

## FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

### Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting Minutes November 1, 2018

#### Meeting Attendance Roster:

Jimi Mack	Recreational Diving	Absent
Jesse Cancelmo	Recreational Diving	Present
Natalie Davis	Diving Operations	Present (webinar)
Frank Burek	Diving Operations	Present
James Wiseman	Oil and Gas Industry	Absent
Clint Moore	Oil and Gas Industry	Present
Scott Hickman	Fishing - Recreational	Present
John Blaha	Fishing - Recreational	Absent
Shane Cantrell	Fishing - Commercial	Present
Buddy Guindon	Fishing - Commercial	Absent
Adrienne Simoes Correa	Research	Absent
Larry McKinney	Research	Present
Brian Shmaefsky	Education	Present
Jacqui Stanley	Education	Absent
Joanie Steinhaus	Conservation	Present (late)
Jake Emmert	Conservation	Present
James Sinclair	BSEE (non-voting)	Present
Mark Belter	BOEM (non-voting)	Present (webinar)
Mark Zanowicz	U.S. Coast Guard (non-voting)	Present (webinar)
Rusty Swafford	NOAA Fisheries (non-voting)	Absent
Charles Tyer	NOAA OLE (non-voting)	Absent
Barbara Keeler	EPA (non-voting)	Present (webinar)
G.P. Schmahl	Sanctuary Superintendent (non-voting)	Present

**Total voting member attendance:** 10 of 16 of voting members; 8 votes needed

**Others in Attendance:**

Leslie Clift, Emma Hickerson, John Embesi, Kelly Drinnen, Marissa Nuttall, Jimmy MacMillan, Bill Jones, Sharon McBreen (Pew; webinar), Sandra Brooke (Florida State University), Emily Callahan (Blue Latitudes), Amber Jackson (Blue Latitudes), Diego Gil (Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG)), Tom Linton (TAMUG), Bill Kiene, Theresa Morris (Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN)), Dan Marks, Ryan Fikes (National Wildlife Federation; webinar), Ken Fountain (webinar), Sarah Tsoflias (Chevron; webinar), and Lauren Waters (webinar)

**9:15** Meeting called to order by Clint Moore.

**9:15 Welcome and Announcements – G.P. Schmahl**

Today's meeting is being run through a webinar, and with a sound system.

**9:21 Administrative Business – Clint Moore**

Adoption of Agenda – motion from Frank Burek, second from Shane Cantrell, no discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Discussion and approval of September 2018 minutes postponed until later in the meeting.

Schedule of 2019 dates - February 28, May 15, September 4, and November 7

**9:23 Sanctuary Update – G.P. Schmahl**

Recent SAC recruitment ended with applications due on September 17, 2018. Applications were as follows: Recreational Diving (Jimi Mack; 2<sup>nd</sup> term) 10 applicants; Oil & Gas (James Wiseman; 2<sup>nd</sup> term) – 2 applicants; Research (Adrienne Correa; 1<sup>st</sup> term) – 1 applicant; Education (Jacqui Stanley; 3<sup>rd</sup> term) – 0 applicants. Current round of recruitment (Recreational Fishing seat and re-advertisement of Education seat) begins November 1, with a deadline for applications on November 30, 2018.

Two important corrections were noted for the record. First, G.P. shared a correction for the area included in the SAC's May 2018 recommendation for expansion. The correct number is 160.4 square miles. The previously reported 206 square miles was incorrect. Also, Jeff Child's master's thesis has been acknowledged and properly cited in the recently published manta ray nursery paper by Stewart et al. (2018). Mr. Childs had identified that the Flower Garden Banks served as a probable Manta ray nursery during his graduate work in the 1990's.

Boundary expansion: G.P. noted the SAC's expansion recommendation for Stetson Bank's boundary excludes small portions of existing FGBNMS, and NOAA will make adjustments to this boundary to include this area. As per presidential Executive Order 13795, FGBNMS will soon request BOEM to review the proposed expansion for a "full accounting of any energy or mineral resource potential within the designated area and

impact to the offshore energy industry.” G.P. presented to GMFMC (Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council) at their October meeting and advised them NOAA will likely revise its expansion preferred alternative to be in line with the May 2018 SAC recommendation. GMFMC will provide comments and recommendations related to this potential change. It is expected that their written response will depart from the previously recommended “tiered” approach for fishing regulations, since the SAC’s recommended boundary lines are close to the NAZ (no activity zones) at most of the proposed banks/reefs. G.P. shared the next steps for FGBNMS expansion, with the publication of a proposed rule by May 2019.

