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## **Envisioning a National System of Marine Protected Areas: A Capitol Region Public Dialogue**

March 7, 2005

6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Hotel Washington (Washington, D.C.)

### **Breakout Group Responses**

This document provides a synthesis transcription of comments received from participants during breakout groups at the March 7, 2005, Capitol Region Public Dialogue held in Washington, DC.

#### Background

Marine protected areas (MPAs) in the United States are widely used as a tool for helping conserve the nation's wealth of natural and cultural resources for all Americans and the world. These precious resources, including coral reefs, kelp forests, whales, shipwrecks, and a wide variety of marine life in the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes, are vital to the economic sustainability of the nation for this and future generations. MPAs provide recreation and economic opportunities for millions of Americans; help sustain critical habitats and marine resources; and act as an "insurance policy" by helping protect marine resources from human impacts.

Over the past two decades, the use of place-based marine conservation and management tools, including the use of MPAs, has risen dramatically. Currently, there are hundreds of federal, state, territory, and tribal authorities and thousands of sites in U.S. waters. Each site may have varying definitions of types and purposes. These sites range from multiple-use to no-take reserves, although less than one percent (1%) of MPAs in the U.S. are no-take reserves. The complexity of MPAs and their recognition as vital tools for marine conservation and management are the foundation of Presidential Executive Order 13158 on MPAs, which was signed on May 26, 2000. The Executive Order directs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of the Interior to work with other federal agencies and consult with states, territories, tribes, and the public to develop a scientifically based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. The MPA Center was established to execute this role.

As part of this effort, the MPA Center has outlined a multi-year process to engage the nation in developing the national system of MPAs. This process includes collecting and considering continuous stakeholder and partner input for the development of the national system, enhancing

relationships with stakeholder organizations engaged in these issues, developing and applying sound science about marine resources and their use, and communicating clear, consistent information about the process. The process includes a series of workshops and Regional Public Dialogue meetings to enable the MPA Center to receive input from a wide variety of stakeholders and partners.

### Capitol Region Public Dialogue

The first in the series of Regional Public Dialogue meetings was held March 7, 2005 in Washington, District of Columbia at the Hotel Washington. After initial remarks and presentations from the MPA Center and Mr. Max Peterson, MPA Federal Advisory Committee member, participants were broken out into small groups to facilitate their input in response to the following five questions:

- 1) What should a national system of MPAs do to better serve you and your stakeholders' interests in the nation's natural and cultural resources?
- 2) What important economic, recreational, and other types of uses and values do you and your stakeholders want considered in developing a national system?
- 3) What important natural and cultural resources do you and your stakeholders think a national system should conserve and sustain the use of for future generations?
- 4) How should NOAA and Department of the Interior work around the country with your organization/agency and stakeholders to develop the vision for the national system?
- 5) Other comments?

The notes below were recorded on paper flip charts during the meeting and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The comments from each individual and group have been aggregated under each of the five respective questions.

All input received during this and other Dialogues is on the public record and will be considered in developing the draft Framework for a national system of MPAs. At this preliminary stage in the effort, the MPA Center does not intend to respond to any comments received via these Dialogues. Once a draft Framework for the national system is developed, NOAA will publish it in the *Federal Register* for formal public comment and will subsequently provide a formal response to any comments received.

This and other reports from workshops, as well as regularly updated information about the MPA Center's work to develop of the national system of MPAs can be found at <http://mpa.gov/>. For more information, contact Jonathan Kelsey, NOAA MPA Center, via phone at: 301-713-3155 ext. 230, or by e-mail at: [mpa.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:mpa.comments@noaa.gov).

