

2001 - 2011

External Panel Review Report of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

APRIL 2012

Preface

This document presents the findings of an external review panel that evaluated the activities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center) during its first decade of operations (2001-2011). The panel was tasked with assessing the past performance of and providing recommendations for future directions of the MPA Center.

This report is not intended to be a consensus document. Rather, it is a compilation of the individual inputs of the members of the external review panel. These inputs are based on the panel members' individual reviews of hundreds of pages of information and summaries of accomplishments provided by staff throughout the MPA Center, as well as input provided by nearly 50 stakeholders nationwide with an interest in the MPA Center. MPA Center staff and an expert panel of stakeholders provided their input directly to the panel during a three-day meeting in Monterey, California, in January 2012. The Table of Contents provides the organization of this report.

The external review panel is grateful to Acting Director Lauren Wenzel and her colleagues at the National MPA Center for initiating and hosting the review process, and especially, for their forthright information and candid (and sometimes difficult) discussions regarding the past, present, and future of the MPA Center and the National System of MPAs. The panel thanks everyone who provided comments for this review, especially the invited experts, even though not every comment was incorporated into the panel's recommendations. The panel extends special thanks to Sea Grant Knauss Fellow Denise Ellis-Hibbett for taking detailed notes during the panel deliberations and for ably assisting the compilation of documents for this report. Panel members are grateful to all those dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of America's marine resources for present and future generations.

Executive Summary

The National Marine Protected Areas Center was established by Executive Order 13158 to "help protect the significant natural and cultural resources within the marine environment for the benefit of present and future generations." The Center opened in 2001 and has focused on three major goals of the Executive Order:

- (1) build and maintain the national system of MPAs;
- (2) improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness; and
- (3) facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPAs activities.

After an initial ramping-up, funding has been chronically variable and less than needed to meet this ambitious mandate. Despite these funding challenges, the National System of MPAs was established in 2009, and currently includes nearly 300 MPAs. The MPA Center has also conducted a variety of activities and produced a variety of products designed to improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness, and MPA Center staff have regularly participated in -- and at times convened -- regional, national, and international meetings regarding MPA activities.

Following a change in its leadership in 2011, the MPA Center conducted an external review of its first decade of operations (2001-2011). Input for the review included information provided by the MPA Center, public comments in response to a *Federal Register* notice and a posting on www.mpa.gov, comments directly solicited from key stakeholders, comments from a five-member panel of experts, and the deliberations of a four-member external review panel. The following recommendations are not intended to represent a consensus, but rather are a compilation of the individual inputs of the members of the external review panel.

Recommendations of the external review panel:

(1) For each of the mandated goals in Executive Order 13158, the MPA Center should focus strategically on key activities where the Center can make a unique and important difference, and let go of lower priorities until funding becomes more substantial and stable. To this end, the review panel recommends that the Center implement an adaptive strategic planning process annually. For now, the panel suggests the following general priorities under each of the three major goals mandated by Executive Order 13158 and detailed in the MPA Center's strategic plan:

- **Build and maintain the national system of MPAs:** Now that the system exists in an early state, it is imperative to foster the value of membership and the emergence of a broad and fully functional system. Because federal funding will probably remain low in the immediate future, building capacity via synergistic partnerships among member sites will be essential.
- **Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness:** Consult and work closely with existing national system members to determine from the bottom-up how high-level efforts by the MPA Center can best be focused to maximize benefit to members of the national system. Reassess the approach, audience and application of the MPA Center's Ocean Uses Atlas.

- **Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPA activities:** Given chronically insufficient funding, the key focus should remain national, with less emphasis on regional and especially international efforts. The MPA Center can play a unique and crucial role facilitating professional networks among MPA managers nationwide.

(2) The review panel recommends that the MPA Center carefully evaluate the list of requirements in Executive Order 13158 in light of the evolving landscape of place-based management in the United States. This evaluation should, first, explicitly reflect trends over the past decade in how place-based conservation such as the national system of MPAs should be pursued, and second, prioritize efforts based on the practicalities of existing and projected resources available. The focus should be on truly effective outcomes that are unique to the national mission of the Center and that only the Center can provide effectively. Such strategic planning should be formal, annual, and adaptive. An internal audit of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) would help to further define and refine future goals and actions. The MPA Federal Advisory Committee could play an important role by producing 10-year strategic visions for Center activities. In all such efforts, widespread discussions and meaningful input from a broad range of relevant stakeholders will be essential.

(3) The review panel recommends that the position of MPA Center Director be filled immediately in a way that provides relevant experience, stability and authority in leadership. Senior staff should take advantage of formal leadership training in fostering partnerships, developing cooperative networks, and building capacity. To fully address the issue of leadership, it will be essential to define explicitly and operationally the key phrase "strengthening and expanding the Nation's System of Marine Protected Areas," as mandated by Executive Order 13158. (Indeed, much of the key wording of the Executive Order should be defined more clearly and operationally.)

(4) The review panel's overarching recommendation to NOAA and the Department of the Interior (DOI) is that the MPA Center be provided substantial and stable resources commensurate with its broad and important mission of enhancing conservation and sustainable use of the nation's marine resources.

The DOI in particular should either become a full partner with NOAA in funding and staffing the MPA Center, as implied by Executive Order 13158, or explicitly become simply another collaborating agency (i.e., remove its logo from the MPA Center logo).

The panel recommends that the MPA Center focus its present limited funding on a few specific efforts that are unique to its mission and maximally effective in addressing the major goals of Executive Order 13158. This process would be accomplished by implementing the panel's recommendations regarding funding and staffing priorities (see the panel's responses to other review questions), which will require reallocation of some current Center funding to new priorities. Such efforts would be bolstered by developing means of securing supplemental resources from non-federal sources.

In all workshops and related activities, on-line coverage (webinars, etc.) would effectively showcase and increase the distribution of MPA Center products in a cost-effective manner. All such activities should involve long-term nurturing for broad impact and sustained success.

(5) The review panel recommends that the MPA Center substantially increase its outreach and engagement activities with diverse national and regional constituencies, including social groups and institutions that both support and oppose the implementation of MPAs. The Center should play a pivotal role in facilitating a professional network of MPA managers throughout the nation in ways that provide tangible benefits to those managers while simultaneously strengthening the national system of MPAs. Capacity and constituency development training for Center personnel would be an important prerequisite, and a formal communication strategy, a practical needs assessment, and social marketing research (as simple as phone calls and informal social events with key stakeholders) will be necessary tools.

Present and past members of the MPA Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) could serve important ambassadorial roles in these efforts. Use of the www.mpa.gov website, the national MPA inventory, MPA Center publications and tools, and FAC documents will follow if those products are adequately advertized, meet user needs, and come with any required training. Overall, it will be essential to build effective partnerships with diverse constituencies that provide the synergies needed to successfully accomplish the overarching goals of Executive Order 13158 (Appendix 1), especially in the context of variable and limited federal funding.

Note that limited funding means that this and other tasks assumed by the MPA Center will necessarily result in trade-offs in priorities that may reduce investment in other relevant activities.

(6) There are presently plans within NOAA to relocate the MPA Center from its present home in the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management to the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Regardless of the ultimate home of the MPA Center, the review panel recommends that the organizational structure of the Center maintains and fosters the following principles:

- continued focus on all national MPAs, which enhances the reality and public perception of a truly national service-oriented unit;
- autonomy, which enhances the reality and public perception of an independent service-oriented unit; and
- separation from specific regulatory authorities, which enhances the reality and public perception of a politically neutral service-oriented unit.

NATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS CENTER
2001-2011
External Panel Review
Final Report
March 2012

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I. Introduction to the National MPA Center

The National Marine Protected Areas Center (hereafter "MPA Center" or simply "Center") was mandated by Executive Order 13158 in 2000 (Appendix 1) and was established within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the following year. The purpose of the order was to "help protect the significant natural and cultural resources within the marine environment for the benefit of present and future generations." The mandated mission of the Center focuses on three explicit goals:

- (1) build and maintain the national system of MPAs;
- (2) improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness; and
- (3) facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPAs activities.

In 2003, the MPA Center hosted the first meeting of its Federal Advisory Committee, a 30-member panel that broadly represents the diversity of ocean users and other stakeholders. Through time, the Center opened a highly informative website (www.mpa.gov), compiled over 1600 sites in a national MPA inventory with an on-line mapping tool, produced a strategic plan in 2004 with updates in 2007 and 2009 (MPAC 2009), developed a Framework for the National System of MPAs (MPAC 2008), and began the nomination process for the national system. The National System of MPAs was established in 2009, and currently includes nearly 300 MPAs distributed throughout the enormous Exclusive Economic Zone (territorial waters) of the United States and its possessions (Figure 1).

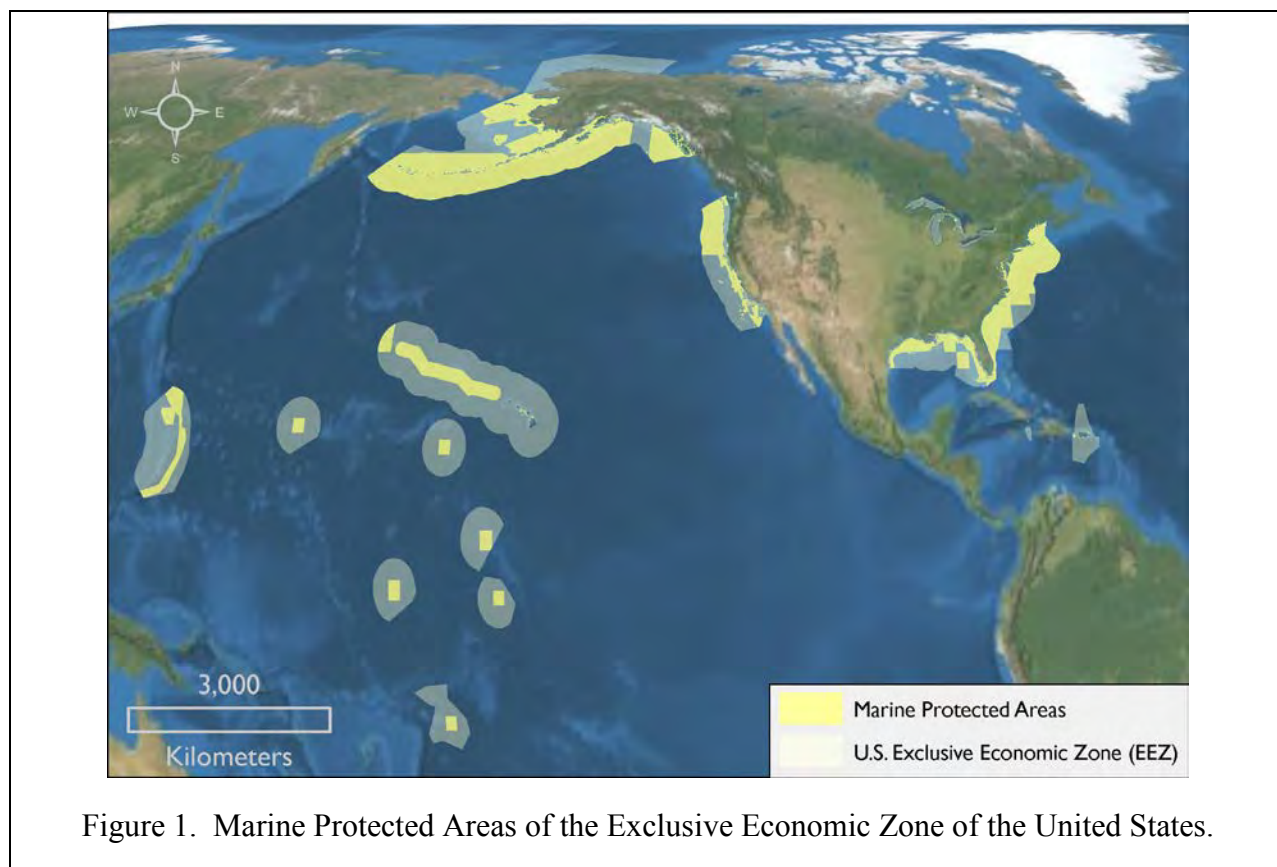
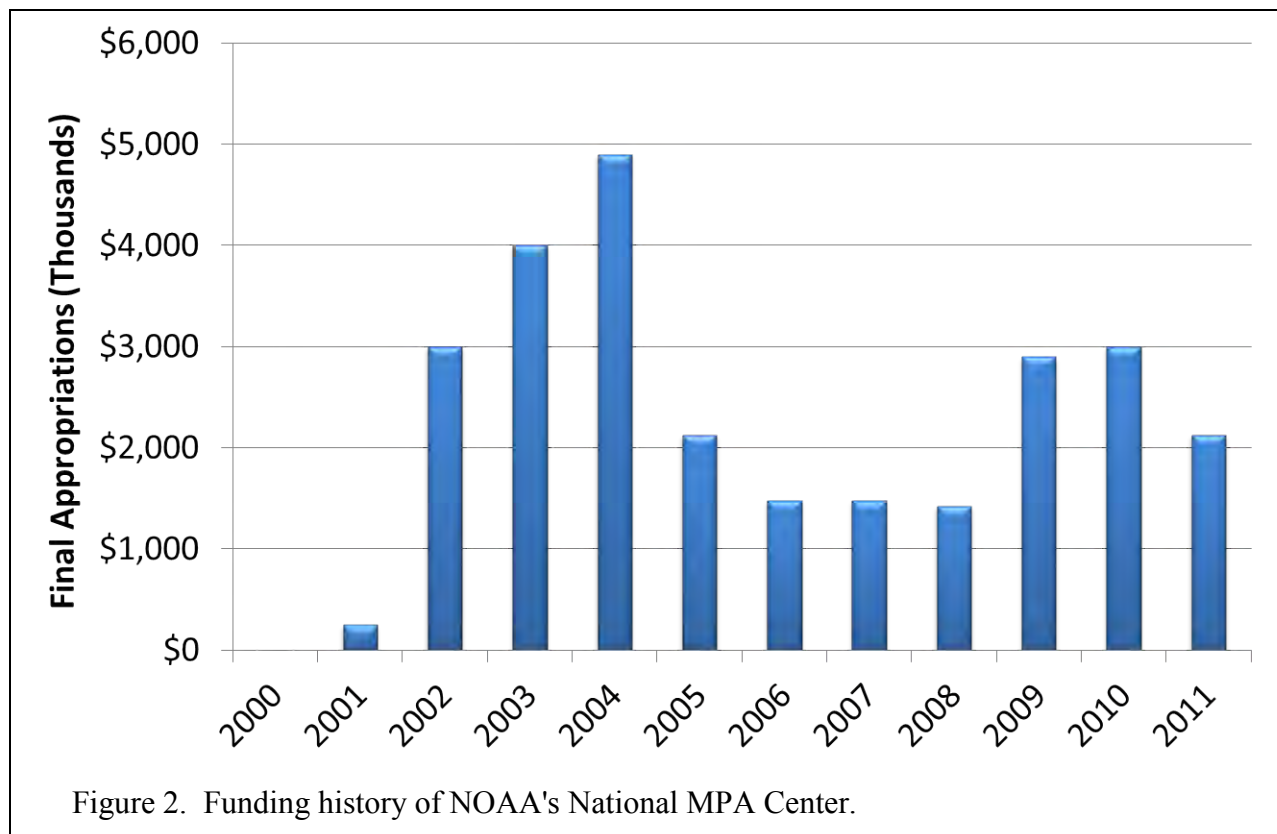


Figure 1. Marine Protected Areas of the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States.

Although Executive Order 13158 mandated that the MPA Center be established and maintained by Department of Commerce through NOAA in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, only NOAA has funded and provided resources for the Center thus far. After an initial ramping-up, funding for the MPA Center has been highly unstable and chronically low given the exceptionally ambitious mandate of the Executive Order (Figure 2).



Despite woefully inconsistent resources, as the National System of MPAs grows, the MPA Center has expanded its website, hosted a variety of MPA-related workshops, produced numerous relevant publications, and generated multiple tools to enhance MPA planning, implementation, and effectiveness (Appendix 2). In 2011, the leadership of the MPA Center changed with the retirement of the original director. The position of Acting Director was subsequently assumed by the original Designated Federal Official for the MPA Federal Advisory Committee, who led the planning of this external review. There are presently plans within NOAA to relocate the MPA Center from its present home in the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management of the National Ocean Service.

II. External Review Process

In 2011, the MPA Center organized a 10-year review for the years 2001-2011, including the statement of work for an external review panel (Appendix 3) and a *Federal Register* notice for public comment (Appendix 4). This section introduces the external review panel (hereafter "review panel" or simply "panel"), describes the sources of information that were used to perform the review, and summarizes the process the panel used to compile and assess the information provided to them, formulate recommendations, and produce this final report.

II.A. External Review Panel

The review panel was comprised of four experts in science and policy regarding marine protected areas, including substantial experience in natural science, social science, international MPAs, state government, public-private partnerships, and non-governmental organizations. The MPA Center invited the chair of the panel, who subsequently invited the remaining panel members. Appendix 5 lists the members of the panel and their prior experience with MPAs.

II.B. Information Sources

To respond to the questions posed in their statement of work (Appendix 3) and the *Federal Register* notice (Appendix 4), the review panel collected information from multiple sources:

- A total of 44 responses to a Request for Public Comment, posted on www.mpa.gov, distributed through stakeholder newsletters and e-mail lists, and published in the *Federal Register* on 1 December 2011. Some responses were personally solicited by the MPA Center and the review panel in an effort to provide broad stakeholder representation. Appendix 6 is a compilation of all responses received.
- Five invited experts representing fishing groups and key federal agencies met face-to-face with the panel during its meeting in January 2012, both in the presence of MPA Center staff and in private:
 - Sarah Allen, National Park Service
 - Daniel Basta, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
 - Mary Gleason, The Nature Conservancy
 - Zeke Grader, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
 - Tom Raftican, Sportfishing Conservancy
- Five invited staff from the MPA Center met face-to-face periodically with the panel during its meeting in January 2012 to provide the panel with requested information, including presentations summarizing Center activities, and a list of accomplishments by the MPA Center (Appendix 2):
 - Robert Brock, Senior Marine Biologist
 - Mimi D'Iorio, GIS/Database Manager
 - Charles Wahle, Senior Scientist
 - Lauren Wenzel, Acting Director
 - Kara Yeager, Communications Coordinator & Designated Federal Official

II.C. External Review Meeting

The MPA Center hosted a three-day meeting of the review panel on 17-19 January 2012 in Monterey, CA (see Appendix 7 for the meeting agenda). The early morning of the first day was devoted to presentations by MPA Center staff, providing overviews of Center activities and accomplishments. The late morning and afternoon of the first day was devoted to a discussion with five invited experts representing fishing and conservation stakeholder groups, as well as key federal agencies (see Section II.B). The second and third days were devoted to the review panel meeting in private to compile and discuss comments and information, formulate recommendations, and draft a final report outline. MPA Center staff met periodically with the review panel to provide requested information. A Knauss Sea Grant Fellow provided logistic and secretarial support for the panel.

II.D. Preparation of Final Report

The review panel prepared this report based on information provided from the sources described in Section II.B, as well as in separate discussions with stakeholders and NOAA staff. This report provides a summary of the individual conclusions and recommendations of the external review panelists. The panel did not seek consensus on any items during the preparation of this document. Section III of this document provides panel responses to the questions outlined in the panel's statement of work (Appendix 3), including recommendations for future activities by the National MPA Center.

III. External Review Recommendations

III.A. Questions, Comments, and Recommendations

The external review panel's statement of work (Appendix 3) and the *Federal Register* notice requesting comments on the National MPA Center external review (Appendix 4) listed six general questions, which despite considerable overlap, provide the official framework for this section. Specific comments received by the Center are tabulated in Appendix 6 and were considered carefully in the deliberations of the external review panel, although not all were adopted. This section provides the comments and recommendation of the panel in response to each question.

Question 1: Is the MPA Center focusing on the most important activities to fulfill its goals and objectives (Build and maintain the national system of MPAs; Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness; Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPA activities)?

Review Panel Comments

The review panel's general answer to this question is a **qualified yes**, as evidenced by the accomplishments of the MPA Center thus far (Appendix 2). Building and maintaining the National System of MPAs has been both the primary focus of the Center and a tremendously labor-intensive task. The National System is clearly a work in progress that will require substantially more resources and time to bring to maturity, and the Framework for the National System of MPAs (MPAC 2008) provides an excellent roadmap. An important pre-requisite for the National System of MPAs was compilation of the national inventory of MPAs. Available on the Center's superb website (www.mpa.gov) with a mapping tool, this inventory is, in and of itself, highly valuable and widely used. The Center has also developed a variety of other tools to enhance MPA stewardship and effectiveness (Appendix 2), yet there has been insufficient outreach regarding the existence and appropriate use of these tools. For example, the Ocean Uses Atlas (MPAC 2010) for the State of California pilot project was useful to some, but appears to have been only partially used by that state's MPA process. Although more recent versions of the Ocean Uses Atlas have been scaled to levels desired by local managers, members of the panel were concerned about the cost involved in replicating this product on a site-by-site basis and whether this is the best use of the Center's presently limited resources. Finally, Center staff members have regularly attended international conferences regarding MPAs, but have not yet assumed a leadership role.

Recommendations: For each of the mandated goals in Executive Order 13158, the MPA Center should focus strategically on key activities where the Center can make a unique and important difference, and let go of lower priorities until funding becomes more substantial and stable. To this end, the review panel recommends that the Center implement an adaptive strategic planning process annually. For now, the panel suggests the following general priorities under each of the three major goals mandated by Executive Order 13158 and detailed in the MPA Center's strategic plan:

(1) Build and maintain the national system of MPAs: Now that the system exists in an early state, it is imperative to foster the value of membership and the emergence of a broad and fully functional system. Because federal funding will probably remain low in the immediate future, building capacity via synergistic partnerships among member sites will be essential.

(2) Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness: Consult and work closely with existing national system members to determine from the bottom-up how high-level efforts by the MPA Center can best be focused to maximize benefit to members of the national system. Reassess the approach, audience and application of the MPA Center's Ocean Uses Atlas.

(3) Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPA activities: Given chronically insufficient funding, the key focus should remain national, with less emphasis on regional and especially international efforts. The MPA Center can play a unique and crucial role facilitating professional networks among MPA managers nationwide.

Question 2: How successfully has the MPA Center addressed the requirements of Executive Order 13158?

