



Marine Protected Areas Education



The education project has been developed as part of our work at the National Marine Protected Areas Center at NOAA (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

BACKGROUND

WHAT IS A MARINE PROTECTED AREA?

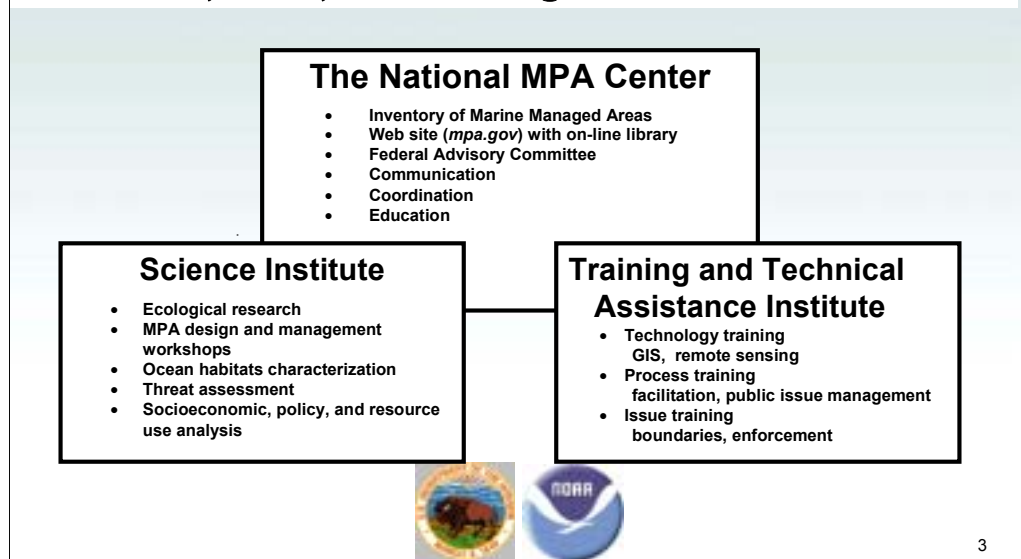
MPA EDUCATION – WHO’S DOING WHAT?



This presentation is about marine protected areas, which are referred to by the acronym MPA. First, a brief overview about our office and basic information about MPAs. Not a lot of detail, but enough so you'll know a bit about what they are and why they're an important part of taking long-term care of our marine environment. And finally, what our office is doing to promote awareness and understanding of MPAs.

The National Marine Protected Area Center

Science, tools, and training for the Nation's MPAs



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This is a very simplified schematic of the National MPA Center and some of the major tasks we focus on. The headquarters is located in Silver Spring, MD, just outside of DC. The Center is a non-regulatory office located in NOAA with support from DOI.

We provide support for the different MPAs throughout the country by helping to provide and coordinate science, tools and training about MPAs and for MPA managers. We're developing an inventory of marine managed areas in the States, maintaining and constantly updating our MPA.GOV web site, and coordinating many other activities.

The Center has 2 field offices. The Science Institute is out in CA, and is working to increase the understanding of natural and social science relating to MPAs. The Training and Technical Assistance Institute in Charleston, SC, provides technological and management training to coastal managers. To increase our efficiency and reach, and to build on the strengths of other agencies, we work in collaboration with many different governmental and non-governmental agencies.

What is An MPA?



“...any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by federal, state, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.”

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The issues we work on concern marine protected areas. That’s a very general term for all types of areas along our coasts and in the ocean that have been set up to provide some level of protection for either natural or cultural resources within their borders. Essentially, they’re protected areas of the ocean and near-shore waters. Because of the wide variety of MPAs, they can go by lots of different names, and each name can have a slightly different connotation.

The definition of an MPA that the MPA Center works with comes from the Presidential Executive Order signed in 2000, which established our office. This is the exact wording from the EO. The key words in here are:

Area, so we’re talking about something with defined boundaries

Reserved, which means that the area’s set aside in some manner

Marine—this has been extended to include near-shore brackish waters and also the Great Lakes, and finally

Lasting Protection – that is, the area has some type of management scheme that is specifically designed to provide protection of natural or cultural resources within the boundaries, and that protection is not designed to be temporary.

What this means is that there are a lot of different types and sizes of MPAs set up for different reasons. Some are very small, others huge. Some are set up to protect natural resources such as coral reefs, while others protect historic shipwrecks. Some are more allowing of different public activities while others have less access to afford more protection to the resources. Some have different areas, or zones, within the same MPA with different rules and regulations. And of course there are different agencies that manage them—state, federal, local, tribal, even private organizations that designate and manage MPAs.

MPAs Are a Tool For Managing Marine Resources

Spatial

Multiple purpose

Inclusive – species and stakeholders

Management tools are compatible with MPAs

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What are they good for? MPAs are just one tool for managing marine resources. They're useful because they are established for a specific area – managers can work on ecosystem management principles. Instead of trying to manage just the crabs within the sanctuary, they manage the sanctuary well and the crabs flourish. And the seagrasses do well and protect beach erosion. So you're dealing with the full system, instead of focusing on single species management.

