

**Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
And
Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve Advisory Committee
Joint meeting, April 20, 2006, Sapelo Island
Meeting Summary**

Distributed Materials

- GRNMS Advisory Council members list
- Sanctuary Advisory Council fact sheet
- NMSP National Advisory Councils meeting agenda
- Human-Induced Acoustic Impacts On Marine Life, Director's Order
- California Ocean Communicators Q&As

Advisory Council Members Present

Tim Tarver, Sport Fishing
Christi Lambert, Regional Conservation
Henry Ansley, GA DNR Coastal Resources Division
Clark Alexander, Non-living Resources Research
Joe Kimmel, Chair, NOAA Fisheries, SERO
Will Berson, Local Conservation
Ralph Neely, Recreational Diving
Venetia Butler, K-12 Education
Buddy Sullivan, Sapelo Island NERR
Judy Helmey, Charter/Commercial Fishing

Advisory Council Members Absent

Leslie Sautter, University Education
Stephen Adams, GA DNR Law Enforcement
LCDR Scott Rogers, U.S. Coast Guard
Danny Gleason, Living Resources Research

Public Present

Lauren Fuqua, College of Charleston, Project Oceanica

Sapelo Island NERR Advisory Committee Members Present

Randy Walker, UGA Marine Extension Service
Ben Hall, Sapelo Island Resident
Don Cohrs, Friends of Sapelo
Michelle Johnson, SICARS
Christi Lambert, Chair, Altamaha Bioreserve, TNC (also GRNMS SAC)
Clark Alexander, Skidaway Institute of Oceanography (also GRNMS SAC)
Fred Hay, Sapelo Island Manager

GRNMS and NMSP Staff Present

Cathy Sakas, Education Coordinator and Co-Acting Manager
Sarah Fangman, Regional Research
Debbie Meeks, Administrative Coordinator
Jim Sullivan, Regional Projects Coordinator
Becky Shortland, Advisory Council and Stewardship Coordinator
Billy Causey, Acting Regional Superintendent

Sapelo NERR Staff Present

Buddy Sullivan, Reserve Manager (also GRNMS SAC)
Brooke Vallaster, Education Coordinator
Dorset Hurley, Research Coordinator
Amy Gaddis, Stewardship Coordinator

Welcome and Introductions

Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve (SINERR) Advisory Committee Chair Christi Lambert and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) Advisory Council Chair Joe Kimmel welcomed everyone, setting the tone for a precedent-setting joint meeting. They asked for introductions and then reviewed the agenda.

Co-acting manager Cathy Sakas announced that member Henry Ansley was nominated by the GRNMS staff as the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation volunteer of the year. The winner will be announced during Capitol Hill Oceans Week at a formal dinner on June 13th in Washington, DC. Henry will be attending.

SINERR Committee and GRNMS Council Business

SINERR Manager Buddy Sullivan welcomed everyone to the reserve and gave a brief overview of the reserve staffing.

He updated members on the status of the *SINERR* Draft Management Plan revision, which has been forwarded to NOAA for review. After NOAA clearance (3-6 month process) the plan will return to the advisory committee as well as the general public for review. Buddy further explained that the plan is a comprehensive overview of state/federal partnership with a breakdown of programs including research, outreach, education, monitoring programs, facilities, state management of island resources, and public access.

Mr. Sullivan also spoke about the annual grant, which has been submitted for award and accepted by the NOAA grants office; grant numbers remain stable from a year ago (\$560K NOAA award, matched with state \$240 funds; \$150K generated through visitor's center).

GRNMS Advisory Council Chair Joe Kimmel spoke to the group about the upcoming annual national advisory council meeting. He reviewed the agenda, which includes:

- 1) Offshore energy issues, including wind generated power issues off the east coast
- 2) Acoustics
- 3) Fishing Regulations in sanctuaries

Education and Outreach Programs

SINERR education programs were outlined by Education Coordinator Brooke Vallaster who gave an introduction to the Reserve System. Several handouts describing programs were distributed including: Quarterly newsletter; Teacher Training Programs; Sapelo and NERRs system information; lecture series handout. Brooke then spoke about anniversary events that are planned for *SINERR*'s 30th Anniversary and the joint programs with GRNMS for the Sanctuary's 25th Anniversary. Chief among the events is the addition of "Film Festival South" the weekend after the Savannah Ocean Film Festival, which coincides with Estuary Day.