## Summary of Breakout Group Responses

### **Question 1. What should a national system of MPAs do to better serve you and your stakeholders' interests in the nation's natural and cultural resources?**

- Why National?
  - Provide framework for regional (or smaller scale) coordination - "National" is for completeness, but need to get to more local scale
  - Provides opportunity for gap-filling or emphasizing regional area where haven't done a lot
- Look at similarities beyond regions; provide similar categories to learn from each other
- Gap analysis- focused biogeographically and ecosystem based
- Coordination within each biogeographical region what priorities are
  - Coordinate the process of determining
- Consider connectivity
- National research plan and monitoring plan
  - include what research going on
  - ensure consistency of monitoring so can answer some national questions
  - sounds prescriptive--might call this guidelines
- Figure out how MPAs serve the protected species and EFH [essential fish habitat] requirements of fisheries
- Communicate with us
- Processes to include participation
- Balance stakeholders' conservation, economic, goals etc.
- Needs education component
  - depends on audience for level (public, academic, hill, user group)
- Adds value
  - Existing areas function better
  - ID gaps in system (ecological/benefits)
  - National perspective- cultural integration, connectivity
- Transparent process to all stakeholders
- ID learning opportunities across- connect people, website/cleaning house
- Coordination across sites and groups (government., non-governmental organizations)
- Look upstream
- Like to see an evaluation of the necessity of no- take areas
- Clearly stated, measurable goals for outcome
- Recreational fish community wants to work with cultural heritage community on goals, restrictions, etc.
- Evaluation-- alternatives to no- take areas
  - other ways to achieve outcome
- ID sport diving community and work with archeologists on artifacts- educational program (Maritime Archeological and Historical Society)
- Value of artifacts
- Value in creating shipwreck trail (like in Florida Keys)-- sport diving community as stewards of historic shipwrecks
  - not being fully based now

- Interactive activities at parks important- develop proactive, interactive approach on education
- Cooperative research important
- Fishermen working with agencies
- Should be incorporated into evaluation
- International MPA system discussions focus on representativeness- how apply to national
  - how define representative
  - how apply to cultural resources
- Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act gives good guidelines for cultural significance
- Adaptive management important based on original goals
  - monitor, make changes based on outcome
- MPAs as crown jewels, misleading- benefit of being MPA needs to be clearly articulated
- MPAs not the “be all and end all”
- Coordination in places where there isn't
- Help ensure all voices heard
- Be an international leader (e.g. Northwestern Hawaiian Islands largest in world)
- What shouldn't national systems do?

**Question 2. What important economic, recreational, and other types of uses and values do you and your stakeholders want considered in developing a national system?**

- Value of area to itself- ecological value,(function and sustainability) ecosystem value
  - "ecological services"
- Intrinsic value- related to wilderness
  - aesthetic, spiritual
- Research- some areas should be just for research
- Economic values, economic sustainability
  - e.g. fisheries
- Transportation uses shouldn't be unreasonably restricted
- Recreational activities
- Tourism
- Subsistence use
- Is the cod fishery in the NE a cultural resource since such a long history? Different views on this
- "nature knows best"- allow to stay as natural as possible
- Don't oversimplify-no one-size fits
- Use equals objectives of MPA
- Tailored approach (management to purpose)
- Global commerce (economic benefits/costs)
- **balance** cultural, ecological, economic
- uses need to be planned with conservation (big picture)
- dynamic/adaptive process
- understand ecosystem and potential threats/impacts
- allow use while conserving (undersea cables in FL)
- engage users in process
- traditional uses and management approaches
- system should be representative and include cultural resources and biological resources
- consider shifting baselines
  - keep things as they are (no worse)
  - or restore/enhance
- ability to mitigate damages of natural disasters- keep/restore ecosystems ability to mitigate
- Oil and gas development considered
  - much misperception about industry
- Issue of managing multiple uses around cultural resources important - needs to be addressed
  - Recreational fishing and diver conflict issues important.
  - much more dialogue needed- leave to local level
- Tremendous concern at local level on impact of no- take areas
  - not much published info on it, but many impacts to fishing community
- Recreational fishing
- Subsistence fishing needs to be studied- always there
  - impacts of no-take areas significant
- Permanent loss for many in no fishing areas - social, economic, etc
- Balance of uses

