

# MPA CONNECTIONS

Newsletter of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

July 2003

The mission of the National Marine Protected Areas Center is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas. *MPA Connections* was launched to meet continuing calls by agency and external stakeholders for information about MPA Center activities.

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## **(NOAA) Seeks Public Comments on Proposed Criteria for Building an Inventory of Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Managed Areas (MMAs)**

NOAA and the Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, jointly propose criteria, definitions, and data fields that will be used in development of an Inventory of U.S. marine managed areas or MMAs.

The MMA Inventory will provide information that will lead to the fulfillment of requirements of Executive Order 13158 on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This action requests comments on the working criteria for including existing sites in the MMA Inventory and describes data fields to provide consistent information about each site.

This notice also makes clear that the development of the MMA Inventory is Phase I, to be followed by the development of the List of MPAs (Phase II) called for in Executive Order 13158. The intent of this document is to solicit public participation in the development of an inventory of existing U.S. MMAs (federal, state, commonwealth, territorial, and tribal sites) as a resource for managers, scientists, and the general public.

A second Federal Register Notice seeking public comment on MPA criteria will be published as part of Phase II.

Comments regarding the proposed MMA Inventory criteria, definitions, and data fields should be sent to:

Joseph Uravitch  
National MPA Center, N/ORM, NOAA  
1305 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Comments will also be accepted via email to: [mpa.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:mpa.comments@noaa.gov). Email comments should state "MMA Inventory Comments" on the subject line.

All comments must be received on or before September 22, 2003.

Details regarding the background, proposal, inventory data fields, process, consultation, and classification can be found in the Federal Register Notice at: 68 Fed. Reg.43495; <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2003/pdf/03-18733.pdf>

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### **Feature: The Making of the United States Marine Protected Areas Initiative**

Many people have wondered about the history leading up to the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Initiative in the United States, known as Executive Order 13158. While MPAs are not a new concept, they have emerged as a major management tool over the last decade.

Throughout the years, MPAs have been established to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, protect endangered and threatened species, sustain and rebuild fisheries stocks, reduce by-catch among non-target species, protect vital fisheries habitat, provide recreational, scientific and educational opportunities, protect cultural resources, and maintain traditional cultural connections to the sea.

Increasingly, MPAs are being implemented in innovative ways around the world, with notable examples in Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Belize, Canada, and Italy. As more scientific research is conducted regarding the effectiveness of MPAs, both in natural and social science areas, national public debate about using or not using MPAs has escalated.

In addition, a number of U.S. states are in the process of reviewing their existing MPAs or considering the establishment of new sites for a variety of resource conservation purposes.

In the last five years alone, there have been several national ocean policy actions regarding MPAs. These include statutory reauthorizations, a national oceans conference, a coral reef Executive Order and action plans, and the establishment of the Congressional Oceans Caucus, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, as well as the MPA Executive Order.

All of this has led to growing concerns from various stakeholder groups about the fairness of or need for MPAs as a management tool, increasing the public debate further.

The National MPA Center was established in 2001 as part of the MPA Executive Order. Its work focuses on collecting and assessing a national MPA inventory, defining MPA terms, conducting science and analysis, providing training and technical assistance, coordinating MPA activities within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and doing outreach to partners and groups with MPA concerns.

For more information about the MPA Initiative in the United States, please visit <http://mpa.gov>.

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### **Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee Holds Inaugural Meeting**

The inaugural meeting of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee was held on June 24 and 25, in the Department of Commerce's auditorium in Washington, D.C.

Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Sam Bodman welcomed the Committee and members of the public, and provided an overview of NOAA's MPA programs and mission. The Deputy Secretary highlighted the partnership between the Departments of Commerce and the Interior, and spoke briefly about the Committee's duties to provide recommendations about aspects of MPA Executive Order 13158 to the Secretaries of both departments.

The Department of the Interior's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Patty Morrison, also addressed the Committee and public. Presenters over the two-day meeting included MPA Center Director Joe Uravitch, Science Institute Director Charlie Wahle, Training and Technical Assistance Institute Director Ginger Hinchcliff, and Dan Farrow from the NOAA Ocean Service's Special Projects Office.

The Committee decided to elect a chairperson at their next meeting, as not all 30 members had cleared the security review and thus not all had been officially appointed. Ten members of the public addressed the Committee during the public comment period, representing recreational fishermen and boaters as well as environmentalists.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation sponsored an evening reception at the National Aquarium for the Committee members, Congressional staff, non-governmental

organization representatives, and NOAA and Department of the Interior staff. Documents, presentations, and transcripts from the meeting will be posted on mpa.gov later this month. The next meeting of the MPA Federal Advisory Committee will take place in September or October 2003.

A complete transcript of the meeting will be available on the MPA website in late August. Go to <http://mpa.gov/mpabusiness/fac.html>.

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**Question of the Month: How many marine protected areas exist in the United States?**

The number of federal, state, commonwealth, territory and tribal marine protected areas and marine managed areas in the United States is currently being collected through an inventory. To date, with just one-third of the states' MPAs counted, and the majority of federal sites counted, we estimate that there may be between 1,000 and 1,500 marine managed areas in the U.S. A draft of all the collected sites will be available sometime in 2004. After each inventory is collected and reviewed, it is being posted on <http://mpa.gov>.

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**Upcoming Events And Conferences**

July

13-17: Coastal Zone '03, Baltimore, Maryland. Theme is coastal zone management through time; <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz2003>

20-22: Second Annual Public Participation GIS Conference, Portland, Oregon; <http://www.ursia.org/ppgis.htm>

20-24: National Marine Educators Association, Wilmington, North Carolina; <http://www.marine-ed.org/nmea2003>

21: MMA Inventory Team initial state meeting with Georgia agencies

August

10-14: American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Quebec City, Canada. Theme is aquatic protected areas as fishery management tools; [http://www.fisheries.org/apa\\_symposium/homepage.htm](http://www.fisheries.org/apa_symposium/homepage.htm)

## September

4-6: Centre for Maritime Research (MARE) announces its second international conference entitled “People and the Sea II – Conflicts, Threats and Opportunities,” Amsterdam, the Netherlands;  
[http://www.marecentre.nl/people\\_and\\_the\\_sea\\_2/index.html](http://www.marecentre.nl/people_and_the_sea_2/index.html)

8-17: World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa; <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/>

14-18: Estuarine Research Federation’s 17<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference: “Estuaries on the Edge: Convergence of Ocean, Land and Culture,” Seattle, Washington;  
<http://fish.washington.edu/news/erf>

## October

7-11: North American Association for Environmental Education, Anchorage, Alaska;  
<http://naaee.org/>

9-10: Managing Visitor Use in Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, California. For more information, contact Tom Fish at the NOAA Coastal Services Center: (843) 740-1271, or [Tom.Fish@noaa.gov](mailto:Tom.Fish@noaa.gov).

18-22: Coastal States Organization, 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

25-30: National Estuarine Research Reserves System (NERRS) and the National Estuarine Research Reserves Association (NERRA) Annual Meeting, Charleston, South Carolina

## November

2-5: Eighth Estuarine and Coastal Modeling Conference, Monterey Hyatt, Monterey, California; <http://www.oce.uri.edu/ecm8/>.

8-12: National Association of Interpretation, Reno, Nevada;  
<http://www.interpnet.com/niw2003/>

17-20: Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship, Los Angeles, California;  
<http://www.partnerships2003.org/home.html>

19: Mid Atlantic U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuges, Gloucester, VA

**TO SUBSCRIBE: Send an email to [Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov](mailto:Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov)**