Research update: The two FGBNMS ROV (remotely operated vehicle) explorations for 2018 were focused near and within the current sanctuary and proposed expansion areas. FGBNMS has enough data now to develop habitat classification maps. Dr. Suzanne Fredericq (University of Louisiana, Lafayette) studied algal nodules (rhodoliths) as biodiversity hotspots and seed banks. Dr. Santiago Herrera (LeHigh University) also utilized the R/V *Manta* to research the population connectivity of deepwater corals in the northwest Gulf of Mexico. The R/V *Manta* also conducted a mapping survey, funded by BOEM, to collect multibeam data at sites of interest (e.g., Big Dunn Bar, Little Dunn Bar, Claypile, Coffee Lump, and Davis Bank).

Dr. Michelle Johnston presented recent work on lionfish at FGBNMS at the 2018 Lionfish Summit in Cocoa Beach, Florida. Interestingly, no decline has been observed in small preyfish at FGBNMS study sites. Lionfish at FGBNMS predominately prey upon Red night shrimp. Skin ulcers on lionfish were observed at FGBNMS during the August 2018 invitational cruise, and has been reported throughout the Caribbean.

The 2017 long-term monitoring report was published and is available on the FGBNMS website.

A recent report issued by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) states the risks of climate-induced impacts are projected to be higher at 2°C (centigrade) than those with global warming of 1.5°C. Coral reefs, for example, are projected to decline by a further 70-90% at 1.5°C with larger losses (>99%) at 2°C.

### **10:15 Advisory Council Charter Renewal – Frank Burek/Brian Shmaefsky**

The FGBNMS SAC Charter expires in April 2019 and must be renewed. Brian Shmaefsky and Frank Burek outlined changes and additions as recommended by the Advisory Council’s Charter Renewal Subcommittee (Frank Burek (co-chair), Jake Emmert, Brian Shmaefsky (co-chair), and James Wiseman). The subcommittee proposes changes regarding membership by adding 2 voting seats for Marine Transportation and 1 additional non-voting seat for Recreation, Tourism, and Marketing from the city of Galveston. The new marine transportation seats would represent transportation, shipping, and ports. Seven of the 14 national marine sanctuaries have a seat related to marine transportation, and nine have a seat related to recreation, tourism, and marketing. The subcommittee recommended the Recreation, Tourism, and Marketing seat not be subject to the 3-year term limit. Discussion followed.

Scott Hickman cautioned against adding more voting seats and the difficulty in achieving quorum, but liked the idea of having a non-voting seat for both seats. John Blaha spoke in support of the seats. G.P. stated he is not in favor of increasing the size of the Advisory Council because smaller committees are generally more effective. Also, the National Marine Sanctuary Act limits advisory councils to 15 seats for sanctuaries designated after 1992 (FGBNMS was designated prior to this restriction). G.P. explained the history of the Advisory Council membership and the difficulty of filling certain seats. He added that when expansion occurs, Council membership should be re-evaluated at that time. G.P. suggested the subcommittee could consider revising the Council membership to have 1 seat for each constituent group instead of 2, freeing up seats for new stakeholder groups. He cautioned against adding governmental entities that do not have jurisdiction in FGBNMS. Jake Emmert suggested bolstering the relationship between FGBNMS and the marine transportation industry instead of adding seats to the Council. Jesse Cancelmo agreed marine transportation would be important representation, but recommended only 1 seat. He suggested removing 1 Diving Operations seat, and adding 1 Marine Transportation seat. Larry said he is concerned about filling 2 seats for marine transportation, but agreed on the non-voting vote for City of Galveston. **Frank motioned to adopt the recommendations from the SAC charter renewal review subcommittee. Brian seconded. Shane offered an amendment motion to refer today's conversation regarding item 3a back to the subcommittee, maintain the current size of the SAC, incorporate seats for the 2 groups (marine transportation and marketing, tourism, and recreation); and identify areas for their incorporation into the current working groups. Larry motioned to table the motion for later in the meeting, seconded by Scott. None opposed. Motion carried.**

