

NATIONAL SAC CHAIR SUMMIT
MAY 4-8, 2009
Alpena, MI

Summary

This is a selective summary of topics discussed at the National Chairs Meeting in Alpena, MI. It does not include all topics and issues discussed. A more comprehensive (and longer) summary is available from Chris Harrold or Nicole Capps upon request.

Tues, May 5

National Perspective (Dan Basta):

- “Item #1” is reauthorization of the NMSA. Last year attempted reauthorization through administration as well as through Congress. Key things the ONMS is looking for: [more on this from notes on 5/7]
- Sanctuaries need to address/embrace issues people care about and are of national significance. Otherwise, will become irrelevant.
- Thunder Bay NMS is increasing in size by 8-fold. Community is entirely behind this. Focus of Thunder Bay is heritage protection (wrecks from the schooners and bulk carriers of the Lake Huron.
- Dropped attempts to add Puerto Rico to the NMMS system.

Intergovernmental Policy Council (Micah McCarty)

This is a council of 3 native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest to have a say in resource protection regulations implemented by the Olympic Coast NMS. Of specific concern is ensuring recognition of special resource use rights that have been granted to the tribes by the Federal Government. There are 2 tribal seats on the OCNMS SAC, but the IPC does not have a seat.

National MPA Center (Lauren Wenzel)(hand-outs provided)

- Conducted national inventory of MPAs
- 1/3 of the US EEZ is in some form of MPA
- Less than 1% of US EEZ is in “no-take” protection
- 1700 MPAs in national waters.
- 225 MPAs accepted into the National Program in first pass (other passes will follow)
- Three goals of program:
 - Natural heritage
 - Cultural heritage
 - Sustainable production

Wednesday, May 6

Dinner with SAC Chairs & Dan Basta

- Dan emphasized the importance of SAC coordinators, and is elevating their position to “cross-cutting” program, as other coordinators are (e.g., research coordinators). They’ll meet regularly and have separate budget. SAC coordinators must be full-time positions. They are/should be more than “counting chairs” at SAC meetings.
- Dan wants resolutions support the findings and recommendations of the CINMS ocean acidification report. Several resolutions from several SACs, rather than a single resolution from the SAC chairs, are more useful to him.
- Responses to issues/questions brought by MBNMS SAC
 - *Issue:* Selection of SAC members: Management is too close to the SAC. Stakeholder groups should be able to select their own representatives.
Response:
 - No support for this concept by any SAC chair/representative.
 - Independent selection process by constituents (e.g., nominations and voting) would be a nightmare.
 - It’s appropriate for SACs to identify and select SAC members who would be helpful to the sanctuary, to get the word out.
 - All SACs (whose representatives spoke up) have some sort of SAC sub-committee that recommends candidates to superintendents and thence to Dan.
 - Florida Keys has standing nominating committee consisting of: superintendent, SAC coordinator, chair, vice-chair & past chair. Superintendent has never rejected recommendation by this group.
 - *Issue:* At-large members are not accountable to any constituency.
Response:
 - No SAC representative agreed with this view. At-Large members were viewed as a way to keep good people on the SAC when their positions rotate out of other seats. It also helps keep “new blood” on SAC.
 - At-large members were viewed as extremely important in representing the many people who aren’t part of a constituency represented on the SAC.
 - When raised at the SAC Coordinators meeting on 5/5, no SAC felt this was an issue of concern.
 - *Question:* Is there a legal foundation in the NMSA for Dan’s vision of increased SAC influence at community level, and at national level? (asked by Steve Scheiblauber at the 4/17/09 SAC meeting)
 - Dan’s response: “That is a stupid question.” He favors a wide, liberal view of the statute, and contends the program will fail if it takes a narrow view. Dan will answer Steve directly if Steve puts his question in writing.

Thursday, May 7

Youth Involvement with Councils

- There is no support for, and there are legal roadblocks to, youth membership on SACs. Rather, other approaches have been taken to involve youth with SACs:
 - Monitor NMS has established a Youth Working Group. “Members of the Youth Working Group would participate monthly in meetings with other youth and council members and present their ideas and findings to the full council from time to time. Purpose of working group is to advise the SAC on how best to convey the message of ocean conservation to the youth of today. (see flyer)
 - Thunder Bay NMS: Established “Sanctuary Stewards,” junior high, high school and undergraduate students.

Policy Update (John Armor, ONMS Conservation Policy and Planning Division Chief)

- #1 item is NMSA reauthorization, through both administrative and congressional action Main elements of revised bill:
 - Get rid of the moratorium on new sanctuaries
 - Streamline the designation process
 - Make national monuments part of the sanctuary system
 - Increase funds for authorization and appropriation.
 - Very important to have advocates for reauthorization outside of the ONMS system.
- Management plans in progress:
 - Stellwagon Bank, Thunder Bay are wrapping up.
 - Monitor, Flower Garden Bank, Fagatele Bay, Olympic Coast are just ramping up
 - Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale NMS: just starting.
- Other Stuff:
 - Overflight regulations: Working through jurisdictional squabble with FAA. FAA will not print mandatory sanctuary overflight rules on their nautical charts. They will print non-regulatory advisory overflight recommendations on charts, which pilots don’t have to follow.
 - Submarine cable guidelines are now out and ONMS is seeking feed-back
 - Developing policy for how the ONMS does zoning, and how it’s been used in the past
 - Usefulness of SAC resolutions on NMS policy: They can be huge, especially if the resolution is specific to a particular regulatory or policy action. They’re less useful if they’re more general.

Workshop/Breakouts: Catalyzing the Influence of Sanctuary Advisory Councils: How Local Actions can have Regional, National and Global Effects

The meeting broke out into several (how many) sessions. The following summarizes the answers developed by my own break-out session. Questions posed:

- What are some “touchstone” issues important to your community? *Ocean acidification*
- Think about tangible roles and activities that individual advisory council members, working groups or the council as a whole could take to help address the issues?
 - *Educate SAC members*
 - *Education/outreach to sanctuary communities*
 - *Help identify action people can take*
- What mechanisms or tools can ONMS staff and/or councils develop or enhance to facilitate advisory council interactions with other user groups, organizations and agencies in their local areas? *Bring NOAA high-level science to bear, e.g., Richard Feely*
- What can ONMS staff and/or councils do to help those local interactions have positive regional, national and global effect? *We couldn't improve on the “straw man” suggestions of ONMS staff:*
 - *Publicize local efforts to a national audience on the sanctuary's website, listserves and publications*
 - *Highlight local efforts at venues such as Capitol Hill Ocean Week, and brief local members of congress about such activities*
 - *Ensure that local successes are known across the sanctuary system, with our other partners, other government agencies and our international partners*
 - *Work with our NMS Foundation to help find partners and resources to help make actions happen.*