


National Marine Sanctuary Program

Workshop Report: National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting February 6 and 7, 2002



NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES TM





This document provides a brief summary of the second annual National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting. It provides a report to Sanctuary Advisory Council members, National Marine Sanctuary Program staff, and members of the public on the subjects discussed during this meeting and steps that are being taken to follow up on the meeting.

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**Workshop Report:
National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
Chairs and Coordinators Meeting**

Introduction

The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), a federally managed marine protected area program, received authority from Congress in 1992 to establish advisory councils to provide advice to Sanctuary Managers regarding the designation and management of National Marine Sanctuaries. Sanctuary Advisory Councils (SACs or Councils) operate at ten existing Sanctuaries and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve/proposed National Marine Sanctuary; the NMSP intends to establish SACs at the remaining three sites without one and in any new Sanctuaries designated in the future.

The NMSP had its first national meeting of SAC Coordinators in May 2000 at the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary in Port Angeles, Washington, followed by its first national meeting of SAC Chairs and Coordinators on January 31 and February 1, 2001, hosted by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Monterey, California. During the Monterey Chairs and Coordinators Meeting, participants:

- Received a general overview of what SACs are and how they have evolved, their position within the NMSP, and the national policies and procedures regarding their operation;
- Met and shared site-specific accomplishments and challenges each SAC has faced;
- Participated in a mini-workshop that focused on planning and conducting effective meetings; and
- Identified solutions to problems that some or all SACs have in common.

The second annual meeting was recently completed on February 6 and 7, 2002, hosted by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, in Marathon, Florida. Participants in the meeting are shown in Table 1. A summary of that meeting follows.

Day 1

On the first day of the workshop, after being officially welcomed to the Florida Keys, participants received a briefing on the national status of SACs which included the following highlights:

- All commitments made to the Councils after the 2001 meeting have been met, including the development of a number of requested protocols;
- The Council Implementation Handbook has been completed and distributed, and is in regular usage;
- Three new Councils have been established for the Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuaries, and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and proposed Sanctuary; and
- Two Councils have been reestablished for the Stellwagen Bank and Thunder Bay Sanctuaries.

The remainder of the day was devoted to an exchange of information among the participants about the activities taking place at each Council. Each Chair was asked to structure their responses to the following topics (summarized in Table 2):

- The top issue dealt with by the SAC;
- What has worked well for the SAC; and
- What has not worked well for the SAC.

Table 1: SAC Chairs and Coordinators Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Daniel J. Basta	NMSP Director, NMSP Headquarters
Alan Brooks	Chair, Olympic Coast NMS ¹ Advisory Council
Maria Brown	Assistant Manager, Gulf of the Farallones NMS
Karen Brubeck	Coordinator, Thunder Bay NMS/Underwater Preserve SAC
Billy Causey	Superintendent, Florida Keys NMS
Sean Corson	Designation Coordinator, Northwest Hawaiian Islands CRER/pNMS
June Cradick	Coordinator, Florida Keys NMS Advisory Council
Matt Gilligan	Chair, Gray's Reef NMS Advisory Council
Karen Grimmer	Coordinator, Monterey Bay NMS Advisory Council
Stephanie Harlan	Chair, Monterey Bay NMS Advisory Council
Jerry Hill	Member, Stellwagen Bank NMS Advisory Council
Jennifer LaBarre	National Council Coordinator, NMSP Headquarters
Dianne Meester	Chair, Channel Islands NMS Advisory Council
Elizabeth Moore	National Council Coordinator, NMSP Headquarters
Mike Murray	Coordinator, Channel Islands NMS Advisory Council
George Neugent	Chair, Florida Keys NMS Advisory Council
Andy Palmer	Coordinator, Olympic Coast NMS Advisory Council
Carol Shafto	Chair, Thunder Bay NMS/Underwater Preserve SAC
Becky Shortland	Coordinator, Gray's Reef NMS Advisory Council
Ed Ueber	Sanctuary Manager, Gulf of the Farallones NMS
Kate Van Dine	Management Plan Review Coordinator, Stellwagen Bank NMS
John Williamson	Member, Stellwagen Bank NMS Advisory Council

¹National Marine Sanctuary

Day 2

The second day was devoted to a series of discussions related to procedural matters such as preparing annual operating plans, preparing annual reports, holding retreats, and determining how SACs can play a role in advising the NMSP on national projects and issues.

