

FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting Minutes May 15, 2019

Meeting Attendance Roster:

Sepp Haukebo	Recreational Diving	Present
Jesse Cancelmo	Recreational Diving	Present
Natalie Davis	Diving Operations	Present (late)
Frank Burek	Diving Operations	Present
Ruth Perry	Oil and Gas Industry	Present (webinar)
Clint Moore	Oil and Gas Industry	Present
Scott Hickman	Fishing - Recreational	Present
Robert Kirschner	Fishing - Recreational	Present
Shane Cantrell	Fishing - Commercial	Present
Buddy Guindon	Fishing - Commercial	Present
Adrienne Simoes Correa	Research	Present
Larry McKinney	Research	Present
Brian Shmaefsky	Education	Absent
Sharon Kamas	Education	Present
Joanie Steinhaus	Conservation	Present
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
Rusty Swafford	NOAA Fisheries (non-voting)	Present
Charles Tyer	NOAA OLE (non-voting)	Absent
Vacant	EPA (non-voting)	
G.P. Schmahl	Sanctuary Superintendent (non-voting)	Present

Total voting member attendance: 11 of 16 of voting members; 8 votes needed

Others in Attendance:

Leslie Clift, Emma Hickerson, James MacMillan, Kelly O'Connell, Kelly Drinnen, Marissa Nuttall, John Embesi, Kris Benson, Jeb Adame (Backline; audio), Bill Jones, Douglas Peter, Dennis Davenport, Mike Purcell, Diego Gil-Agudelo, Jason Stancil, Janavi Folmsbee, and Sarah Tsoflias (Chevron)

9:09 Meeting called to order by Advisory Council Chair 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 Shane Cantrell, second from Scott Hickman. All in favor, motion approved.

Adoption of Minutes – motion from Shane Cantrell, second from Jesse Cancelmo, no discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Introduction of new SAC members – Sharon Kamas (Education) and Robert Kirschner (Recreational Fishing).

9:25 Chair and Vice-Chair Election Process – Leslie Clift

FGBNMS Leslie Clift explained the process for the Advisory Council's Chair and Vice-Chair elections.

9:28 Sanctuary Update – G.P. Schmahl

As per Frank Burek's (Vice-Chair of Charter Renewal Subcommittee) request, G.P. Schmahl shared an update on the Council's charter renewal submission, and the two changes he recommended to NOAA's HQ, that were different from what the Charter Renewal Subcommittee suggested regarding Council Roles (Statement s 1 and 4). These two recommendations reflect language contained in the previous FGBNMS charter.

G.P. thanked John Blaha for his service on the Advisory Council in the Recreational Fishing seat, as well as Jacqui Stanley for her service in the Education seat. Leslie read the letter from Jacqui's SEEDS (Students Engaging the Environment by Discovery and Science) regarding an upcoming fundraiser to benefit the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, targeted for FGBNMS.

Other announcements:

- Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) - June 4-6, 2019. G.P. announced Jake Emmert has been selected as the FGBNMS Volunteer of the Year.

- ONMS Leadership Team Meeting occurred last week in Hawai'i from May 6-10, 2019, hosted by Papahānaumokuākea National Monument (PNM). G.P. reported ONMS is currently focused on sanctuary expansions, the Blue Economy, and vessel needs.
- Lake Ontario proposed NMS' Notice of Intent was issued in April 2019, and NOAA accepted public comment.
- FGBNMS proposed expansion update: the 2019 Revised Preferred Alternative has been formally adopted by NOAA - 14 additional banks in 16 polygons for a total of 160 square miles. FGBNMS proposed to apply existing regulations to the expansion area. Publication of the Proposed Rule is the next step in the expansion process, hopefully released in July 2019, with a 60-day public comment period and 2 public meetings (Houston and New Orleans are potential locations). The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is expected by June 2020, and the publication of the Final Rule in July 2020. A Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was not required since the revised preferred boundary alternative is within the range of those considered in the DEIS. BOEM completed their analyses of impacts to the oil & gas industry as required by Executive Order 13795.
- After many years, TABS Buoy "V" was decommissioned on April 27, 2019. FGBNMS is looking at potential funding sources to reinstall it. Adrienne Correa commented on how important this buoy was during the East FGB localized mortality event.
- The FGBNMS 2019 research season will start soon with many projects:
 - Seafloor sensor will be deployed soon at FBNMS with Niall Slowey (Texas A&M University)
 - HIA389 monitoring post-platform removal
 - Coral reef study site photomosaic with Dr. Art Gleason (University of Miami)
 - East FGB (Flower Garden Bank) mortality site – monitoring and restoration (e.g., transplantation of corals to enhance recruitment)
 - Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration – telepresence expedition in August 2019 during the coral spawning

Kris Benson reported the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Open Ocean Trustees released today the Draft Restoration Plan for Fish, Sea Turtles, Marine Mammals and Mesophotic and Deep Benthic Communities, with a 45-day public comment period open from May 15, 2019 to July 1, 2019. The plan proposes \$25 million allocated to restoration of marine wildlife and \$126 million allocated to restoration and management of mesophotic and deep benthic communities. Integral engagement with FGBNMS is expected to implement the "Active management and protection" component of the plan (www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov).