Review Panel Comments

The review panel's general answer to this question is that, with the caveat that the requirements of Executive Order 13158 are immense and impossible to meet fully with current levels of funding, **the MPA Center has done a remarkable job with chronically limited resources.** The accomplishments of the Center thus far (Appendix 2) are impressive, yet there have been no consistent or focused performance metrics. Under past leadership, the MPA Center had often been too inflexible and self-isolated in attempts to meet its mandate.

Recommendations: The review panel recommends that the MPA Center carefully evaluate the list of requirements in Executive Order 13158 in light of the evolving landscape of place-based management in the United States. This evaluation should, first, explicitly reflect trends over the past decade in how place-based conservation such as the national system of MPAs should be pursued, and second, prioritize efforts based on the practicalities of existing and projected resources available. The focus should be on truly effective outcomes that are unique to the national mission of the Center and that only the Center can provide effectively. Such strategic planning should be formal, annual, and adaptive. An internal audit of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) would help to further define and refine future goals and actions. The MPA Federal Advisory Committee could play an important role by producing 10-year strategic visions for Center activities. In all such efforts, widespread discussions and meaningful input from a broad range of relevant stakeholders will be essential.

Question 3: Is the MPA Center providing the necessary leadership to strengthen and expand the national system of MPAs?

Review Panel Comments

The review panel's general answer to this question is that leadership is an area where the MPA Center **needs some improvement**. Under past leadership, the MPA Center had often been isolated, and had provided less effective outreach and cooperation than has been necessary and desirable. The present MPA Center leadership and staff are doing an excellent job engaging with partners and other interested parties. In any case, because the Center lacks legal authority, effective leadership requires the creative ability to network with and inspire action in a broad variety of stakeholders and potential partners. Such leadership requires nationwide travel for face-to-face interactions and networking with key regional stakeholders.

Recommendations: The review panel recommends that the position of MPA Center Director be filled immediately in a way that provides relevant experience, stability and authority in leadership. Senior staff should take advantage of formal leadership training in fostering partnerships, developing cooperative networks, and building capacity. To fully address the issue of leadership, it will be essential to define explicitly and operationally the key phrase "strengthening and expanding the Nation's System of Marine Protected Areas," as mandated by Executive Order 13158. (Indeed, much of the key wording of the Executive Order should be defined more clearly and operationally.)

Question 4: Are resources (human and financial) allocated appropriately to effectively address the goals and objectives of the MPA Center?

Review Panel Comments

The review panel believes that the key constraint facing the MPA Center is the unrealistic combination of the extremely ambitious task mandated by Executive Order 13158, and the chronically low and unstable funding provided to meet this task (Figure 2). Faced with this untenable situation, the Center has been spread a mile wide but only inches deep in attempts to meet its broad mandate with insufficient resources. It is clear that, in the absence of substantial and consistent funding, the Center cannot be all things to all people regarding MPAs.

Given inconsistent and insufficient funding to accomplish the immensely broad mission of the Center, truly appropriate allocation of resources to address mandated goals effectively has been impossible from the outset. That said, within these severe constraints, **the MPA Center has been inventive and successful in making considerable progress** to meet the ambitious goals listed in Executive Order 13158 (Appendix 1). Unfortunately, this approach has necessarily

caused the collective efforts of the Center to be intermittent and somewhat diffused, despite some major accomplishments (Appendix 2).

Recommendations: The review panel's overarching recommendation to NOAA and the Department of the Interior (DOI) is that the MPA Center be provided substantial and stable resources commensurate with its broad and important mission of enhancing conservation and sustainable use of the nation's marine resources.

The DOI in particular should either become a full partner with NOAA in funding and staffing the MPA Center, as implied by Executive Order 13158, or explicitly become simply another collaborating agency (i.e., remove its logo from the MPA Center logo).

The panel recommends that the MPA Center focus its present limited funding on a few specific efforts that are unique to its mission and maximally effective in addressing the major goals of Executive Order 13158. This process would be accomplished by implementing the panel's recommendations regarding funding and staffing priorities (see the panel's responses to other review questions), which will require reallocation of some current Center funding to new priorities. Such efforts would be bolstered by developing means of securing supplemental resources from non-federal sources.

In all workshops and related activities, on-line coverage (webinars, etc.) would effectively showcase and increase the distribution of MPA Center products in a cost-effective manner. All such activities should involve long-term nurturing for broad impact and sustained success.

Question 5: How effective has the MPA Center been in solidifying public/private partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks?

Review Panel Comments

The review panel's general answer to this question is that partnerships and engagement are areas where the MPA Center **needs improvement**. To date, the Center has focused mostly on its Federal Advisory Committee (www.mpa.gov/fac/) for stakeholder engagement. However, while the MPA FAC has indeed been broadly representative of major stakeholder groups, yet many of its strategic products have not been effectively distributed and used. The Center's focus on its FAC was logical and appropriate at the early stages of MPA system development. Nonetheless, many of the Center's science-focused workshops have included stakeholder groups as full participants.

The Center has also engaged in various specific and opportunistic partnerships, which have been individually effective, yet again, have not been carried forward consistently or communicated effectively to broader constituencies. Most tellingly, many relevant stakeholders, including potential partners and supporters, are simply unaware that a National MPA Center exists.

Recommendations: The review panel recommends that the MPA Center substantially increase its outreach and engagement activities with diverse national and regional constituencies, including social groups and institutions that both support and oppose the implementation of MPAs. The Center should play a pivotal role in facilitating a professional network of MPA managers throughout the nation in ways that provide tangible benefits to those managers while simultaneously strengthening the national system of MPAs. Capacity and constituency development training for Center personnel would be an important prerequisite, and a formal communication strategy, a practical needs assessment, and social marketing research (as simple as phone calls and informal social events with key stakeholders) will be necessary tools.

Present and past members of the MPA Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) could serve important ambassadorial roles in these efforts. Use of the www.mpa.gov website, the national MPA inventory, MPA Center publications and tools, and FAC documents will follow if those products are adequately advertized, meet user needs, and come with any required training. Overall, it will be essential to build effective partnerships with diverse constituencies that provide the synergies needed to successfully accomplish the overarching goals of Executive Order 13158 (Appendix 1), especially in the context of variable and limited federal funding.

Note that limited funding means that this and other tasks assumed by the MPA Center will necessarily result in trade-offs in priorities that may reduce investment in other relevant activities.

Question 6: Should the MPA Center change its priorities or activities to more effectively meet the requirements of Executive Order 13158? If so, how?

Review Panel Comments

Given the concerns raised above, the review panel's implicit answer to this question is **yes**. The panel believes that the "how" portion of this question is answered by the panel's responses to the previous questions.

III.B. National MPA Center Organizational Options and Recommendations

Given ongoing reorganization within NOAA and continuing budgetary constraints, the review panel discussed several options regarding the best home for the MPA Center within the federal government in terms of effectively fostering the major goals of Executive Order 13158 (Appendix 1). Four possibilities were examined in detail:

- (1) the MPA Center remains within the NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM, the *status quo* option);
- (2) the MPA Center becomes part of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries;
- (3) the MPA Center becomes part of a new "place-based" office within NOAA; and
- (4) the MPA Center transfers to the Department of Interior as a unit independent of the National Park Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

After much discussion, the panel tabulated the perceived benefits and costs of each option:

Option	Benefits	Costs
(1) <i>status quo</i> (OCRM)	Autonomy and neutrality important for broad mission of MPA Center; not being part of a regulatory unit, MPA Center can focus on its broad mission of service to all national MPAs	Continued low funding and capacity; possible isolation & stagnation
(2) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS)	NMS is a stable, potent, well-funded office that already includes MPA capacity; possible expansion of NMS mission to more holistic scale; potential to share NMS expertise & capacity with other national MPA programs	MPA Center mission is broader than that of NMS, given that federal sanctuaries are only one kind of MPA; MPA Center is a non-regulatory service-oriented unit, perhaps diminished unless NMS embraces the unique and broad mission of MPA Center relative to the narrower mission of NMS; possible new and negative public perception that all MPAs are now federal sanctuaries
(3) New place-based office within NOAA	Autonomy and neutrality important for broad mission of MPA Center; not being part of a regulatory unit, MPA Center can focus on its broad mission of service to all national MPAs; possible enhanced collaboration & coordination among place-based units	Constraints, unknown costs, and likely obstacles and delays of creating, organizing, and funding a new office within NOAA
(4) Department of the Interior (DOI)	Autonomy and neutrality important for broad mission of MPA Center; not being part of a regulatory unit, MPA Center can focus on its broad mission of service to all national MPAs	Traditional terrestrial focus of DOI; lack of past commitment to MPA Center may translate to low future commitment; culture of stakeholder engagement less at DOI than at NOAA; new set of appropriators must be educated

Considering all these options, different panel members had different individual recommendations, with one member preferring option 1, one member preferring option 2, and two members preferring option 3. Current MPA Center staff expressed similarly variable opinions. The review panel notes that combined options are possible, with different parts of the MPA Center (such as the Ocean Uses Atlas team, which focuses on a broader set of applications than solely MPAs) moving to different units, albeit at the risk of diluting or losing the mission of the original unit.

Recommendations: Regardless of the ultimate home of the MPA Center, the review panel recommends that the organizational structure of the Center maintains and fosters the following principles:

- continued focus on all national MPAs, which enhances the reality and public perception of a truly national service-oriented unit;
- autonomy, which enhances the reality and public perception of an independent service-oriented unit; and
- separation from specific regulatory authorities, which enhances the reality and public perception of a politically neutral service-oriented unit.

IV. References

National Marine Protected Areas Center. (2010). The California Ocean Uses Atlas Project: Participatory GIS informing marine spatial planning on the west coast. http://www.mpa.gov/pdf/helpful-resources/factsheet_atlasmar10.pdf

National Marine Protected Areas Center. (2009). National Marine Protected Areas Center Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015. http://www.mpa.gov/pdf/mpa-center/MPA_Strategic_Plan_2010-1015.pdf

National Marine Protected Areas Center. (2008). Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America. http://www.mpa.gov/pdf/national-system/finalframework_full.pdf

V. Appendices

Appendix 1
Executive Order 13158 (26 May 2000)
Marine Protected Areas

Presidential Documents

Executive Order 13158 of May 26, 2000

Marine Protected Areas

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and in furtherance of the purposes of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-ee), National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 *et seq.*), National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*), Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*), Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1451 *et seq.*), Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1362 *et seq.*), Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (42 U.S.C. 1331 *et seq.*), and other pertinent statutes, it is ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. This Executive Order will help protect the significant natural and cultural resources within the marine environment for the benefit of present and future generations by strengthening and expanding the Nation's system of marine protected areas (MPAs). An expanded and strengthened comprehensive system of marine protected areas throughout the marine environment would enhance the conservation of our Nation's natural and cultural marine heritage and the ecologically and economically sustainable use of the marine environment for future generations. To this end, the purpose of this order is to, consistent with domestic and international law: (a) strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing marine protected areas and establish new or expanded MPAs; (b) develop a scientifically based, comprehensive national system of MPAs representing diverse U.S. marine ecosystems, and the Nation's natural and cultural resources; and (c) avoid causing harm to MPAs through federally conducted, approved, or funded activities.

Sec. 2. Definitions. For the purposes of this order: (a) "Marine protected area" means 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.

(b) "Marine environment" means those areas of coastal and ocean waters, the Great Lakes and their connecting waters, and submerged lands thereunder, over which the United States exercises jurisdiction, consistent with international law.

(c) The term "United States" includes the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Sec. 3. MPA Establishment, Protection, and Management. Each Federal agency whose authorities provide for the establishment or management of MPAs shall take appropriate actions to enhance or expand protection of existing MPAs and establish or recommend, as appropriate, new MPAs. Agencies implementing this section shall consult with the agencies identified in subsection 4(a) of this order, consistent with existing requirements.

Sec. 4. National System of MPAs. (a) To the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior, in consultation with the Department

of Defense, the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, and other pertinent Federal agencies shall develop a national system of MPAs. They shall coordinate and share information, tools, and strategies, and provide guidance to enable and encourage the use of the following in the exercise of each agency's respective authorities to further enhance and expand protection of existing MPAs and to establish or recommend new MPAs, as appropriate:

(1) science-based identification and prioritization of natural and cultural resources for additional protection;

(2) integrated assessments of ecological linkages among MPAs, including ecological reserves in which consumptive uses of resources are prohibited, to provide synergistic benefits;

(3) a biological assessment of the minimum area where consumptive uses would be prohibited that is necessary to preserve representative habitats in different geographic areas of the marine environment;

(4) an assessment of threats and gaps in levels of protection currently afforded to natural and cultural resources, as appropriate;

(5) practical, science-based criteria and protocols for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of MPAs;

(6) identification of emerging threats and user conflicts affecting MPAs and appropriate, practical, and equitable management solutions, including effective enforcement strategies, to eliminate or reduce such threats and conflicts;

(7) assessment of the economic effects of the preferred management solutions; and

(8) identification of opportunities to improve linkages with, and technical assistance to, international marine protected area programs.

(b) In carrying out the requirements of section 4 of this order, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior shall consult with those States that contain portions of the marine environment, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, tribes, Regional Fishery Management Councils, and other entities, as appropriate, to promote coordination of Federal, State, territorial, and tribal actions to establish and manage MPAs.

(c) In carrying out the requirements of this section, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior shall seek the expert advice and recommendations of non-Federal scientists, resource managers, and other interested persons and organizations through a Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee. The Committee shall be established by the Department of Commerce.

(d) The Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior shall establish and jointly manage a website for information on MPAs and Federal agency reports required by this order. They shall also publish and maintain a list of MPAs that meet the definition of MPA for the purposes of this order.

(e) The Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall establish a Marine Protected Area Center to carry out, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, the requirements of subsection 4(a) of this order, coordinate the website established pursuant to subsection 4(d) of this order, and partner with governmental and non-governmental entities to conduct necessary research, analysis, and exploration. The goal of the MPA Center shall be, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, to develop a framework for a national system of MPAs, and to provide Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments with the information, technologies, and strategies to support the system. This

national system framework and the work of the MPA Center is intended to support, not interfere with, agencies' independent exercise of their own existing authorities.

(f) To better protect beaches, coasts, and the marine environment from pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), relying upon existing Clean Water Act authorities, shall expeditiously propose new science-based regulations, as necessary, to ensure appropriate levels of protection for the marine environment. Such regulations may include the identification of areas that warrant additional pollution protections and the enhancement of marine water quality standards. The EPA shall consult with the Federal agencies identified in subsection 4(a) of this order, States, territories, tribes, and the public in the development of such new regulations.

Sec. 5. Agency Responsibilities. Each Federal agency whose actions affect the natural or cultural resources that are protected by an MPA shall identify such actions. To the extent permitted by law and to the maximum extent practicable, each Federal agency, in taking such actions, shall avoid harm to the natural and cultural resources that are protected by an MPA. In implementing this section, each Federal agency shall refer to the MPAs identified under subsection 4(d) of this order.

Sec. 6. Accountability. Each Federal agency that is required to take actions under this order shall prepare and make public annually a concise description of actions taken by it in the previous year to implement the order, including a description of written comments by any person or organization stating that the agency has not complied with this order and a response to such comments by the agency.

Sec. 7. International Law. Federal agencies taking actions pursuant to this Executive Order must act in accordance with international law and with Presidential Proclamation 5928 of December 27, 1988, on the Territorial Sea of the United States of America, Presidential Proclamation 5030 of March 10, 1983, on the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States of America, and Presidential Proclamation 7219 of September 2, 1999, on the Contiguous Zone of the United States.

Sec. 8. General. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed as altering existing authorities regarding the establishment of Federal MPAs in areas of the marine environment subject to the jurisdiction and control of States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Indian tribes.

(b) This order does not diminish, affect, or abrogate Indian treaty rights or United States trust responsibilities to Indian tribes.

(c) This order does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable in law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.



THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 26, 2000.

Appendix 2

2001-2011 Major Accomplishments of National MPA Center

Part I: MPA Center Accomplishments Organized by Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Build and maintain the National System of MPAs

Objective 1. Implement the national system and maintain the List of MPAs.

MPA Inventory

- 2001-2007: Collected data on federal, state, and territorial marine managed areas (MMAs), reaching a total of nearly 2,000 sites in U.S. waters. Created a standard definition of MPAs, and a new MPA classification system to provide a common language for describing MPA characteristics (e.g. level of protection, managing agency, fishing restrictions, etc). Also gathered data on more than 1,200 de facto MPAs throughout U.S. waters that are closed for non-conservation purposes (security zones, safety areas, navigation lanes, etc). Completed a preliminary analysis of the MMA inventory to understand the purposes, authorities, and uses of the nation's MMAs.
- 2008: Unveiled the new Marine Protected Areas Inventory (MPA Inventory) on www.mpa.gov, based on the previously developed Marine Managed Areas (MMA) Inventory. MMAs are a more inclusive category of place-based management than MPAs. The definition of "MPA" used in the *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America* was used as the criteria for inclusion in the MPA Inventory.
- 2010-12: Began a data gathering effort to improve the level of detail of the MPA Inventory, by adding new information about resource presence, management practices and regulation strategies for all sites in the database (targeted completion Spring 2012)
- From the MPA Inventory, created a new interactive online mapping tool that allows users to view boundaries and access data for U.S. MPAs. The tool provides simple functions to visualize MPA boundaries, review MPA classification information, explore all MPAs in a given location and filter sites by certain attributes (FY2010).
- To demonstrate the expansion of the MPA Inventory to include additional natural resource information, the MPA Center partnered with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory Conservation Science (PRBO) to assess the legal conservation status of important seabird foraging habitats in the Pacific Ocean off the West Coast. Using GIS techniques, staff at the MPA Center and PRBO combined data on MPA boundaries with foraging seabird hotspots to analyze the management of these areas. This case study was used in the FWS' 2011 "State of the Birds" report (FY2010).
- Worked with Google to advance visibility and discoverability of the MPA Inventory data through Google Ocean and Google Map application (FY2010-2011).
- Completed five special analyses on MPAs (FY2011):
 - Marine Protected Areas and Wildlife Hotspots in the California Current
 - Snapshot of Gulf of Mexico MPAs
 - Snapshot of Great Lakes MPAs
 - Snapshot of NOAA's Fisheries Service MPAs
 - National Wildlife Refuge Marine Protected Areas

National System

- Began a series of agency and public workshops (federal agency workshop, state workshops, and five regional public dialogue sessions) to gather input for the development of the national system framework (FY2005-2006).
- In September 2006, released the *Draft Framework for Developing the National System of MPAs*, available for public comment for 145 days. Received over 11,000 submissions from around the nation representing over 100 specific comments on the *Draft Framework*. In 2007, the MPA Center developed significant changes to strengthen the *Draft Framework* to address public comments. The final *Framework* is published in November 2008.
- On April 22, 2009, announced the admission of 225 existing federal, state and territorial MPAs into the national system of MPAs. The charter group was comprised of sites from state, territorial, federal and federal/state partnership agencies in 28 states, plus additional offshore areas under federal jurisdiction. The National System now includes 297 MPAs, including all National Marine Sanctuaries, five National Estuarine Research Reserves, 101 National Wildlife Refuges, 29 National Parks, four fisheries management sites and MPAs managed by 11 state and territorial programs.

Objective 2. Identify regional and national gaps, opportunities and priorities for place-based conservation within the context of ecosystem-based management.

MPA Inventory and De Facto Inventory

- See detail on MPA Inventory (p. 18).
- Completed the first comprehensive inventory of marine areas in which access is federally restricted for reasons other than conservation (De Facto MPAs). Because this wide variety of safety and security zones directly controls where, how, and when people can use certain ocean areas, these de facto MPAs represent a critical component of comprehensive spatial management of marine ecosystems in U.S. waters. (FY2006)
- Published “*The State of U.S. Marine Managed Areas: West Coast,*” describing characteristics of west coast marine managed areas (MMAs). The report contains the best available information on the purpose, management approach, and location of MMAs off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington (FY2008).

Mapping Ocean Uses (see p. 25)

Gap Analysis

- Hosted a workshop to scope a regional gap analysis process to identify important ecological areas that meet the conservation objectives of the national system of MPAs and may be in need of additional place-based protection. The workshop drew on the expertise of approximately 20 national and international scientists and resource managers with experience in marine and terrestrial gap analysis. Topics of discussion included ensuring a representative national system, integrating diverse geospatial information on marine resources and uses, involving stakeholders at appropriate points in the process, and fostering partnerships (FY2009).

- Worked in partnership with NOAA’s National Centers for Coastal and Ocean Science to develop a spatial resource assessment for the California coast that synthesizes and analyzes information on ecological resources, MPA boundaries and authorities, and human uses of the ocean. The project will serve as a “proof of concept” for the process to identify ecologically important areas in the ocean and potentially conflicting uses, a model for future efforts needed to inform coastal and marine spatial planning. The project includes an analytical tool to identify important resource areas inside and outside existing MPAs (FY2010-2011).

Objective 3. Conserve representative examples of the nation’s natural and cultural heritage and ecologically significant places.

Representativeness

- Developed an approach to assess representativeness of MPAs on the West Coast using a newly developed spatial analysis toolkit (SPARC) in combination with the MPA Inventory and geospatial data on coastal and marine resource distribution. This approach will include a regional profile that describes the marine environment, defines key resources, and analyzes those resources in relationship to MPA boundaries. Work to expand MPA Inventory to include natural and cultural resource information (see page 18) will be used to assess representativeness of US MPAs and MPAs in the national system (FY2011).

Objective 4. Foster the establishment of ecological and institutional networks to enhance the conservation of the nation’s natural and cultural heritage.

Cultural Heritage

- Co-hosted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a federal agency workshop on identifying important data needs for cultural resource management. The results helped inform the development of data sets and management tools necessary for building a national system of MPAs (FY2006).
- Convened the Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group (CHRWG) under the MPA Federal Advisory Committee to help guide the development of the cultural heritage track of the national system. The CHRWG includes federal, state, and non-governmental archaeologists and historians, and representatives of tribes and indigenous peoples. Initial accomplishments included the completion of a vision for the cultural heritage component of the national MPA system and technical corrections to the *Framework* to better include cultural resources of importance to tribal and indigenous peoples. In 2011, the CHRWG completed and the MPA FAC adopted a set of recommendations focused on using a cultural landscape approach for the national system (FY2010-2011).

National System Partners Workgroup:

- In June 2009, held the first National System of MPAs Partners Retreat at the Aspen Wye River Institute in Queenstown, MD. Representatives from federal, state, and tribal MPA programs met to share information about their capabilities and needs and identify opportunities for collaboration. Products from this retreat helped guide the MPA Center in identifying thematic and regional priorities (FY2009).
- In July 2010, held the second National System of MPAs Partners Retreat in Tiburon, California. The Retreat focused on MPA effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, and community-based MPAs. Partners identified key opportunities for collaboration, including capacity building and a national system communications plan (FY2010).
- In July 2010, held a 1.5 day training on MPA networks for 15 federal and state MPA managers to build capacity of managers in developing ecological, institutional and social networks to enhance management of marine resources (FY2010).