Preparing Annual Operating Plans

While many sites do some kind of annual planning for their SAC already, or have elements of it, such as an annual meeting schedule, most do not actually produce an annual operating plan. The NMSP believes that such a document would be useful, since it could (1) help SACs determine what their roles are; (2) help ensure that SACs are focused on things of most benefit to the site; and (3) lay out a schedule for the upcoming year to allow members to plan for future meetings. Additional discussion at the meeting also pointed out that such a plan might make the difference for members between feeling useful and useless. One chair added the thought that each site having an annual operating plan would allow them to be shared among other Councils, increasing the information exchange among the SACs. It was generally agreed that such documents would be useful, but that such plans also must be flexible to allow for unforeseen events.

The NMSP has agreed to prepare general guidelines for how Sanctuaries can go about preparing annual operating plans. The guidelines will appear in a revised second edition of the Handbook later this year.

Table 2: Council Chair Presentations

Chair and Sanctuary	Presentations
<p>Dianne Meester Chair Channel Islands NMS</p>	<p>The CINMS presentation focused on the SAC's role in the site's process to jointly develop marine reserves with the State of California. The SAC established a science panel, socioeconomic panel, and marine reserves working group, and solicited public input with four very large public forums and many written comments. The marine reserves working group used a consensus approach which made it difficult; they did not get consensus on a specific location but did agree on other aspects and goals, including problem statements, goals and objectives, and implementation recommendations. All findings and information were provided to the Sanctuary Manager and the SAC asked the Manager to work with the State to craft a final recommendation for delivery to the State in August 2001. The SAC asked themselves, given that consensus was not achieved, was this process a success or failure? The SAC believes it was successful, because it focused the working group on the mission, problem, and goals and objectives; obtained good public input and awareness; strengthened working relationships among diverse community interest groups; created a unprecedented data collection effort; and brought about community consensus that there should be marine reserves.</p>
<p>Maria Brown and Ed Ueber Staff Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones NMS</p>	<p>As the CBNMS and GRNMS SACs are just being meeting for the first time, Sanctuary staff made their presentation. Mr. Ueber stressed how he has always highly valued interface with the community through informal groups, including his volunteer programs, Beachwatch and SEALs. He has started his SACs as small bodies and intends to obtain their advice on additional seats to be considered at a future time. Ms. Brown stressed the value of the Handbook, which has made establishment of SAC easier. She also stated that having a new SAC has already added new blood to the Sanctuary (e.g., new folks involved with the Sanctuary).</p>
<p>George Neugent Chair Florida Keys NMS</p>	<p>The achievements of the SAC include the Tortugas 2000 effort, using consensus building to get buy-in and trust from the community which allowed the SAC to move forward. There was also a sponging issue, where there was a misperception that it provided a necessary element of the commercial fishing industry versus sponges' important function in water filtration. The SAC supported sustainable use of the sponging fishery versus a complete ban or no action at all. The SAC could do better at engaging the media more and upgrading education/outreach so they are able to write good and accurate articles so the Sanctuary does not have to do "damage control."</p>
<p>Matt Gilligan Chair Gray's Reef NMS</p>	<p>The chair offered a poster of the latest side scan mapping of the sea floor and reefs at the Sanctuary, indicated that revision of the management plan is well underway, and that the SAC has been deeply involved in the process and in research, education, and outreach planning via presentations by staff. Establishment of Marine Protected Areas received a lot of attention by both the SAC and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The chair recently provided testimony to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and suggested that opportunity exists for chairs and the public to provide input to the Commission in future meetings (nine total around the country). The education committee of the Commission looks forward to information on increasing minority participation and diversity in marine and maritime affairs. The SAC looks forward to providing advice more broadly through education, research, users, and conservation committees.</p>

