

Conservation Working Group

September 16, 2003

9:30 – 11:30

Moss Landing Harbor Office

Meeting minutes

CWG Members attending:

Kaitilin Gaffney, The Ocean Conservancy (TOC), Chair
Huff McGonigal, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS)
Mike Osmond, World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Meredith Lepoch, WWF
Erin Simmons, Oceana
Steve Shimek, The Otter Project
D'Anne Albers, Friends of the Sea Otter (FSO)
Fleur O'Neill, Save Our Shores (SOS)
Jane De Lay, SOS
Peggy McNutt, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Steve Webster, Monterey Bay Aquarium (MBA)
Lydia Bergen, Partnership For Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO)
John Fisher, At-Large
Dave Zaches, At-Large
Jack Wickham, At-Large

Special Dates and Announcements

September 16: Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) will host a special lecture on the effects of sound pollution on sea animals. The lecture presented by Michael Stocker, from *SeaFlow*, is scheduled for September 16 in Sausalito.

September 24: Pacific Grove City Council will discuss the status of tidepools and marine reserves at its meeting on Wednesday, September 24, from 4-6p.m.

September 24: NOAA Fisheries will host a constituent information session on September 24, at the Westin Francis in San Francisco, from 6-9 p.m. This will be an important opportunity to voice concerns about ocean and fisheries management and to provide your suggestions for improvements.

October 5: *Save Our Shores* will celebrate its 25th Anniversary on Sunday, October 5 from 2-6p.m. The event will be a Toast to the Coast as well as a Roast for Vicki Nichols, former executive director for SOS. Nichols is moving to Virginia in November, but will remain involved in central coast ocean policy as the Marine Policy Advisor to SOS. All are invited. Mr. Fred Keeley, Mr. Zeke Grader, and Mr. Bill Douros are confirmed speakers. Cost for the event is \$25 per person/\$40 per couple.

October 18: *Friends of the Sea Otter* is also celebrating a significant anniversary this year. On October 18 from 7-9, the organization will toast its 35th year at the Monterey Plaza Hotel in Monterey. Congressman Sam Farr and Dr. Rikk Kvitek are confirmed speakers. The event is free. More details to follow.

Sea Otter Protection

Steve Shimek led the discussion on proposed Federal legislation to protect sea otter populations. Authored by Congressman Farr, HR _____ referred to as the “Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act”, provides \$5 million per year for five years to promote research. Although the proposed legislation does not meet all of the *Sea Otter Project* goals, Shimek reported that the proposal is a good beginning. The Bill will be introduced to House Resources Committee sometime before October 15, 2003.

Action needed by CWG members:

- **Write letters to the House Resources Committee in support the proposed legislation and increased protection of the Southern sea otter;**
- **Appear as a unified group in support of the proposed Act’s provisions;**
- **Develop a strategy to help the Bill pass committee.**

Sanctuary Report

Huff McGonigal provided the following Sanctuary Report:

JMPR process: The Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) addressed all of the JMPR draft action plans over the course of two meetings held in July and August. More than 350 people attended the meetings. The SAC recommendations on each of the plans are posted on the Sanctuary’s website at: <http://www.mbnms.nos.noaa.gov/sac/2003/073003/recact.html>.

The SAC deferred decisions on the draft action plans for special marine protected areas and motorized personal watercraft. The topics were referred back to the working groups for further discussion, and they will be considered again by the SAC at future meetings.

With respect to special marine protected areas, the SAC requested that the working group re-address the goal statement and role of Sanctuary. The group will meet on Sept. 25th.

CWG members support is also needed for limiting use of Motorized Personal Watercraft (MPWC) in the MBNMS. The SAC discussed this item at length with several results: 1) Use of MPWCs will be allowed in the MBNMS in the existing zones; 2) MPWCs will be allowed at the Maverick’s competition for tow-in purposes and only with a special-use permit; and 3) Under specific high-wave conditions, MPWCs will be allowed for practice purposes.

An additional concern was raised about MPWCs being used for rescue purposes during both practice and competitions. The issue raised several questions and concerns about the practical aspects of the concept such as:

- Who would run the ‘rescue team; i.e., would they be an official group trained and administered through the county or sanctuary office, or would the rescue team be a group of volunteers?
- Under what conditions would the jet-ski rescue team be out on the water?

The working group discussed the issue during a conference call on September 15; the results of which will be mailed to working group members. Although the working group did not reach consensus, this issue will be on the agenda for the October 3 SAC meeting in Cambria.

CWG members are urged to attend the SAC meeting to provide comment on this issue, as it raises concerns about the elevation of jet-ski use in the Sanctuary. **The CWG voiced support for limiting safety patrol use of MPWC to formal, agency staffed patrols.**

Other major topics of discussion about the JMPR are as follows:

- Sanctuary Visitors' Center: The SAC deferred a decision on the location of a Sanctuary Visitors' Center to the Business & Tourism Activity Panel.
- Desalination: The SAC recommended that the Sanctuary facilitate a discussion group about the growth inducing impacts of desalination.

Other Sanctuary news

1. The Regional Water Quality Control Board recently provided funds to the Sanctuary program to implement the Water Quality Protection Program's (WQPP's) plan for Agriculture specifically addressing run-off and tertiary treated water.
2. The database for the *Sanctuary Watch* program was completed by Save Our Shores and presented to the Sanctuary. Combined with GIS data, it will provide the Sanctuary with a valuable tool for education, monitoring, and enforcement.
3. CALTRANS is working with PISCO to determine sensitive habitats along Highway One and to create disposal plans that respond appropriately.

Other issues of importance

John Fisher expressed concern over the discussions and pending decisions about the fate of the San Clemente Dam and Carmel River. The Dam has to be either strengthened or removed. There are funds available to do riparian work, but now is the time to provide comments to ensure that the work is done well. Contact CAL AM for more information.

John also requested that CWG members become more involved with the issues surrounding desalination, as there are several discussions happening on a statewide level that will ultimately affect how desalination is implemented in the Sanctuary. Fisher recommended that everyone read the recent California Coastal Commission report on Desalination to gain a better understanding of the full scope of desalination issues throughout the state.

Steve Shimek reported that Moss Landing Harbor is considering its long-range dredging plan. If anyone is interested in dredging at Moss Landing Harbor, please send an email to Shimek and he will send the contact information on the project.

2004 Sanctuary Currents Symposium

The Sanctuary Currents Symposium is scheduled for March 6, 2004. The topic is Water Quality. Please send your suggestions for speakers, panel discussion topics, and moderators to Kaitilin at The Ocean Conservancy.

Legislative Report

AB 121(Simitian) and AB 906(Nakano) dealing with cruise ship pollution were signed by Governor Davis on September 24. Both bills enact some of the nation's strictest laws dealing with discharges from passenger ships. Specifically, the bills ban cruise ships from dumping oily bilge water, sewage sludge, chemicals from photo finishing and dry cleaning, and medical wastes. In addition, the bills require that the cruise ships report their discharges to the state within 24-hours, with a penalty for failure to report. An additional bill will be introduced next year to address air pollution generated by cruise ships.

AB 1296 prohibiting Krill harvest in state waters also passed. The bill prohibits krill harvest by California boats in state waters out to 200 miles. However, krill harvest is still allowed by non-California boats outside three-miles.

Future meetings

The next CWG meeting is scheduled for October 21, from 9:30–11:30 at Moss Landing Harbor Office.