2002) would primarily focus on monitoring and reviewing new management plan process and document(s). In addition, SAC members would like to see regular public presentations from pertinent researchers aligned with SAC meetings.

Discussion also followed concerning adding new members to the SAC. Some suggestions were made for a commercial fisher representative and representation from the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve. No decisions, however, were made. Becky Shortland reminded the SAC that additions to the SAC membership would require an amendment to the charter.

NOAA Administrator

The President has selected Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr. to be the next Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, or "NOAA

Administrator," The President will submit the nomination to the U.S. Senate for confirmation.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SAC was tentatively set for Thursday, December 13, 2001, at a location to be determined. Agenda items for the next SAC meeting may include:

- Election of officers

- Finalizing the SAC Accomplishments Report 1999-2001
- Discussion of the Draft Management Plan/EIS status and an update on the process and timeline ahead.
- Reviewing research and monitoring project priorities list
- An informative presentation (scientific?) to be determined
- Discussion of SAC work plan

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.