Continued

Table 2 Continued: Council Chair Presentations

Chair and Sanctuary	Presentations
<p>Stephanie Harlan Chair Monterey Bay NMS</p>	<p>The highlight for this year for the SAC has been the management plan review process. Ms. Harlan believes that more emphasis is needed on education and public relations because there are still have many people in the community who don't know about the Sanctuary. The focus should be on simple awareness, with publications being inexpensive and basic to reach the most people. Such publications should be in hands of local governments, educators, and user groups (to put in their newsletters). There has been some concern in the community that they will not be heard during the management plan review. Other issues that have been dealt with include the SIMON project funded by \$2M from the Packard Foundation, a new multi-cultural education program called MERITO (Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans), and the work of the Santa Cruz Interagency Task Force to help identify Santa Cruz as the gateway to the Sanctuary.</p>
<p>Isaac Harp Vice Chair Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and proposed NMS</p>	<p>The Council for this site is different in that the Council is a advisory body for an existing Reserve and a proposed Sanctuary. Mr. Harp presented an overview of the history and resources of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, including the establishment of the Reserve and the formation of the Reserve/Sanctuary Advisory Council.</p>
<p>Allan Brooks Olympic Coast NMS Chair</p>	<p>The major issues facing the SAC include possible expansion of the Area To Be Avoided, fiber optic cable fair market value, and marine conservation working group (which has focused on marine zoning for last 18 months but stopped recently and is on hold because of lack of communication with the Native American tribes along the coast). What has worked well for the SAC is its non-confrontational style and mutual respect among members, and arriving at consensus on issues on which they comment. Public outreach and involving constituencies could use some improvement. The SAC has several internal issues with which Mr. Brooks wants to deal, including raising visibility for the SAC and Sanctuary, raising performance expectations of members (e.g., attendance; having trouble getting quorums), and recognition of council members.</p>
<p>Jerry Hill Member John Williamson Member Kate Van Dine Staff Stellwagen Bank NMS</p>	<p>This is a newly reformed SAC, which has not yet elected officers. Mr. Hill stressed that the members don't yet have a firm expectation of what to expect on the SAC, but has a thought that in SBNMS they have something that is different from other Sanctuaries: being adjacent to a huge metropolitan area with a large urban population. Mr. Hill hopes that public can be considered as a friend and partner, not as the enemy. Mr. Williamson agreed that the challenge for the SAC is dealing with a Sanctuary cradled in the Boston metropolitan area; very high level of use of many sorts in a small marine area of 842 square miles. He also stressed that the challenge for the SAC is going to be preparing a management plan that covers all of these uses.</p>
<p>Carol Shafto Chair Thunder Bay NMS</p>	<p>Ms. Shafto stressed that the site had a SAC long before they had a Sanctuary, which was good, even if it did put a burden on them as SAC members since no staff was present and they had to respond to questions. The first SAC's purpose was to decide if there should be a Sanctuary at all; its biggest success was that the SAC decided not to say yes or no to a Sanctuary, but to say, if there is a Sanctuary, what should it look like? The new SAC has been established, with three new working groups. TBNMS is a unique Sanctuary: no ocean, joint management with State, and protects shipwrecks only.</p>

Preparing Annual Reports

As with annual operating plans, some sites have produced annual reports. The NMSP encourages each Sanctuary and SAC to produce an annual report for numerous reasons, including sharing individual SAC achievements with the public and having summary information that can be provided to new members. However, the NMSP proposed to the Chairs and Coordinators that a national annual SAC report be produced each year. Such a document would: (1) help show how effective SACs have been in presenting the thoughts, concerns, and ideas of the community to Sanctuary Managers (and vice versa); (2) help demonstrate how SACs have contributed to resource protection; and (3) serve as a vehicle for sharing SAC information and achievements to the public. There was general agreement that such a national annual report was a good idea, and that it could be done even more efficiently by combining it with the workshop report from the annual Chairs and Coordinators Meeting. Several Chairs suggested that the report ensure a similar amount of content and emphasis for each Sanctuary. One Chair suggested that the report include a one-page characterization of each SAC and its community.

