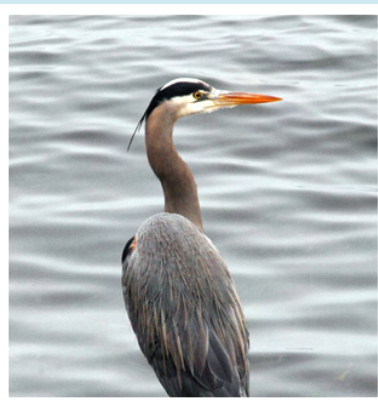


NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY PROGRAM SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

National Annual Report 2006



FEBRUARY 2007

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service
National Marine Sanctuary Program

About This Document

This annual report provides information to interested parties about the activities of National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils in 2006.

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INTRODUCTION

National Marine Sanctuary Program

The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 National Marine Sanctuaries and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. The NMSP is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which manages sanctuaries by working cooperatively with the public to protect sanctuaries while allowing recreation and commercial activities that are compatible with resource protection. The sanctuary program works to enhance public awareness of our marine resources and marine heritage through scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs and outreach.

The sites in the sanctuary system embrace part of our collective riches as a nation. Within their protected waters, giant humpback whales breed and calve their young, coral colonies flourish, and shipwrecks tell stories of our maritime history. Habitats include beautiful rocky reefs, lush kelp forests, whale migration corridors, spectacular deep-sea canyons, and underwater archaeological sites. Our nation's sanctuaries and marine national monument can provide a safe habitat for species close to extinction or protect historically significant shipwrecks. Ranging in size from less than one square mile to more than 5,300 square miles, each site is a unique place needing special protections. Natural classrooms, cherished recreational spots, and valuable commercial industries—marine sanctuaries represent many things to many people.

Sanctuary Advisory Councils

The NMSP has entered a “tipping period” as it relates to organizational maturity and stature within the marine conservation community. This tipping period very much encompasses our sanctuary advisory councils as well because every site in the system, including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, now has an advisory council. There are almost 440 people (243 Members and 161 Alternates) serving on advisory councils.

The NMSP has worked with councils for fifteen years. Like the sanctuaries themselves, the councils are constantly evolving and maturing. At some sites councils are tackling new, different, and sometimes more complex issues. At other sites, councils continue to address familiar issues in a dedicated and steadfast fashion.

Councils bring together members of a diverse community to provide advice and recommendations to the sanctuary superintendents on the management and protection of the sanctuary, or to assist the NMSP in guiding a proposed site through the designation process.

The members of the councils serve as a broad cross-section of the communities that lie adjacent to national marine sanctuaries. Members sit on councils representing such interests as conservation, education, research, fishing, whale watching, diving and other recreational activities, boating and shipping, tourism, harbors and ports, maritime business, agriculture, and maritime heritage, as well as jurisdictional partners from local, regional, state, tribal and federal agencies.

The NMSP regards the involvement of communities and the development of a stewardship ethic as vitally important to successfully protect sanctuary resources. Councils create a nexus among the communities, the resources and the NMSP. The NMSP is committed to the full support, utilization, and enhancement of councils at all sanctuaries and provides national support to that end. The NMSP deeply appreciates the dedication, hard work and passion of each and every one of our sanctuary advisory council members.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profiles

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 1998 to enhance opportunities for public involvement in sanctuary management and to support the process of management plan revision. The council has twenty-one voting members, ten representing various local, state, and federal government partners and eleven representing a variety of community interests (conservation, education, research, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, tourism, non-consumptive recreation, business, Chumash community and the public at-large). The council meets bi-monthly and has formed a number of active working groups, including those focused on conservation, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, education, research, and Chumash community involvement.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

The Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 2002 to support the Joint Management Plan Review process currently underway for the sanctuary and its neighboring sanctuaries, Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries. The council has members representing research, conservation, maritime activity, education and community-at-large. The government seats on the council are held by representatives from the National Marine Fisheries Service and the United States Coast Guard. The council holds a minimum of four regular meetings per year, and an annual retreat in the summer.

