

The Sanctuaries Act

Congress mandated that national marine sanctuaries be managed to protect and conserve ecosystem structure and function

Focus on management of

- natural biological communities
- natural assemblages of living resources and
- natural habitats

rather than focusing on species populations

Benefits of MPAs

research has shown that carefully crafted MPAs can be effective tools for conserving:

- diversity of animals and plants
- protecting habitats
- increasing both numbers and individual sizes of some species within an MPA
- larger fish produce many more young that are healthier and more likely to survive

Existing Protections EFH-RCA-MLPA

existing spatial management measures in state and federal waters of the Sanctuary provide valuable protections from impacts in certain habitats, but habitats further offshore are either:

- not adequately represented in existing MPAs, or
- not adequately protected by the gear based restrictions associated with EFH or the RCAs.

Existing MBNMS Zoning

The MBNMS has zones where:

A harmful human activity otherwise prohibited throughout the Sanctuary is allowed (motorized personal watercraft, harbor dredge disposal, jade collecting)

A harmful human activity is specifically prohibited (shark chumming, low over-flights)

The Need to Maintain and Restore Ecosystem Structure and Function

The Sanctuary ecosystem has been impacted from human activity to a degree where the MBNMS believes that it is appropriate to set aside some areas in federal waters where these impacts are minimized.

These impacts include:

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- altered size and age structure of fish and invertebrates
- altered habitats
- altered species assemblages and biodiversity
- reduced abundance
- altered ecosystem function

The Need for Research Areas

Setting aside areas of the Sanctuary as MPAs can provide critical research opportunities in offshore habitats in order to more fully understand the effects of fishing and other uses on the Sanctuary environment

While the new MPAs in state waters do afford the opportunity to distinguish human induced change from natural variation, offshore habitats are not represented

The Need to Conserve for Future Generations

The NMSA states that the NMSP will maintain for future generations the habitat, and ecological services, of the natural assemblages of living resources

There are certain areas of the Sanctuary with extraordinary features or attributes which warrant a higher level of protection

By providing additional protection the MBNMS can buffer against the effects of cumulative impacts from any large scale environmental changes (such as climate change)

Clarification of Purpose

The primary purpose for this action is the conservation of Sanctuary ecosystem structure and function

This action would not be taken for the purpose of managing any single human activity or impact

The Process Ahead

Asking the PFMC and SAC for input on how best to build on the efforts of the MPA working group to ensure an effective and timely public process

Consider “Concepts for a Process” and proposed timeline handouts

Ecosystem Analysis will be released shortly

Process Concepts (1-5)

1. The process ahead should capitalize on previous work
2. The membership of the MPA working group should remain approximately the same, some adjustment may be warranted
3. Science members should remain involved but serve as subject matter experts, not as stakeholders. A separate but public science panel should be convened to evaluate eventual proposals
4. Working group meetings should be professionally facilitated
5. Working group and science panel meetings should be public and any products made publicly available

Process Concepts (6-11)

6. The MPA planning process should provide for PFMC input
7. There is a need for socioeconomic study
8. A starting point for discussions should be the Areas of Interest identified by the working group adjacent to MPAs in state waters
9. Adjacent State and Federal waters MPAs should generally have parallel regulations
10. The working group will have approx. 6 meetings over 6 months to develop proposals to forward to the SAC.
11. Decisions on implementing authority will be made in the future

DRAFT DECISION PROCESS AND TIMELINE for the MONTEREY BAY NMS CONSIDERATION OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS.