Objective 5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the national system in meeting its goals and objectives.

Assessing Performance:

- In 2003, the National Marine Sanctuaries Program and the MPA Center together completed a Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) analysis for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The two programs assessed their objectives and accomplishments, which was then formally reviewed and scored by OMB as “meeting objectives.”
- In 2004, the MPA Center completed its first Strategic Plan (2004-2009); 2nd completed in 2009 (2010-2015).
- In 2009, the MPA FAC completed (and formally recommended to NOAA and DOI) a framework for evaluating the national system of MPAs, based on an approach developed by IUCN.

Monitoring:

- Hosted an expert workshop for the Marine Protected Areas Integrated Ocean Observing System (MPA IOOS) Task Team in Monterey, CA. The purpose of this workshop was to obtain information and recommendations on how MPAs can be used as platforms for ocean monitoring, to better understand the range of observing and monitoring requirements at MPAs, and to obtain knowledge on ocean monitoring parameters and processes most important to monitoring environmental changes at the national scale. The Task Team completed a report on recommendations to strengthen and expand the linkages between MPAs and IOOS that will guide future collaboration (FY2010-2011).

Goal 2: Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPA activities.

Objective 1. Coordinate nationally among federal, state, commonwealth, territorial, regional, tribal and local agencies to support the national system of MPAs and its stewardship goals.

- Convene and facilitate regular meetings of the Federal Interagency MPA Working Group, which includes representatives from nine federal agencies, to seek input on the national system framework and coordinate implementation of MPA Executive Order 13158 (ongoing).

Objective 2. Foster regional coordination of agencies and stakeholders to support the national system of MPAs and its stewardship goals.

Accomplishments:

- Collaborated with Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and California Marine Life Protection Act to produce spatial decision support tool for the MLPA Initiative; the tool evolved in DORIS and the UC members of the team eventually developed MarineMap which is widely used in spatially planning efforts nationwide (FY2005).
- Supported the publication of a 16-page MPA insert in the Honolulu *Advertiser* (FY2005).
- Supported two New England Fishery Management Council outreach and education workshops on MPA and habitat issues (FY2005).
- Launched web-based Regional Information Centers to provide “one stop shopping” for comprehensive information about ongoing regional MPA processes (FY2005; later discontinued).
- Through the MPA Partnership Grant funded by the MPA Center and made by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supported a regional workshop for marine protected area managers in the Gulf of Mexico to identify common goals, objectives and actions for collaboration through a regional MPA network. The workshop was hosted by Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and included participants from federal and state MPA programs. Participants identified three priority focus areas (adaptation to climate change, emergency planning and response, and education and outreach) and agreed to establish a steering committee to ensure ongoing communication and coordination with Gulf of Mexico restoration efforts (FY2011).
- Also through an MPA Partnership Grant, funded The Nature Conservancy in the US Virgin Islands to develop a coordinated MPA Strategy for federal and territorial MPAs (FY2012).

Objective 3. Improve linkages with international MPA programs to advance U.S. conservation goals.

North American MPA Network

- With Canada and Mexico, under the auspices of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, established the North American MPA network. Key accomplishments of NAMPAN include:
 - Mapping North American ecoregions (FY2005);
 - Identifying Priority Conservation Areas in the Baja to Bering Region (FY2005);
 - Establishing joint MPA scorecards and completing them for 10 pilot sites on the West Coast (FY2008-2009);
 - Developing a manual and training program for the MPA scorecards (FY2009-2010);
 - Working with International Council for the Exploration of the Seas to synthesize information and develop scientific guidelines on climate change impacts and their implications for MPA management and design (FY2011-2012);
 - Working with the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (aquariums) to develop short videos on MPAs to be shown at aquariums and other venues (FY2011-2012).

Marine Charts:

- Helped organize an international workshop led by NOAA's Office of Coast Survey to develop a draft standard for displaying environmental information on electronic navigational charts (ENCs). The workshop involved hydrographic and environmental experts from eight countries, UNEP and IUCN. Participants came to consensus on a draft proposal to display information on MPAs and coral reef ecosystems on ENCs that will be refined and submitted for approval to an International Hydrographic Organization Committee (FY2008).

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Greater Caribbean:

- Worked with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the National Ocean Service's International Programs Office to help design an official listing process for sites under the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol), part of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention). The US ratified the SPAW Protocol, and in doing so committed to protect, preserve and sustainably manage areas that require conservation to safeguard their special value, and threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna. The MPA Center coordinated the submission of the first US site to be listed, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FY2010-11).

Goal 3: Improve capacity for effective MPA stewardship through the national system.

Objective 1. Foster awareness and understanding of the national system and place-based ecosystem-based management.

- Established www.mpa.gov to provide extensive MPA information, tools, and program details. The website averages 35,000 visits per month and 45,000 pages viewed per month (ongoing).
- Online newsletters:
 - *MPA Connections*, the MPA Center’s primary quarterly newsletter that is distributed to more than 3,100 subscribers worldwide;
 - *MPA Cultural and Historic Resources*, distributed to hundreds of subscribers worldwide (published from 2006-2007);
 - *Information Exchange for Marine Educators*, distributed to about 1,000 subscribers (MPA Center was project lead until 2005, now managed by Office of Education).
- Partnered with California filmmaker on an educational DVD insert illustrating and explaining the importance of MPAs to the Northern Elephant Seal’s life cycle and survival. To accompany “A Seal’s Life: The Story of the Northern Elephant Seal,” the MPA Center created a GIS map of MPAs and haulout sites. The educational insert and DVD was distributed to 1,000 nonprofit and educational associations (FY2008).
- Worked with syndicated cartoonists Jack Elrod (*Mark Trail*) and Jim Toomey (*Sherman’s Lagoon*) to highlight the national system of MPAs. On Sunday, April 12, 2009, *Mark Trail* featured a colorful panel highlighting the National System of MPAs. *Mark Trail* appears in 175 newspapers, reaching nearly 23 million readers worldwide. Jim Toomey created and donated a *Sherman’s Lagoon* poster highlighting the three conservation goals of the National System of MPAs, Natural Heritage Conservation, Cultural Heritage Conservation, and Sustainable Production for the national system’s celebration ceremony held on Earth Day 2009 in Annapolis, MD.
- Released two special editions of *Current: The Journal of Marine Education* focusing on networks and systems of MPAs, published by the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA). *Current* is distributed to all NMEA members, and additional copies were provided for distribution in hard copy and through www.mpa.gov.
 - MPAs (2003).
 - MPA Networks (2010).
- Created a Facebook page to reach out to the public about the MPA Center’s work, activities and the work of the National System Partners. (<https://www.facebook.com/usmarineprotectiongov>) (FY2011)
- Produced four MPA videos, disseminated through www.mpa.gov. The videos showcase the national system, and focus on the three goals of the national system: conserving and managing cultural heritage, natural heritage and sustainable production resources. Videos are posted at: <http://www.mpa.gov/resources/multimedia/> (FY2011)

Objective 2. Develop, enhance and disseminate the science, tools and strategies for the design, evaluation and adaptive management of MPAs within the context of coastal and marine spatial planning.

Training and Technical Assistance:

- From 2002 through 2005, the MPA Center provided training and technical assistance to MPA managers. Training topics included management effectiveness, managing visitor use impacts, and use of GIS and other technical tools. Examples of technical assistance projects include developing digital boundaries for national marine sanctuaries, leading the development of an interagency handbook on developing marine boundaries, and publishing a synthesis report on MPA enforcement. Conducted two major needs assessments for U.S. MPAs to guide future training and technical assistance efforts. These activities were suspended in 2005 due to budget reductions.
- In 2009, the MPA Center established a partnership with Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) and the Coral Reef Conservation Program to support a shared training position for US and international MPA training. (FY2009-FY2011).
- In February 2010, the MPA Center joined the Center for Ocean Solutions, ONMS and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission in a training workshop for California coastal and MPA managers on adaptation to climate change.
- Provided the first U.S. training workshop on designing and managing MPA networks for national system partners (FY2010)
- Conducted training needs assessment to guide future training efforts (FY2011).

Tools:

- Collaborated with NOAA's Office of Coast Survey to provide data from the marine managed areas inventory to mariners and other users about the location, purpose, and allowable activities in existing MPAs through the U.S. Coast Pilot (FY2004-ongoing).
- Worked with the NOS Special Projects Office, the Office of Coast Survey, and federal and state MPA programs in the Monterey Bay region, to develop the first MPA Booklet Chart, targeting recreational users in the Monterey Bay region. The Booklet Chart is a user friendly version of a nautical chart aimed at recreational users that provides an overlay of all MPAs in the Monterey Bay area and information on resources and regulations (FY2010).

Mapping Ocean Uses

- In partnership with Marine Conservation Biology Institute (MCBI), received a grant of \$555K from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation for the California Ocean Uses Atlas (Atlas) Project. This innovative public-private partnership was created to fill a critical information gap in ocean management by documenting the full range of significant human uses of the ocean in state and federal waters off California (FY2007).
- Convened an expert workshop in Monterey, California to gather perspectives for a methodology to document patterns of human use of ocean areas for MPA planning at regional and local scales. The workshop brought together more than 20 social scientists, geographers, and GIS specialists from government agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations with expertise in characterizing human use patterns in the marine environment with the aid of GIS tools (FY2007).

- Completed human use mapping for the entire California coast and worked with the National Ocean Services' Special Projects Office to develop an interactive Atlas online data viewer, available at mpa.gov. The Ocean Uses Atlas project maps 30 major human activities across three sectors (industrial and military, fishing and non-consumptive). (FY2010)
- In cooperation with the Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) at the University of New Hampshire (UNH), hosted a New Hampshire and Southern Maine Ocean Uses Atlas workshop. Participating resource managers, stakeholders, and scientists used GIS techniques to map patterns of consumptive, non-consumptive, and industrial/military human uses of the ocean from the high tide line to out to 200 nautical miles throughout the region from Cape Small in Phippsburg, Maine south to the New Hampshire/Massachusetts border. The resulting data, maps, and analytical products were used in emergency response planning and made available to state and federal ocean management agencies and all other interested parties.
- In partnership with the state of Hawaii and various other NOAA programs, conducted participatory GIS ocean use mapping workshops on the islands of Hawaii and Maui. The workshops engaged local experts to map ocean use patterns to inform coastal and marine spatial planning efforts and community conservation planning in Hawaii state waters. The data viewer, built by NOAA's Special Projects Office, allows interaction with project data and simple analysis of use patterns without the need for specialized software (FY2011).
- Provided hands-on training on ocean use mapping as part of four- day training on coastal and marine spatial planning organized by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries for the Pacific region and held in Honolulu. While this training has been conducted in other countries, it was the first of its kind to be offered in the U.S. (FY2011)
- Published "*Mapping Human Uses of the Ocean: Informing Marine Spatial Planning Through Participatory GIS*," a best practices manual on mapping human uses of the ocean using participatory GIS techniques. The report summarizes the Center's mapping approach, provides detailed lessons learned from various participatory mapping projects and provides insight to the successful planning and implementation of mapping efforts to capture spatial data on human uses of the ocean in different regions and at varying scales (FY2011).

Ocean Policy/Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP)

- During FY09-11, contributed dedicated staff to NOAA's engagement in the National Ocean Council and the development of the National Ocean Policy (NOP). Made substantive contributions to:
 - The Framework for Effective CMSP in the US
 - Implementation Plan for CMSP
 - Guidance Handbook for Regional CMSP
 - Design and implementation of the National Information Management System,
 - Design and interim execution of NOAA's CMSP Program
 - inclusion of MPA issues throughout the NOP process

Science

- Working with fishermen, managers and ecologists, the MPA Center convened an expert workshop to assess ecological linkages between benthic and pelagic communities and to develop guidelines for when pelagic fishing might not impact deeper communities in an MPA. The group's findings were published in Fisheries and were used widely in MPA planning efforts.

Objective 3. Increase the capacity for meaningful, collaborative stakeholder participation in MPA processes.

Analysis

- Published five case studies on lessons learned from stakeholder engagement in MPA establishment processes (FY2003).
- Published a literature synthesis on stakeholder participation in MPA processes (FY2004).

MPA FAC

- Established 30-member Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) comprised of diverse MPA stakeholders (FY2003). The MPA FAC generally meets twice annually and has developed a series of influential recommendations on the national system for NOAA and DOI. A consistent theme has been the importance of public engagement in MPA decision making processes. See Appendix 2a for list of FAC products.

Tribal:

- Convened a meeting with nine Northwest tribes and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to provide information on the development of the national system of MPAs and learn about tribal marine management activities and perspectives (FY2006).
- Convened an open meeting and two day work session in October 2010 for tribal representatives to help define the cultural heritage component of the national system. The event served as a forum for discussion, information exchange and the development of recommendations among tribal and indigenous peoples' representatives, including members of the Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group (CHRWG) of the MPA FAC. (FY2010).

Objective 4. Address cross-cutting technical and management priorities of member MPAs through collaborative initiatives and demonstration projects.

- Compiled on-line mapping products for MPAs in the Gulf of Mexico region to support their response to the BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill (FY2010).
- The MPA Center and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provided MPA Partnership Grants to support collaborative MPA stewardship projects. Applicants were required to be members or prospective members of the national system, and to work jointly with another MPA program on the project. In FY2009 and FY2010, the MPA Center provided a total of \$400K. See Appendix 2b for list of projects funded.

Appendix 2

2001-2011 Major Accomplishments of National MPA Center

Part II: MPA Federal Advisory Committee Products

2011 Products

- [Committee Recommendations for Integrated Management Using a Cultural Landscape Approach in the National System](#) (December 2011)
- [Committee Recommendations on Marine Protected Areas and Healthy Coastal Communities](#) (December 2011)
- [Committee Recommendations on Managing Marine Resources Across the Land/Sea Interface](#) (December 2011)
- [Committee Recommendations on the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Process](#) (September 2011)

2010 Products

- [Committee Recommendations on Cultural Heritage Resources in the National System of Marine Protected Areas](#) (November 2010)
- [Letter to NOAA and DOI on Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning and Toolkit of MPA Products](#) (November 2010)
- [Letter to NOAA and DOI on Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning](#) (May 2010)
- [Committee Recommendations on Climate Change in the Oceans, and the Cultural Heritage Vision for the National System of Marine Protected Areas](#) (April 2010)

2009 Products

- [Committee Recommendations on Evaluating the National System of Marine Protected Areas](#) (September 2009)
- [Committee Recommendations on Ecological Resilience and Gap Analysis of the National System of Marine Protected Areas](#) (April 2009)

2008 Products

- [Committee Recommendations on Linking Ocean Observing Systems with the National System and Evaluating the National System of MPAs](#) (December 2008)
- [Committee Recommendations on MPA Compliance and Enforcement and Comments on Revised Draft Framework](#) (May 2008)
- ["Toward a National System of Marine Protected Areas: A Report by the MPA Federal Advisory Committee, Recommendations from 2006-2007"](#) (February 2008)

2007 Products

- [Process for Determining Which Existing MPA Sites will Constitute the Initial National System of MPAs](#) (November 2007)
- [Developing Plans for Effective MPA Management: A Model](#) (November 2007)
- [Incentives for Participation in the National System of MPAs](#) (November 2007)
- [Regional Approaches to Planning and Coordination of MPAs](#) (November 2007)
- [Management Criteria, Priority Objectives, and Categories for the National System of MPAs](#) (April 2007)
- [Committee comments on the Draft MPA Framework](#) (Feb 2007)

2005-2006 Products

- ["Marine Protected Areas: A Fundamental Tool for Ecosystem-Based Management"](#) (Nov 2006)
- ["Protecting America's Marine Environment: A Report of the MPA FAC on Establishing and Managing A National System of MPAs"](#) (June 2005)

Appendix 2

2001-2011 Major Accomplishments of National MPA Center

Part III: MPA Partnership Grants (NFWF)

FY2010

- Strengthening Marine Protection in Puako, Hawai'i Island (The Nature Conservancy)
- Applying LiDAR Data to Support MPA Management (Jacques Cousteau NERR)
- Developing a Regional MPA Plan for the Southeast (Friends of Rookery Bay NERR)
- Developing an MPA Management Plan for the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (MNM) (Marine Conservation Biology Institute)
- Designing and Installing California MPA Interpretive Panels (California Department of Parks and Recreation)

FY2011:

- Chumash Stewardship and Education in California's Channel Islands, The Wishtoyo Foundation
- Optimizing Monitoring and Surveillance in Central California MPAs, The Marine Conservation Institute
- Developing a MPA Coordination Framework in the U.S. Virgin Islands, The Nature Conservancy
- Oyster Habitat Restoration in the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, The South Carolina DNR
- Phase II: Implementing the Gulf of Mexico Regional MPA Plan, The non-profit corporation Friends of Rookery Bay, Inc

Appendix 3

Charge to the National MPA Center External Review Panel

November 8, 2011

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Protected Areas Center

Introduction

On May 26, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order (E.O.) 13158, directing federal agencies (led by NOAA and DOI) to establish a comprehensive national system of MPAs serving multiple conservation and management goals. To this end, the EO directs NOAA to establish a National Marine Protected Area Center (“MPA Center”) within NOAA (Sec. 4(e)) to carry out several provisions in cooperation with the Department of the Interior. Over the past decade, the MPA Center has conducted a variety of efforts to establish and support the growing national system through targeted science, information resources, coordination and policy development.

An external review of the MPA Center is needed to maximize its effectiveness and transparency and to ensure that the MPA Center is conducting high quality work of significant value to NOAA and the nation. This external review will evaluate the MPA Center’s overall strategic priorities and the relevance, effectiveness, performance, and management of its activities to-date. The review will assess the effectiveness of the MPA Center in providing leadership and forming partnerships in carrying out the mandates of the E.O. The review will also assess potential future directions and priorities in light of the rapidly evolving national ocean policy.

In 2004, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reported many experts within and outside government have noted that peer review practices at federal agencies need to be strengthened. On January 21, 2009, the President issued a Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government and called for recommendations for making the Federal government more transparent, participatory, and collaborative. An external review of the MPA Center provides an opportunity to look back at what has been accomplished in the decade since the E.O. was issued and look forward toward future priorities.

Some suggested areas to be reviewed and questions posed include but are not limited to:

Priorities

Question 1. Is the MPA Center focusing on the most important activities to fulfill its goals and objectives?

- Are the projects that are undertaken by MPA Center staff fulfilling the MPA Center’s missions, goals, and objectives?

Relevance

Question 2. How successfully has the MPA Center addressed the requirements of Executive Order 13158?

- Do the major programs being undertaken by the MPA Center address relevant MPA societal needs, now and projected in the future, both domestically and internationally (e.g., is the MPA Center undertaking the right activities and doing it right)?
- Is knowledge being advanced and do projects completed by MPA Center staff provide what MPA managers and policy makers need to make informed decisions?

Effective Leadership

Question 4. Is the MPA Center providing the necessary leadership to strengthen and expand the national system of MPAs?

- Are the approaches to fulfill the MPA Center's mission and objectives well conceived?
- Has the MPA Center undertaken and addressed important information needs?
- For the stated objectives, have the activities undertaken by the MPA Center produced significant findings?
- Are the aims of the project(s) at the MPA Center being achieved?
- What is the area of impact of the products developed (e.g., local/state, regional/ national, international)?
- Is the activity proposed appropriate to the experience level of MPA Center staff and other collaborators (if any)?
- Is the MPA Center actively forging a leadership role in MPA development and adaptive management in the US?

Program Management

Question 5. Are resources (human and financial) allocated appropriately to effectively address the goals and objectives of the National MPA Center?

- Is the support the MPA Center receives appropriate in terms of budget?
- Is MPA Center staff appropriately trained and well suited to carry out the activities being pursued?
- What type of tracking is in place for: projects, budgets, accomplishments and outcomes.
- Are effective and visionary long-range planning, development, and adherence to a strategic and implementation plan in place to guide information and budgetary decisions?
- Has the Center adapted effectively to chronic fluctuations in resource levels or constraints and opportunities posed by agency policy directives?

Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Question 6. How effective has the MPA Center been in solidifying public/private partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks?

- How has the MPA Center building partnerships and working with stakeholders to advance an effective national system of MPAs?
- Are there opportunities for additional collaborative arrangements with external entities?
- Has the MPA Center effectively formed public-private partnerships to augment resources and capacities to fulfill its mission?

Question 7. How should the MPA Center change its priorities or activities to more effectively meet the requirements of Executive Order 13158?

Review Panel

The Review Panel will be composed of independent experts in the subject matter of the MPA Center's program focus, such as:

- Science and Technology – knowledge of ecological services and functions supported and perhaps enhanced by MPAs and MPA networks and systems; human dimensions of MPAs and MPA networks, MPA governance, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of ocean conservation; economics of MPAs; cultural heritage.
- MPA management – knowledge of implementing MPAs and the needs of federal, state and territorial MPA managers that can be addressed through the national MPA system; knowledge of broader ocean policy and its implications for protected areas.
- Public/private partnerships – knowledge of public-private partnerships that support effective management of MPAs and ocean conservation
- International affairs – knowledge of international best practices in development of MPA networks and successful collaborations

Review of the MPA Center will include:

- Creation of a review website in advance of the panel meeting that includes all relevant background material;
- In-person panel meeting, to include:
 - Presentations about the MPA Center by the Acting Director, staff and partners pertaining to mandates, goals and objectives, initiatives, staff, budget, and future vision;
 - Opportunities for submission of written and/or oral public comments from MPA partners and stakeholders; and
 - Completion of outline and draft findings of External Review
- Follow up work via email and conference call to finalize review

The responsibilities of the Review Panel will be:

1. Review background documents and certify that assembled documents are satisfactory to proceed with the MPA Center review.
2. Participate in in-person panel meeting.
3. With the support of a staff person assigned from the MPA Center and under the direction of the Panel Chair, prepare, edit and approve the MPA Center External Review Report.

The MPA Center will select the Panel's Chair. The Chair will select the remaining panelists from a suggested list of names furnished by the MPA Center and/or persons of his/her choosing.

The MPA Center will be responsible for coordinating the panel meetings. The Acting Director of the MPA Center will participate in all aspects of the work of the Panel, except for the preparation of findings and recommendations.

