

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Final Management Plan: A Summary Guide

January 2009

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) has updated the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary's management plan. To help you understand the sanctuary's new management plan, this summary provides brief descriptions of sanctuary action plans and revised sanctuary regulations, along with information on how you can stay involved in your sanctuary.

What is the Management Plan?

The management plan is a road map for sanctuary management that serves to: 1) guide site management toward achievement of the sanctuary's goals using the best means available; and 2) inform sanctuary constituents, including the general public, about the sanctuary, its regulations, and the management actions it has planned for the next five to ten years. The sanctuary's new management plan, released in January 2009, represents a major revision of the original 1983 management plan under which the sanctuary previously operated.

The final management plan contains information about the sanctuary's environment and resources, staffing and administration, regulations and boundaries, priority management issues and the actions proposed to address them, and performance measures. It is supported by a final environmental impact statement (FEIS; released November 25, 2008), which contains detailed information on the greater sanctuary region, presents a range of alternatives for modified and new sanctuary regulations, and provides environmental and socioeconomic impact analyses of those regulatory alternatives. These two documents are bundled together in two volumes: the final management plan is Volume I, and the FEIS is Volume II. Of the regulatory alternatives analyzed in the FEIS, NOAA decided to implement the proposed action alternative. A final rule, published in the Federal Register, presents the new sanctuary regulations. Changes to sanctuary regulations focus on key issues including ecosystem protection, wildlife disturbance, vessel traffic, water quality and introduced species.



Photo: Dean DePhillipo

For information on how to get a copy of the final management plan, please refer to the back cover of this guide.



About the Sanctuary

Designated in 1980, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary consists of an area off the coast of California of approximately 1,470 square miles (1,110 square nautical miles) adjacent to the following islands and offshore rocks: San Miguel Island, Santa Cruz Island, Santa Rosa Island, Anacapa Island, Santa Barbara Island, Richardson Rock, and Castle Rock extending seaward to a distance of approximately six nautical miles. The islands and rocks vary in distance from 12 to 40 nautical miles offshore from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties in southern California.

A fertile combination of warm and cool currents in this area results in a great variety of plants and animals including kelp forests, fish and invertebrates, pinnipeds, cetaceans and sea birds. The sanctuary also has a wealth of maritime heritage resources including Chumash Native American artifacts and more than 100 historic shipwrecks. Human uses in the area include commercial and recreational fishing, marine wildlife viewing, boating, diving, kayaking, maritime shipping, nearby offshore oil and gas development, research and monitoring, military and numerous educational activities.



Sanctuary Goals

The sanctuary's goals, derived from the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, are to:

- 1) Protect the natural habitats, ecological services and biological communities of all living resources inhabiting the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and the sanctuary's cultural and archaeological resources, for future generations;
- 2) Enhance public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the marine environment and the natural, historical, cultural and archaeological resources of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary;
- 3) Support, promote, and coordinate scientific research on, and long-term monitoring of, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary resources;
- 4) Where appropriate, restore and enhance natural habitats, populations and ecological processes within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary;
- 5) Provide comprehensive and coordinated conservation and management of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, as well as the activities affecting it, in a manner complementing existing regulatory authorities;
- 6) Create models of and incentives for ways to conserve and manage national marine sanctuaries, including the application of innovative management techniques;
- 7) Facilitate to the extent compatible with the primary objective of resource protection, public and private uses of sanctuary resources not prohibited pursuant to other authorities, and enhance such uses where they are wise and sustainable;
- 8) Cooperate with national and international programs encouraging conservation of marine resources; and
- 9) Develop and implement coordinated plans for the protection and management of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, with appropriate federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes and organizations, international organizations, and other public and private interests concerned with continuing the sanctuary's health and resilience.



Why Review the Sanctuary Management Plan?

The ONMS is required to review sanctuary management plans to:

- Evaluate the substantive progress toward implementing the management plan and goals, especially the effectiveness of site-specific management techniques and strategies;
- Determine necessary revisions to the management plan and regulations;
- Prioritize management objectives; and
- Meet requirements of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

Since the sanctuary's designation in 1980, significant innovations in science, technology, and marine resource management techniques have been made, while challenging new resource management issues have emerged. In addition to updating its now obsolete 1983 management plan, the plan revision process has provided a vehicle for the ONMS to integrate new tools and practices into site management.

How Was the Final Management Plan Developed?