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in May 2005. Voting members include research, education, fishing/Western Pacific Fisheries Council member, ocean recreation, and community-at-large. American Samoa's Department of Commerce/Environment Division, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, American Samoa Community College-Sea Grant Program, National Parks and the National Marine Fisheries Services are nonvoting seats. The council meets monthly.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Established in 1991, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council is the oldest of the councils and has twenty members covering a wide spectrum of interests in the Florida Keys community, including boating, conservation, diving, education, Everglades restoration, fishing (commercial and recreational), government, maritime heritage, research, tourism and the community-at-large. The council meets bimonthly and currently has three active working groups: water quality, ecosystem restoration and education & outreach. Ad hoc committees are formed to deal with more narrowly focused issues.

Flower Garden Bank National Marine Sanctuary

The Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 2005 to enhance opportunities for public involvement in sanctuary management and to support the process of the management plan review. The council has eight voting (non-governmental) members representing various community interests including recreational diving, diving operations, oil and gas industry, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, research, education, and conservation. Additionally, non-voting representatives from three governmental agencies serve on the council including: Minerals Management Service, Department of the Interior; United States Coast Guard; and NOAA Fisheries, Department of Commerce. The council meets quarterly or more frequently as needed during the management plan review process.

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

The Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 1999 to support the site's management plan review, which began the same year. The council includes fourteen members representing conservation, education, research, recreational fishing and diving, commercial/charter fishing, and federal and state agency partners. The council meets quarterly.

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 2001 to support the joint management plan review process now underway for the GFNMS and its neighboring sanctuaries, Cordell Bank and Monterey Bay. Council members represent the areas of education, research, conservation, maritime activities and the community at large, as well as the GFNMS's primary government partner, the National Park Service. The council meets quarterly, including an annual meeting with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to discuss issues related to the northern management area and overlapping issues. Several council members participate in ad hoc working groups.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 1992. It is one of the older councils and also the largest at 31 members. Representatives cover all facets of the sanctuary community, including conservation, education, research, fishing, whale watching, tourism, recreation, shipping, business/commerce, Native Hawaiian, individual islands, the community at large, and a number of state and federal partners. The council formed subcommittees for education, research, and conservation that meet on a frequent basis; the whole council generally meets quarterly.

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary

The Monitor National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 2005. The council consists of twelve members and three alternates representing the U.S. Navy, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, National Park Service, The Mariners' Museum, recreational diving, heritage tourism, conservation, education, maritime museums and the public at-large. The council meets biannually and meeting locations alternate between Virginia and North Carolina.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council is one of the oldest councils, established in 1994. It is also one of the largest, with 20 voting members. The seats include such diverse interests as conservation, education, research, fishing, diving, tourism, recreation, harbors/ports, business/industry, agriculture, and the community at large, and 7 members represent local or state agency partners. Non-voting federal agency representatives include the U.S. Coast Guard, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the three California sanctuaries. The Advisory Council meets bimonthly throughout the sanctuary. There are four standing working groups of the Advisory Council: Conservation, Education, Research and Business; and Tourism.

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument

The Advisory Council was established in 2001 to provide advice on the operation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, now Marine National Monument, and the sanctuary designation process. Twenty-five members represent a broad spectrum of interest groups, including conservation, education, research, recreational and commercial fishing, tourism, Native Hawaiians, and the community at large, as well as ten state and federal agency partners. The council generally meets quarterly.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 1995 and has twenty-one members, including fifteen voting members representing conservation, education, research, fishing, tourism, harbors/ports, community at large, local governments, and the four Native American tribes of the region. Six ex-officio, non-voting seats represent the sanctuary's federal partners (Olympic National Park, NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Navy) and the Northwest Straits Commission. The council meets bimonthly, except during the summer. The council has three standing committees – the executive committee, the resource protection committee, and the education/outreach committee - to assist the work of the council. In addition, the advisory council has established working groups on an as-needed basis.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

The Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 1992. The council has 21 members covering the wide spectrum of interests in the region, with fifteen voting seats representing various facets of the community including conservation, education, research, fishing, whale watching, recreation, business /industry, and the community at large. The remaining ex-officio seats represent the sanctuary's state and federal partners. The council generally meets four times a year.