Review Timeline

- Within 30 days of naming the Review Panel Chair, the Acting MPA Center Director and Panel Chair will agree upon a Statement of Work.
- Within 30 days of finalizing this Statement of Work, the Acting MPA Center Director will present a list of potential reviewers to the Review Panel Chair.
- Within 30 days of accepting this list of potential reviewers, the Review Panel Chair will appoint four (4) additional Review Panelists.
- November 8: the MPA Center will hold a check in call with reviewers.
- On or about November 28: a Federal Register notice requesting public comments will be published.
- Early December: the MPA Center will hold a check in call with reviewers.
- January 10: Deadline for public comments from Federal Register notice
- January 17-19: Review Panel meets in Monterey
 - January 17: meetings with MPA Center and partners
 - January 18: internal meeting of review panelists – identify findings & recommendations
 - January 19: internal meeting of review panelists – create rough draft of report
- February 19: A rough draft MPA Center External Panel Review Report will be sent to the Acting MPA Center Director for any clarifying statements or additional information, if necessary.
- March 5: The Acting MPA Center Director will respond to the Report by submitting appropriate comments and responses to the Review Panel Chair.
- March 31: The Review Panel Chair will submit the Final MPA Center External Review Report to the Acting MPA Center Director and NOAA

Travel expenses of the Review Panel members will be paid by the MPA Center.

What is the Expected Outcome of the Review?

External peer review will help ensure that the MPA Center is undertaking the most important activities to implement E.O. 13158, and that they are of significant value to NOAA and the nation. It will ultimately improve the quality and functional utility of the MPA Center by improving resource management decisions or solving problems of concern to NOAA and the nation.

Selected Documents for Background:

- *Executive Order 13158* (May 26, 2000)
- *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America* (November 2008)
- *Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee: Evaluating the National System of Marine Protected Areas: Considerations and Planning Tool* (September 11, 2009)
- *National Marine Protected Areas Center Strategic Plan 2010-2015* (November 2009)
- *NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan* (December 2010)

Appendix 4
***Federal Register* Notice Request for**
Public Comment on National MPA Center External Review

Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina on January 11–13, 2012. Invited participants will discuss topics as outlined below.

Members of the public are invited to attend the forum and are required to RSVP to Brooke.Stewart@noaa.gov by 5 p.m. EST, Wednesday, December 28, 2011 if they wish to attend. The forum is to be held in a federal facility; building security restrictions preclude attendance by members of the public who do not RSVP by the deadline. Space is also limited and public attendees will be admitted based on the order in which RSVPs are received.

Members of the public will be invited to offer their comments during a 30-minute period to be held from 9:30 to 10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 11, 2012. Each individual or group making a verbal presentation will be limited to a total time of five minutes. Please indicate your intention to participate in the public comment period when submitting your RSVP. Time for public comments will be allotted based on the order in which RSVPs are received. Written comments may be submitted via email or in hardcopy and must be received by December 28, 2011. For information on how to submit written comments, please see addresses below.

Special Accommodations: These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Brooke Stewart (828) 257–3020, Brooke.Stewart@noaa.gov by December 28, 2011.

DATES:

Forum Date and Time: The forum will be held on January 11–13, 2012 at the following times: January 11, 2012 from 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. EST; January 12, 2012 from 8:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST; and January 13, 2012 from 8:15 a.m. to 2 p.m. EST.

RSVP Deadline: Any member of the public wishing to attend the forum must RSVP no later than 5 p.m. EST, Wednesday, December 28, 2011.

Deadline for Written Comments: Written comments must be received by 5 p.m. EST, Wednesday, December 28, 2011.

ADDRESSES: The forum will be held at the Veach-Baley Federal Complex, located at 151 Patton Avenue, Asheville, North Carolina 28801.

Written comments may be submitted to Brooke.Stewart@noaa.gov or in hard copy to Brooke Stewart, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 563, Asheville, North Carolina 28801. For changes in the schedule, agenda, and updated information, please check the forum

Web site at <https://sites.google.com/a/noaa.gov/extreme-winds-waves-extratropical-storms/home>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brooke Stewart, National Climatic Data Center, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 563, Asheville, North Carolina 28801. (Phone: (828) 257–3020, Email: brooke.stewart@noaa.gov.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This forum will provide an update to the climate science surrounding extreme events. The intent is to make key input available to the National Climate Assessment (NCA) for consideration. Further information regarding the NCA is available at <http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment>. NOAA is sponsoring this forum in support of the National Climate Assessment process.

As materials for this forum become available, they may be found at <https://sites.google.com/a/noaa.gov/extreme-winds-waves-extratropical-storms/home>.

Topics To Be Addressed

This forum will address observed changes and their causes with regard to specific types of extreme weather and climate events, including extreme winds, waves, and extratropical storms along the coasts.

Participants Will Consider

- Observed changes and degree of confidence in those changes for extreme winds, waves, and extratropical storms along the coasts.
- Current state of mechanistic understanding of the above-mentioned extreme events.
- Potential causes of observed changes in extreme events.

This forum will feature invited speakers and discussions. The forum is designed to produce a detailed draft outline of an article for submission to a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

Mary E. Kicza,
Assistant Administrator for Satellite and Information Services.

[FR Doc. 2011–30889 Filed 11–30–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Protected Areas Center External Review

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Request for public comment.

SUMMARY: On May 26, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) 13158, directing federal agencies (led by NOAA and DOI) to establish a comprehensive national system of MPAs serving multiple conservation and management goals. To this end, the EO directs NOAA to establish a National Marine Protected Area Center (“MPA Center”) within NOAA (Sec. 4(e)) to carry out several provisions in cooperation with the Department of the Interior. Over the past decade, the MPA Center has conducted a variety of efforts to establish and support the growing national system through targeted science, information resources, coordination and policy development.

An external review of the MPA Center is needed to maximize its effectiveness and transparency and to ensure that the MPA Center is conducting high quality work of significant value to NOAA and the nation. To this end, the MPA Center is seeking external feedback, including public comment on the program’s approach to balancing competing priorities.

All comments received in response to this request will be summarized and provided to an expert review panel scheduled to convene in late January, 2012.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before January 10, 2012.

ADDRESSES: This announcement contains guidance on how to provide feedback, including some of the questions for which the MPA Center is seeking comment. The questions are also available for download via the Internet on the MPA Center Web site at: <http://www.mpa.gov/aboutmpas/mpacenter/>. You may submit comments electronically via email to mpa.comments@noaa.gov. You may also submit comments in writing to: National Marine Protected Areas Center, c/o Denise Ellis-Hibbett, 1305 East-West Highway, Rm. 11401, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Denise Ellis-Hibbett by mail at 1305 East-West Highway, Rm. 11401, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 or phone: (301) 563–1195 or email: denise.ellis-hibbett@noaa.gov or visit the MPA Center Web site at <http://www.mpa.gov>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The MPA Center’s external review will encompass program activities between 2000 and 2011. An independent, external panel of four experts in subject matter of the MPA Center’s program focus will convene for a three day meeting in late January, 2012 to review materials and

information about the MPA Center, develop findings and make recommendations. The program is seeking input on the questions listed below. Please note that you do not need to address all questions, and the MPA Center welcomes additional input on topics not covered in the questions listed.

Although the MPA Center is most interested in obtaining feedback based on the public's interaction and experience with the Center, background information concerning the MPA Center and its activities is available from the MPA Center Web site at <http://mpa.gov>.

The MPA Center is seeking input on the following questions:

- Is the MPA Center focusing on the most important activities to fulfill its goals and objectives (Build and maintain the national system of MPAs; Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness; Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPAs activities)?
- How successfully has the MPA Center addressed the requirements of Executive Order 13158?
- Is the MPA Center providing the necessary leadership to strengthen and expand the national system of MPAs?
- Are resources (human and financial) allocated appropriately to effectively address the goals and objectives of the MPA Center?
- How effective has the MPA Center been in solidifying public/private partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks?
- Should the MPA Center change its priorities or activities to more effectively meet the requirements of Executive Order 13158? If so, how?

An electronic version of these questions is available at: <http://www.mpa.gov/aboutmpas/mpacenter/>. (Optional) When you submit your comments, you are welcome to provide background information about yourself, such as your organization(s), area(s) of expertise, and experience with the MPA Center. This information will be compiled and summarized with the comments.

Dated: November 18, 2011.

Donna Wieting,

Director, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2011-30700 Filed 11-30-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA850

[File No. 16439]

Endangered Species

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 21 South Putt Corners Rd., New Paltz, NY 12561 [Responsible Party: Kathryn Hattala], has been issued a permit to take shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) for purposes of scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

- Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and
- Northeast Region, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; phone (978) 281-9328; fax (978) 281-9394.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Malcolm Mohead or Colette Cairns, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 9, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 33703) that a request for a scientific research permit to take shortnose sturgeon had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

The Permit Holder is issued a five-year permit to study shortnose sturgeon in the Hudson River Estuary from New York Harbor (RKM 0) to Troy Dam (RKM 245). Gill nets, trammel nets and trawls will be used to capture up to 240 and 2,340 shortnose sturgeon in years one through three and years four and five, respectively. Research activities include: capture; measure, weigh; tag with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags and Floy tags, if untagged; and

sample genetic fin clips. Subsets of fish will also be anesthetized and tagged with acoustic transmitters; have fin rays sampled for age and growth analysis; have gastric contents lavaged for diet analysis; as well as blood samples taken for contaminants. A total of four (4) unintended mortalities are authorized over the life of the permit.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered or threatened species, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: November 28, 2011.

Tammy C. Adams,

Acting Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2011-30959 Filed 11-30-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meetings

The following notice of scheduled meetings is published pursuant to the provisions of the Government in the Sunshine Act, Public Law 94-409, 5 U.S.C. 552b.

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETINGS:

Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

TIMES AND DATES: The Commission has scheduled meetings for the following dates:

- December 5, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.
- December 20, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.
- January 5, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: Three Lafayette Center, 1155 21st St. NW., Washington, DC, Conference Center (Room 1300).

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: The Commission has scheduled these meetings to consider various rulemaking matters, including the issuance of proposed rules and the approval of final rules. The Commission may also consider and vote on dates and times for future meetings. The agenda for the December 5, 2011 meeting was posted on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.cftc.gov> seven (7) days prior to the meeting. The agenda for the December 20, 2011 meeting will be made available to the public and posted on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.cftc.gov> at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. In the event that the times or dates of the meetings

Appendix 5

National MPA Center External Review Panel Members

Dr. Mark Hixon

(Chair of External Review Panel)

Professor of Marine Ecology
and Conservation Biology
Department of Zoology
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon

MPA experience: Marine Reserve Working Group of U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (1999-2000), advisor for national system of MPAs of the Bahamas (1999), MPA Federal Advisory Committee (Subcommittee Chair 2003-2006, Chair 2006-2009, Member 2009-2010), Conservation International Marine Managed Area Science Advisory Committee (2005-present), State of Oregon Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve Community Team (Co-Chair 2010), ongoing field research on fish larval dispersal among MPAs.

Ms. Lori Arguelles

Executive Director
Alice Ferguson Foundation
Accokeek, Maryland

MPA experience: President and CEO, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (2001-2009); Vice President of Media and Policy Strategy, SeaWeb (2009-2011); MPA Federal Advisory Committee (Member 2007-2011, Vice Chair 2009-2011).

Dr. Patrick Christie

Associate Professor
School of Marine and Environmental Affairs
and Jackson School of International Studies
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

MPA Experience: MPA social-ecological research in Southeast Asia, Latin America, Puget Sound (1987-2012); Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation (2007-2009); regular advisor to World Bank, USAID, FAO (2000-present).

Ms. Petra MacGowan

Reef Resilience Project Manager
Global Marine Initiative
The Nature Conservancy
Seattle, Washington

MPA experience: Planner, State of Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (2006-2011): led the planning and implementation of marine managed areas throughout the state through work with local communities and federal partners.

Appendix 6

Responses Received in Response to *Federal Register* Notice Request for Public Comment

Comments Compiled by Question and Stakeholder Expertise

- *General Comments (page 45)*
- *Question 1: Is the MPA Center focusing on the most important activities to fulfill its goals and objectives (Build and maintain the national system of MPAs; Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness; Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPAs activities)? (page 56)*
- *Question 2: How successfully has the MPA Center addressed the requirements of Executive Order 13158? (page 63)*
- *Question 3: Is the MPA Center providing the necessary leadership to strengthen and expand the national system of MPAs? (page 69)*
- *Question 4: Are resources (human and financial) allocated appropriately to effectively address the goals and objectives of the National MPA Center? (page 73)*
- *Question 5: How effective has the MPA Center been in solidifying public/private partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks? (page 77)*
- *Question 6: How should the MPA Center change its priorities or activities to more effectively meet the requirements of Executive Order 13158? (page 81)*

Respondents:

	Name	Title and Affiliation
1	Tundi Agardy*	Executive Director, Sound Seas
2	Satie Aireme	Assistant Dean, Academic Programs at the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, University of California at Santa Barbara.
3	Connie Anderson	Environmental Scientist, California Environmental Protection Agency
4	Dan Basta (on behalf of sanctuary superintendents)	Director, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
5	Jay Elliot Berman (personal comments)	Director of Government Relations, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
6	Priscilla Brooks*	Vice President and Director of Ocean Conservation, Conservation Law Foundation
7	Gregor M Cailliet	Professor Emeritus, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories
8	Mark H. Carr	Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Long Marine Laboratory, University of California at Santa Cruz
9	Gary E. Davis, USNPS (ret.)*	G E Davis & Associates Environmental Consultants
10	Michael P. De Luca	Senior Associate Director, Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University
11	Katherine C. Donahue	Professor, Anthropology, Social Science Department, Plymouth State University
12	John W. Foster	Californian State Underwater Archaeologist
13	David Gadsby	Archeologist, National Park Service
14	Karen Garrison*	Co-Director, Oceans Program, Natural Resources Defense Council
15	Erin Hofmann	Manager, Marine Conservation, representing National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
16	David Hyrenbach*	Assistant Professor of Oceanography, Hawaii Pacific University
17	John Jensen	Maritime Studies/Ocean Policy Faculty, Sea Education Association

18	Kathy Kelly, MSLS, C.A.	Librarian / Certified Archivist
19	Gary Lytton	Environmental Administrator, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
20	Victor T. Mastone*	Director and Chief Archaeologist, Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources
21	Catherine McCall	representing Maryland Coastal Program, Chesapeake and Coastal Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
22	Will McClintock	Center for Marine Assessment and Planning (CMAP), Marine Science Institute, University of California at Santa Barbara; Senior Fellow, United Nations Environmental Program
23	Laurie McGilvray; Michael Migliori	Chief; Program Specialist: Estuarine Reserves Division (NOAA/NOS)
24	Russell Moll	Director, California Sea Grant College Program, University of California, San Diego
25	Lance Morgan	Vice President for Science, representing Marine Conservation Institute
26	Steve Murray	Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, California State University at Fullerton
27	Harriet Nash	Harte Doctoral Fellow, Marine Policy and Law, Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University--Corpus Christi
28	Robert S. Neyland	Head, Underwater Archaeology Branch, Naval History and Heritage Command, Department of the Navy
29	Mike Nussman et. al (organizations within the recreational fishing & boating community)	signed by: Mike Nussman, President and CEO, American Sportfishing Association; Noreen Clough, Conservation Director, B.A.S.S LLC; Jeff Angers, President, Center for Coastal Conservation; Pat Murray, President, Coastal Conservation Association; Ellen Peel, President, The Billfish Foundation; Jeff Crane, President, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation; Rob Kramer, President, International Game Fish Association; Thom Dammrich, President; National Marine Manufacturers Association (submitted by Gary Kania, Vice-President, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation)
30	John Ogden*	Emeritus Professor of Integrative Biology, University of South Florida
31	Heather L. Sagar	Senior Policy Advisor, NOAA Office of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, representing NOAA Fisheries

32	Jerry Schubel	President and CEO, Aquarium of the Pacific
33	Fawn Sharp	President, representing Quinault Indian Nation
34	Tabitha Stadler	Coastal Training Coordinator, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
35	Bruce A. Tackett*	Managing Director, Resource Access International, L.L.C.
36	Hans Van Tilburg	Maritime Heritage Coordinator, Unit Diving Supervisor, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Maritime Heritage Program
37	Jim Tozzi	Member, Board of Advisors, Center for Regulatory Effectiveness
38	John W. (Wes) Tunnel	Associate Director, Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies and Harte Research Scientist, Regents Professor and Professor of Biology, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
39	David H. Wallace*	Owner, Wallace & Associates
40	Bob Wargo* (personal comments)	AT&T and North American Submarine Cable Association
41	Chad Wiggins	Marine Coordinator, Hawai'i Island, The Nature Conservancy
42	Bret Wolfe	Marine Program Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge System
43	Dawn Wright	Chief Scientist, ESRI
44	Ryan Young	Marine Protected Areas Specialist, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

* Current or former member of MPA Federal Advisory Committee

General Comments
MPA Program Managers
<p>Respondent 3 Over the past 3 years I have been involved with the MPA, I believe the MPA Center is successful in producing high quality products, especially given the plethora of competing interests and ever shrinking budget.</p>
<p>Respondent 4 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) would like to offer its views on the external review of the National Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center). These views represent the collective opinions of sanctuary superintendents from around the National Marine Sanctuary System. We applaud the MPA Center for proactively seeking external advice on the future direction of its activities and efforts and are confident that together we can make a real difference in sustaining local communities and the marine environment for future generations through the protection and projection of the Nation's special marine areas. A summary of our input is below and responses to the six questions are attached on the following pages. We look forward to discussing our perspective on the future of the MPA Center.</p> <p>SUMMARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the greatest possible contribution to marine protected areas, the MPA Center should focus on two core functions: capacity building for marine protected area managers and demonstrating the value-added benefits of marine protected areas to local communities and the Nation as a whole. • Capacity building efforts should focus on training the current and next generation of marine protected area managers and communities in areas such as: planning, public involvement, communication skills, resource protection, adaptive management, and scientific monitoring of resources. • In promoting the benefits of marine protected areas, the MPA Center should focus on: characterizing and publicizing the social and economic benefits of marine protected areas to coastal communities and the Nation; providing a forum for supporters of new marine protected areas across the country to exchange ideas and work together; and expanding the community of marine protected areas supporters beyond traditional support bases. • The MPA Center should discontinue or de-emphasize activities that are outside of these two core functions. The creation of a national system of marine protected areas, for example, should be transformed into a "coalition" that actively supports existing and prospective marine protected areas. • To facilitate focusing on the critical issues facing the protection of special places, the MPA Center should re-evaluate the definition of "marine protected area" to make it more precise and to help focus, prioritize, and direct the efforts of the MPA Center.
<p>Respondent 31 NOAA Fisheries appreciates the productive working relationship with the MPA Center. The communication is proactive and consistent between the Center and Fisheries and we really appreciate it. Some additional comments for the MPA Center Review happening this week from NOAA Fisheries are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It would be great to focus one of the communication efforts to fishermen. This would include more than going to Council meetings but distributing materials, one pagers etc. This could help in getting the Councils on board and will hopefully dispel the myths that have crept up during the National System Process. 2. A more formal communication effort between the place-base management groups in NOAA would be advantageous to the MPA Center. There seems to be a disconnect between those groups.
Tribal
<p>Respondent 33 The Quinault Indian Nation appreciates this opportunity to comment on the effectiveness of the National Marine Protected Areas Center and its fulfillment of the requirements of Executive Order 13158.</p>

The Quinault Indian Nation is one of four coastal treaty tribes of Washington State that have treaty rights to manage marine fisheries and associated resources extending into the Exclusive Economic Zone. We take the management of our treaty ocean area very seriously as do our fellow treaty tribes the Hoh, the Quileute and the Makah. The coastal treaty tribes of Washington State have been involved since the beginning of policy formation within the MPA Center shortly after its creation under EO 13158. The first tribal representative on the Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) was Mel Moon, Director of the Quileute Tribe Department of Natural Resources. Mel was followed by Jim Woods of the Makah Tribe and most recently by our Quinault Marine Resources Scientist, Joe Schumacker. With that history we are well qualified to give input to the Review Committee regarding the effectiveness of the MPA Center.

The Quinault Nation believes that Marine Protected Areas are one of many useful tools to better manage the resources of our oceans. Ocean policy and management is critical to Quinault and other coastal tribes and indigenous groups for many reasons. Tribes, by and large, are “place-based” and have no option but to maintain resources for generations to come at the potential cost of losing the cultural identity that is integral to our natural world. Quinault has and will continue to nurture and invest in traditional and western science to guide us in sustaining our ocean resources for those who come after us.

Mr. Moon, Mr. Woods and Mr. Schumacker have kept the Northwest Treaty Tribes informed of the activities and charges given the MPA FAC from the Departments of Interior and Commerce and the products that have come of them. We have generally been pleased with the attention to tribal input regarding MPAs from our FAC representatives and from the other members.

Some specific comments regarding this External Review are:

- We are pleased that the Center and the FAC have acknowledged the importance of socio-economic information when MPAs are being designated or considered in areas. Both positive and negative impacts to local communities, including first peoples, must be considered when MPAs are proposed or modified. Doing so will only strengthen support for MPAs when they are actually designated.
- We have been satisfied with our tribal representation on the MPA FAC but recommend that the Center through the FAC continues to actively seek wider tribal and indigenous input on its deliberations. One avenue for this may be through the Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group which Mr. Schumacker was part of. He has spoken highly of the level of tribal and indigenous representation from across the U.S. on that group including Great Lakes, NE and West Coast Tribes and Pacific Islanders. The current National Ocean Policy now being finalized recognizes the importance of tribal input into marine policy decisions and keeping a group such as this available to the Center and the FAC would be in line with that National Policy.
- Ten years after EO 13158 we believe the National MPA Center has carried out its mandates well without itself designating MPAs. Through a thoughtful and sometimes contentious FAC process, the Center has developed guidelines and scientific information that have aided marine managers in responsibly developing MPAs and developing the National System called for in the EO. The System is still in the building stage and the Center should remain the source of good information for responsibly filling gaps that exist.
- As noted above, Quinault believes that the Center’s resources need to better support the human dimension of MPAs. The science of MPAs is of critical importance to our understanding of their effectiveness but social, cultural and economic concerns are equally important to their having any longevity and support as useful tools in marine management. The MPA Center would benefit from expending resources for conducting more regional meetings/workshops potentially associated with FAC meetings. These would engage stakeholders, improve public input and solidify support for the National System.
- We are concerned about the MPA Center retaining its autonomy in a time of constrained federal budgets. The Center has worked to fulfill its mandates under the EO while not itself designating or managing any MPAs. This maintains credibility in the public eye that could be lost if the MPA Center becomes associated with MPA managers or designators. The Center must remain independent or it will lose effectiveness and public support.
- We believe the MPA Center is moving ahead properly to fulfill its mandates. A National System of MPAs must be carefully considered and properly deliberated. Through the FAC process and the charges that have been brought forward to that body, the MPA Center has been integral in

creating MPA policy in a careful and thoughtful manner that considers all voices, including tribal voices, thereby assuring a strong level of trust in their actions.