Not only can MPAs be multi-purpose within their boundary, they can be set up for different reasons. So while a National Wildlife Refuge may have in its mission statement that it's managed for ducks, it's actually a protected area that provides good habitat for ducks. It's the habitat that's managed, so all the species within it, including ducks, thrive. The National Estuarine Research Reserves are managed for long-term research, water quality monitoring, education and stewardship. But as an example, the Waquoit Bay NERR on Cape Cod, MA encompasses 3,000 acres of open waters, barrier beaches, marshlands and uplands, providing good habitat for threatened Piping Plovers and Roseate terns. It also provides a refuge for people at a beautiful swimming beach and for recreational fishermen surfcasting for Striped Bass.

MPAs should be inclusive – not only for the plants and animals within their boundaries, but also for people. Experience has shown that the MPAs that work well are those that have included all the stakeholders, or the people that have interest in them, in their design. Social science is just as important as natural science in the design and management of MPAs.

Marine protected areas provide just the framework for managing marine resources. What's done with them—the rules and regulations and their enforcement—are what's really managing the resource.

Many Kinds for Many Purposes

- Biodiversity conservation**
- Fisheries management**
- Endangered Species Protection**
- Cultural resource preservation**
- Recreational, Scientific & Educational Opportunities**



MPAs aren't just one thing. They aren't just fisheries exclusion zones or coral reef parks. The estuarine research reserves are set up for research and education. National wildlife refuges have hiking trails and camping sites. Shipwrecks allow diving, but allow no artifact removal. Many of them are multi-purpose, and multiple use.

Managed by Many Agencies

Federal



National Marine Sanctuaries



National Parks, Monuments, Lake- and Seashores

National Estuarine Research Reserves

National Wildlife Refuges

Fisheries Closures & Special Areas



And as I've said they're run by many different agencies and organizations. This lists the major types of federal MPAs.

Managed by Many Agencies

Territorial

Parks

Tribal

Seashores

State

Wildlife Refuges

Closures & Special Areas

Local

And that's just at the federal level. There are similar types set up at the territorial, tribal, state and local level, all run by different agencies.

Many Kinds for Many People

Coastal residents

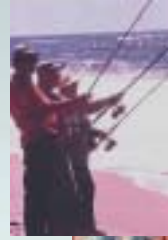
Tourists

Recreational Fishermen

Researchers

Ports and security

Commercial Resource Use



MPAs aren't just for conservationists. They're for everyone. They are for the people living in the surrounding area and the people that come to vacation and have fun. They are for scientists who study our oceans. And they are for the businesses that make the local economy strong. Properly designed and managed MPAs are set up to protect the resources within them for everyone's future.

MPA Education Project

Presentations

Regional workshops

Conferences

mpa.gov and the Library

Literature

Workshops & conferences

Resources

Education & outreach materials

Web links



Scientists can gather data about the benefits of MPAs, but that's not enough. People have to be involved for MPAs to work well, and as you know, they won't get involved with what they don't know about. So we need to educate the public about MPAs, and it's important to educate the people who educate the public. And this is where the MPA education project comes in.

First, we organized a series of regional workshops to provide a more in-depth look at the social and natural science behind MPAs. These were provided for education intermediaries—those who provide marine resource education and outreach. These educators can then work regionally to increase the knowledge and understanding of MPAs in the education community.

We also take the opportunity to present at many conferences.

But we need a method to make information available to a wider audience. We are using the Internet as a primary outreach tool. The NOAA library has set up a section on the MPA Center's web site that includes an extensive bibliography about MPAs, and they are making as many articles as possible available on the web. Just a few years ago, it was very difficult to find any literature; now an extensive bibliography is available and searchable from a central location. We are also posting information about MPA conferences and making proceedings available whenever possible. For example, the presentations from the education workshops will be available on the web in easily down-loadable format.

In addition, we are developing materials that will help you integrate MPAs into marine education activities and programs.



MPA Education Materials Development

MPA education poster and companion materials

Backgrounders & outreach materials

MPA issue of *Current* magazine

***Connections* newsletter and ed email updates**

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Our first project is an MPA education poster that was developed with the very generous support of cartoonist Jim Toomey. We can mail these out to educators upon request.

The poster is meant to catch people's eye to start them wondering what we're talking about when we say MPA. It shows some geographic distribution of MPAs, the diversity of the resources being protected, and also the diversity of the types of MPAs. We developed a companion sheet that provides a bit more information about each site along with web links for more information. Another handout helps teachers guide the discussion about the poster and MPAs.

Through the workshops and conferences that we attend, we are working to integrate the concept of MPAs into marine resource education activities. MPAs should be part of the overall discussion about marine resources, just as MPAs are part of the overall management of marine resources. We will provide the information that you need to do this. We are developing a series of basic informational background pieces about a wide variety of MPA issues. These will be readily available for your use or adaptation from the MPA.GOV website. In addition, we will work together with NMEA's *Current* editors to produce an issue devoted to MPAs, covering a wide range of basic issues. We also send out a monthly newsletter highlighting the MPA Center's resources and opportunities, including updates on training, research, management tools, publications and studies, inventories, photos, and frequently asked questions. A monthly email update also goes out to educators with information about grants and opportunities, and highlights a different marine resource education program and a website each month.



We'd like to hear from you – what are your needs from our office. We'd like to develop materials that are useful to raise awareness of MPAs. For this, we need feedback from you, about the information you need and the types of materials that are useful. Please call or email us with any suggestions or questions.