The management plan review process is based on three fundamental steps: 1) public scoping meetings ("scoping" is a process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed by, and identifying the significant issues related to, a federal agency's proposed action); 2) the prioritization of issues and development of action plans; and 3) the preparation of draft and final management plans and regulations, and the relevant environmental documentation (such as an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment) as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Seven public scoping meetings were held in 1999 from San Luis Obispo in central California to Long Beach in southern California (one meeting was also held in Washington, D.C.). During scoping, sanctuary constituents raised a wide range of local, regional and national resource management issues, such as sanctuary boundaries, water quality, marine reserves, and enforcement.

Sanctuary staff worked with the sanctuary advisory council to analyze and refine all of the issue categories raised during scoping. Based on input from the advisory council and general public, sanctuary, ONMS and other NOAA staff collaborated to develop a robust set of action plans and revised sanctuary regulations to address issues and concerns identified during scoping. Sanctuary staff also consulted with congressional leaders and federal, state and local government agencies regarding the draft management plan. The ONMS contracted Tetra Tech for assistance in developing the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), which contained a draft analysis of proposed sanctuary regulation changes.

Between May and July 2006, the ONMS received public comment and held two hearings on the draft management plan and DEIS. After receiving comments on the DEIS, the ONMS determined that the original range of alternatives needed to be modified to better address potential impacts of sewage and graywater discharges from large vessels. Thus, the ONMS issued a supplemental DEIS (or SDEIS) that modified the range of regulatory changes under consideration and discussed the potential environmental consequences of a revised discharge/deposit regulation. Between March and May 2008, the ONMS received public comment on the SDEIS. The ONMS then incorporated the revisions to the discharge/deposit regulation analyzed in the SDEIS into the FEIS' revised proposed action. In total, the ONMS received over 700 comments on the draft management plan, DEIS, and SDEIS.

Comments from the public, the advisory council, and government agencies played a key role in the development of the final management plan and FEIS. FEIS Appendix B and the final rule contain NOAA's responses to all substantive comments received on the draft management plan, DEIS, and SDEIS.



Photo: Robert V. Schwemmer

Summary of Final Action Plans and Regulations

The final management plan contains nine action plans that will guide sanctuary management in the years ahead, and NOAA has made a number of regulatory changes to improve resource protection.

Public Awareness and Understanding

The primary objective of the Public Awareness and Understanding Action Plan is to promote an understanding of the unique natural and maritime heritage resources of the sanctuary. Through community and regional partnerships in education, the sanctuary has and will continue to reach out to a broad spectrum of the public, exposing them to not only the biological, physical, and intrinsic values of the sanctuary, but also the impacts human activity can have on this invaluable resource. This outreach can help the public develop a personal sense of ownership and responsibility for the sanctuary; the key to building stewardship. This action plan describes activities such as: increasing visitor center support and development (including building a new Outreach Center for Teaching Ocean Science with the Marine Science Institute at the University of California, Santa Barbara); promoting the growth of multicultural education programs (especially MERITO – the Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans program); and the continued operation of the successful Channel Islands Naturalist Corps program.

Conservation Science

The ONMS has adopted the mission-oriented, multi-disciplinary approach of conservation science for the protection, assessment, monitoring, maintenance, and restoration of the historical and natural resources under its stewardship. The Conservation Science Action Plan describes the sanctuary's efforts to develop a research and monitoring program for evaluating ecosystem health, socioeconomic impacts, and implementing effective resource management strategies. The sanctuary and its partners work to obtain sufficient data on living marine resources, ecosystems and human activities to better understand questions and issues such as how biological communities function and vary naturally; how different biological components interact and are integral to the ecosystem health; effects of human activities on the natural system; how ecosystems vary over time due to natural perturbations and human-related factors; and socioeconomic impacts resulting from the health of the ecosystem or from management actions. Strategies in this action plan include aerial monitoring, collaborative research, habitat mapping, and understanding the social and biological effects of marine reserves.

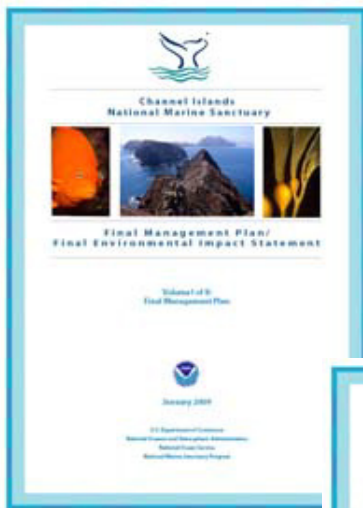
The Sanctuary, Partnerships, and the Sanctuary Advisory Council

Partnerships are vitally important to sanctuary operations. The sanctuary works with local, state, and federal agencies in addition to regional and local stakeholders, research institutions, and other non-governmental organizations in order to carry out the ONMS' mission. The sanctuary relies on its many partners to leverage resources available to implement various resource protection, research, and education programs. It will continue to rely on these partnerships to implement the new management plan.