Natural Science

Respondent 8

I am writing to provide comments as part of the 2011/12 MPA Center external review. The MPA Center is unique in its role to provide a comprehensive overview of all MPAs in the United States across MPA programs and regions. Given the disparate nature of MPA management agencies, the role of the Center in assessing how U.S. MPAs are collectively contributing to national marine conservation objectives is extremely important to the effective management of our oceans.

One of the great strengths of the MPA Center are the tools and information it is generating to support more effective MPA programs. These tools have the capacity and flexibility to be used as stand-alone products, but when combined can serve a larger goal to inform more inclusive ocean management planning such as NOAA's Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning efforts. Often with ocean planning processes there is a dearth of basic information of the kinds of human activities (e.g., commercial and recreational) and sources of information (e.g., citizen science, academic and government monitoring programs) and how they are distributed in U.S. waters. The inventory and ocean use atlas being generated by the Center are tools that will greatly expedite regional planning processes around the country.

However, one concern I have with the mission of the MPA Center is the apparent inability to communicate these projects and successes more broadly to the wider community of ocean users and decision makers. This lack of communication is notable to me given that the MPA center has an office in Monterey, less than 40 miles away, yet I have little idea of many of the recent products generated by the MPA Center. This limits my knowledge about the Center, its contributions, how I might interface with the Center to the benefit of each of our programs, and how our combined efforts can better inform management decisions. With funding from both the public and private sector becoming more limited, such communication and the partnerships it can foster seems more important than ever. Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to comment.

Respondent 9

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the MPA Center review. I believe the Center can serve a crucial role in ocean conservation. The Center started well under difficult circumstances, but currently seems to be struggling to find its niche and stride. From my perspective, this is a time for transition and an opportunity for constructive change.

Before I jump into the officially worded questions, let me give some context from my experience. Over the past decade, I think the MPA Center has focused on the most important activities:

- developing an inventory of MPAs,
- establishing a formal forum that facilitates MPA stakeholder engagement with MPA managers, and
- creating a framework for a national system of MPAs and beginning to build the system.

Now comes the challenge of making these things work. Keeping the MPA inventory current and accurate, analyzing the information in the inventory to improve MPA efficacy, and identifying gaps in extant MPA systems all require different skills and vision than those needed to develop the initial inventory. The role of the stakeholder Advisory Committee is shifting from understanding basic MPA concepts and diverse stakeholder needs and fears to how to meet operational needs of MPA systems. Having built a national MPA system framework, now it needs to be populated and the advantages of cooperation among other existing MPA systems (national, state, territory, tribal) need to be realized.

In effective design, form follows function. The functions of the MPA Center should dictate its form. The function of place-based stewardship, e.g., refuges, sanctuaries, and parks, is somewhat different than species-based conservation as traditionally practiced by fisheries and wildlife agencies with stock assessments and lists of species of concern. Stewardship of places lends itself to ecosystem-based approaches that include physical, biological, and human (social and cultural) elements and processes.

The four primary functions of place-based stewardship are:

1. Know and understand the ecosystem(s) and cultural resources (inventory, monitor, research)
2. Restore and sustain system integrity (ecological & cultural)
3. Protect integrity and mitigate threats
4. Connect people to the special places

To fulfill its goals and objectives, the MPA Center needs to address all four of these functions. However the Center's purpose is not that of a management agency, but rather that of a catalyst, facilitator, and mentor for others with statutory authority and responsibility for individual MPAs and systems of MPAs.

Therefore, I see the Center's unique niche as:

- a guide to help others acquire the knowledge and understanding needed to address not only symptoms of stress but underlying causes of stress to MPA integrity;
- a facilitator to learn and to share from experiences and methods for increasing ecological resilience and cultural landscape integrity of MPAs;
- an evaluator to test efficacy of education, policy, and enforcement activities to protect MPAs and mitigate threats to their integrity; and
- a leader in communication and education helping to connect MPAs to communities.

In national parks the four stewardship functions (know, restore, protect & connect) are carried out by three discrete groups of people who work cooperatively as a team to accomplish shared goals. The three groups are broadly:

1. Scientists and scholars who work on research and development with academicians designing protocols, developing techniques, evaluating efficacy, testing methods, and synthesizing new understanding;
2. Scientists and practitioners who, like physicians in clinics, monitor park health, apply remedial treatments, mitigate impacts, and diagnose new emerging issues; and
3. Field operators (rangers, maintenance workers, administrators) who observe resource conditions, explain park needs to people, enforce laws, and describe the effects and consequences of resource conditions and policies.

I use this matrix to help explain the division of labor and help people see how they may contribute to the overall team effort required to manage a park (MPA).

	Research & Development	Applied Science & Scholarship	Field Operations
Know & understand	Design protocols	Monitor resources	Observe conditions
Restore & sustain	Develop techniques	Apply techniques	Explain needs
Protect & mitigate	Evaluate efficacy	Mitigate impacts	Enforce laws
Connect	Test methods	Diagnose issues	Describe effects

In this scheme, I see the MPA Center playing a major leadership role in the R&D areas, with strong interactions in applied science, and more of a supporting role in field operations.

Respondent 27

... I'm sending responses representing collective answers from a few of us at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies. None of us has much experience working with the MPA Center, but we have found its website resourceful. I really don't know enough or have interacted enough to be able to answer most of your questions. However, I'm very interested in learning more about ongoing activities, particularly as mentioned in your question about effectiveness of the MPA Center in supporting efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks. Perhaps I need to check the website more frequently, or perhaps this is an indicator that the MPA Center could engage in more activities or leadership roles.

Respondent 38

I have been working with Gulf of Mexico colleagues for several years on the potential of a network of MPAs within the Gulf, but I have not dealt with the Center regarding the process. On the other hand, our process has been quite open with two large forums, one proceedings, and one recent prospectus, and I have never been contacted by the Center regarding all of this activity. Perhaps someone else in our larger steering committee team has been contacted, but no one has mentioned this to me.

Social Science
<p>Respondent 11</p> <p>I think the MPA system is an admirable cause. Speaking as an anthropologist, among other concerns that come with pressure from natural resource extraction, I would like to have cultural heritage taken seriously when gas and oil leasing and drilling are involved. For instance, the Native Alaska people must be listened to when speaking in opposition to drilling offshore. Do the MPAs have enough strength to ensure effectiveness in stewardship of culturally important resources in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas? We've already seen the results of the Valdez and BP oil spills. I support the work of the MPA system; I just want to make sure it has the strength to make a difference in protection of both natural resources and human culture.</p>
Environmental
<p>Respondent 5</p> <p>In the current political and budget environment, NOAA must re-evaluate the role and organization of its place-based management programs. This is a message that I have heard on Capitol Hill, at OMB, and all over town in discussions relevant to the National Ocean Policy and CMSP. Without prejudice as to how these issues are resolved, it seems clear that the time has come to think seriously about the interrelated functions of sanctuaries, NERRS, the MPA Center, parts of the coral and CZ programs with a place-based element, and even parts of NMFS like Habitat Conservation that deal with spatially-explicit EFH and HAPCs. As the NOS budget continues to be squeezed by the demands of satellite procurement and non-NOAA DOC bureaus, streamlining the place-based conservation programs into fewer, more sustainable entities seems preferable to the slow bleeding that we will see across the board by maintaining the status quo.</p>
<p>Respondent 25</p> <p>On behalf of the Marine Conservation Institute I am writing to support and provide advice to NOAA's Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center as part of their external review process. As an organization dedicated to saving our living oceans, we support the mission of the MPA Center "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."</p> <p>Marine protected areas are an important tool for maintaining marine biological diversity, protecting ocean habitats, and managing marine resources, including fisheries. MPAs also provide opportunities for scientific research, education, and recreation, when compatible with the objectives of the MPA. Natural and social scientists, many of which are represented by the groups below, were instrumental in calling for the establishment of a national system of marine protected areas as a way to protect against threats to marine biodiversity. In 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13158 to protect "significant natural and cultural resources within the marine environment for present and future generations by strengthening and expanding the Nation's system of marine protected areas."</p> <p>The National Marine Protected Areas Center was established to undertake the essential task of developing an integrated national system of MPAs to advance the conservation of our nation's vital natural and cultural marine resources by creating partnerships among management agencies, improving management practices, and engaging ocean stakeholders. As organizations that have worked closely with the MPA Center, we believe the Center has made great progress (even with very limited funding) in establishing and expanding the National System of MPAs as well as encouraging MPA manager collaboration and planning.</p> <p>We have the following suggestions as the program moves forward in implementing Executive Order 13158:</p> <p><i>Ensure MPA Center Provides National Leadership and Remains the Coordinating Body for Marine Protected Areas</i></p> <p>The MPA Center was established by NOAA to coordinate federal, state, tribal, and local government MPA efforts. No other agency has this important task of coordinating with the many diverse agencies and groups that work on MPAs. During a time of declining federal budgets and agency consolidation, the MPA Center plays a vital role that will be lost without its presence.</p> <p><i>Greater Conservation Focus of the National System</i></p> <p>We encourage increased efforts to identify conservation gaps and determine where additional marine protected areas are needed. Recent scientific studies have demonstrated the significant benefits of no-</p>

take marine reserves for conservation and restoration. Of the 297 areas in the national system of MPAs, 72% are multiple use MPAs that allow a variety of stakeholder uses, including fishing and mineral extraction. That leaves only 28% of the national system MPAs as no-take reserves, many of which are small in size, which limits efficacy in achieving conservation goals. As a tool to protect marine biodiversity, we encourage the MPA Center to increase collaborative efforts in identifying additional areas (especially larger ones) that can be set aside as no-take reserves.

Advance Science and Stewardship Efforts

In past years, the MPA Center has supported MPA management effectiveness and provided technical assistance for managers to understand what is needed to manage future impacts (sea-level rise, ocean acidification). However, these efforts have decreased over the years as funding has diminished, severely reducing the benefits of the National System of MPAs. We would like to see the MPA Center increase these collaborative efforts.

Enhance Ocean Planning and Management

We recommend additional efforts to understand ocean uses (consumptive, non-consumptive, and military/industrial human uses) throughout the US EEZ. For instance, the MPA Center completed a series of workshops with resource managers, stakeholders, and scientists to map human uses of the ocean along the entire California coast. These efforts must be expanded to the entire US coast to inform the marine spatial planning efforts of the National Ocean Policy.

While the MPA Program has made great strides over the years, appropriated funds have been insufficient and inconsistent. Appropriated funding for the MPA Center started at \$3 million (FY 2002) and reached a peak of \$4.9 million in FY 2004. Since 2004, the funding has primarily decreased and the program is expected to receive an amount at or below \$2.0 million in FY2012. These funds are insufficient to allow the MPA Center to fully develop the national system and perform its science and consultation functions, many of which need more attention. Therefore, the Administration must continue to educate stakeholders and Congress on the importance of the MPA Center.

In closing, we encourage the MPA Center to implement Executive Order 13158 by focusing efforts on improving conservation of our nation's ocean ecosystems, enhancing ocean planning and management, identifying additional areas for full protection, and advancing stewardship and science efforts.

Cultural

Respondent 13

Please accept my comments below on the MPA Center external review. I advocate for an increased emphasis on the management and protection of submerged cultural resources. EO 13158 requires the science-based identification and prioritization of natural and cultural resources alike, as well as an assessment of gaps in protection for both natural and cultural resources. Not enough emphasis is currently placed on cultural resources; the center should devote additional funding to the identification and protection of cultural resources, including archaeological sites, and should hire additional expert personnel to assist in the cultural resources program.

The MPA center has the opportunity to create a model for interagency cooperation and federal leadership in the management of submerged cultural heritage. Without increased human and financial emphasis on cultural resources in the Center, this opportunity may be wasted. The center needs to be sure that cultural resources are being protected as part of its goal of improving stewardship of resources in MPAs.

Cultural and archaeological resources need more than one seat at the table. Although the EO treats natural and cultural resources equally, this equality is not reflected in the Staff directory, which lists only one Cultural Resource Coordinator.

Respondent 17

I have been broadly familiar with the National MPA System since its creation, and over the past two years I have been directly engaged with Center through the cultural heritage resources working group convened through the MPA FAC. As a faculty member at the Sea Education Association, I teach undergraduate interdisciplinary courses in ocean policy and maritime studies. Outside of the academy I have more than twenty years' experience in the study and management of marine cultural resources at both the state and federal levels, including serving more than a year as acting state underwater archaeologist for Wisconsin, and more than a decade as consultant for the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the State of Alaska Office of History and Archaeology. My work covers several of the U.S. maritime regions and involves natural and well as cultural resources under the umbrella of marine conservation.

The MPA Center, I believe has demonstrated its enormous potential for improving the stewardship and effectiveness of MPAs in the United States and beyond. Its particular value stems from the original concept of a federal MPA system based on a coordinating rather than a managing agency, and the deep challenging work completed by the MPA Center and FAC during its initial decade. Prior to my current involvement, I had little knowledge or appreciation of the Center's efforts to improve the state of thinking about MPAs. Over the past two years the Center, however, through the work of contract cultural resource specialist, Valerie Grussing with the support of Joseph Uravitch and Lauren Wenzel, the MPA Center has fostered new ways of thinking about marine cultural heritage that has the promise of redefining how these resources are understood, managed, and preserved in our nation's MPAs. In these efforts, which culminated in the cultural heritage resources white paper "Integrated Management Using a Cultural Landscape Approach in the National System" adopted by the MPA FAC, the Center made a dramatic leap from collectors of inventory information, to facilitators of cutting edge environmental policy-making. This process, which was mirrored in several other MPA FAC working groups over the past two years, reveals the Center's nearly unique capacity within NOAA to genuinely engage multiple stakeholders, disciplines, and cultural groups in tasks that will lead to a common goal of improved and sustainable ocean protection and use in the United States. In that sense the Center demonstrated the broader capacities of government to positively influence public policy without the specter of intervening federal authority that has often plagued issues associated with MPAs. The contrast between top down federal authority and collaborative governance in support of ocean stewardship could not be more clear or important.

In a time of fiscal stringency, the question of resources is obviously difficult. Over the course of its brief history, the budget for the MPA Center has fluctuated greatly and this is has been a serious impediment, leading to inconsistency in staffing and limiting the ability to leverage resources among the members of the National System. While the MPA Center annual budget need not be overly large nor its staff huge, it does need stable funding at a level adequate to continue building relationships, developing tools, and expanding knowledge about the how to foster ocean stewardship through MPA's. Funding is clearly required to better disseminate and implement ideas developed through the work of the Center. This may be the most important direction for the MPA Center.

In summary, the MPA Center has been on the right track in fulfilling its goals and objectives. The initial ten-year foundational period although hampered by inconsistent resourcing has yielded important progress. Strong professional, scientific, and policy foundations have been created along with a charter group of MPAs. The opportunities ahead have the potential to build rapidly on these foundations to raise national capacities and improve MPA management and stewardship. The MPA Center has led through fostering collaborative thought and governance and has the potential to emerge as a stable and unique actor in national ocean stewardship as outlined in President Obama's National Ocean Policy. Executive Order 13158 offered a far-reaching vision of stewardship that encompasses natural and cultural resources as well as sustainable use. The MPA Center has, especially over the past two years, fully embraced this vision.

I strongly endorse its current direction and strong recommend the allocation of adequate and stable funding for the program.

Respondent 20

I welcome this opportunity to provide comments on the effectiveness of the National Marine Protected Areas Center (the "MPA Center") and its decade of work. My familiarity and interaction with the MPA Center spans much of this period. I participated in early stakeholder workshops, served as a FAC member (and co-chaired working group), and now work with them as a National System Partner.

Through these various experiences, I have come to recognize the unique leadership role of the MPA Center.

In its staff, the MPA Center has over the course of its existence assembled a team composed of a diverse range of experts and able consensus builders. By not being a program that manages federal property (such as NOAA Sanctuaries, National Parks, or National Wildlife Refuges), it has been able to reflect a “national” view rather than a predominantly federal perspective. This factor is key to its ability to establish, implement, and support the goals of the Executive Order and the resulting National System of Marine Protected Areas.

In addition to my comments above¹, it is my fervent hope that the MPA Center might find a way to continue to use the Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group (CHRWG). Many of the working group members have asked if the group might continue to serve the FAC and Center. They expressed a strong interest in continuing these efforts. There was a feeling that there is more work they could do on behalf of the MPA Center. While we did not make this a specific recommendation in our white paper, it would be a strong force behind the implementation of the recommendations.

In the CHRWG, the MPA FAC and Center have assembled a team composed of a diverse range of experts and able consensus builders. The working group reflects a “national” view rather than a predominantly federal perspective. It has the added benefit of robust tribal/indigenous engagement. The conference call/webinar meeting format was successful and fiscally prudent approach. It worked much better than anyone anticipated and our white paper certainly reflects our success. Further, this group has established a strong and successful working relationship which would be difficult to replicate, especially in these tight fiscal times. It stands willingly and readily available to assist in your future efforts.

In closing, the MPA Center is in a unique position among federal agencies. As noted above, it is not a property manager or a regulatory program. It has been able to bring various independent parties/organizations and various levels of government together to discuss issues absent an overriding federal authority of the issue or discussant parties. As such, the MPA Center has been able to promulgate a national view rather than a federal perspective.

Respondent 28

The Underwater Archaeology Branch of Naval History and Heritage Command has worked well with the MPA program and several US Navy shipwrecks have been added to the list of Marine Protected Areas. I personally am supportive of this program and believe it is beneficial to preserving our maritime heritage.

Respondent 36

I am sure there are many aspects to consider in the MPA Center review; my comments focus on one particular very successful function, the incorporation of cultural heritage into marine resource management. Tasked with enhancing the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's MPA's, and directed to do so through partnerships with other federal, state, tribal, and local governments, tribes, and stakeholders, the recently concluded MPA cultural heritage working recommendations paper (accepted by the FAC in November 2011) provides the best example of the Center meeting its broad yet complex mandate. The product of this MPA working group not only shapes a much better way of considering cultural resources within all MPA's (which is plainly needed), but also addresses better ways to view cultural inputs and cultural drivers to marine resource decision-making across the board. And the group created by the MPA featured partner federal and state agencies, tribal governments, scientists, and other public preservationist stakeholders. That is no small accomplishment. These MPA recommendations serve as a model for incorporating multiple voices and perspectives into the national system (admittedly not something we always succeed at).

In order to carry out the recommendations of the MPA working group, I would very much hope that the MPA Center itself can continue to support agencies, programs, and stakeholders in these ways, particularly when it comes to cultural heritage topics

Industry

Respondent 35

All things considered, I think that the E.O. is so broad that it's nearly impossible for the MPA Center as

¹ Refers to answers to the questions, below.

resourced to fulfill "the mission". What's needed is a much more tightly prioritized mission and strategy directly linked to activities, money and people. It may be that this has been done is just not visible to a part-time FAC member.

Aggregation of activities is desperately needed with NOAA, in my view.

And, if budget pressures at the federal level are a problem, it's worse at state/local levels. This may create an opportunity for working on fewer things but having more leverage by becoming more of a 'center of expertise' -- developing tools, etc. -- for implementation by these other levels.

Recreational Fishing

Respondent 29

The undersigned organizations within the recreational fishing and boating community composed the following comments for the MPA Center's Request for External Review. In this letter we address the questions presented by the MPA Center as well as concerns regarding the MPA FAC. As a coalition of recreational angling conservation organizations, we are deeply concerned with the current political climate surrounding our nation's waters. Recreational angling is a longstanding American tradition with numerous benefits to offer our nation. We hope that the MPA Center will consider our comments and incorporate changes to reflect our concerns about the MPA Center. In the request for external review, you have asked for comments to assess how successfully the MPA Center addresses the requirements of Executive Order 13158. While we acknowledge that it is only natural for the MPA Center to look to its document of origin for guidance, Executive Order 13158 was handed down over ten years ago and over the last decade there have been dramatic changes in the issues impacting aquatic resources and the policies governing America's waters and the world's oceans.

We feel that the MPA Center should expand its scope and look at subsequent Executive orders, legislation, and other policy initiatives, including the following:

1. Executive Order 12962 as amended by Executive Order 13474 which cites numerous statutes that cover all Federal ocean waters and mandates Federal agencies, in cooperation with the States, to improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities where practical and permissible by law by *"ensuring that recreational fishing shall be managed as a sustainable activity in national wildlife refuges, national parks, national monuments, national marine sanctuaries, marine protected areas, or any other relevant conservation or management areas or activities under any Federal authority, consistent with applicable law;"*
2. Executive Order 13547 which implemented the Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, of which some of the goals are to "support sustainable, safe, secure, efficient, and productive uses of the ocean" and "provide for and maintain public access to the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes;"
3. Additional legislation, such as the 2006 Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and
4. America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

All of these have contributed to the changing dynamic in ocean policy. The MPA Center should be working to incorporate all current ocean policy into its mission, and adjusting practices and products accordingly. We believe that all of these policies are compatible with Executive Order 13158, and hope that the future strategy of the MPA Center will incorporate additional objectives consistent with the aforementioned executive orders as the actions of the MPA Center could be defined as "relevant conservation or management...activities under any Federal authority." Specifically, this may include the rejection of MPAs from the National System if they are not in compliance with executive orders in reference to the directive that requires recreational fishing to be "managed as a sustainable activity in...marine protected areas." We are happy to provide examples of MPAs currently in the National System that are in non-compliance at your request.

One of the goals in Executive Order 13158 is for Federal agencies to "enhance or expand protection of existing MPAs and establish or recommend, as appropriate, new MPAs." As a community, we have always emphasized that MPAs are but one tool among a suite of other resources available for effective marine fisheries management. MPAs can be effective management tools in specific circumstances. However, they are not a one-size-fits-all strategy and should only be implemented where deemed necessary to conserve marine resources. It is counterintuitive to strengthen and expand a system if it is

not required, especially when considering the current economic climate and limited availability of resources. The MPA Center should instead be allocating its resources to the assessment of the current system of MPAs. It is evident that more research is needed on MPA designations, including economic impact assessments, studies on their effectiveness at conserving marine resources, and maximizing stakeholder involvement and public access, among many others. We strongly urge the MPA Center to focus on research objectives and data collection before moving forward with expansion.

