

**Conservation Working Group Meeting
Minutes
May 15, 2001**

There were 27 people in attendance at the meeting.

Announcements:

- Kaitilin Gaffney informed the group that there was an article on tidepools and human disturbance in the 5/15/01 LA Times.
- Vicki Nichols announced that SOS, CMC and WWF would be cosponsoring a public forum with presentations from SeaWeb and on the MLPA and the Management Plan Review on May 30th from 7-9 pm at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.
- Milos noted that there are several whale species in the Bay currently and it is a good time to go whale watching.

Sanctuary Report: (Holly Price, MBNMS)

- LFA Sonar
 - Some indications that Navy may be willing to stay outside of MBNMS
 - Deadline for comments on LFA has been extended to 5/18
- Snapshot Day
 - Over 120 volunteers participated, testing 140 stations for a variety of parameters. Nitrate and coliform testing was done at every site this year.
 - Data will be available in a couple of months
- Fishermen's Alliance
 - Alliance has created study group to look at marine reserves issue with the goal of developing recommendations to the State (F&G), PFMC, and Management Plan Review processes. Brock Bernstein will facilitate the study group meeting and they are currently in the data gathering stage.
- Funding Proposals
 - The Sanctuary is currently seeking funding for biological assessments as part of the Big Sur Coast Highway study as well as updates to the emergency response critical habitat maps.
- 2002 Symposium
 - Holly asked for input on the 2002 symposium theme- alternates under consideration include: the management plan review issues, reserves, and innovative research technology. There was support from the CWG for covering an array of management plan review issues, including marine reserves. It was suggested that experts from other areas (other sanctuaries) be brought in to share their experiences with issues such as reserve creation.

Management Plan Topics:

- Shoreline Protection Devices – Charles Lester of the CCC gave a presentation on coastal erosion and shoreline protective devices and the public policy issues related to use of such devices. He also explained some of the issues related to specific seawall of riprap projects in the Monterey Bay area such as Pleasure Point and Fort Ord. The MBNMS has played a limited role in seawall permitting in the past.

Suggestions for sanctuary involvement in this issue included: (1) assistance in coordinating sub regional approaches to shoreline protection, (2) assessing/considering cumulative impacts of SPD, (3) facilitating or performing research related to sand supply and shoreline dynamics, (4) helping ensure public access to the Sanctuary, (5) helping to identify key resources areas where SPD may not be appropriate (such as Big Sur).

- Benthic Disturbance by Trawling - Steve Webster, Monterey Bay Aquarium gave a presentation related to concerns about impacts of bottom trawling. Steve noted that bottom trawling is the most pervasive form of benthic disturbance in the Sanctuary and that trawling impacts have become a priority issue in marine conservation worldwide in recent years. Steve circulated several articles related to impacts of bottom trawling and handed out copies of a brief bibliography on trawling related publications and websites. Steve noted that a subcommittee of the Sanctuary Ecosystem Monitoring team identified bottom trawling as a top issue requiring further study, and also noted that the one study related to trawling and the MBNMS noted a lack of adequate control sites as all areas open to and appropriate for trawling are trawled. Steve recommended that the trawling concerns be addressed by creating suitable control sites (non-trawl areas) and studying the issue further to determine what the impacts of trawling in the MBNMS may be. CWG members voiced support for creating no-trawl areas for scientific purposes and potentially for conservation purposes as well. It was noted that this is an important issues for the CWG and that more information and interaction with the RAP and the Fishing Alliance Study Group on this issue may be appropriate.
- Dredging- Deirdre Hall, MBNMS gave a presentation on harbor dredging policies and issues throughout the MBNMS. Deirdre identified the potential adverse impacts associated with dredging and noted the various approved dredging sites and dredge disposal sites within the MBNMS. She also gave updates on current dredge operations at Sanctuary harbors and noted the Sanctuary's current concerns over dredging including the desire for an efficient and thorough process, interagency coordination, increases in volume in disposal requests, resource concerns. Representatives from the harbors noted their concerns that permitting for disposals is onerous and that clean dredge materials should be considered a resource for beach replenishment. The CWG discussed the statewide harbor association's request for changes in Sanctuary boundaries to remove disposal prohibitions from a wider zone around the harbors. The CWG agreed that the management plan review process should be prepared to discuss the harbor's request and assess its potential impacts on resources. The CWG also noted that the Sanctuary could help with: (1) further research related to dredging and dredge disposal such as regional analysis of sediment transport and (2) improving interagency coordination regarding permits for dredge disposal (the SF DMMO was noted as a model process), (3) efforts to minimize future need for dredging through improved watershed management, breakwater and harbor design (4) assessment of impacts associated with dredge disposal (esp. materials that are not 80% sand).

The next CWG meeting will be held on June 19th and will include presentations on marine mammals, invasive species, and tidepools.