One of the sanctuary's strongest partners is the sanctuary advisory council. Dedicated sanctuary advisory council members have laid a strong foundation for the sanctuary's structures, policies, and procedures. The advisory council provides the sanctuary superintendent with advice on management priorities, programs and activities.

The sanctuary advisory council has proven to be a powerful voice for the general public, responding to citizen concerns, ideas, and needs. It provides a public forum for its constituents, working to improve communications and bringing the concerns of stakeholders to the attention of the sanctuary superintendent and NOAA leadership in Washington, D.C.

Community members are encouraged to communicate with their sanctuary advisory council representatives and to attend sanctuary advisory council meetings as a means of raising or commenting on various sanctuary-related issues. Information about the sanctuary advisory council is provided on the sanctuary's Web site at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/> (click on "Sanctuary Advisory Council").



important water quality questions. Such questions concern topics ranging from water quality science to management policies and regulations.

Resource Protection

The Resource Protection Action Plan prescribes a framework for identifying and addressing current and future sanctuary resource protection issues. A partial list of threats that need to be evaluated and which may require sanctuary action include: marine mammal ship strikes, ocean acidification and other possible climate change effects, energy development proposals and activities, human-caused noise, introductions of non-native species, and wildlife disturbance from vessels or lighting.

This action plan documents these and other issues sanctuary staff are currently tracking, and describes the tools used to address such issues. With an ecosystem-based approach to management, including a research program that informs resource protection, sanctuary staff examine and evaluate issues that may affect the sanctuary, assess and track threat levels, and when necessary take appropriate action (or work with partners to do so). This reduces the potential for negative impacts on sanctuary resources and qualities while continuing to allow compatible, sustainable human use and enjoyment of the sanctuary.

Emergency Response and Enforcement

Effectively responding to emergencies (e.g., oil spills) and ensuring compliance with sanctuary regulations requires coordination of multiple agencies, vessel and aircraft operations, and trained officers, staff, and volunteers. The Emergency Response and Enforcement Action Plan presents strategies and actions for addressing the sanctuary's emergency response and enforcement needs. Strategies within this action plan focus on improving emergency response preparedness and planning, providing interpretive enforcement, sustaining vessel and aircraft surveillance, and enhancing inter-agency cooperative enforcement of sanctuary regulations.

Boundary Evaluation

NOTE: Sanctuary boundary expansion is not proposed in this plan. A separate public process will address this issue in the future.

Many people raised the issue of sanctuary boundary expansion during public scoping in 1999 and throughout 2000. The Boundary Evaluation Action Plan describes a future process the ONMS will utilize to evaluate possible changes to the sanctuary's boundary.

Water Quality

The Water Quality Action Plan describes strategies for understanding and addressing potential water quality threats. Traditionally, the sanctuary's water quality efforts have been primarily limited to: supporting select monitoring projects conducted by outside parties, facilitating public discussion and investigation of water quality issues, producing various water quality education and outreach materials, and promoting practices to limit pollution. This action plan addresses the need for the sanctuary to work in partnership with other entities to find answers to



Maritime Heritage

The Maritime Heritage Action Plan focuses on the sanctuary's archaeological research and monitoring, maritime heritage resource protection, and education and outreach about our rich maritime history and important connections to contemporary Chumash Native American culture. Collectively, sanctuary maritime heritage resources represent a remarkable cross-section of regional and national heritage. Cultural material in the sanctuary dates as far back as 13,000 years while historic materials date from Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo's 1542-1543 voyage up to the mid-20th century. Activities in this action plan include monitoring and inventorying maritime heritage resource sites, developing exhibits and outreach materials, upgrading the sanctuary's maritime heritage resource Web site, and working with members of the Chumash community to provide public education and outreach about Chumash heritage.

Operations

The Operations Action Plan describes the sanctuary's day-to-day administrative and operational activities. These activities are designed to safely and effectively utilize the sanctuary's administrative, infrastructure, fiscal, and human resources. Since the sanctuary is one of many entities involved in the management of resources within the Channel Islands and surrounding waters, partnerships and community involvement programs aid in achieving comprehensive and coordinated management of sanctuary resources. This action plan also prioritizes completion of a new sanctuary office building and education center on the UC Santa Barbara campus, and promotes the greening of sanctuary operations. In addition, this action plan describes how the sanctuary is working to "green" its operations.