When considering public-private partnerships in terms of MPA designations, recreational anglers are skeptical due to the resounding impacts caused by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative process. The MLPA process has caused countless anglers on the west coast to retire their fishing gear and has become the prime example in our community of the threat MPAs pose to the sport. One of the most troubling aspects for recreational fishermen of the MLPA process was the interjection of private funding into the designation process. Accepting private funding for MPA planning initiatives inherently creates bias, which is precisely what occurred for recreational fishermen in California. Excluding stakeholders from the planning process; creating biased plans based on input from private groups funding the project, and precautionary closures of vast expanses of water with no scientific justification are just a few of the effects private funding had on the planning process of the MLPA. The MPA Center should work to ensure all MPAs, where necessary, are developed using appropriate protocols to ensure the process is apolitical, transparent, fair, and balanced. Unfortunately, in the state of California, it was none of these.

A significant number of our concerns about the MPA Center arise from the products of the MPA FAC. While the MPA Center and MPA FAC are two different entities, the distinction is not always clear. While there will no doubt be overlap between the MPA Center and the FAC, the MPA Center should work to ensure the clear delineation of products from the MPA Center and the MPA FAC. The recreational angling community has been loudly voicing concerns about the products of the MPA FAC, which has chosen to publish recommendations that go beyond the scope of the MPA Center's subscribed mission and reflects a biased view of ocean management with an emphasis on preservation that is not rooted in science. This is a step back from the multiple-use management strategy that has become the precedent for managing public resources in this country and is in conflict with the numerous policies governing marine resources including Executive Order 13547 which requires the "science-based identification and prioritization of natural and cultural resources" and "a biological assessment of the minimum area where consumptive uses would be prohibited that is necessary" during MPA development. Because of the lack of differentiation, these products appear to be documents endorsed by the MPA Center. In order to achieve the goals outlined in the Executive Order, the MPA Center must differentiate itself from some of the ideologies in MPA FAC recommendations.

We are also concerned more specifically about the process associated with the MPA FAC as endorsed by the MPA Center. During the month of December, the MPA FAC released three sets of recommendations for MPAs. While it is important for the MPA FAC to release several products in a year and we support the full involvement of the MPA FAC on current issues related to the designation of MPAs, it is also prudent to consider the quality of work that can be produced by one body in a short period of time. After careful review of the three products, we found that the recommendations were not only inconsistent with past MPA documents but also with each other. We also took note of the frequency, or lack thereof, of meetings and conference calls for the MPA FAC during the time when these recommendations would have been produced. The only meeting of the full FAC was the three-day meeting in New Orleans, and there are no conference calls on record of the full FAC discussing the papers. One meeting to both discuss and vote on a document that can have a direct impact on economic, social, and cultural values is not only insufficient, but unacceptable in that members of the FAC who were not able to attend this meeting or perhaps had critical reviews of these documents would be intrinsically unable to contribute in a meaningful manner to the recommendations. Full inclusion of all resource representatives, consistency in recommendations, and a true effort to reach consensus must be promoted by the MPA Center over shows of quantity and artificial deadlines.

An external review process is only valuable if the critiques provided are assessed and incorporated to reflect a more direct route to goal achievement and mission fulfillment. We hope our comments will be thought provoking, and will impart a new view of the potential for the future of the National System of MPAs that includes meaningful stakeholder involvement, the endorsement of multiple-use management, and an initiative to delve deeper into the true costs and benefits of MPA designations in our nation's waters.

Other

Respondent 7

I received the request below to provide an external review of the National Marine Protected Areas Center. Unfortunately, other than reading the MPA Connections newsletter occasionally, I really do not have direct access to or involvement with the NMPAC. I do know Dr. Charles Wahle personally and understand that he and his staff have been working hard and diligently to make this Center a productive and communicative one. Other than that, I am afraid that I cannot provide more input or evaluation.

Respondent 18

I would like to suggest that the MPA Center consider hiring an 'embedded librarian' either part-time or full-time, as either a federal employee or as a contract employee of a firm under direct contract to the MPA Center. Rather than contracting with the agency library, which has budget and staffing challenges of its own, the MPA Center could hire its own librarian to assist with topical and administrative research needs for the Center, which would thereby have better control of hiring/firing than it would with a librarian who is situated in another part of the agency. The NOAA PPI office has an embedded librarian to assist with PPI's unique work; and NIH has a variety of "Informationists" who provide direct customized service to NIH's specific institutes. While not every environmental consulting company may have offer a position called 'Librarian', perhaps they have some other related job titles available, such as Information Specialist. I would recommend that there be no requirement for a marine science educational background, since librarians' expertise in information discovery enables them to adapt quickly to various subject specialties.

In EO 13158, there is an emphasis on sharing of information, not only between Commerce and DOI, but also with the varying levels of government involved in the building and management of the national system of MPAs. A librarian would be in an ideal position to aid other MPA Center staff with publications management and information outreach to advance this information sharing. A librarian could ensure that all MPA publications are preserved, cataloged, and promoted via outreach to NOAA Library, academic and governmental libraries, and by ensuring they are listed in the OCLC database, GPO FDsys, and in other resources. A librarian could also serve in an archival and knowledge management capacity by ensuring that the evolving history of the MPA Center itself is preserved, e.g. by continuing to add to the National MPA Center History Collection, and periodically updating the existing finding aid (http://www.lib.noaa.gov/collections/virtual_libs/mpacenter_history_findingaid.html). A librarian could interact with the records liaison officers in NOS to work on records retirement issues for the center.

Similarly, an MPA Center Librarian could work on continuing the systematic collection of citations and links of pertinent scientific and policy literature on MPA topics, either via maintenance in a database or via bibliographies or other tools. An MPA Librarian could continue to serve the staff by assisting them with setting up alerts in commercial subscription resources such as LexisNexis for specific wire service titles, MPA articles in law reviews, etc.

While brick and mortar libraries may be experiencing declines, the role of independent information professionals, who can be embedded in specific programs to do research, publications management, document management, and general knowledge management, is growing. Hiring such a person, whatever his or her job title, should enable the MPA Center to engage in its information sharing activities in an efficient and focused manner.

Respondent 32

I have worked with the NMPA Center on a number of occasions and have always found them to be receptive, responsive, collaborative, and collegial. Given their very modest budget, I think they have accomplished a number of important things, and serve an important coordinating function. Their leadership with NAMPAN is just one example.

Respondent 37

CRE appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments on the National Marine Protected Areas Center (“MPA Center”) external review. ⁱ

NOAA’s Federal Register notice soliciting public comment explains:

“An external review of the MPA Center is needed to maximize its effectiveness and transparency and to ensure that the MPA Center is conducting high quality work of significant value to NOAA and the nation. To this end, the MPA Center is seeking external feedback, including public comment on the program’s approach to balancing competing priorities.”

“An independent, external panel of four experts in subject matter of the MPA Center’s program focus will convene for a three day meeting in late January, 2012 to review materials and information about the MPA Center, develop findings and make Recommendations. The program is seeking input on the questions listed below. Please note that you do not need to address all questions, and the MPA Center welcomes additional input on topics not covered in the questions listed.”¹

For our comments, we first note our assumption that the “independent, external panel of four experts” will be constituted under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (“FACA”), 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2, and will comply with all FACA requirements. Please inform us if our assumption is wrong. Second, we request that the panel be informed of NOAA’s Information Quality Act (“IQA”) Guidelines, and that NOAA’s IQA Guidelines be included in the charge language to the panel. The panel should be asked to determine whether the MPA Center is complying with NOAA’s IQA Guidelines during the Center’s information disseminations.

Our request is consistent with guidance by the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) to other agencies using external expert review panels. OMB has stated:

“Since the development of Agency Information Quality (IQ) guidelines required by statute, many agencies have been using charge language that tracks with the standards of their own IQ guidelines. For example, such language often focuses on whether or not the information in question is accurate, clear, complete, transparently and objectively described, and scientifically justified. We believe it may be useful for EPA to follow a similar approach and incorporate some of the language from your IQ guidelines into the formulation of the charge questions.”²

NOAA should refer to the following IQA documents when informing the panel of IQA requirements, and when charging the panel with reviewing the MPA Center’s compliance with them: Information Quality Overview 3; NOAA Information Quality Guidelines 4; NAO 216-115: Strengthening NOAA’s Research and Development Enterprise 5; Section 515 Pre-dissemination Review Documentation and Certification 6 ; OMB Peer Review Bulletin 7; NOAA Peer Review Plans 8 ; and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Policy on Conflicts of Interest For Peer Review Subject to OMB’s Peer Review Bulletin. ⁹

NOAA should also refer to the following additional IQA requirement when informing the panel of IQA requirements, and when charging the panel with reviewing the MPA Center’s compliance with them: *NOAA/NMFS’ Instruction on GUIDELINES FOR AGENCY ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS*, which states at pages 2-3 that:

“The AR [Administrative Record] first must document the process the agency used in reaching its final decision in order to show that the agency followed required procedures. For NOAA actions, procedural requirements include...the Information Quality Act...”¹⁰

Question 1: Is the MPA Center focusing on the most important activities to fulfill its goals and objectives (Build and maintain the national system of MPAs; Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness; Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPAs activities)?

MPA Programs/Managers

Respondent 3

I believe the MPA Center is focusing on the most important activities to fulfill its goals and objectives. With regard to regional coordination, I would like to see a stronger presence in that area AND what is key on the west coast, is to meet with the Governor’s office directly, preferably the Chief of Staff. Doing so, would strengthen the presence and importance of the MPAs and subsequently direct resources and support to the managing agencies.

Respondent 4

Since its creation, the MPA Center has been doing a reasonable job of following the requirements of Executive Order 13158 (May 26, 2000). In doing so, the MPA Center has begun a foundation upon which to build a program that is critical to identifying, protecting, and managing our Nation's special marine areas. However, the activities the MPA Center has focused on in the past are not those activities to focus on in the future.

The goal of building and maintaining the national system of marine protected areas has created some confusion and suspicion amongst members of marine protected area communities and the public at large. Without any real place-based management authority or financial resources, the value-added of the system has been minimal at best. Since individual units in the system are managed by a wide variety of local, state, and federal agencies, there is a disconnect between the national system and the operation and integration of the actual "units on the ground."

In addition, the significant amount of effort (time and funding) put into producing maps, characterizing existing marine protected areas, and gross level use assessments may not be justified by their operational utility to marine protected area managers. While these products may have been useful for some marine protected areas managers, national marine sanctuary managers have not been able to use any of them for any specific management application. Therefore, this program area should be revisited.

Respondent 10

Certainly, the MPA Center has placed much time and effort in building the network, which is manifest in the number of members that have joined the system. With respect to stewardship, the MPA Center has developed a variety of science-based services to inform management decisions. These include a variety of GIS data layers that are available for use by the resource management community. Perhaps an area that needs more attention however is development of training programs or services that enable the user community to bring these tools to bear on decision-making. It is one thing to develop the tools, quite another to get the target audience to be familiar enough with the information to put it to use. This is a challenge that could be met, in part, by partnerships with programs that have existing networks. One example is the National Estuarine Research Reserve System which operates a coastal training program designed specifically to transfer BMPs, science-based information and new technology to the user community.

As far as coordination is concerned, I believe more can be accomplished here as well. As a member of the MPA network, what I find most helpful is the information transfer that occurs at the annual meeting sponsored by NOAA. Updates on tools, web-based information, and transfer of exemplary programs among the diverse cultures of the MPA network are extremely valuable. However, participation has been rather limited, with the same groups each year. How can the MPA Center expand the value of this meeting to the network broadly? Webinars? Brown bag conference calls? Additional mechanisms need to be developed to broaden delivery of the value-added information produced by the MPA Center.

Respondent 19

The MPA Center has taken several important steps to build the national system of MPAs, and to improve MPA stewardship. By providing funding support to help establish the Gulf of Mexico MPA Network in collaboration with Rookery Bay NERR and the Southeast Region NMS, the MPA Center is recognizing the need to establish regional frameworks that support a national MPA program. The Gulf of Mexico MPA Network, while still in its formative years, has enabled the development of a collaborative partnership between DOI and DOC MPAs located in the Gulf, serving as a catalyst for the exchange of information on issues such as climate change and disaster response.

Respondent 21

Since 2007, the Maryland Coastal Program has primarily received correspondence from and worked with the MPA Center on site inventories and site nominations. The Center has made significant progress toward its goals and objectives related to building and maintaining the national system of MPAs, particularly at the Federal level and less so at the state or regional level (please see the second response for additional clarification on this issue). The Coastal Program has not worked with the Center related to the improvement of MPA stewardship and effectiveness and coordination of national and regional MPA activities. The majority of information the Coastal Program has received from the Center has been related

to characterization and definitions of MPAs and about site nominations.

With the emergence of regional ocean partnerships, there is an opportunity for the Center to leverage ongoing work between states and engage in Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) efforts that address many resource management and stewardship objectives at a broader scale. This may allow the Center to make additional progress toward fulfilling its goals related to stewardship and effectiveness of certain MPA issues.

Respondent 23

- The MPA Center has provided some enhanced regional coordination through the NFWF grant program. Two National Estuarine Research Reserves have benefited from these awards. However, due to its limited financial scope, the results of the MPA Center-NFWF partnership are necessarily restricted to individual projects.
- The intended user group and benefit of the expanded MPA inventory tool has not been satisfactorily demonstrated to the reserve system. The data collection method can result in inaccurate information being placed in the public domain. Detailed information is presented for all MPAs in the national inventory even when they have not chosen to participate in the national system. The fine granularity of information for their MPAs requires an investment of time to verify information even though they may not see the value in the tool nor expect to use it.
- Nationally, MPAs would benefit from greater direct investment in improving MPA stewardship and effectiveness and advocating for such improvements. While the MPA Center activities related to Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) are worthwhile endeavors, these activities could be revisited to understand whether and how they best support the purpose of the national MPA system.

Respondent 34

Yes. As an MPA representative, there is important work to be done in building our existing national system and supporting it in being effective. MPA's face many challenges in the coming years including potential funding cuts and a lack of recognition of the value of MPA's, including what they bring to communities and the nation. For example, communities and decision-makers may misunderstand the purpose of an MPA and fail to recognize their value. In other instances, MPA managers themselves fail to understand the value of the national system which can help them spread the word about how important MPA's are to the economy and citizens quality of life. The MPA Center has helped us work through some of these issues and to collaborate in a wider venue so that shared resources have helped us meet our mission. These activities are vital to the future of MPA's and it has been a tremendous resource to our organization.

Respondent 42

To maintain the National System, the MPA Center needs to develop opportunities for MPA managers to engage with one another. The MPA Center should focus efforts on getting MPA managers and staff to take a role in activities. A good example of how this can be done effectively is the Gulf of Mexico MPA Network. This network is being organized by the local MPA managers leaving the MPA Center to focus on other things.

Natural Science

Respondent 2

I am not familiar with the MPA Center's efforts to build the national system of MPAs. In my experience, staff from the west coast MPA Center office were involved in planning for MPAs in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and served an important role as a resource for information. I recall that staff from the MPA Center worked to build a catalog of MPAs throughout the nation, including locations and sizes of MPAs to help place future planning of MPAs into context. The library of scientific publication and data about MPAs hosted by the MPA Center is an excellent resource for people working on this topic. As far as I know, staff from the MPA Center did not have a significant role in the 8-year planning process for California's Marine Life Protection Act.

Respondent 9

Most important activities: I believe the Center has focused on the most critical items, but that those priorities are changing now because of the Center's successes (inventory, system framework, and FAC) and because conditions regarding knowledge, experience and politics of MPAs have changed and continue to evolve.

Respondent 16

Yes – the MPA center is meeting these goals as follows:

- Build and maintain the national system of MPAs: This task has been achieved in two ways: (i) by promoting the submission of additional entries into the system and (ii) by ensuring that the system is incorporated into other developing spatial management initiatives, such as the Integrated Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning process.
- Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness: This task has been achieved in two ways: (i) by developing whiter papers describing the “best practices” for integration of cultural and ecological concerns into MPA designs and management plans (ii) by sharing information about the tools and approaches being used to monitor and manage MPAs.
- Facilitate international, national and regional coordination of MPAs activities: MPA center staff have participated in multitude of international conservation and educational for a, where they have reached out to the scientific community, resource user groups and the public at large.

Respondent 24

Yes, for the most part. The MPA Center is drawn into many directions that include building the national system of MPAs. However, they are also conducting other activities that divert their small staff. Creating and promoting the national system is a huge task that can be addressed on many fronts. Bottom line is that the MPA Center is doing many of the right things but would benefit from more staff/resources to do more of the right things.

Respondent 26

The MPA Center has been effectively working on the three major goals and objectives outlined above. The Center is indeed building a National System, which as of FY2011 includes 297 members. It has allocated resources in the form of partnership grants, held workshops, and performed analyses to further the goal of improving MPA stewardship and effectiveness, with particular emphasis on strengthening the cultural heritage component of the National System. In addition, the MPA Center has taken important steps to more fully engage tribes and other Native Peoples in the development of the National System. Lastly, the MPA Center has made efforts to facilitate international cooperation through its ICES-NAMPAN workshop and its Wider Caribbean Region activities. The MPA Center also has made limited and targeted efforts to facilitate regional MPA activities through its MPA Partnership Grants. However, key questions remain. For example, the significance of this National System, i.e., what does it mean to have an MPA in the National System, is still not very clear. Is this simply a “paper” label or are there real and significant benefits. Also, how does the National System become a true system – an entity that provides goods and services greater than the sum of the goods and services provided by its individual MPA units? Providing real benefits for MPA membership in the National System, such as funds for evaluation of MPA performance, and creating an ecologically linked National System of MPAs instead of a collection of MPAs are topics requiring future attention.

Clearly, efforts have been made to improve clarity regarding the cultural heritage component of the MPA National System. Revisions have been made to the Framework with expanded attention to benefits resulting from the cultural resources contained within MPA boundaries. Efforts to engage tribes in the MPA process also have been successful. A white paper on Improving Comprehensive Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage in the National MPA System is in progress. However, conservation and management of cultural heritage should address goals and objectives for MPAs and this requires first the identification of such goals and objectives and then an evaluation plan. Hopefully, the white paper will address these topics.

The Center has been working to document and map human use patterns in California and Hawaii, a prerequisite to determining anthropogenic impacts on and potential value-gained from MPAs in these regions.

These data should form the basis of deeper analyses of activities in and outside of existing MPAs and efforts should be made to translate these data into ecological impacts that affect the biological performances of MPAs in the National System. These data should provide valuable input into Marine Spatial Planning efforts and should probably be expanded to other parts of the U.S. In future efforts to address MPA stewardship and effectiveness, more attention should be given to gaining improved understanding of the ‘true’ social and economic benefits or effects of MPAs, particularly as this relates to

fisheries (recreational and commercial). Also, given the comprehensive nature of potential MPA benefits, which include not only natural ecosystem level parameters but also cultural, social, and economic indicators, the development of an economically sustainable and valuable program for evaluating MPA performance has become an enormous challenge. It would be helpful if the MPA Center could contribute to this challenge by developing effective guidelines or advice for monitoring and evaluating MPA performance at the individual MPA and MPA system levels.

Respondent 30

The MPA Center with the input of the MPA FAC established the National Network after a number of years of discussion primarily by cobbling together existing MPAs and calling it a network. Making this network a true network by filling gaps and coordinating management is a large, long-term task on which there hasn't been much progress.

I doubt if any of the member MPAs of the national network have received much "value added" to date from their participation in the National Network other than perhaps some leverage for outreach and fund-raising and pride of membership.

The MPA Center has provided national guidance in stewardship, monitoring and assessment of MPAs through its publications and outreach at national meetings. It has also made an effort to expand the information base for the MPAs of the national network. But I doubt if there has been much "hands on" activity with individual MPAs.

Of course, managing, maintaining and growing a national network of >250 MPAs requires funds. Since early budget cuts the MPA Center has been essentially level-funded. The current economic situation has likely made the budget situation worse, although I am not acquainted with the details.

Environmental

Respondent 1

As for working on the most important things, I believe the priorities should have been figuring out what we (USA has (this being accomplished), mapping and assessing human uses, and assessing (and perhaps mapping) management effectiveness for the purpose of identifying gaps. I find the international stuff less important, even though I am a big advocate for that. I feel the US should get its house in order first, or at least be willing to learn from others, which it seems reluctant to do.

Respondent 5

While much of the MPA Center's work is valuable, I'm not confident that its activities are making concrete contributions to a) increasing MPA coverage and effectiveness, or b) coordinating among MPAs. I see and hear about a lot of work being done, especially on training and coordination, but I'm unsure that change is actually occurring on the water. I think this is partly this is because the Center doesn't have a regulatory function – potentially the biggest impediment to implementing the goals of EO13158. To me, it also feels like there has been a general focus on coordinating but that this effort could be targeted more specifically, i.e. aligning management between federal and state MPAs two or three at a time in a specific region or ecosystem.

I think that in the absence of an ability to create new sites, the biggest impact the Center could have would be to better coordinate between adjacent protected areas under different management schemes.

Respondent 6

To date, I believe that the MPA Center's focus has been appropriately placed on creating a framework for a National System of MPAs and then beginning to populate the National System with existing MPAs. As MPAs are widely considered to be an essential component to the management, conservation, and sustainable use of our ocean waters and resources, this focused effort to create a National System of MPAs is a valuable component of the federal government's stewardship of our nation's greatest public trust asset – our oceans. As well, the MPA Center has produced a variety of tools and products that resource managers can and do use to improve their stewardship of their respective MPAs. To that end, I think that the MPA Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) has been instrumental in facilitating the development of some of these products and their transfer into use by MPA managers and effected stakeholders around the nation. The MPA FAC has also helped to stimulate conversations, relationship building, and education and understanding among a diverse array of stakeholders – which can only lead

to better stewardship of MPAs and an enhanced appreciation for the social, economic, cultural, scientific, and natural resource factors operating in the sustainable management of MPAs. As well, the MPA center will need to play a central role in the development of regional coastal and marine spatial plans called for in the President's National Ocean Policy – particularly the Center's valuable input on the identification and protection of important ecological areas within a coastal and marine spatial plan as well as the socioeconomic and cultural resource factors that need to be recognized and built into the regional plans.

Going forward, I believe that the MPA Center's focus needs to now shift to (1) assisting with the development of regional coastal and marine spatial plans and in particular the identification and protection of important ecological areas and (2) the completion of a gap analysis of the current National System of MPAs to identify gaps in protection; and (3) establishment of new and expanded MPAs to fill the gaps in protection in the current National System (discussed in more detail below).

Respondent 14

First, I think the MPA Center does an amazing job with very limited resources. I also think it could do more useful work with more resources.