The NMSP committed to developing an outline and timeline for the national annual report that will be included in the revised second edition of the Handbook due later this year. In general, the report would be completed by early March for distribution to the public and other interested parties.

Conducting Useful and Productive Retreats

Many Sanctuaries have held retreats with their Councils, with varying degrees of success. A number of Chairs and Coordinators emphasized the importance of having very clear goals for a retreat, whether it is to prepare an annual operating plan, deal with internal issues, and/or provide recognition to SAC members. Some of the participants commented on the need to have as many of the Sanctuary staff members as possible involved in retreats, and also on the need to balance work with an element of enjoyment at retreats.

The NMSP committed to developing guidelines for how retreats can be conducted that will be included in the revised second edition of the handbook due later this year.

Determining Role for SACs in National Projects and Issues

Despite over ten years of having Councils, the NMSP still had the question, do SACs have a role in providing advice to the national office on program level projects and issues? The advantage to having SACs involved at the national level are numerous and include:

- Providing the voice of communities in national issues;
- Broadening SAC member's perspectives;
- Increasing local visibility and importance of oceans/Sanctuaries and promoting public involvement; and
- More rewarding/satisfying for SAC members by addressing national issues as well as local issues.

However, there are numerous disadvantages, including

- SACs are composed and chartered for site-specific needs that may not be applicable for the national level;
- SACs are already often overworked on just local issues and needs; and
- Logistics of trying to manage an *ad hoc* national SAC would be expensive and burdensome.

Given the advantages and disadvantages, the NMSP proposed to the Chairs that each future Chairs and Coordinators Meeting will have at least a portion of its time dedicated to bringing national projects and issues to the Chairs for their discussion and advice. Such a meeting will be the most effective use of time and resources for both the Chairs and the NMSP. The idea was well-received, with several Chairs expressing their agreement to have more substantive issues being discussed at their annual meeting.

SACs' Role in Designation and Management Plan Review Processes

Given the importance of ongoing management plan reviews and a new designation (for the proposed NWHI National Marine Sanctuary), and the vital role that Councils play in such processes, a brief presentation was made to the Chairs on what general roles a SAC might expect to play in such a process (summarized in Table 3).

Future Initiatives

The meeting ended with a presentation on several initiatives proposed by the NMSP:

- **Directory of SAC members:** The NMSP developed a directory for public distribution that provides contact information for Council members and alternates.
- **SAC exchange program:** The NMSP would like to continue to encourage the exchange of information and expertise among Councils and their members, and is proposing to provide funding and support for SAC members to attend the meetings of other SACs. The decision to support such an effort will be made on a case-by-case basis and may be limited by the amount of available funding.
- **Council Implementation Handbook:** The Handbook will undergo several revisions as discussed earlier in this report and be produced as a second edition later in 2002.

Miscellaneous Discussions

In the course of the day, participants asked for discussions on several items not included on the agenda. The first of the items was the guidelines for conflict of interest contained in the Handbook. Several Chairs expressed concern about the lack of clarity on some of the terms used. The NMSP agreed to revisit and possibly revise that text for the second edition of the Handbook.

The second item was the treatment of alternates. Everyone agreed that alternates are important but it is difficult to keep them engaged and feel appreciated. Each Chair was asked to discuss how their alternates were treated during meetings to help generate ideas for other sites to use.

