

FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY  
**Sanctuary Advisory Council**  
**Draft Meeting Minutes**  
**April 20, 2011**

**Meeting Attendance Roster:**

Frank Burek	Recreational Diving	Present
Jesse Cancelmo	Recreational Diving	Present
Cher Walker	Diving Operators	Present
Frank Wasson	Diving Operators	Absent
Clint Moore	Oil and Gas Industry	Present
John Hoffman	Oil and Gas Industry	Present
Irby Basco	Fishing - Recreational	Present
Matt Bunn	Fishing - Recreational	Present
Joe Hendrix	Fishing - Commercial	Present
Mike Jennings	Fishing - Commercial	Absent
Will Heyman	Research	Absent
Larry McKinney	Research	Absent
Dale Loughmiller	Education	Present
Jacqui Stanley	Education	Present
Ellis Pickett	Conservation	Present
Page Williams	Conservation	Present
James Sinclair	BOEMRE (non-voting)	Absent
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

Others in attendance:

Rebecca Nadel  
Darrell Walker  
Dan Mueller  
Lisa Ashworth (El Paso Production)  
Rory Starling  
George Clark (TGCC of Dive Clubs)  
Kevin Buch  
Intern/TAMUG grad student

A regular meeting of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) Advisory Council was held on Wednesday, April 20, 2011, at 9:00 AM, at the FGBNMS Headquarters offices in Galveston, Texas. Council chair, Larry McKinney was absent. Council vice-chair, Frank Burek, was present and presided over the meeting. Frank called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

G.P. Schmahl, sanctuary superintendent, welcomed the council and the public and gave a brief "safety moment." He welcomed the new council members and announced the recent appointments to the current advisory council. Mike Jennings was reappointed as the commercial fishing seat representative. Two new members will join the council: Jesse Cancelmo as a recreational diving representative and John Hoffman as an oil and gas production representative. G.P. also thanked Rebecca Nadel for her time on the council. G.P. reviewed the responsibilities of SAC members at all sites and emphasized the importance of council members maintaining communication with their constituency. He requested that the new members find Kelly Drinnen to have their photo taken for the website.

G.P. introduced FGBNMS staff present and requested SAC introductions for the benefit of the new members. He also introduced members of the public in attendance. G.P. reviewed the meeting structure and explained that the council uses a loose version of Robert's Rules of Order.

Frank Burek asked for approval of the meeting agenda. Irby Basco asked that the discussion of the NOAA aquaculture policy be moved to an earlier point in the agenda. Frank pointed out that since the official comment period has passed, this would now be just an informational discussion. Matt Bunn agreed that he too would like to participate in that discussion and would need to adjust the agenda in order to do that. Frank suggested that the council switch the 11 am agenda item for the 3 pm item, moving the LTM presentation to 3 pm. Dale Loughmiller moved to accept the revised agenda. Jacqui Stanley seconded and the motion passed.

Frank Burek asked for approval of the minutes of the November 2010 SAC meeting. Clint Moore requested minor changes (typo and time of meeting end). Matt Bunn moved to approve the minutes with changes. Page Williams seconded and the motion passed. Frank asked for approval of the minutes of the March 2011 SAC meeting. The minutes were approved pending minor changes.

New council members John Hoffman and Jesse Cancelmo provided background regarding their careers and interests. John Hoffman described that he has spent 30 years in the oil and gas industry in both the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Mexico. In 2007 he started Black Elk Energy. He is also a diver and fisherman and says that he has a unique view of how those three interests should coexist. He has an appreciation for the beauty that the sanctuary offers and the life on the platforms. Jesse Cancelmo stated that he has 41 years of recreational diving experience and that he has been a technical diver for 12 years. His first dive at the Flower Garden Banks was in 1978. He is involved in HUC and HUPS and is known as an underwater photographer. He

recently retired from the corporate world where he worked for many companies in project management. He now has extra time and is looking forward to contributing to the council and sanctuary.