Second, I'm most familiar with the work it does on the first two objectives above. The Center certainly does a good job of building the national inventory of sites that meet certain criteria, which it deems the national system of MPAs. But I believe the Executive Order used the term "national system" to mean the physical areas themselves (just as "the National Park System" refers to a nationwide array of parks, not just to a list of those parks). It's important to have an inventory with criteria that define eligibility to be listed as part of the national system of MPAs. But I would like to see the Center involved in efforts to strengthen and expand actual physical MPAs around the country, in addition to building and maintaining an inventory of qualifying sites.

Based on the materials on the Center website and what I know about the tools and resources you've developed, I think you provide useful resources for encouraging MPA stewardship.

Respondent 41

Because Hawai'i does not have strong leadership at the state level to create or maintain MPAs, the support of the National Center is sorely needed to provide information about the benefit and utility of area protection and to identify sustainable mechanisms for management. I had the privilege of working with the Center on the West Hawai'i Coastal Mapping project and observed firsthand the impact that this project had in building local capacity for participation in MPA planning both through inviting diverse participation, and training local agency staff to use cutting edge technology in planning processes. The products of this project have been utilized by community groups looking to design and implement new protected areas in the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) with an emphasis on the Coral priority site of South Kohala. The technology and experience of MPA Center representatives from Monterey was well received and will continue to play a vital role in gathering and sharing relevant information for management planning in Hawaii.

The Center, via NFWF is supporting a collaborative planning process focused around marine resource enforcement in the priority site "Strengthening Mar. Thanks to this support, we've been able to compile over 30 years of coral reef data showing decline and will be facilitating community meetings to identify and commit to cooperative actions across levels of governance with community support.

Cultural Resources

Respondent 12

It's made a good start but focused almost entirely on biological issues. If the goals are Natural, Cultural and Sustainable MPAs, the Center needs to strengthen the cultural and sustainable efforts to match the natural and scientific support it has given. People and their history need to be a more prominent part of the build-out if the national system is to go beyond a series of fish take boundaries.

Respondent 20

Despite its small staff size and its broad mandate, the MPA Center has been clearly able to fulfill or make significant progress on its goals and objectives. An inventory was compiled and grows, the Framework for the National System was developed and the National System of MPAs was launched (and continues to grow). Utilizing the expertise of its staff and the MPA FAC, it has developed a number of white papers and recommendations for effective stewardship. Coordination and collaborative efforts

<p>have been a hallmark of the MPA Center's effectiveness and success. As it moves toward implementation of the National System as a network, it not only coordinates the diverse efforts of, but works with its National System Partners. Similarly, the creation of its Cultural Heritage Working Group (CHRWG) allow it to augment its staff and FAC expertise with outside members and successfully deliver work products charged to them by the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior.</p>
<p>Tools/GIS</p>
<p>Respondent 22 The MPA Center has been very effective and collecting, collating and distributing geospatial information about MPAs (e.g., boundaries and regulations) in a variety of formats, including web-based mapping services and applications. The resources are easily discovered online and, when I need additional information, the staff at the MPA Center has been very responsive to getting me what I need, including creating additional web services.</p>
<p>Respondent 43 As far as I can tell without serving in any advisory capacity to the center it is indeed focusing on the most important activities. I do wonder about international engagement though. Happily, there continue to be numerous international MPA efforts underway with linkages that could contribute to and benefit from the U.S. national system and vice-versa. I wonder if the Center should do more in this area.</p>
<p>Industry</p>
<p>Respondent 35</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Don't know quantitatively as don't have metrics. b) Qualitatively, probably reasonably successful on building the national system. Not enough time has passed to assess "maintain the national system"; but this likely to be difficult c) Good effort on "facilitate", the question is to what end. Don't have the knowledge on what concrete outcomes have come from this. If for example, there was an outcome on successful resource sharing, that would be especially positive. d) Going forward in a new constrained resource environment, suggest that time be spent fleshing out how "effectiveness" is assessed on more than just adding new MPAs into the system. For example, if "adaptive management" is real; then deciding what MPAs are deserving of resources/effort and which ones are not. More important will be the clear communication that in our Darwinian world, not all activities are in perpetuity.
<p>Respondent 40 The short answer is yes. During my time on the MPA FAC I saw the evolution of the FAC charge move from pure science to take on a more human dimension; from marine biology to cultural heritage. I believe that this change was collaboration between the FAC and the MPA Center though clearly it was driven by the Center. I believe that this was an appropriate change based on the work products of the FAC and the needs of the National System.</p>
<p>Commercial Fishing</p>
<p>Respondent 39 For the four years that I was an MPA FAC member and reading what the previous members wrote, I think the MPA Center has addressed the EO goals and objectives very well given the very limited funding that they had to work with.</p>
<p>Other</p>
<p>Respondent 15 Yes. The MPA center has gone through extensive consultation with stakeholders to guide the prioritization of its efforts to fulfill its goals and Objectives. Stakeholders including the MPA FACA and State MPA program managers recommended that financial incentives be made available to programs that participate in the National System stakeholders. To address this need the MPA center entered into an innovative public private partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and launched the National Marine Protected Area Fund (MPA Fund). Through the MPA Fund, the MPA Center has awarded nine projects to support the effectiveness of marine protected areas through the implementation</p>

of the U.S. National System of Marine Protected Areas. Priorities for funding outlined in the Request for Proposals document (both funding cycles) include:

1. Stewardship projects as part of a regional/sub-regional MPA Plan
2. Development of a Regional/sub-regional MPA Plan
3. Meeting national system eligibility criteria for MPAs and MPA programs that do not yet meet the eligibility criteria.

Successful applications included project activities on topics ranging from MPA management and effectiveness to MPA science and analysis to MPA outreach and education.

Through two solicitations since 2009, more than \$313,000 of NOAA dollars was matched by close to \$330,000 to generate over \$643,000 for building and maintaining the national system of MPAs. The awarded grants were chosen because they assist in the building and maintaining of the national system of MPAs and implement projects aimed at improving MPA stewardship and effectiveness.

Question 2: How successfully has the MPA Center addressed the requirements of Executive Order 13158?

MPA Programs/Managers

Respondent 3

I believe the MPA Center has been successful in addressing the requirements of the EO, and a stronger presence is needed, such as mentioned in 2. Otherwise, the on the ground managers are hamstrung without support from their agencies.

Respondent 4

The MPA Center has done a sufficient job to date in addressing the requirements of Executive Order 13158 (May 26, 2000) given the constraints. Inadequate funding and a lack of legislative or regulatory authority, however, have limited its potential impact. The apparent overlap in the Executive Order's direction with the mandates of management agencies has made fulfillment of the Executive Order a very tough task.

Respondent 10

Construction of the MPA network certainly has been a successful pursuit--many members have been elected at a variety of government scales and throughout a diverse assemblage of MPA communities. Much information has been produced to aid MPAs in decision-making but, as noted above, more work needs to be done to expand the utility of this data and data products.

One area that needs to be addressed better is to define ecological linkages among MPAs. This is not an easy task, but one which could benefit the management and user community tremendously. For example, few MPAs have quantified what "resource protection" means in terms of populations and communities of organisms. Further, few MPAs have quantitative metrics and thresholds for the state of such populations and communities to trigger actions to limit use or certain human activities. Such a capability requires an understanding of population and community dynamics, which is different from those that are the targets of fisheries (e.g., corals, sponges, other invertebrates). Understanding aspects of reproductive biology, growth rates, patterns of recruitment and dispersal, and the functional role of key taxa (dominant and keystone) as well as rare taxa (to prevent endangerment) as they relate to patterns of distribution and abundance are required. The MPA Center must incorporate the specific research needs of its network into existing research programs at NOAA including CCOS, NMFS, Coral Reef Research Program, Sea Grant, and others.

I'm not certain whether a gap analysis (an assessment of threats and gaps in levels of protection) has been conducted for the MPA network. If not, this is one of the mandates in the Executive Order that should be addressed. Likewise, criteria need to be developed to evaluate the performance of MPAs. Another tough nut to crack, but a challenge that could be tremendously valuable to the MPA community.

Additional financial support is required to enable the MPA Center to meet its obligations. Although the Executive Order identifies many agencies that have MPA interests and programs, I'm not certain whether any "external" financial support has been provided to help build out the MPA Center and address the mandates of the EO.

Respondent 19

As stated above, the MPA Center's efforts to support the establishment of regional frameworks for MPAs has enabled the exchange of management and research information envisioned in Executive Order 13158, between MPAs managed by DOI and DOC. Examples include the sharing of lessons

learned from the response to Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico by MPAs located in the region, and agreement to incorporate those lessons into a regional framework for catastrophic event response in the future.

Respondent 23

We are not sufficiently knowledgeable of all the MPA Center has done regarding E.O. Sec. 4 (1) – (8) to comment on how well the MPA Center has met these requirements.

Respondent 34

The MPA Center has done the best that it could do with a limited budget. I commend its efforts to support regional MPA collaborations because they seem to be an effective method of providing on-the-ground support to individual sites that have common goals and frameworks of understanding. It may also provide a basis for growing the MPA network.

Respondent 42

I walked through Sec. 4 of the EO 13158 and ranked each from 0-10 with 10 being highly successful:

1. 8. The MPA Inventory expansion and the Ocean Uses Mapping are highly relevant especially considering that the U.S. is moving forward with the implementation of CMSP. These tools will be incredibly useful in helping to emphasize the contribution of MPAs.
2. 8. The MPA Center has helped to communicated this and recommended this as a focus area for the MPA FAC to develop recommendations.
3. 0? I have no knowledge of any accomplishments concerning this action. Minimum areas for consumptive uses?
4. 7. Nice accomplishments but still progress to be made.
5. 5. Much progress but needs to be reinvigorated. The MPA Center should work with the NGOs that work on this to help develop this more.
6. 6
7. 6. The MPA Center has helped provide info to various efforts.
8.
 - a. 9. The MPA Center has become the voice for all U.S. MPAs in international settings.
 - b. 8. The MPA Center is seen as a go to group to help agencies communicate with States, Tribes, and Territories concerning MPA issues
 - c. 9. The MPA FAC has been incredibly well run. I recommend getting more out of the FAC by getting them more engaged with their local MPAs between meetings.
 - d. 10. Super website! One of the best .gov websites around. Easy to navigate, has loads of relevant info, and is regularly updated
 - e. 10 right now. But a 0 if they dissolve it.
 - f. EPA???

Overall, the MPA Center has been very successful in accomplishing the goal set out in Sec. 4 of the EO 13158. This is remarkable considering the limited resources they work with.

Natural Science

Respondent 2

I think the MPA Center has provided increased coordination among agencies and sharing of information, tools, and strategies to plan, implement and manage MPAs, important goals of EO 13158. Scientific data and publications on MPAs have been assembled and are available to the public via the website. The MPA Center has done a great job in coordinating the website on MPAs. Other goals outlined in EO 13158 have been addressed by other agencies and organizations. Reports on ecological linkages were produced for the West Coast Sanctuaries by NOAA's biogeography program. Science based criteria have been developed for planning MPAs, but largely by science advisory teams working on independent planning projects (e.g. MLPA). Some tools have been developed for planning (e.g., MarineMap) but also by independent contractors working on MPA planning processes and not by the MPA Center. I am not aware of systematic investigations of threats and gaps in levels of protection, except those conducted by outside scientists (e.g., Halpern et al.). I am aware of assessments of potential economic impacts of MPA alternatives conducted by NOAA economics (Channel Islands) and Ecotrust (Channel Islands and MLPA) but I am not familiar with the role of the MPA Center in this work.

The National Marine Sanctuary program has an excellent international training program on MPAs lead by Anne Walton. I do not know the level of involvement of the MPA Center in this work.

Respondent 9

Executive Order requirements: largely the Center has met the requirements. The largest deficiency is the virtual lack of support, engagement and meaningful participation in Center activities by the Department of the Interior. This is largely perceived as a NOAA effort, much to its detriment.

The Administration needs to acknowledge the critical importance of cooperation and shared responsibilities within the federal family to serve as a model for cooperation among all of the nation's MPA system managers and stakeholders. National wildlife refuges and parks are major players in the nation's MPA system. Without their full participation in the Center, it is difficult to convince others, such as states, territories and tribes, to believe and trust in federal intentions and commitments. Even your note to me for this review identifies the effort as a NOAA MPA Center, while EO 13158 clearly directs both Commerce and Interior Departments to share the responsibility for the Center.

Respondent 24

I'd give the MPA Center a moderate grade in regard to addressing the requirements of Ex. Order 13158 – perhaps a B-. The issue is that the Ex. Order is huge in scope and ranges from working with local communities, tribes, states, other federal agencies and international partners. Further there are mandates to conduct biological assessments, integrated assessments, gap analysis, identify emerging threats and so on. While it may be true that the MPA Center has tried to address many of these charges of the Ex. Order, they would have to become an inch deep and a mile wide to do it all unless they can either increase their staff or engage outside consultants to assist with these tasks.

Respondent 26

The MPA Center has been successful in addressing the requirements of the Executive Order, particularly under the circumstances surrounding its organizational structure and funding. It seems to be an awkward positioning of the MPA Center, housed in NOAA in the Department of Commerce but designed to work in cooperation with the Department of Interior. I assume this means that its fiscal resources stem exclusively from NOAA and Commerce and not Interior – but agencies in Interior certainly have a vested interest in the National System and the work of the MPA Center. I have to wonder how this actually works.

Certainly, the Center has not been given the funding level consistent with its charges. Nevertheless, the Center should be given good marks for making good progress in addressing its Executive Order mandates while working under this strange administrative situation with limited funding.

The sections of the Executive Order that require more MPA Center attention as we move into the coming years include: Sections 4a (3), 4a (4), 4a (5). As discussed in other parts of this evaluation, the Center should work to address the minimum area requirement (4a 3), the threats and gaps in levels of protection (4a 4), and the practical, science-based criteria for evaluation of MPA effectiveness (4a 5). The minimum area requirement represents a difficult challenge because this will differ from region to region given the landscape, human-use history and presence, and biological condition. Therefore, it may not be possible to do much here but progress was made in California in building in a minimum area design guidelines for achieving biological MPA performance. Threats and gaps in levels of protection cannot be assessed until a system has been built. The Center should assess whether enough MPAs in the system now exist to look at gaps and threats. However, before doing this, the issue of levels of protection needs to be analyzed. Again, in California a system of describing the level of protection for each MPA based on allowed activities was developed that should prove to be informative. Lastly, it is time for the MPA Center to give attention to developing advice or guidelines for the science-based criteria and protocols for monitoring and evaluating MPA effectiveness.

Environmental

Respondent 1

In general I think the Center is succeeding in meeting the goals of the EO. However, I have always felt that the EO's language and intent was not only to amalgamate existing MPAs into a national system, but to strengthen MPAs as well as expand the system (ie establish new MPAs). I do understand the political constraints but think the Center could have done more to explain why more and better MPAs are needed and advocate for them (without becoming a lobbying group).

Respondent 5

Clearly, the MPA Center can make the case that it has begun to address the requirements of the EO; however, I think that there are problems with the EO's approach. For starters, using a definition of MPA where maps show literally the entire EEZ as one type of MPA or another – that's just not helpful. It creates all kinds of perception problems. Also, I think that 'build the system' in some way refers to adding new protected areas, and the Center can't really do anything there (other than support place-based regulatory programs at DOI and NOAA).

Respondent 6

As discussed above, I think that the MPA center has done an excellent job in creating a framework for a national system of MPAs and then populating that framework with a multitude of already existing MPAs. What has yet to be completed is a gap analysis to identify natural and cultural resource protection deficiencies in the current National System as called for in Section 4 (4) of Executive Order 13158. The gap analysis should then be used to "strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing marine protected areas and establish new or expanded MPAs" – as called for in the Purpose Section 1(a) of the Executive Order. This is a critical next step in the mandate of the MPA Center and should be a primary objective of the MPA Center in the coming next several years, particularly as the MPA Center's work is integrated into the development of regional coastal and marine spatial plans and other aspects related to the implementation of the National Ocean Policy.

Respondent 14

See above². The Center does an excellent job supporting the FAC and making use of its products. I would like to see it do more to encourage federal agencies to use their full authorities to strengthen and expand the national (in the water) system of MPAs, in addition to building and maintaining the list. For example, the Center could provide greater visibility for the evidence of benefits created by marine reserves in the system that have been monitored (for example, the Channel Islands 5-year report and follow-up studies, and evidence from the Dry Tortugas). That kind of info could be provided through links, highlighted on the website in summary form, and/or incorporated into the analysis provided on select MPAs. Unfortunately, that analysis currently seems to favor statistics (x% of the region in MPAs) over performance information or biological and sociological benefits, which in my view is what really matters. Information on effectiveness is very general, despite the availability of scientific studies (in some cases on biological and economic factors) of effectiveness of some MPAs in the national system.

Respondent 41

If the metric for measuring success in addressing this requirement is expansion and strengthening of MPAs in Hawai'i, there has not been appreciable success to date. Since 2000, no additional MPAs have been established in West Hawai'i and the existing protected areas continue to suffer from financial and capacity shortfalls, however, the potential is great for a functioning system along the West Hawai'i coastline.

What the MPA Center has done extremely well is work to support the state in understanding the current status of coastal use in their priority areas. Because the state of Hawai'i has management authority for coral reefs here, there are jurisdictional impediments to more direct involvement at this time, and the substantive contributions provided are consistent with a cooperative partnership designed to support state government according to the needs they have specified.

Cultural Resources

Respondent 12

They have made a good start. I feel the basic parameters of a national system have been established but there needs to be an increased emphasis on the cultural resource component. The biology is well covered and includes many academic and conservation groups. More of that needs to be done on the cultural side with outreach to tribes, maritime museums, cultural specialists and groups that identify with maritime heritage. People and their history matter very much in the long-term success of the MPA system.

² Refers to Respondent 14's answer to question one.

Respondent 20

It has been quite successful in addressing the Executive Order by creating the network and infrastructure for a National System. Its accomplishments are many and the products are readily available on its webpage. It serves as an organizational model of collaboration and consensus building needed to implement, manage, and enhance a National System of MPAs.

Respondent 30

The E.O. contains a very ambitious list of specific charges to the Center which would have been difficult to fulfill even with ample funding. Again, I think that the Center has done what it can with its limited staff to keep the FAC going and to produce publications of importance in the scientific and management aspects of the national network.

Tools/GIS

Respondent 22

This is difficult for me to assess. The MPA Center has been a very good advocate for the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of MPAs, including the new national system of MPAs. The establishment of MPAs depends, in part, on having good information about the distribution and intensity of human activities in and around the ocean. As such, the MPA Center conducted research that resulted in a "Human Uses Atlas" based on expert opinion. In my opinion, the resulting data were not useful. They were collected at a very coarse resolution and relied on a very small group of experts. Although the data were provided to the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative for use in MPA planning within California, the data were simply not used. My understanding is that their methodology is being repeated in additional study regions (e.g., on the East Coast and in Oregon) as it has now been standardized and is therefore "repeatable." However, I fear that this is simply going to result in more data that is essentially not useful to anyone doing MPA planning. I know that the Center has received a great deal of criticism about their methodology so I am surprised that this project continues as it is. I would like to see a much more rigorous approach to assessing human activities of the ocean, using a web-based, geospatial survey system. To develop such a system might be seen as costly up front, but in the long run it would provide far better and useful information about human activities.

Respondent 43

In the absence of some kind of self-study report from the center or statistics/metrics on success, I cannot assess this fully. But my *impression* is that the Center has faithfully and fully addressed the requirements of the Order, even if it has been able to achieve all desired outcomes. This is especially in light of limited human and financial resources (again, my *impression*).

Industry

Respondent 35

Maybe worth looking at the discrete elements in a score card format.

- i) "help protect" resources - unsure
- ii) strengthening and expanding MPA system – system build, nominations done.
- iii) Strengthen management, protection and conservation of existing MPAs – unsure; some benefit from setting standards; not sure that the MPA Center has much, if any leverage on what individual MPAs do. A problem.
- iv) Establish new, expanded MPAs – again unsure, not sure the Center has any leverage here. The gap analysis and the evaluation tool are key to this and not sure either has been fully, effectively employed.
- v) "Science-based identification and prioritization"... an area of needed improvement (I suspect) ... this is also a problem in the Sanctuaries program. User groups have consistently asked for and been frustrated by the lack of specifics to identify what's important to protect. There's an overall weakness in ecological risk assessment and prioritization. Perhaps the newly launch NRC study on this will help.
- vi) "emerging threats and user conflicts" – most of the work I've seen is on things like climate change and connectivity. No criticism on discussing either topic, however, there are some other closer-in issues that could also be addressed like funding enforcement. Within the scope and resources of the MPA Center, however, it's hard to expect them to undertake such an objective. Work by Charlie Wahle and Mimi and others on use mapping important.
- vii) "assessment of the economic effects of the preferred management solutions" –a serious lack of

progress in my view on this – but critically important to setting priorities and responding to critics. Also, lack of attention to this will hamper integration into broader CMSP initiatives. A real bright spot, is the work on mapping human uses by Charlie Wahle, this will be a key input to identifying some of the activities for further economic consideration. The MPA Evaluation Tool should be refined to include more economic factors, re-energized/redeployed.

viii) “website” – pretty effective; the MPA Center has heavily invested in communications.

Commercial Fishing

Respondent 39

I think the MPA Center has complied with the EO very well. Look at the numbers of member MPAs. Those members comply with the basic requirements, which provides for a uniform membership. It also provides for a framework for other MPAs that do not have within their charter the components to be a well-rounded MPA.

Other

Respondent 15

The MPA center has successfully managed a highly participatory process to develop a framework for a national system of MPAs. This framework was the basis of the National System of MPAs that was launched in April 2009. Through NFWF National Marine Protected Area Fund (MPA Fund) the MPA Center has continued to carry out the coordination and sharing of information, tools and strategies and to provide guidance to enable and encourage the use of the following in the exercise of each agency’s respective authorities. The Fund has granted awards that directly funded activities at 20 MPAs located throughout the US’s marine ecosystems. The principal investigators intend to further disseminate their findings for the benefit of other MPA members further expanding the reach of these project activities. Several federal agencies benefited from the implementation of these grants, including NOAA, the US Coast Guard, the Navy, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Air Force, who improved collaboration of implementation at cooperatively run MPAs.