### **11:30 Marine Life Discoveries at the Intersection of Industry and the Environment – Amber Jackson/Emily Callahan**

Amber Jackson and Emily Callahan with Blue Latitudes, a marine environmental consulting firm, presented two case studies from the Gulf of Mexico: 1) post-reefing ROV marine life survey of recent decommissioning and reefing of oil and gas platform, East Breaks 110A and 2) ROV marine life surveys on the Amberjack (MC109) platform and Pompano (VK989A) platform. Blue Latitudes has been using existing ROV maintenance footage to communicate to their clients what marine life is present on the rig, and the potential for a decommissioning decision. California is looking at potentially decommissioning its first platform in 20 years. As well as characterizing the fish communities on the platform, they also tried to calculate the percent cover of *Lophelia pertusa*. Discussion followed.

### **12:25 Break for Lunch**

### **12:35 Microplastics – Theresa Morris/Joanie Steinhaus**

Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN) has been conducting a microplastics study in Galveston, assisted by Moody Gardens. Significant amounts of microplastics have been

documented from local sediments and water samples. TIRN wants to expand the project to be monthly at 5 sites for 2 years, and also to expand the sampling sites to include FGBNMS.

TIRN also reported on the status of sea turtle nesting on the upper Texas coast. They explained all sea turtle eggs are removed and moved south Texas, but TIRN is trying to establish a sea turtle corral in Galveston so that the eggs could remain local. Joanie explained plastics are impacting sea turtles' endocrine system, metabolism, feeding behavior, mating behavior, and nests. Discussion followed.

Scott inquired about the plastic bag ban. Joanie explained the Texas Supreme Court ruled local government bans on plastic bags would not be allowed.

### **1:13 Public Comment and Q&A Period**

none

**1:13 Advisory Council Charter Renewal – Frank Burek/Brian Shmaefsky**  
Shane made a motion to amend Frank's original motion to adopt the recommendations of the subcommittee, and amend as follows: "to carve out the seat recommendation and refer back to the committee for more development and analysis of 1) the size of SAC; 2) the Galveston seat recommendation; and 3) marine transportation seat recommendation". Seconded by Larry. Discussion followed. Motion to adopt Shane's amendment carried unanimously. Motion on Frank's original motion as amended by Shane's amendment carried unanimously.

### **1:20 Deep Sea Corals in the Gulf of Mexico – Dr. Sandra Brooke**

Deep sea corals are found in all the world's oceans and are most common from 200-800 meters (m). Some are important structure-forming species, while others add diversity to the habitat. Black corals are long-lived (e.g., a specimen from Hawaii was aged 4,270 years old.), and some can be large (i.e., over 3 m in diameter). The Gulf of Mexico has many species of glass sponges, as well as 45 deep sea gorgonians, some of which are large and structurally important. The northern Gulf of Mexico has a limited amount of hard substrate, so some deep sea corals are more concentrated in the hard bottom areas as associated with salt diapirs.

Global threats to deep sea corals include bottom fishing, harvesting, climate change, marine debris (nets, traps, lines, microplastics), deep sea industries, and future threats of deep sea mining for economically important metals (gold, silver, manganese, cobalt, zinc) from seamount crusts and hydrothermal vents. For example, the South Texas Banks have high shrimping use near deep sea coral locations and as a result, chronic sedimentation is a threat.

The purpose of Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's (GMFMC) Amendment 9 is to protect federally managed deep sea coral and habitat. In 2018, the GMFMC sent its final amendment to the National Marine Fisheries Service for approval, with 15 areas selected with regulations, and 8 without regulations.

## **Administrative Business**

2019 SAC meetings – Thursday, Feb 28, Wed May 15, Wed Sept 4, Thursday Nov 7.

**Motion by Clint, seconded by Frank. Passed unanimously.**

A discussion regarding the Advisory Council September meeting minutes ensued. Clint stated the minutes are very important to capture the work of the SAC and its working groups and subcommittees. Clint would like more of the discussions captured in the minutes. G.P. noted presentations could be made available online. The minutes for the May 2018 SAC meeting were longer because of the motions and discussions on sanctuary expansion. Jake motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Joanie.  
**Opposed by Clint, all others in favor. Motion passed.**