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in 1997. The council has fifteen members and fifteen alternates; five seats represent local community governments, and the other ten represent facets of the sanctuary community, including education, research, fishing, diving, tourism, cultural resources, economic development, and the community at large. The council meets bi-monthly, with informal coffees and lunches scheduled for non-meeting months. Working groups meet as needed.

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORTS

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

In July 2006, the council submitted to the sanctuary superintendent consensus and non-consensus comments on the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) Draft Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DMP/DEIS). As part of this process, the conservation working group, research activities panel and Chumash Community working group each provided comments on the draft documents. The comments were forwarded by the council to the sanctuary superintendent. Since receiving these recommendations, CINMS staff has been working on comment responses and revising documentation as the final management plan and final environmental impact statement are prepared.

The council also submitted to the sanctuary superintendent consensus and non-consensus comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Consideration of Marine Reserves and Conservation Areas within the CINMS. As part of this process, the conservation working group, research activities panel and recreational fishing working group each provided comments on the draft documents that were forwarded by the council to the sanctuary superintendent. Since receiving these comments, staff has been working on drafting responses and revising documentation as the final environmental impact statement on marine reserves and conservation areas is prepared.

The council agreed to formally continue their role of providing community input to the California Department of Fish and Game regarding the monitoring of state marine protected areas (MPAs) within the sanctuary. The response has been to create an annual schedule of reports from the Department of Fish and Game that provide the council with an opportunity to give feedback on planned activities and measured results before they are finalized. The council sent a letter to NOAA's Vice Admiral Lautenbacher asking for support for marine reserves monitoring programs. A response was received thanking the council for their hard work and stating that "NOAA is committed to dedicating funds to meet research and monitoring priorities, and to coordinate our existing research efforts in order to fully realize opportunities to augment Channel Islands MPA monitoring."

The council's new Chumash Community working group was established and held their first public meeting in February at the Santa Ynez Reservation, including an orientation session and discussions about how the group and CINMS might work together. The working group then met to learn about tribal/Sanctuary working relationships in the northwest through conversation with Bob Steelquist from the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. The group was instrumental in getting several Chumash people to provide substantive comments on the DMP/DEIS.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

In December the council submitted comments on the Draft Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary. Since its inception in 2002, the council has worked tirelessly with sanctuary staff to shape and draft the management plan for CBNMS.

Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils held a joint meeting in the Spring of 2006 to discuss the use and technology of dispersants in spill response within Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries. In this meeting, the two councils sought to gather information in order to advise sanctuary management in protocol for spill response and use of dispersants.

Sanctuary Chair Tom Lambert attended the first ever meeting of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council with the superintendents and council chairs for the West Coast National Marine Sanctuaries. This meeting was held in order to advance relations with the sanctuary program and the Fisheries Management Council.

The council passed a resolution regarding the potential threat of oil and gas exploration activities to ecosystems protected under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act as a result of the recent passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 by the United States Congress. The council also passed a resolution opposing opening the Leatherback Conservation Zone (time/area closure), established in 2001 to protect the critically endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle from injury and mortality from the drift gillnet fishery. The sanctuary is included within the Leatherback Conservation Zone, and is a known feeding area for the leatherback during the Leatherback Conservation Zone time/area closure.

The council advised U.S. Coast Guard personnel as to possible adjustments to the boundary of the Coast Guard's weapons training area which lies offshore of Bodega Head, Sonoma County, in a busy fishing and boating traffic area, as well as migration and feeding area for several marine bird and mammal species.

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The council sponsored a VIP day to Fagatele Bay where the Governor, Lt. Governor and members of the local legislature and cabinet participated, giving them an opportunity to learn about sanctuary resources and programs.