G.P. Schmahl provided a sanctuary update. G.P. began his presentation with a discussion of the budget. A budget was passed for the current fiscal year a couple of weeks ago and budget cuts were implemented. NOAA was not spared, but we do not know how this will affect the sanctuary. NOAA's budget was cut by \$143 million, but it appears that the sanctuary will not be affected too badly. We have been operating as if there would be a 10% reduction in funding. Today is the 1-year anniversary of the Deep Water Horizon event. The sanctuary is involved in the NRDA process. Emma, John and G.P. are involved in working groups, discussions and studies to determine if injury to resources has occurred. G.P. reviewed the following topics during the remainder of the sanctuary update presentation: 2011 congressional hill visits April 5-8; 2010 ONMS accomplishments report with an emphasis on how sanctuary resources contribute to healthy economies; FGBNMS volunteer of the year, Kevin Buch, who will be honored during CHOW in June (Kevin works with the TAMUG scientific diving program and has worked to integrate that program with FGBNMS, volunteers at most events, and volunteers his time to work with our divers on numerous projects); R/V Manta field season which will run consistently through October and is made possible by a civil penalty settlement which will pay for operations and maintenance; Darrell Walker reported on the recent fleet inspection noting that inspectors were very complimentary and that only a couple of minor deficiencies were reported; Hyperlite recompression chamber training; Shelley DuPuy reported on recent education efforts including Ocean Discovery Day, National Environmental Education Week, and NOSB competition in ocean sciences for high school students.

SAC members toured the new Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network (TMMSN) Facility from 10:00 – 11:00 AM.

Upon return from the tour, G.P. concluded his sanctuary update. He described the Beyond Horizon conference to be held at Mote Marine Lab in Florida May 11-13 that will focus on creating a network of special ocean places. He noted that Clint Moore has been invited and will participate. G.P. also attended a meeting of MPA managers at Rookery Bay NERR in Florida to encourage MPA managers to think in terms of networks and sentinel sites. Council members engaged in discussion about the confusion over MPA terminology. Page Williams reminded the SAC of the "Science of Marine Reserves" publication that she distributed at the March meeting.

G.P. provided background information for a discussion of the Draft NOAA aquaculture policy. He began his review by stating that the SAC has seen the draft policy and that at the last meeting the charge was given to Page Williams and Joe Hendrix to draft comments from SAC. Progress was not made due to various debates and discussions through email. Larry McKinney, SAC Chair, found that this was not productive and that it was difficult to reach consensus. Therefore, he made the decision to put the draft

policy on today's agenda for discussion. In addition to DOC and NOAA proposed policies, ONMS is also considering aquaculture as it relates to sanctuaries. Even more scrutiny exists with aquaculture within sanctuaries. It is either outright prohibited or effectively prohibited, as is the case at FGBNMS. It could be allowed by permit, however, permits at most sanctuaries are given for research, education, or management and not for commercial aquaculture. A special use permit might conceptually allow it. Council members discussed the NOAA proposed policy as well as the GOMFMC aquaculture fishery management plan. Opinions expressed were highly varied (providing reasons for support and opposition) and included the following points: jurisdiction over this activity is the most important consideration and is given to NOAA fisheries; in GOM, sanctuaries and HAPC are not areas to be considered for aquaculture; aquaculture may benefit wild stocks; seafood safety and security were the reasons for the GOMFMC aquaculture plan; aquaculture is concerning due to possible health and ecological impacts; stricter regulations on imports are needed; aquaculture anywhere in GOM would affect FGBNMS.

G.P. discussed with the council the public comments received on the DMP and proposed rules. He explained that Jen Morgan and two ONMS HQ staff are working on the analysis of the comments and preparing responses. He noted that many comments were related to expansion and an assumption that there would be no fishing in expansion areas. Many comments discussed spear fishing and asked for specific regulatory changes for spear fishing while free diving. We are currently discussing the comments internally. With release of the final management plan (FMP), we will show our intention to go forward with expansion. Boundaries and regulations will be addressed at that time. G.P. noted that a frequent comment stated that since it doesn't appear that there are many threats to the proposed expansion areas, then why protect these areas? NOAA's response is that the NMSA charges us to identify areas that are valuable due to a variety of reasons. The fact that there are no significant threats actually raises the importance of identifying the area as a sanctuary—they are pristine. G.P. and Jen discussed the process and time frame for responding to comments and preparation of the FMP. Council members discussed concerns about expansion, specifically budget and resources to monitor and provide enforcement for such a large area. Carmen DeGeorge and Charles Tyer commented on the ability of USCG and NOAA OLE to assist with patrolling new areas. Clint Moore noted that the history of the sanctuary program is to establish areas and then have funding allocated after the fact. G.P. also noted that there is some value in establishing special areas even if active management can't effectively cover the new area. John Hoffman explained that his interest in the council is to bring in more collaboration. He would like to work with Charles Tyer and discuss the use of platforms for sanctuary enforcement needs.