## **3:20 Working Group and Constituent Updates**

### Underwater Webcam

The working group recommended: 1) to install a webcam at HIA389A at 70-80 feet depth; 2) to use a “View Into the Blue” webcam; and 3) to consider use of an Ocean Power Technologies Buoy for power and data transmittal. A nearby platform could receive the radio signal and provide connection to the fiber optic system for internet connection. The system design will allow adding real time monitoring of scientific data and will be expandable to other locations. The plan is not yet finalized. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Dale Shively gave verbal agreement to assume the ownership of the proposed system. The working group also has a verbal agreement with FGBNMS for use of sanctuary staff for camera and buoy maintenance if funding is provided. The working group will look at possible funding sources including estimated 5-year maintenance costs.

### Visibility

G.P. said he submitted a request for signage into the FGBNMS budget for next fiscal year. He recommended convening the working group via conference call. Shane said the digital billboards are affordable; 2 billboards on south Gulf Freeway cost \$400 for a recent fishing tournament.

### Visitor Permit Program

Natalie Davis reported the working group is continuing to work through the proposed, mandatory visitor permit program.

### Artificial Reef Working Group

Paul Sammarco has agreed to participate in this working group. Frank Burek volunteered to join this working group.

### Constituent Updates

Frank Burek – has conducted outreach to dive clubs. Frank offered the use of his and his wife’s collection of 7,000+ underwater images to FGBNMS and any other scientific or educational request.

Jake Emmert – attended the American Academy of Underwater Sciences symposium and gave a presentation, highlighting the partnership between Moody Gardens and FGBNMS. Jake will be attending DEMA and will panel a discussion on the value of the dive community to FGBNMS and the sanctuary system.

Shane Cantrell – Galveston Fishing Rodeo was successful and will be a repeated event. Shane will soon be attending the Marine Resource Education meeting in Tampa, Florida and will discuss the fisheries education program.

Joanie Steinhaus – TIRN is looking at ways to ban the release of balloons and distribution of plastic straws in restaurants. The Beach Management Advisory Committee is researching the amount of tents and other equipment left on Galveston's beaches.

Clint Moore – reported a 90% acceptance rate in his industry for the Advisory Council's recommendation for sanctuary expansion. He said he had convinced most of the opponents known to him to support it. In 2 weeks, Clint will be on a Washington DC post-election House & Senate visit, as well as a "West Wing Tour".

John Blaha – attended 2 kids fishing tournaments recently in south Texas.

Scott Hickman – attended GMFMC meeting last week, where Coral Amendment 10 was discussed.

Jesse Cancelmo – gave a 6-talking point status report at a dive club meeting and online to other dive clubs in Houston area for posting online and newsletters. Dive Photo Guide, an underwater magazine, will have an article Jesse wrote, along with his photography.

James Sinclair – has been working on compliance projects such as ROV of platforms which confirmed the configuration of the shunt pipe under the platform that is located within 3 miles of Ewing Bank. BSEE will conduct side scan sonar surveys to confirm platforms that have been removed have conducted proper site clearance (no debris left).

Brian Shmaefsky – conducted programs for local schools on FGBNMS, and has been creating a Youtube channel for environmental issues (e.g., "What does a coral reef mean?"). He will attend a marine education workshop next week in San Diego and will have a booth present. The Lone Star College's research lab that was destroyed in Harvey may be rebuilt with aquariums.

Mark Belter – BOEM is working with FGBNMS on the Executive Order analysis for sanctuary expansion. Modest increases in budget occurred for next year's budget to FGBNMS to help support monitoring. The recent mapping research cruise, funded by BOEM and conducted by FGBNMS, was successful and helpful. The joint effort to

acquire multibeam bathymetry of several banks will benefit BOEM and its stakeholders by enabling them to more accurately determine where no activity zones and buffers should be implemented.

Natalie Davis – is speaking at the next Coastal Issue Forum on November 8 regarding FGBNMS. She continues to outreach to local diving operations.

Mark Zanowicz – US Coast Guard continues to conduct regular patrols and is developing enforcement strategies for the proposed expansion areas.

**4:00 New Business**

Site clearance activities at HIA389A has been completed. The transfer of ownership from W&T Offshore to TPWD can now proceed.

**4:03 Meeting Adjourned** - All in favor. Approved.

Next SAC Meeting scheduled for February 28, 2019.