Suzanne VanParreren, Coastal Training Programs Coordinator, noted that it has been a very busy year for programs including:

- 1) Marine mammal workshop in November in partnership with GRNMS;
- 2) Planning for Quality Growth Workshop hosted in January;
- 3) Erosion and Sedimentation Control: Enforcement for Local Issuing Authorities workshop in February;
- 4) Oyster Roast for a Reason hosted in February in partnership with UGA Marine Extension Service;
- 5) Georgia's Diamondback Terrapin Workshop in March;
- 6) Sustainable Building Workshop Edisto Beach State Park Interpretive Center in March; and
- 7) Public Issues and Conflict Management – hosted by NOAA CSC also in March.

These events are instrumental in networking and developing partnerships and have brought significant visibility to SINERR. Clark Alexander and others commended the reserve for all the training and education programs.

GRNMS education and outreach programs were outlined by GRNMS Education Coordinator Cathy Sakas beginning with an overview of program goals (see attached PowerPoint presentation). She noted that GRNMS attempts to create many opportunities and venues to try to reach different audiences including:

- 1) Rivers to Reefs Educators Workshop
- 2) Gray's Reef Education Modules
- 3) Student Ocean Council
- 4) NMSP Mini-grants
- 5) Radio message campaign
- 6) GRNMS Festival/Ocean Film festival
- 7) Exhibits

Budget cuts projected for next year are expected to impact all GRNMS programs including education and outreach. Cathy also mentioned participation in other activities such as:

- ~GRNMS is actively participating in the Southeast Implementation Team for Right Whale recovery
- ~ROV Design and Implementation contest this weekend
- ~Salt Water University II – adult group diving GRNMS & students coming to coastal GA to learn about GRNMS & other issues
- ~September 7th: 25th anniversary gala event at Georgia Aquarium (\$250/plate fundraiser)

Venetia Butler reported that she attended the Georgia Science Teachers Association and other meetings on behalf of GRNMS and presented GRNMS education materials. Teachers are incredibly receptive to these materials and this information.

Venetia went on to address formation of the Advisory Council's first Education Working Group, which was approved at the January meeting. She met with staff and developed some goals, such as help with development, refinement and distribution of the ocean science curriculum and helping with events like the Ocean Film Festival. The working group may begin to brainstorm on marine mammal issues. Marine mammal issues could

be one of the topics the working group could address. Members will soon be invited to join this group; suggestions and ideas are welcomed.

Regionalization and Connectivity throughout the Region – Billy Causey

Acting Southeast/Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean Regional Superintendent Billy Causey first expressed appreciation to members of the Advisory Council for the time they volunteer to the NMSP. He then gave a presentation on NMSP regionalization based on management needs. (See attached PowerPoint presentation for details.)

Regional priorities for 2006 include: getting out in the region and not just the sites; supporting management plan reviews; meeting with regional agency counterparts; making congressional contacts (field & D.C.); engage CZM managers and Coastal States Organization members, NERRS and Marine Protected Area Centers; and integrating the Annual Operating Plan process among sites.

Billy then gave an overview of the regional science program and the oceanographic and biological “connectivity” in the region. A great deal of capability has been developed through the Florida Keys NMS and he would like to see this transferred to the whole region. Billy also spoke about education and outreach in the region such as working with aquariums to teach them about watersheds and oceans.

GRNMS Latitude 31-30 Program – Jim Sullivan

GRNMS Regional Projects Coordinator Jim Sullivan presented an update on the Latitude 31-30 program (see PowerPoint attached), which emphasizes multiple groups sharing management responsibilities between Latitudes 31-30 N.

Expected outcomes include:

1. Establishment of 31-30 Council – initial meeting held in Savannah May 2005; determined characteristics of the council, identified benefits & challenges
2. Resource Characterization & Inventory of sites that are 31-30 partners. All of these groups are gathering data and it isn't always shared.
3. Develop Education & Outreach efforts
4. Form international partnerships within Latitude 31-30 program.

The next steps include finalizing council specifics, the initial resource characterization and analysis, an education poster and outreach materials, and identifying and pursuing funding and research opportunities.

Jim also mentioned a proposed South Atlantic Bight (SAB) high-power, high-bandwidth cabled observatory.