At a council meeting, sanctuary staff laid the groundwork for the management plan review. The council is ready to tackle the process in 2007.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The council's April meeting was held in Key West in conjunction with the dedication of the patrol vessel P/V Peter Gladding, named for a deceased council member. The council hosted Major Julie Jones and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission law enforcement honor guard to lunch with other distinguished guests at the historic La Concha hotel. Following the meeting a group of council members and invited guests from headquarters went out to Ft. Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas to join members of the National Park Service to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Tortugas Ecological Reserve and establishment of the Research Natural Area in Dry Tortugas National Park.

In December the council again met in Key West, for the first time at the newly opened Nancy Foster Eco-Discovery Center. The council hosted a mini-symposium on Shifting Baselines and the Historical Ecology of Fishing in the Florida Keys, with guest speakers Dr. Jeremy Jackson and Loren McClenachan of the Scripps Institution, Dr. Steven Miller of University of North Carolina at Wilmington and a distinguished panel of long-time Keys fishermen.

The administrative office at Crane House in Marathon was closed and a smaller facility maintained nearby, including the council coordinator's office and council records. Ann Morkill joined the ex officios on the council for U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, as did Cecelia Weaver for the South Florida Water Management District at the council's request. Council coordinator Fiona Wilmot left the sanctuary's employment after over five years supporting the council.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The focus of council activities during 2006 was the ongoing review and revision of the 1991 Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan. The council's actions served to further the sanctuary's progress in the management plan review process. Actions detailed below included revising goals and objectives statements, reviewing the State of the Sanctuary Report, discussing priority issues and forming working groups to focus on various aspects of the management plan.

Four council members participated in a half-day training session in September to prepare sanctuary staff and volunteers for scoping meetings. Those council members also attended and assisted with the management plan review scoping meeting held in Houston, Corpus Christi and New Orleans during October.

In February, during a regular meeting of the council, members participated in a facilitated discussion to begin revising a draft of the sanctuary's mission statement and goals and objectives. Three council subcommittees continued to work on the draft with final changes being accepted at the council meeting in June and then put forth as a recommendation by the full council.

The council's draft of the goals was included in the State of the Sanctuary Report released in October. The council reviewed the draft State of the Sanctuary Report during its preparation and recommended minor changes.

In August, the council voted to establish working groups to focus on two different areas—education and oil and gas production. Also in August, the council participated in a ranking exercise and a discussion of the sanctuary's emerging issues.

During their December meeting, the council established working groups to address priority issues for the management plan review. The working groups plan to actively engage in discussion and drafting of action plans during spring 2007.

Following a presentation by a NOAA law enforcement officer, the council recommended that the sanctuary develop a form for reporting violations and make it available on the sanctuary website.

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Review and revision of the sanctuary's 1983 management plan was the primary focus for council activities since its formation in 1999. This past year the council oversaw the release of the final management plan and environmental impact statement and final rule for the sanctuary. The council hosted the public release in July, and is facilitating outreach to constituents on the new regulations that will be final in early 2007.

Two new working groups were established by the council in 2006 – the education and outreach working group and the research advisory panel. The education and outreach working group tackled final development of an oceanography curriculum as its initial task, but is expected to aid the site in outreach and communication efforts in the future. The research advisory panel met in November to draft significant components of Gray's Reef's Condition Report, a summary of sanctuary resources, pressures on those resources, current conditions and trends, and management responses to the pressures that threaten the integrity of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary.

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The council plays a critical role in facilitating dialogue between sanctuary management and the area's many and varied user groups and constituents. In addition to raising constituent concerns with sanctuary management, the council is responsible for carrying the messages, programs, accomplishments and issues of the sanctuary out to the groups each member represents.

The council passed a resolution to fully support the Gulf of the Farallones NMS Facilities Master Plan, which was developed from management plan review information, staff workshops, and public scoping meeting information. A resolution was also passed in support of "Option A" from Dan Basta for the National Advisory Council providing it represents a wide spectrum of disciplines, stakeholders and interests, and a full extent of geographic areas con-

taining marine sanctuaries. "Option A" was to establish a National Advisory Council made up of one standing group with permanent membership covering diversity of functions and interests, and meeting at least twice a year.