- New and emerging uses important to consider
  - offshore wind and aquaculture
- Zoning relevant to system planning
- Consideration of community impacts
  - social, historic, economic, cultural
- Underwater adventure to and dive to shipwreck site, collect artifacts
  - museum is in the ocean - message important to come across
- Interest in underwater archeology growing- management issue that needs to be addressed in MPAs
- Perception that federal government wants to take away rights to access shipwrecks
  - issue in sport diving community
  - need to engage community

**Question 3. What important natural and cultural resources do you and your stakeholders think a national system should conserve and sustain the use of for future generations?**

- protect **full range/scope** of marine environments; duplicate set of protections for each bioregion
  - and have connectivity between
- necessary to protect special/unique areas with meaning to society
  - greater opportunity to do this in marine realm than a land
- also areas unique ecologically (e.g. deep water corals)
- subsistence use; indigenous use
  - some confusion/disagreement about use being a resource
  - maybe subsistence/indigenous "considerations" or "aspects"
- coastal/bottom habitats
- coral reefs
- fisheries
- representative suite of habitats and connect
- lifecycle of species (varies)
- species assemblages
- shipwrecks
- native American sites (Paleolithic and more recent)
- access to resource
- use of resource
- traditional uses of resource
- water quantity
- water quality
- Connectivity between watershed and waters (geography based rather than program based)
- charismatic species conservation - motivate interest
- Cultural resources - learning from experts fosters stewardship
  - apply to sport divers, also fishermen
- Level of protection important to clarify
- Questions raised about validity of science on no-fish areas
- benthic habitat impacts need to be studied
- appropriate management measures important
  - sometimes too restrictive for goal trying to achieve
- Commercial fishing interests- addressing is challenge for MPA planning
  - regulating and managing multiple uses challenging
- Clarify no-take vs. spectrum of MPAs
  - come out with definition or still suspicious
- South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has definitions of MPAs - various levels of protection clarified
  - people bought into levels, definition
    - only concern is that not established through legislation

**Question 4. How should NOAA and Department of the Interior work around the country with your organization/agency and stakeholders to develop the vision for the national system?**

- Include international collaboration
  - e.g. IOI (international oceans institute)
- Bring in fisherman/other users from other countries who've had positive experiences to share experiences
- Cooperative research and monitoring
  - previous users can be brought back this way (transport for or direct research)
- List serve-- discussion forum
- Look for strategize meetings
- Puget sound/Gulf of Alaska basin international research conference (3/29- 3/31)
- Legislators-- they're ones can make happen ultimately
- Industry (all user groups w/ economic interest in the ocean)
- integrate with efforts to implement the recommendations of the President's Ocean Action Plan
  - various committees formed under Council on Environmental Quality
- power point should include information on how our work linked into broader ocean policy work
- Washington State thinking about state commission to examine ocean policy- if gets established, perfect group to talk to other states doing this too
- co-host meetings - messenger is important
- get set of speakers to talk to interest groups
- International oil/gas -“Offshore Technology”, Houston May 2005
- Draft people within industry to help communicate
- Get stakeholders to speak at each other’s gatherings
- cross-fertilization
- Work with Council on Environmental Quality (existing structure)
- Ocean Action Plan
- Bottom-up and top down
- Don’t re-create wheels
- Boat Shows
- NOAA should be there but should partner
- Collect info about how national system could benefit them
- Caribbean, Pacific
- Cooperative overview and information gathering
- Legitimate, local leaders
  - Example: Massachusetts Striped Bass Association
    - views different in different regions, local areas
    - representatives of larger organizations
- North Carolina to Maine all involved in striped bass
- State Historic Preservation Offices missing and representatives from sport diving industry
  - interact sooner than later
  - biggest objectors- take wrecks away
- Open discussion format useful with more involvement from all stakeholders



## **Question 5. Other?**

How Big/Inclusive is National Systems; Definition?

- Concern that if term marine managed area (MMA) doesn't restrict system to areas managed to conserve, the system will be too big, include everything (inconsistent with Executive Order if not managed for protection)
- Cultural/shipwreck path may need its own definitions (rather than include in natural)
- Assume MPA network not there to protect tourism, but assume tourism will take place there
- Goal is protection of resource, not the use