

FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2011

Meeting Attendance Roster:

Frank Burek	Recreational Diving	Absent
Lori Traweek	Recreational Diving	Absent
Cher Walker	Diving Operators	Present
Frank Wasson	Diving Operators	Absent
Clint Moore	Oil and Gas Industry	Present
Rebecca Nadel	Oil and Gas Industry	Absent
Irby Basco	Fishing - Recreational	Present
Matt Bunn	Fishing - Recreational	Absent
Joe Hendrix	Fishing - Commercial	Absent
Mike Jennings	Fishing - Commercial	Present
Will Heyman	Research	Absent
Larry McKinney	Research	Present
Dale Loughmiller	Education	Present
Jacqui Stanley	Education	Present
Ellis Pickett	Conservation	Present
Page Williams	Conservation	Present
James Sinclair	BOEMRE (non-voting)	Present
Carmen DeGeorge	U.S. Coast Guard (non-voting)	Absent
Rusty Swafford	NOAA Fisheries (non-voting)	Absent
Charles Tyer	NOAA OLE (non-voting)	Present
Vacant	EPA (non-voting)	-----
G.P. Schmahl	Sanctuary Superintendent (non-voting)	Present

*Note: Will Heyman joined the meeting at 10:20 AM via GoToMeeting

The regular meeting of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) Advisory Council was held on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, at 9:00 AM, at the FGBNMS Headquarters offices in Galveston, Texas. Council chair, Larry McKinney was present. Council vice-chair, Frank Burek, was absent. Larry called the meeting to order at 9:20 AM.

G.P. Schmahl, sanctuary superintendent, welcomed the council and the public, apologized for the parking issues due to the construction area associated with replacing salt water tank pipeline, and gave a brief "safety moment." He introduced sanctuary staff that were present. G.P. also reminded council members that Dale Loughmiller would be experimenting with GoToMeeting today to allow virtual meeting attendance by several council members. Jen Morgan provided administrative updates regarding the

council roster, council directory, and council annual report. G.P. introduced Cher Walker, a new council member serving in a diving operations seat, who was in attendance for the first time. Cher provided some biographical information for the council members, who in turn provided their own introductions.

G.P. provided a sanctuary update on activities that have occurred since November 2010. He acknowledged the current budget concerns and stated that the House and Senate have come to agreement on a budget for an additional two weeks. G.P. briefly reviewed the management plan progress. 89 comments (including one petition with 193 signatures) were received. He explained that we have now captured all of the comments, sorted them into categories, and tracked the comments with an identifier number to relate them back to the original submitter. G.P.'s update included a review of the following items: the NPR feature "To expand or not to expand" by Carrie Feibel on KUHF on 2/23/11; the DOC/NOS/NOAA organizational chart and the newly appointed positions held by David Kennedy (Assistant Administrator, NOS) and Holly Bamford (Deputy Assistant Administrator, NOS); R/V Manta field operations for 2011 and partnerships (Darrell Walker commented on the maintenance challenges, two crew members that are now NOAA certified working divers; and the choice to operate at lower speeds to use monetary resources better); SPMD maintenance and data; the Long-term Coral Reef Monitoring Report (2004-2008) published by BOEMRE in Dec. 2010 (James Sinclair added information about the details and availability of the report); FGBNMS long-term monitoring; W&T Offshore 2011 Divestiture package (Clint Moore provided further details, adding that W&T is also selling HIA384); Reefs at Risk – Revisited-2011, the World Resources Institute's analysis of the status of and threats to coral reefs around the world (FGBNMS is a benchmark area for healthy reefs); FGBNMS project with Texas Sate Aquarium to install touch-screen video exhibits; the historical maps and charts collection of the NOAA Office of Coast Survey in which was found a 1910 map indicating coral areas off the coast of Texas; and Ocean Discovery Day to be held on March 26th. The council members engaged in discussion about various aquarium, zoo, and nature center partnerships established by the sanctuary, including Tennessee Aquarium, Moody Gardens, Rockport Aquarium, Austin Nature Center, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas in New Orleans, Galveston's Seawall Park design, and the Downtown Aquarium in Houston.

Page Williams announced the Galveston Bay Foundation's premier of the Save the Bay movie at the Houston Zoo education building and the State of the Gulf documentary. She also shared copies of the Science of Marine Reserves publication with the council members.

G.P. asked the members of the public in attendance for introductions. Public in attendance included: Lisa Ashworth, Jesse Cancelmo, Kevin Buch, and Josh Davis.

G.P introduced Wayne Smith, the guest speaker and a member of Monitor NMS Advisory Council, and asked Wayne to elaborate on his background. G.P. explained that although FGBNMS does not have known archaeological resources, the program is supportive of maritime heritage; it's not just about shipwrecks.