Performance Evaluation

As part of an effort to improve overall management of national marine sanctuaries, ongoing and routine performance evaluation is a priority for the ONMS. The Performance Evaluation Action Plan presents a series of performance measures for the sanctuary's other eight action plans. The sanctuary will use these performance measures to demonstrate progress towards achieving its objectives (provided within the strategies of each action plan).

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries & Public Participation

National marine sanctuaries are areas of the marine environment with special conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, cultural, archaeological, or esthetic qualities. The ONMS has managed these special areas since passage of Title III of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972; now called the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. For more than 30 years, the ONMS has engaged the public in designating sanctuaries, developing resource protection strategies, addressing complex resource management issues, and – more recently – reviewing and updating sanctuary management plans.

The ONMS encourages members of the public to stay engaged in the sanctuary and implementation of the Channel Islands sanctuary management plan. Consider some of the following opportunities:

- Attend public meetings of the sanctuary advisory council or their various working groups.
- Learn more about the sanctuary from experts at one of our free monthly "From Shore to Sea" public lectures (<http://channelislands.noaa.gov/focus/calendar.html>).
- Consider applying to become a trained volunteer with the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps (http://channelislands.noaa.gov/edu/edu_natc.html).
- Learn how you can support sanctuary programs through the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (www.nmsfocean.org).
- Join the sanctuary e-mail list to receive notices about upcoming sanctuary events (<http://channelislands.noaa.gov/focus/list.html>).



Photo: Robert V. Schwemmer

Sanctuary Regulations

The original sanctuary regulations were in place for over 25 years. NOAA has revised the sanctuary regulations in order to: address new, emerging, and other potential threats to sanctuary resources; clarify and update existing vague and/or outdated sanctuary regulations; and increase consistency with other national marine sanctuaries' regulations. The regulatory changes are aimed at protecting marine habitats, sensitive species, water quality, and submerged cultural and historic resources while continuing to allow compatible, sustainable human uses. The FEIS analyzes the potential environmental and economic impacts from the regulation changes, which are summarized in the box below.



Photo: Robert V. Schwemmer

Summary of Sanctuary Regulation Changes¹

In general, the revised sanctuary regulations:

- Continue to prohibit oil and gas exploration, production, and development.
- Prohibit mineral exploration, production and development.
- Continue to prohibit discharges and deposits of material or matter, with changes that:
 - Clarify that discharges allowed from marine sanitation devices must be treated by a Type I or II marine sanitation device.
 - Prohibit graywater and treated sewage discharges from large vessels (> 300 gross registered tons), with an exception for oceangoing ships without sufficient holding tank capacity to hold these wastes while within the sanctuary, but no exception for cruise ships.
 - Prohibit discharges or deposits from beyond the sanctuary that subsequently enter the sanctuary and injure a sanctuary resource or quality.
 - Prohibit food waste discharges and chumming for non-fishing purposes.
- Continue, but expand to the whole sanctuary, the prohibition on altering the sanctuary's seabed/submerged lands.
- Prohibit abandoning material or other matter on or in the sanctuary's submerged lands.
- Continue, but strengthen, the prohibition on operating large vessels within 1 nautical mile of islands and certain offshore rocks within the sanctuary.
- Continue to prohibit disturbing marine mammals or seabirds by low-flying aircraft.
- Continue, but strengthen, the prohibition on moving, removing, injuring or possessing sanctuary cultural resources.
- Prohibit taking or possessing marine mammals, seabirds or sea turtles.
- Prohibit tampering with signs.
- Prohibit releasing introduced species.
- Prohibit operating motorized personal watercraft, but only within an area already banned by the National Park Service (within 1 nautical mile of the Islands).
- Continue, but strengthen, requirements for allowed military activities and clarify consultation requirements for new activities.
- Continue, but clarify, strengthen, and augment permit categories, criteria, and procedures.

¹ This is a summary list and does not depict any actual regulatory language. Additional details about the regulation changes appear in the FEIS and final rule. For sanctuary regulations in effect, refer to the Code of Federal Regulations (15 CFR 922.70 - 922.74).

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To get a copy of the final management plan / FEIS:

- 1. Go to <http://channelislands.noaa.gov>**
- 2. Visit a sanctuary office:**

**113 Harbor Way, Santa Barbara Harbor (in Santa Barbara) or
3600 S. Harbor Blvd. Ste. 111, Channel Islands Harbor (in Ventura County)**
- 3. Visit the Ventura County or Santa Barbara public library**
- 4. Contact us via e-mail (mp.request@noaa.gov) or phone (805-884-1464)
& provide us with the following information:**

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