Lunch Break

Marine Messaging – Christi Lambert

Christi Lambert introduced the topic of marine messaging for all to consider. She explained that both of our organizations share common themes and programs on awareness and protection of marine resources. Perhaps we could consider how to better coordinate and collaborate. Becky Shortland further explained that organizations on the west coast, including sanctuaries, The Nature Conservancy and others with common objectives, are working together to give their messages more impact. Little discussion

followed, but participants agreed that it would be a good topic for the newly-formed Advisory Council Education and Outreach Working Group to consider.

Other SINERR Programs

Stewardship and GIS – Aimee Gaddis

Stewardship throughout the reserve system means different things. Aimee spends most of her time on GIS and providing information to visitors. The GIS lab in this reserve has been missing for about ten years but it will be re-opening soon, which satisfies one of the directives of the Sapelo Island NERR Management Plan. Aimee is also working to create a better system to provide data to other groups/individuals that request information. Aimee also informed members that a new parking area is being developed at the dock landing site using environmentally friendly materials and techniques.

Research and Monitoring – Dorset Hurley

Dorset Hurley gave an update on two components: monitoring & research. Monitoring is well-defined within the reserve system; the manner with which they conduct weather, water and nutrient monitoring activities is mandated under the NERR System Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP).

Dorset gave an update on the Dean Creek project and other programs including: blue crab monitoring due in part to the overall decline of blue crab landings in Georgia 1956-2002; publication of marsh die-back monitoring nears submission in the Journal of Coastal Research; Hollings Coastal Research Institute is partnering with the SINERR and University of Georgia Marine Extension Service to conduct a study focusing on regional anthropogenic impacts of development upon small intertidal creeks.

Adjourn Joint Meeting at Sapelo Island & Reconvene GRNMS Advisory Council at Sapelo Island Visitor's Center

The meeting of the Gray's Reef NMS Advisory Council was reconvened by Chair Joe Kimmel in the Sapelo Island NERR Visitors Center on the mainland in Meridian, Georgia.

Council Business – Joe Kimmel

Minutes of the January meeting were approved followed by a brief discussion of the format of meeting notes. Advisory Council Secretary Venetia Butler and Becky Shortland asked for approval to format future meeting minutes in a summary form, while maintaining all the original notes. Members agreed that future minutes can be more of a summary format, but all notes should be archived.

Final Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FMP/FEIS)

Becky Shortland updated members on the status of the Gray's Reef FMP/FEIS, which is now formally in NOAA clearance, with a July release hoped for. Becky proposed July as the next meeting date for the Advisory Council to coincide with release of the plan. She further suggested the meeting be held somewhere in coastal Georgia at a time of day/evening when most of interested public could attend. All agreed that Midway would be a good central location and the meeting time should begin in the afternoon and extend into the evening for public comment. Tuesday, July 25th is the tentative date, beginning at approximately 1:00 p.m. with extended public comment beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Members asked what role the Advisory Council will have in the next steps of the plan. Becky responded that the Advisory Council is tasked with helping to implement the plan where appropriate and with performance evaluation. The regulations, however, will not be effective until approximately 90 days after release of the document.

Becky continued by asking about an October meeting date and location. The U.S. Coast Guard training center in Charleston, South Carolina has been proposed. If the budget allows this may be a two-day meeting and retreat. Mid-October seemed preferable for most members present.

NMSA & MSFCMA – Billy Causey and Joe Kimmel

Billy Causey introduced the Advisory Council's review and comment on the proposed protocols for development of fishing regulations in national marine sanctuaries. The outline and flowchart indicate numerous points at which the NMSP and NOAA Fisheries Service would interact. Joe Kimmel gave an overview of similar communications through actions of Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries Service. (Refer to the flowcharts and text handed out previously, which describe the processes and how they flow with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and the Magnuson Stevens Act). Both pieces of legislation are under consideration for reauthorization.

Discussion followed with no particular recommendations. Joe Kimmel, however strongly recommended that sanctuary staff renew communications with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) by attending future SAFMC meetings, which is considering Amendment 14 on marine protected areas at the June meeting in Florida. Joe emphasized that he believes it is good to have someone from NMSP come to Council meetings when those things are being discussed so Gray's Reef and the NMSP are better informed. He further noted that he would like to see Gray's Reef staff participation when fisheries management teams are being created over potential management actions/issues.

Public Comment – no public present.

Meeting Adjourned