Wayne Smith began by describing his background and stating that everything in the ocean and coasts is one great big ball of resources; you can't separate maritime heritage from resources or coastal waters. He gave a brief overview of the state of the Monitor and the current threats to it. He also described how the Monitor has generated excitement within the community about the history of the area. He continued by saying that it becomes even more exciting when faces are given to history. Wayne's recent projects have focused on the people as part of the story. He described in detail how the remains of two sailors found in the turret have allowed them to put faces on those sailors and then mesh the components of names, photos, history, and family to get to the true story of the sailors. He has worked with the faces lab at LSU. Wayne answered questions posed by council members, especially regarding diving on the shipwreck. He concluded by saying that shipwrecks have a limited lifetime and that it is good management to have divers on wrecks.

Page Williams asked that the council have more time to review the November 2010 meeting minutes and that an attendance list be included. Those meeting minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Larry McKinney suggested that the NMSA Reauthorization Letter be approved by email when suggested language from HQ is included. Page Williams moved to send forward the letter pending revision. Mike Jennings seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

G.P. addressed the vacant seats on the council. He explained that we are in the process of applicant review and that the names would soon be vetted at HQ with the possibility of having new members at the next council meeting.

The council engaged in a brief discussion to address concerns about virtual meeting attendance. Larry McKinney agreed to work with Jen to review the SAC charter and outline remote attendance possibilities. Dale Loughmiller recommended that voting should not be allowed remotely. Will Heyman asked if other stakeholders might be able to participate using GoToMeeting.

As Larry McKinney's term as council chair was to expire, an officer election was necessary. Page Williams moved to accept Larry McKinney as chair by acclamation. Jacqui Stanley seconded the motion. In advance of this SAC meeting, Jen Morgan received five votes for Larry as chair. Larry McKinney will serve as the council chair for a two year term.

A public comment period was held at 12:50 P.M. Kevin Buch spoke and asked if there have been any recent developments or progress towards an experimental closure or plans for further studies. G.P. responded by explaining that the idea for looking at the effects of fishing in the sanctuary is included in the DMP and that if it is included in the final management plan, then we will go forward with the design. He noted that comments received on the DMP show that this is quite controversial. It is something that could take quite a few years. In the meantime, sanctuary staff are gathering

baseline information on benthic communities using multiple means. The sanctuary is currently funded for three years by the coral reef conservation program to collect this baseline data. G.P. also addressed questions about current budget issues and ONMS funding.

Following a brief lunch break, Larry stated that he reviewed the council charter and that decisions require a majority vote by those present with a quorum. Under these guidelines voting remotely during virtual meeting attendance would not be allowed.

G.P. gave a presentation to review the comments received on the draft management plan. He reminded council members that they have received a CD with all of the comments. He noted that a complete analysis has not yet been completed, but that the comments have been sorted into general categories. The following are the comment categories and frequencies:

- Boundary expansion-46
- Fishing-24
- Spearfishing (many related to expansion)-27
- Ray and whale shark regs -8
- Vessel discharge-8
- Discharge (oil and gas)– 2
- Dive flag reg – 9
- Other- 51

G.P. noted that many assumptions were found in the comments. Many people appeared to assume that sanctuary expansion means that new areas will be off limits to all fishing, and in some cases diving as well. Others assumed that regulations associated with boundary expansion would take place immediately upon finalization of the management plan. G.P. explained proposals within the DMP and regulatory versus non-regulatory activities. He also noted that with expansion; we may be open to looking at site specific regulations.

G.P. also reviewed comments on the proposed regulations, including the alpha flag requirement and the ray and whale shark harassment proposed regulations. He explained that we will be modifying the regulatory language, as only direct touching, riding, pursuing, injuring or killing is meant to be addressed by this regulation. Regardless, G.P. does feel strongly that we do need some type of regulation. G.P. also addressed the proposed discharge regulations and the numerous spearfishing comments.

No standing subcommittee reports were given at the meeting.

Larry addressed the idea of a youth working group. He noted that it is difficult to see how a youth seat would be useful, but he does think that there is value in a youth working group. G.P. added that he was involved in a youth summit at TAMUCC and that demographic provides an interesting perspective and surprising depth of thought. Larry appointed Jacqui Stanley as chair of the subcommittee to pursue options

regarding youth involvement. The subcommittee will use information from other sanctuary sites as resources.

Larry introduced the Draft NOAA Aquaculture Policy. Larry asked that Page Williams and Joe Hendrix work together to draft a comment to be submitted during the public comment period. He suggested a review and vote by email, as the comment period will end on April 11.

Mike Jennings introduced the Walter Jones Amendment #548 to H.R. 1. This is a bill that cuts funding for controversial catch shares. He explained that funding could be cut for JEA, law enforcement and data collections and could mean major cuts to NOAA funding. Mike will testify before the senate commerce and science committee. Page Williams asked Mike to send an email alert to everyone on the council with information and links.

Irby Basco moved to adjourn the meeting. Jacqui Stanley seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 PM.