Matt Bunn, a council recreational fishing representative, gave a constituent report describing his role with CCA—a science-based, grassroots organization committed to marine resource conservation. CCA consists primarily of sportsmen who want to utilize resources but also protect them for future generations. Matt described a number of CCA projects, including scientific studies, lobbying, habitat restoration, marine debris removal, and scholarships.

Joe Hendrix, a council commercial fishing representative, also gave a constituent report. He described his role with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, including his work on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). Joe also described his work as a marine aquaculturist.

During the public comment period, Kevin Buch offered comments and questions relating to offshore aquaculture. Kevin asked if it is feasible and/or reasonable to put aquaculture pens along the continental shelf. Kevin also stated that language from ONMS already exists stating that HAPCs are off limits, but that he is curious if there are requirements for buffers. Joe Hendrix replied stating that when the Gulf Council first began examining aquaculture, many companies were interested. However, interest has waned due to the lack of movement on this issue by the Council. He reminded us that the Gulf Council only addresses federal waters. Joe also stated that specific language for putting buffers in place does not exist, but that NOAA Fisheries would look at currents and other factors during the permitting process. Kevin encouraged the SAC to weigh-in on the draft aquaculture policy and to examine the pros and cons from a habitat and sanctuary impact perspective.

Jacqui Stanley reported on her work as the Youth Working Group Subcommittee chair. Jacqui explained that she has contacted other sanctuary sites, reviewed the SAC Handbook, and had an extensive conversation with Shannon Ricles at the Monitor. Jacqui reviewed for the SAC the steps that the Monitor NMS Council and sanctuary staff have taken to make youth involvement a priority, which has evolved from a youth working group to now having a youth seat representative on the SAC. Jacqui explained that no action is necessary at this point from the FGBNMS Council, however, some direction is needed. G.P. and SAC members engaged in discussion regarding the benefits and challenges of youth involvement with the council. G.P. suggested that something like the Channel Islands Ocean Ambassador program might be a reasonable starting place. Concerns expressed about youth involvement included the level of commitment needed from students and parents and the amount of time required of sanctuary staff and council members. Page Williams suggested that the SAC hold at least one meeting per year on a Saturday to make youth attendance more feasible. Joe Hendrix suggested working with an already established group of youth (e.g. scouts). Jen suggested that Jacqui recruit other SAC members for her subcommittee and draft options that the SAC could consider. Cher Walker volunteered for the subcommittee.

Jacqui Stanley and Shelley DuPuy described Jacqui's and the sanctuary's involvement in National Ocean Science Bowl. Jacqui showed the large painting that she did for the event as a fundraising effort and as a basis for the artwork for other aspects of the NOSB event (T-Shirts, etc).

Frank Burek spoke for the Decommissioning subcommittee. He explained that the group would now be a working group, as Rebecca Nadel will serve. Frank Burek will chair the working group.

Shelley DuPuy provided an introduction for the NOAA Sea Turtle Facility Tour. She described the facility and the work conducted by NOAA on the conservation and recovery of Kemp's Ridley sea turtles. SAC members walked to the Sea Turtle Facility for a tour.

Marissa Nuttall gave a presentation on the FGBNMS Long-Term Monitoring program. Marissa reviewed the history of monitoring at the Flower Garden Banks since 1978, the long-term monitoring tasks, and preliminary results of the 2009-2010 field seasons.

Kelly Drinnen provided a review of recent updates to the FGBNMS web site.

Page Williams moved to adjourn the meeting. Jacqui Stanley seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.