10:51 FGBNMS Monitoring – Water Quality – James MacMillan

This is the first of several monitoring presentations planned to share information with the Advisory Council. All monitoring reports are accessible on the FGBNMS website. FGBNMS staff James MacMillan ("Jimmy") explained the instruments used by FGBNMS

to monitor water quality. In partnership with TIRN, FGBNMS has recently been collecting water samples for microplastics analyses. Microplastics have been detected at all levels from the surface to the reef cap, with more at the surface.

11:50 Advisory Council Charter Renewal – Frank Burek

Jason Stancil, a pilot on the Houston Ship Channel, spoke briefly regarding the marine transportation industry and his interest in FGBNMS.

Frank Burek, Co-Chair of Charter Renewal Subcommittee, made the following 3 individual motions:

1. Add 1 governmental, non-voting seat for Texas Parks & Wildlife – Coastal Fisheries Division – Artificial Reef program. (Motion carried.)
2. Add 1 governmental, non-voting seat for Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (Motion failed.)
3. Add 2 non-governmental, voting seats for Marine Transportation (Motion failed.)

Discussion followed. First motion seconded by Scott Hickman. Vote on 1st motion: 11:2 (in favor:nay). **Motion carried.** Second motion seconded by Scott. After discussion, Shane Cantrell called the question, seconded by Scott. Vote to end discussion and vote: 9:3 (in favor:nay). Motion carried to end discussion and vote. Vote on 2nd motion: 5:8 (in favor:nay). **Motion failed.** Discussion and vote on 3rd motion was tabled until after lunch and public comment.

12:49 Break for Lunch

1:10 Public Comment and Q&A Period

Dennis Davenport from the Houston Underwater Photographic Society relayed information on the Houston Underwater Film Festival (HUFF) on April 18, 2020.

Mike Purcell from Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing relayed information on fishing access to veteran and active duty members, and hopes to link veterans to NOAA's "Get Into Your Sanctuary" events in August.

Janavi Folmsbee, a mural artist in Houston and diver, introduced herself and expressed interest in creating artwork related to FGBNMS. Scott mentioned the Advisory Council's Visibility Working Group's proposed project of painting a mural at Galveston Yacht Basin marina.

1:16 Advisory Council Charter Renewal – (continued discussion)

Third motion seconded by Scott. Joanie Steinhaus moved to amend the motion to reduce the number of seats from two to one, seconded by Natalie Davis. Amendment to Motion 3 – 1 non-governmental seat for Marine Transportation instead of 2. Vote on amended 3rd motion: All in favor. **Motion carried.** Discussion followed. Vote on 3rd motion: 6:6 (in favor:nay). **Motion failed.**

2:00 Chair and Vice-Chair Elections – Leslie Clift

Chair Election

Shane Cantrell nominated Scott Hickman. Jesse Cancelmo nominated Jake Emmert. Nominations were closed and discussion followed. **Scott Hickman elected as new Chair of Advisory Council.** The Vice-Chair election was postponed until after Douglas Peter's presentation.

2:19 BSEE's Rigs-to-Reefs Program: History and Policy Overview – Douglas Peter

Douglas shared the history and policy overview of BSEE's Rigs-to-Reefs, which is an alternative to onshore disposal for the oil and gas industry's platforms. The total number of standing platforms is currently 1,855. For all Gulf states, 11.38% (552) platforms have been reefed, with the majority in water depths >200 feet.

2:00 Chair and Vice-Chair Elections – Leslie Clift (continued discussion)

Vice-Chair Election

Shane nominated Clint Moore, and Adrienne nominated Jake Emmert. **Jake Emmert elected as new Vice-Chair of Advisory Council.**

3:00 Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease – Adrienne Correa

Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) is a new, unusual disease that is a serious threat to Caribbean reefs. SCTLD outbreaks occur over large spatial scales. Over half of the Florida Reef Tract has been affected. In Florida, 66-100 out of every 100 colonies surveyed were infected. SCTLD is now found along the entire Mexican Caribbean coast and has affected >30% of all corals.

SCTLD-like signs have not (yet) been observed in FGBNMS, but are spreading in the Caribbean. Susceptibility among coral species differ. Once a coral colony is infected, rapid mortality ensues, with corals dying within weeks to months. The disease infects both large and small coral colonies. Infections have been observed at depths down to 80 feet. Experiments demonstrate SCTLD is infectious and can transmit via direct contact or through water transport. Studies have suggested bacterial pathogen(s) are involved, but no specific pathogen has yet been identified. Treatments are being developed, and vary in efficacy. Some success has been seen with antibiotic (amoxicillin and kanamycin) application. Due to the possibility of transmission, it is recommended that every diver at FGBNMS should disinfect his/her gear prior to entering the water.