The council passed a resolution to support the continuation of a streamlined sanctuary advisory council process through more efficient use of existing funding and resources, increased use of volunteer and intern support, and greater volunteer involvement on the part of sanctuary advisory council members.

In July, the council authored a letter to Dan Basta seeking additional funds and a line item for a permanent council coordinator as soon as possible. The council also proposed to put a discussion of the Maverick's Surf Contest on the next joint meeting agenda with MBNMS. The Seabird Colony Protection Program's outreach and education and enforcement and coordinated management working groups members were chosen.

During the council's October retreat they agreed to continue the Seabird Colony Protection Program's outreach and education and enforcement and coordinated management working groups, and the ad hoc Esteros, ad hoc San Francisco Exemption Area working groups. The Tomales Bay Water Quality and Seabird Colony Protection Program's technical advisory committees will also continue, and the vessel spills working group will be developed. The ad hoc fishing working group will now become the ad hoc California Marine Life Protection Act working group.

A council resolution was passed to include fishing activities in both GFNMS and West Coast Regional outreach publications, and a letter was reviewed that will be forwarded to Dan Basta regarding NOAA's decision to reject an expansion proposal for GFNMS and CBNMS that would have been attached to the Magnuson Fisheries Act Reauthorization Bill. The council provided comments on the draft management plans for GFNMS and MBNMS and the draft environmental impact statement. The council passed a resolution in support of the GFNMS and MBNMS management plans as well as the GFNMS proposed regulations with the proposed council changes.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The council has been working on existing and emerging issues that may affect humpback whales and their habitat in Hawaii. These issues include vessel-whale collisions, aquaculture development, and water quality. The Super Ferry and other vessel-whale interactions continue to be discussed, and focus-groups have met to address management, research, and education strategies for these potential threats. The council has also provided significant input to the sanctuary's ocean etiquette campaign that focuses on providing ocean users with guidelines and regulations regarding humpback whales and other protected species of Hawaii.

The council's research and conservation committees issued a joint position statement on proposed spinner dolphin rulemaking to NOAA's Office of Protected Resources, Pacific Islands Regional Division. The aquaculture working group has been establishing liaisons for communication between the council and industry on each island. The entire council is working to develop a better way to evaluate aquaculture ventures, as several new projects are being proposed in Hawaii.

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The council, established in 2006, held its first two meetings in May and November. Council members worked this year to determine the best methods for communicating Monitor information to their respective constituency groups.

The council also provided feedback to the sanctuary superintendent on how to best exhibit the archaeological remains of the two sailors found in the Monitor's turret, a highlight of the 64,000 square foot Monitor Center at The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia opening in March 2007. The challenge was how to present a topic

that is an essential component of the Monitor recovery in a tasteful yet realistic manner. Four options were offered to the council, and the superintendent received tremendous feedback from the group on the subject.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The council marked its sixth year of participation in the management plan review process, which is nearing completion. In October they were briefed on the plan and the draft environmental impact statement. In November and December many council members took part in public workshops and consulted their own constituents. Their December meeting was devoted to writing the council response to the plan, seeking consensus where possible, and adding additional comments as well. It was a challenging and productive process. Their letter also urged NOAA to continue funding and staff support to make it possible for this comprehensive plan actually to be enacted.

The council provided input on a new NOAA document on the process for consultations and coordination between NMFS and NMSP. They saw this process in action as it related to krill harvesting and fishing at Davidson Seamount. Chair Deborah Streeter took part in a further discussion of this growing coordination and relationship at a National Marine Fisheries Service meeting in San Diego in September.

Council members were active participants in the California State process to designate a network of Marine Protected Areas along the central coast in an area that overlaps the MBNMS. Many also took part in California's other new ocean protection initiatives including attending and providing leadership at the California and World Ocean's Conference, attended by over 1,000 people in Long Beach in September.