Table 3: Roles for Councils in a Management Plan Review or Designation Process

Process Phase	Potential SAC Role
<p><i>Phase I: Initiate Management Plan Review/Designation Process.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify preliminary issues • prepare project plan • prepare communications plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with designation process and SAC's role • Help prepare vision, goals, and objectives • Consider existing management structure • Become familiar with NOAA positions and talking points • Start communicating with constituents
<p><i>Phase II: Complete Pre-Scoping Activities.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure all logistical arrangements completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to helping at scoping meetings • Help review scoping materials and talking points
<p><i>Phase III: Conduct the Scoping Process.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide opportunity to the public to provide their thoughts to NOAA • summarize and analyze comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help at scoping meetings • Communicate with constituents
<p><i>Phase IV: Evaluate, Prioritize, and Characterize Issues.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate and prioritize issues • characterize issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice on prioritizing issues • Volunteer to help write issue descriptions
<p><i>Phase V: Develop and Prioritize Strategies.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and prioritize strategies • characterize strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help define study area • Participate in technical workshops to characterize issues with other experts • Lead and/or participate on working groups to develop action plans • Help write action plans
<p><i>Phase VI: Prepare Draft Management Plan.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group strategies into theme or issue areas and further develop as action plans • prepare non-action plan portions of DMP/DEIS • clear DMP/DEIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to help prepare action plans • Review drafts of other sections of management plan • Facilitate consultations (governmental members) • Help review proposals for special assessments
<p><i>Phase VII: Conduct a Public Review of the Management Plan.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct public review of DMP/DEIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review DMP/DEIS • Commit to helping at public meetings • Keep constituents involved
<p><i>Phase VIII: Prepare and Release the Final Management Plan.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise DMP/DEIS into FMP/FEIS • Clear FMP/FEIS • Release FMP/FEIS to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help and revise action plans • Review draft FMP/FEIS



Conclusion

Most of the participants indicated their satisfaction after the meeting. The NMSP is planning to host a meeting in early 2003 for the SAC Chairs and Coordinators, to be located on the west coast. Key recommendations for next year's meeting include:

- Ask each Chair to present a case study of something their SAC has worked on rather than the three topics discussed earlier in this report;
- Set aside more time on the agenda for discussion of items that have not been formally scheduled; and
- Present more substantive issues for the Chairs to discuss.

Action Items

The NMSP has committed to the following action items as a result of the workshop:

- Develop revised handbook protocols on preparing annual operating plans and annual reports for SACs, and conducting retreats - by July 2002.
- Revisit Handbook guidelines on conflict of interest - by July 2002.
- Revise and finalize a directory of SAC members - Done.
- Assist in the development of a SAC intranet site for use by Council Coordinators - by September 2002.
- Begin planning the 2003 Chairs and Coordinators Meeting - by July 2002.



National Marine Sanctuaries

Our National Marine Sanctuaries embrace part of our collective riches as a nation. Within their protected waters, giant humpback whales breed and calve their young, coral colonies flourish, and shipwrecks tell stories of our maritime history. Sanctuary habitats include beautiful rocky reefs, lush kelp forests, whale migrations corridors, spectacular deep-sea canyons, and underwater archaeological sites. Our nation's Sanctuaries can provide a safe habitat for species close to extinction or protect historically significant shipwrecks. Ranging in size from less than one square mile to over 5,300 square miles, each Sanctuary is a unique place needing special protections. Natural classrooms, cherished recreational spots, and valuable commercial industries— Marine Sanctuaries represent many things to many people.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program

The National Marine Sanctuary Program serves as the trustee for a system of thirteen underwater parks, encompassing 18,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Ocean Service has managed National Marine Sanctuaries since passage of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act in 1972. Protecting Sanctuary resources requires a great deal of planning, management, and cooperation between federal, state, and local officials. The National Marine Sanctuary Program works cooperatively with its partners and the public to balance enjoyment and use with long-term conservation. Increasing public awareness of our marine heritage, scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs, and outreach are just a few of the ways the National Marine Sanctuary Program fulfills its mission to the American people. The Program's staff is ever mindful of their responsibility to protect America's ocean treasures for this and future generations.