4:10 Working Group Updates

Underwater Webcam Working Group

Purpose: expand recognition of the FGBNMS marine habitat to the general public
Goals: install a real-time underwater webcam at FGBNMS at HIA389A available on the internet to the general public.

Update: meeting held in April 2019 to look at a broader scope of a future shared network in the Gulf of Mexico for providing additional users/entities collecting environmental data, and to establish a wider range of contacts for sharing knowledge,

better understanding of other prospective communication projects and an understanding of the Tampnet-managed fiber optic network (BP owned).

Moving forward: take a closer look at the OPT PB3 buoy for the webcam application, and while waiting on Tampnet's fiber optic network expansion, they will explore the possibility of plan B (communication transmission (via radio) to a nearby platform already connected to the internet). With the project definition plan for project funding already developed, the working group can now begin development of a funding strategy.

Jake Emmert and Sharon Kamas volunteered to join this working group.

Visibility Working Group

The group met twice since the last SAC meeting, and have developed a draft work plan to guide our goals and deliverables, track individual action items and owners, and provide updates on critical components like funding streams.

Three immediate ideas that are progressing include:

- 1) a large mural designed to raise awareness of the sanctuary and increase stewardship;
- 2) develop a sanctuary themed escape room at Galveston's Escape the Island;
- 3) partnering with FGBNMS, EDF, and Project Healing Waters to have veterans go fishing at FGBNMS in August as "Vet into Your Sanctuary," an offshoot of the national "Get Into Your Sanctuary" program.

The group also discussed potential to set up a local Sanctuary Foundation Chapter to help promote local engagement and funding streams.

Sharon Kamas offered to join this working group. Sepp Haukebo volunteered to be Chair.

Artificial Reef Working Group

Frank Burek volunteered to be Chair, and hopes to call a meeting before September.

Visitor Permit Working Group

This working group is on hold during the sanctuary's expansion. Sepp volunteered to co-Chair.

Visitor Center WG

Not active at this time. Clint volunteered to co-Chair. Joanie and Jake expressed interest in joining at a later date.

All additions of volunteers and change of Chairs were ratified by the Advisory Council.

Work plan

Sharon offered to develop a shared google drive for documents for all working groups. Leslie shared that a draft work plan has been developed and a finalized version could be presented the full Council at the next meeting.

4:46 Constituent Updates

Joanie Steinhaus – a Kemp's Ridley sea turtle nest was reported on Bolivar today. No turtles nested on Bolivar last week because of driving activity on the beaches. A very low number of sea turtle nests (38 total for Texas coast) was recorded for April 1 through mid-May, yet had the highest ever stranding numbers (154 for Texas, 47 for Upper Texas coast). No arribada (mass synchronized sea turtle nesting) was observed in Mexico, which hasn't happened in over a decade.

Jesse Cancelmo – will give new presentation on photographing FGBNMS at HUPS and will give another presentation to 2 groups on coral spawning. Jesse reminded everyone to use FGBNMS reusable grocery bags for both increasing visibility/exposure of FGBNMS and also for advocating reusable grocery bags.

Scott Hickman – Great Red Snapper Count starts June 1, 2019, with 300 tagged fish off of Freeport and Galveston and recaptures = \$. State management of red snapper went through and now all states will each set their own seasons. All charter boats are now mandated to have electronic reporting (location and effort data). GMFMC is considering an exemption for golden crabs, a species found in deep water. Scott is worried the large metal traps could damage deep coral habitat.

Clint Moore – updates his industry regularly regarding sanctuary expansion.

Sharon Kamas – can help set up presentations to Harris County's Department of Education for their science leadership team.

Jake Emmert – trained Rice University students for research in Moorea. Moody Gardens had a record year for dive support: \$33,000 in support including FGBNMS, Rice, Woods Hole, and Texas A&M. Moody Gardens will host a World Ocean Day event on June 8, offering a no-cost experience in a scuba diving pool, as well as hosting a *Plastic Ocean* documentary on Friday evening with a panel discussion.

Frank Burek – Houston Underwater Film Festival (HUFF) event and reports FGBNMS activities and news to the Texas Gulf Coast Council of Diving Clubs (TGCC) and its member clubs.

Mark Zanowicz – USCG continues regular patrols. One of USCG cutters will be visiting FGBNMS soon. Three fast cutter vessels will also be conducting regular patrols.

Shane Cantrell – has been focusing on marketing strategies to build partnerships to understand how many people are fishing in Galveston and grow that user group.

Shelley Du Puy reported ArtistBoat will also be hosting a World Ocean Day event at Stuart Beach on June 8, 2019.

5:24 Discussion of Robert's Rules of Order

Tabled until next Advisory Council meeting.

5:24 New Business

No new business

5:25 Chair Transfer

G.P. thanked Clint for his service as Chair for two terms. Clint transferred the Chair to Scott Hickman.

5:30 Meeting Adjourned – Jake motioned to adjourn, seconded by Shane. All in favor. Approved.

Next SAC Meeting scheduled for September 4, 2019.