The council used one of the management plan action plans on new issues, as a way to consider a proposed artificial reef off the coast. They also heard about the new ocean literacy and ocean communicators group. Many council members took part in the dedication ceremonies for the new research vessel the R/V Fulmar. The council was briefed on the Safe Seas drill in August and made recommendations on various community groups to involve in the exercise.

The council continued to work cooperatively with the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) on the area within MBNMS boundaries that is managed by the GFNMS. They expressed concern about proposed budget and staff cuts at the GFNMS, including proposed reduction in staff support for their advisory council.

The council continued to work on improving relations with local governments and increasing public outreach. Members worked with and attended hearings of the Monterey City Council, which continues to express concerns about the structure and governance of the council.

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council

In the first half of 2006, the council's time was primarily dedicated to reviewing and developing comments on the draft sanctuary management plan and draft environmental impact statement for the proposed sanctuary in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

On June 15, 2006, President George W. Bush signed a proclamation designating the area surrounding the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands a "marine national monument." Before the proclamation, most of these federal waters were protected as a coral reef ecosystem reserve established in 2000 by President William J. Clinton and were being considered for designation as the nation's 14th national marine sanctuary.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

A major initiative of the council was to develop an understanding of the relationship of the NMSP to the regional fisheries management councils when fishery regulations are being considered that may impact a particular sanctuary. The year began with a briefing by the director of the Northwest Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service on a draft flowchart showing the links and relationships between the Stevens Magnuson Fishery Act and the National Marine Sanctuary Program. The council established a working group to develop comments on the draft flowchart and held a special meeting to approve these comments. A council member representing tribal interests initiated an effort to break through some of the institutional barriers between the west coast sanctuaries and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC). In May, the advisory council voted to send one of its members to the June PFMC meeting in San Francisco. In November, again at the urging of council members, the PFMC sponsored a roundtable discussion at its regular meeting. Present at the discussion were council representatives and superintendents from all of the west coast sanctuaries. The roundtable was well attended and produced a number of follow-up suggestions meant to further the relationships between the management council and the advisory councils and superintendents of the west coast sanctuaries.

The council adopted a resolution of support for the 7th annual Coastal Cleanup to be held in April. The cleanup involves a partnership of the sanctuary with the Olympic National Park and is spearheaded by citizen groups, including the Olympic Coast Alliance. The cleanup annually removes tens of tons of trash from the remote beaches of the Olympic Coast. The advisory council also moved to establish a working group to make final recommendations on the Flowchart and to hold an emergency meeting in April to consider the recommendations.

In September, the advisory council passed a resolution commending the Governor of the State of Washington for her leadership in ocean protection. The council felt that this was warranted given a number of actions the governor had taken over the past year. This included establishing an ocean policy working group to develop comprehensive recommendations for the state on managing its coastal resources, the creation of an oil spill advisory council to development recommendations on steps needed to protect Washington's water from oil spills, and the joint agreement cosigned by the governors of California and Oregon to initiate coast wide efforts to coordinate, research, and protect coastal resources.

The council formed a working group at its November meeting for the purpose of developing comments on the Aqua Energy preliminary draft environmental assessment that was submitted to the Federal Power Regulatory Agency. Aqua Energy is proposing a test of four wave energy buoys to be sited within the OCNMS to assess the feasibility of the design.

In November, the council passed a resolution on supporting the stationing of a year-around rescue tug at Neah Bay. The current rescue tug is only available from fall through late spring, due to funding restrictions. Since 1999, when the tug was first stationed, it has responded to 29 incidents involving drifting or damaged vessels and/or barges.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

In 2003, the council prioritized the complex array of issues identified by the public in scoping meetings and recommended the formation of stakeholder working groups to address these issues. In 2004, council members chaired and participated in 11 working groups and provided recommendations to the sanctuary superintendent for the revised management plan. The process thus far has provided agreement among diverse stakeholders on contentious issues, i.e. many of the working groups came to consensus recommendations and the council approved many of the working groups' recommendations unanimously. In 2005, two working groups were formed compatibility determination and zoning.

In 2006, the sanctuary announced that the draft management plan is a non-regulatory management plan— a decision of the National Marine Sanctuary Program - incorporating the following four components: the site setting, the action plans, the draft environmental assessment and general appendices. The final management plan may be followed by targeted regulatory actions addressing high priority issues.

The draft action plans were submitted to NMSP Headquarters in Summer 2006. The action plans were altered slightly from the council's review (October 2004) in order to combine recommendations that were overlapping between action plans. In effect, the working group content remains the same. The council prioritized activities (November 2004); the sanctuary prioritized strategies (2006). Prioritization will be dependant on cost effectiveness and timelines. The draft management plan will be submitted for internal NMSP/NOAA review in 2007.

The zoning working group was established in 2005 due to a consensus agreement by the ecosystem-based management working group to tackle one of the most significant and difficult issues in sanctuary management (i.e. applying ecosystem-based management and zoning in a site). The group developed a definition of "ecological integrity" as follows:

Ecological integrity is defined as the degree to which the system is structurally intact and functionally resilient within the context of historical baselines. Structurally intact means the native parts of the system are maintained as well as their interrelationships. Functional resilience is the system's ability to resist changes caused by human or environmental perturbations, or should change occur, to recover over time.

In June, the sanctuary initiated formal consultation with the U.S. Coast Guard and the proponents under Section 304(d) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act regarding the proposed traffic separation scheme change, that will reduce the probability of ship strike to the greatest number of whales, but not necessarily right whales.

Regarding the various liquefied natural gas (LNG) proposals, the council requested that sanctuary staff, in consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, review the DEIS for the Northeast Gateway and Neptune projects to determine the extent to which the projects have evaluated the effects of entrainment on sanctuary resources.

The council also recommended that the sanctuary staff, in consultations for LNG projects, take into consideration the effects of marine mammals, fish, other marine life, habitat quality and exotic species and projects including but not limited to noise, vessel traffic, habitat alteration, entrainment and other factors.

The sanctuary's condition report was commissioned in October 2004 to serve as a prototype for the entire sanctuary system. The report was designed as a report to the public and is not a scientific document. In 2006, the council provided recommendations for the SBNMS Condition Report to NMSP Headquarters.

Gloucester, MA (a strong SBNMS constituent-base) was selected as a Preserve America City. Preserve America City is a new federal grant opportunity, which has been developed for historic cities across the country. Funding will enable a city to conduct community development and set up tourist programs. The council suggested that other key cities around the sanctuary should be submitted for selection as a Preserve America City.

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

In 2006, the council held four meetings, a short retreat and also met informally on four separate occasions. Council members also participated in the four management plan review scoping meetings that were held in September.

Constituent reports continue to be an important tool for council member involvement. Constituent reports provide a valuable way for council members to stay in touch with the segment of the community they represent and share that information with the balance of the council and the sanctuary staff. The council agreed that these reports should continue.

At each meeting, time was reserved for a special presentation. These included a demonstration of the sanctuary's newest exhibit "Science on a Sphere," a boat building update and demonstration, viewing the Science Channel's documentary "Great Lakes Shipwrecks," and a presentation by Brandon Schroeder of Sea Grant on the Northeast Michigan Integrated Assessment: Connecting Great Lakes Coastal Access, Tourism and Economic Development.

Another regular feature at the meetings, "Sanctuary Updates" is popular with council members and the media and serves to keep the council informed. The council also receives a periodic email update from the sanctuary staff between meetings.

In 2006, Thunder Bay NMS began its management plan review. During the review process, the council will play an important role. Council members formed a management plan review working group. This group helped facilitate the four public scoping meetings that were held in September to gather public comments. The working group also assisted the sanctuary staff in sorting through the comments received during the scoping process and helped prioritize these issues. Council members then formed six working groups to address these issues. The working groups are: sanctuary operations, funding, resource protection, boundary expansion, education and outreach, and research and monitoring. The council will continue to work with the sanctuary staff in 2007 on the management plan review.

In 2006, the council passed a resolution to congratulate the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands on designation as a National Monument and welcome them into the family of sanctuaries across the United States.

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