Activities funded through the MPA Fund projects include:

- Develop a regional MPA plan and a functional network within coastal states of the Gulf of Mexico, aiming to highlight priority areas and common interests. Implement key elements of the plan focusing on managing for climate change, catastrophic event response, and outreach and training about the values of MPAs.
- Collaboration and coordination among federal, state, and non-government agencies and community members to identify and prioritize management actions to conserve marine resources.
- Develop a strong ecosystem-based management plan and assess law enforcement needs by facilitating workshops and meetings with scientists and public officials.
- Pilot a new approach to create temporal and spatial information to support management of salt marsh and barrier island habitat using high horizontal and vertical resolution Light Detection and Ranging imagery. Apply spatial tools to direct strategies for climate change adaptation at a regional scale and for potential broader application through the national system of marine protected areas, especially with respect to rising sea level and the local drivers that influence the rate of rise.
- Identify capacity, needs, and technologies to unite scientific monitoring with increased surveillance and enforcement in MPAs. · Deliver stewardship education programs to K-12 youth with indigenous marine stewardship, marine conservation/ecology and MPA education content.
- Create a formal framework of shared priorities and resources for monitoring and collaboration across jurisdictions and the geographic extent of regional MPAs.
- Implement habitat restoration of the Eastern Oyster through a community-based restoration program.

<p>Question 3: Is the MPA Center providing the necessary leadership to strengthen and expand the national system of MPAs?</p>
<p>MPA Programs/Managers</p>
<p>Respondent 3 I believe the MPA Center is providing the necessary leadership thus far in light of their budget, realistically more resources should be directed in this area.</p>
<p>Respondent 4 The lack of funding, authority, and, more importantly, vision have made leadership in marine protected areas very difficult. Consequently, the MPA Center has not made appreciable progress in leading efforts to strengthen and expand the national system of marine protected areas.</p>
<p>Respondent 10 Leadership has done a nice job in building out the national system of MPAs. More work is required to support management of MPAs, especially bringing the relevant suite of NOAA capacity (NMFS, OAR, NOS) to bear upon MPA community needs. Given the structure of NOAA, this is a challenging task that will require skilled leadership to work across line offices. Such integration could be advanced quickly with a clear mandate from the NOAA Director.</p>
<p>Respondent 19 Yes, new leadership within the MPA Center has been responsive to needs of the MPA community, and to building increased awareness of the advantages of sites joining the MPA national system. There is additional work to do on this front. For example, many of the NERRS are not yet in the MPA network, but with additional support and efforts from the MPA Center, we will likely see a significant number of NER programs join the system.</p>
<p>Respondent 21³ It has been the Maryland Coastal Program's experience that the MPA Center has been somewhat effective in solidifying partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks. A strong emphasis has been placed on the nomination of individual sites to the MPA network. While this approach appears to have been successful at beginning to characterize the breadth and scope of MPAs nationwide, it appears that the vast majority of sites in the network represent Federal sites, with somewhat limited participation from states. The exception to this is those areas or states where the Center has invested a significant amount of time and resources assisting in mapping human uses of the ocean. While Maryland nominated a site from its original inventory, the value of including additional sites in the network could be better articulated. The Center has clearly defined how it has provided leadership in some regions (e.g. California and Hawaii per http://www.mpa.gov/dataanalysis/ocean_uses/). The type of projects and work the MPA Center completed in conjunction with its partners in these regions makes a compelling case for how the Center may further strengthen its partnership and expand the national system of MPAs, particularly at the state and/or regional level. As noted above, the establishment of regional ocean partnerships and an advancement of the application of CMSP tools to advance coastal and ocean resource management goals provides an opportunity for the Center to expand the goals and objectives of the Center from the Maryland Coastal Program perspective. The Coastal Program continues to follow the work and accomplishments that the Center is involved in on the west coast to learn more about MPA evaluation and development. The Center could potentially increase its effectiveness in solidifying additional partnerships in other regions by transferring some of its knowledge and experience to other partnerships.</p>
<p>Respondent 23 Although the MPA Center has had several opportunities to articulate the benefits of expanding the national system of MPAs to the NERRS community, reserves have not been persuaded that inclusion in the national system provides tangible benefits to their programs, neither individually nor collectively. Through their participation in the national system, five reserves have had the opportunity to demonstrate</p>

³ Respondent's answer is duplicated in responses to Question 5

benefits of membership but their NERRS peers are not convinced that membership provides a beneficial return to their programs. There is the potential for confusion on the part of the public and reserve stakeholders regarding what an additional designation of joining the national MPA system means. The tangible benefit of joining the national system (eligibility to apply for NFWF funding) does not outweigh the cost to explain an additional designation to stakeholders and the public. Also, with the blurred distinction between the national system sites and national inventory (described below), there isn't a real incentive to submit a nomination to the national system if all inventoried MPAs are included in most MPA Center actions anyway aside from NFWF grants eligibility and partners meetings (i.e., inventory data expansion, gap analysis, FACA committee white papers, etc.).

Respondent 34

We've had very positive support from the MPA Center with staff participating in our regional efforts and funding from a NFWF grant. The level of support and leadership they can provide is directly correlated to the amount of funding they receive.

Respondent 42

Yes. But the success of the MPA Center depends on the participation of MPA partners. The MPA Center should pursue increasing its capacity by engaging with MPA managers, their staff and MPA agencies to take on action items. This doesn't have to be anything major. For example, an MPA biologist may be able to help with the MPA Inventory or a GIS person might be able to complete a modeling task.

I suggest looking to the LCCs as a model for increasing the capacity of the MPA Center. The partner agencies could coordinate with each other to complete certain tasks while working within their existing authorities and jurisdictions.

Respondent 44

The MPA Center has helped to build The National System of MPAs, improve stewardship and effective management, and facilitate regional coordination by encouraging application to The National System and funding The Gulf of Mexico MPA Network Project. I have had The opportunity to work closely with The MPA Center while working towards the goal of creating a regional Network for MPAs in The Gulf of Mexico to increase communication, cooperation, and effective collaborative management. They have been a tremendous help and I encourage future funding of similar project throughout The country.

The MPA Center is providing leadership to strengthen the National System by initiating regional efforts that will give membership a higher value. With these initiatives, the value of membership goes far beyond intrinsic as it will have more tangible benefits that will greatly improve and enhance conservation, reduce costs of management through cooperation, and give these regional MPA Networks a strong, collective voice.

Natural Science

Respondent 2

It seems to me that the role of the MPA Center has been supportive of efforts to plan MPAs that already are ongoing. Additional leadership in the area of education regarding existing MPAs and tools for planning would be particularly helpful. A west coast presence for the MPA Center is critical.

Respondent 9

Leadership for the national MPA system: as the Oklahoma lyric regarding Kansas City goes "They've gone as about far as they can go...." The Center has defined categories of MPAs, established criteria for joining and participating in a national system of MPAs, provided a list (inventory) of potential sites eligible for admission, held auditions, and admitted the first couple of cohorts of MPAs to the system. As long as this system is perceived as a NOAA creature and the advantages of membership to MPAs and MPA systems remain nebulous and doubtful, not much more can be done.

That could and should change dramatically going forward. I believe such change requires a different vision or concept of the relationship of the MPA Center's EO driven national system with other MPA systems in the nation.

Respondent 16

The MPA center is providing the rationale, the motivation and the tools required for the public and the stake holders to submit existing MPAs into the system. Unfortunately, due to the MPA FAC's inability to strengthen the ecological / conservation wording and to fill in the gaps listed previously, the assessments of existing areas and the definition of additional MPAs are not informing the strengthening and expansion of the current system.

Respondent 24

Yes and no. Yes because the MPA Center has made excellent contacts among the states to enroll more and more MPAs into the national system. They deserve kudos for this effort that has realized excellent results. No because the national system would benefit greatly from a strong outreach program so that a wide audience views the national system in a positive light. To date that goal has not been realized nor does it appear that this is a sufficiently high priority for the MPA Center.

Respondent 26

The MPA Center has made good decisions in allocating its time and resources to address the Executive Order mandates. Its key work to date has been first to develop a framework for a National System and then to begin obtaining MPA memberships in this system. This is the first step towards building a National System of MPAs as stipulated in the Executive Order. As pointed out earlier in this evaluation, the National System seems to be more of a collection than a real system. Working with states to develop the MPAs to actually form a system (defined as having benefits that exceed those of individual MPA members) will be a real challenge. As one who was strongly involved in a comprehensive state MPA effort, I was struck by how little use was made of valuable MPA Center efforts and products. This is an area in need of improvement – MPA Center contributions to state-based MPA activities.

Respondent 30

I haven't been impressed with the recent level of energy or the leadership of the Center. Other than managing the FAC, not an insignificant task, it is hard to say that the Center has been a leader in gap-filling or in adding MPAs to the network.

For example, with the exception of helping to organize a 2011 Florida workshop on a potential network of MPAs, the Center has not been very active in the Gulf of Mexico. While the political situation admittedly is very difficult for MPAs in the Gulf, there is great potential for progress due to the unprecedented funding that may accrue from the NRDA process. Many of the groups working through this process have MPAs as a primary tool for restoration and mitigation.

Finally, I am not aware of any Center effort to identify gaps in the national system as called for in the EO. This will be a key requirement for making the national network of MPAs something more than just a list.

Environmental

Respondent 6

To date, the MPA Center has provided excellent leadership in the development of the National System. Unfortunately there simply is not enough manpower and resources for the current MPA Center staff and leadership to continue to populate and, more importantly, to expand the national system, while also taking on responsibilities in helping to implement the national ocean policy and the develop regional coastal and marine spatial plans. The Center works on a very minimal budget and for that I believe that NOAA gets a very large bang for its buck.

The staff is very capable of providing this kind of leadership, but must be given adequate resources to get their jobs done.

<p>Respondent 14</p> <p>I think it could do a better job of that, by being clear about the benefits of such a system, making scientific findings about well-designed MPAs (especially marine reserves) widely available, perhaps by highlighting particular challenges people have faced in creating successful MPAs and how they've met those challenges. A gap analysis or process to identify ecologically important areas is sorely needed; it would be great if the Center could help make that happen.</p>
<p>Respondent 41</p> <p>Because there is no fixed local presence for the Center in Hawai'i, its role is not generally understood here, although those of us who have had the pleasure of working with representatives can attest to their leadership and expertise.</p> <p>It is my belief that any increase in local Center capacity will be helpful in expediting processes to strengthen and expand the national system through contributing expertise for planning and implementation in biologically significant areas.</p> <p>An equally helpful and potentially less costly approach might be to work closely with regional managers to design tools to advance conservation objectives such as a webpage where sites could be nominated for protection and citizens could contribute to management initiatives, outreach materials and media highlighting the benefits of MPAs to people and the environment, and expansion of current tools (derived through participatory mapping workshops) to cover the entirety of the Main Hawaiian Islands.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>
<p>Respondent 12</p> <p>Yes and No. They are trying but the Center has only one cultural staff person, and that is a contract position. The CHRWG did some excellent work, but its recommendations need to be implemented to strengthen the cultural program within the Center.</p>
<p>Respondent 20</p> <p>As an organization, the MPA Center is an exceptional leader. It identifies needs and problems and then takes steps to provide remedies. As case in point was its creation of the Cultural Heritage Working Group (CHRWG). After the initial round of site nominations to the National System, there was an obvious limited participation of cultural heritage sites. Similarly, the engagement of tribal and indigenous peoples seemed equally limited. The CHRWG was formed to address these shortcomings.</p>
<p>Tools/GIS</p>
<p>Respondent 22</p> <p>Yes, as far as I can tell, Charlie Wahle has been doing everything one should to promote the establishment of a national system.</p>
<p>Respondent 43</p> <p>My impression is yes.</p>
<p>Industry</p>
<p>Respondent 35</p> <p>a) My impression is that the Center staff is dedicated and hard-working. What I cannot judge is their ability, effectiveness to impact higher-level management decision-making particularly with movement of politicals in and out of agencies...and whether the bosses are receptive. Part of such a management issue is whether and how similar initiatives/programs are aggregated for management review, commitment and resource allocation. I suspect that the MPA Center as a small entity gets lost.</p>
<p>Commercial Fishing</p>
<p>Respondent 39</p> <p>The MPA staff is capable of further building the network but could use additional staff.</p>

Other
<p>Respondent 15 Yes, the MPA Center is providing effective leadership to strengthen and expand the national System of MPAs. The MPA Center, through cooperative agreements with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, has provided \$366,000 for grant awards to contribute to the national system priority conservation objectives. Through the award of nine grants over two funding cycles with these funds, twenty MPAs have directly benefited from the resources available to them through the MPA Center. By funding projects that reach all the major geographies – the remote Pacific Islands, Caribbean, Hawaii, east coast, west coast, and the Gulf of Mexico, the indirect benefits of these funds through dissemination and presentation at future workshops and conferences is not yet known.</p>
<p>Question 4: Are resources (human and financial) allocated appropriately to effectively address the goals and objectives of the National MPA Center?</p>
MPA Programs/Managers
<p>Respondent 3 I believe the MPA Center has been effective in their efforts in engaging stakeholders, however, the strength and presence should also be directed to the Governors office so may filter down to managing agency for supporting directives.</p>
<p>Respondent 4 Considering the last decade (May 26, 2000) and progress over that timeframe, we would have to conclude no. Given limited resources, a different approach could have been considered. For example, looking forward, we believe the MPA Center should refocus its resources towards capacity building and outreach. Our perspective on this is described in more detail in our response to question #6.</p>
<p>Respondent 10 To my knowledge, most of the resources have been dedicated to network expansion, web-based information, and a periodic newsletter. Given the limited budget of the program, this is understandable. However, for the program to reach its goals and to provide the services that the MPA community needs, more resources must be developed. Some of this can come from partnerships within NOAA and with other agencies, but will require creative strategies in this time of fiscal constraint. As noted above, it would be very helpful if the MPA Center could address the research needs of its members through existing competitive grant programs at NOAA and other relevant agencies.</p>
<p>Respondent 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EO 13158 states that the purpose of the order, in part, is to “strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing marine protected areas and establish new or expanded MPAs.” In this regard, the MPA Center could better focus its staffing resources to support existing systems of MPAs (NERRS, National Marine Sanctuaries, Refuges, Parks, etc.) to directly bring together MPAs regionally to move towards common goals. The Seamless Network of Protected Areas under the Ocean Action Plan provides a good framework for how this type of collaboration can work and the MPA Center could use its resources to bring together MPAs and their partners regionally in a way that is potentially broader than the scope of the Seamless Network. • The MPA Center could work more closely with the existing programs and authorities when considering the establishment of new or expanded MPAs. Currently, there is little connection between the analyses done by the MPA Center and the real-world work of MPA programs related to the designation of new sites. • The MPA Center should consider the utility of a communications plan and how completion of this plan will benefit the Center, the national system, and MPAs in general. Operationally, the MPA Center blurs the distinction between the national inventory and the national system. By expanding the national inventory to include the detailed information as piloted in California, the MPA Center cannot articulate to potential national system members the benefits of inclusion in the national system. Also, a

<p>communication strategy which provides clear implications of designation to the public and private stakeholders would enhance the ability of MPAs to make a better informed decision on membership in the national system.</p>
<p>Respondent 34 The MPA Center is not very visible, even within the MPA community, unless you are working on some of their signature projects. Perhaps a focus on general awareness of what they can do for MPA's would help them gain greater visibility within the network and therefore raise their profile to receive additional funding and collaborative opportunities.</p>
<p>Respondent 42 Yes. No comments.</p>
<p>Respondent 44 Lack of resources has taken a toll on the capacity of the MPA Center, but available resources have been effectively used. Products developed by the Center are very informative and rich with data, but can be difficult to use and/or interpret. The Gulf of Mexico MPA Network Project is currently working with the MPA Center to take Gulf data and present it in a way that will allow for simplified use and easy access.</p>
<p>Natural Science</p>
<p>Respondent 2 I am impressed with the expertise that has been brought to the MPA Center to work steadily toward their goals. At different times, I had the opportunity to work with Charlie Wahle, Hugo Selbie, and Lauren Wenzel and all were extremely helpful and knowledgeable.</p>
<p>Respondent 9 Distribution of resources within the Center: past priorities for allocating resources seem adequate and certainly achieved the major goals of establishing a program, inventorying the nation's MPAs, and serving the information to stakeholders. It also helped establish the Center as a leader in MPA science coordination. Looking forward with revised goals and objectives would likely entail changes in resource allocation. However, evaluating or guiding fiscal and human resource allocations is fraught with cultural biases, e.g., NOAA and the National Park Service have very different approaches to identifying and staffing core mission functions, and so what's a best practice in one organizational culture could be way outside the norm in the other.</p>
<p>Respondent 16 Yes. Despite the budgetary constraints, which forced the cancellation of a CMSP subcommittee meeting and the move of an MPA FAC meeting to the east coast, the process has been supported with ample staff and resources.</p>
<p>Respondent 24 Resources for the MPA Center to achieve their numerous goals are very, very short. Further, too much resource has been allocated toward the Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) while other important goals of the MPA Center go unaddressed or addressed at too low a level. In strong support for the current MPA Center Director, she fully understands this issue and has taken steps to shrink the size of the FAC while maintaining its function within the Center. A smaller FAC will drain less of the MPA Center resources and yet should be able to provide the desired sage advice. This will free-up badly needed resources of other MPA Center tasks such as promoting the national system, developing partnerships at more local levels and the long list of requirements in Ex. Order. 13158.</p>
<p>Respondent 26 The MPA Center has made good use of its human and financial resources to advance the goals of the MPA Center. In looking over the Center's accomplishments for 2010 and 2011, it appears that the Center has been addressing key activities associated with fulfilling its Executive Order mandates. The Center has been particularly effective in tackling important and timely problems related to climate change and marine spatial planning that will prove critical to the success of a National MPA System. It also has realized the importance of collaborating with the Integrated Ocean Observing Systems (IOOS), although the direct relationship between IOOS data and MPA design and performance is still not very well defined.</p>

<p>Respondent 30</p> <p>The scientific work of the Center, located in the progressive and supportive political climate of California, has been west coast-centric. Perhaps this is not surprising given the Center's limited resources and the capabilities and support provided by institutions and individuals there. If the MPA Center were an NGO, it would have offices or at least an occasional presence in key states/regions such as: Alaska, West Coast; Gulf Coast; Central Atlantic; New England. Furthermore, some offices would shift to where the action was on a regular basis. I suppose that as a part of a large federal agency, the Center is administratively hobbled in this respect.</p>
<p>Environmental</p>
<p>Respondent 1</p> <p>As for capacities, I think the Center has been underfunded, and has done remarkable work on a shoestring.</p>
<p>Respondent 6</p> <p>Following on the question above, the staff at the MPA Center are a high performing group – incredibly talented and well respected in their fields who every day do amazing things with a shoestring for a budget. NOAA is getting a big bang for their relatively small investment in the MPA Center. I strongly encourage NOAA to maintain and, if possible, increase funding to the MPA Center so that they can continue to do their excellent work and also play an integral role in implementation of the President's National Ocean Policy – particular on the science of MPAs and the identification and protection of important ecological areas. Given the increasing demand for the Center's services and expertise as we move forward in implementing the National Ocean Policy, there is no way that the Center can continue to perform on their existing budget.</p>
<p>Respondent 14</p> <p>I don't know enough about the Center's resource allocation.</p>
<p>Respondent 41</p> <p>Because the Center operates at the national level, I don't feel qualified to address this question. Of course Hawai'i could always use additional human and financial resources, but how that would affect other areas is uncertain. It is notable that the high rate of endemism here drives our work, and should advocate for consideration of the global significance of Hawai'i's coral reef habitats.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>
<p>Respondent 12</p> <p>Having spent many years in a government bureaucracy, I know that the budget of an agency defines its priorities. By that measure, the cultural aspect is low priority. This needs to change if you want to see a more balanced national system.</p>
<p>Respondent 20</p> <p>While there are never enough resources to meet every need, cultural heritage resources were not given the same weight as natural heritage resources or sustainable production. In developing the Framework and launching the National System, this lack of staff and FAC expertise became quite apparent. The Center has added a Cultural Heritage Resources Coordinator through a contract position; this position should be made a regular NOAA (or DOI) employee. While this position embraces tribal/indigenous issues, a position should be added to address this area. NOAA should not be expected to deal with this alone; DOI should provide direct financial and staffing resources to the National MPA Center.</p>
<p>Tools/GIS</p>
<p>Respondent 22</p> <p>See answer to question #2. I do not feel as though the resources allocated to assessing human uses in the ocean have been appropriately allocated. I do not know the cost of their surveys but I am convinced that it would be more cost-effective over the long run and, as I mentioned, would produce much better data if an online survey method was used to gather data from a much larger group of stakeholders.</p>

<p>Respondent 43</p> <p>I do not have hard statistical or self-study data with which to judge this fully. I have no inside information on what allocations are being made by the Center or what human and financial challenges they face. But I will list several areas that I see as needing further support, further resources in order to be fully realized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mapping, aggregation, and description by region of the relevant and readily available existing data and analyses about important species, habitats, cultural resources, and ecosystems that contribute to regional and then national system goals and priority conservation objectives - integration of spatial data on ecosystems and place-based management to identify important areas where protection is either lacking or potentially inadequate to achieve regional and then national system goals and objectives.
<p>Industry</p>
<p>Respondent 35</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Don't know specifics of time and budget allocation, so can't really comment. b) It does seem that in periods when the budget was increasing the MPA Center was "staffed up" with younger career folks. A question would be was this over done and at the expense of adding some more experienced people that could 'drive change'? c) There seems to be many other areas of similar skills – albeit slightly different missions – Sanctuaries and parts of OCRM come to mind. Is there an argument to be made that centers of expertise (e.g. economic analysis or ecological risk assessments, etc.) couldn't be "contracted for" versus staffing up? I think these types of efficiencies are going to be required. In this vein, I'm sure there are conversations about consolidating things like the Sanctuaries and the MPA Center. <p>It may be that maintaining the independence of the missions but sharing certain resources should be examined.</p>
<p>Respondent 40</p> <p>Yes; I believe that the MPA Center does a great deal of work with very little staff or funds. During my time on the FAC I participated in numerous teleconference calls in an effort to finish work product so that valuable time at meetings could be allocated to more pressing needs. Numerous meetings were held in NOAA facilities to minimize meeting and travel expenses. Center staff often was involved in multiple projects at the same time. All this speaks to efficient use of people and funds to accomplish the goals and objectives of the center.</p>
<p>Commercial Fishing</p>
<p>Respondent 39</p> <p>They could use more staff but they do a great job with the small human and financial resources that they have.</p>
<p>Other</p>
<p>Respondent 15</p> <p>Although The MPA center is constrained by financial resources, it has excellent human resources that are allocated appropriately to address the goals and objectives of the National system. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has worked directly with Lauren Wenzel, Designated Federal Official to align priorities for the National MPA Fund, review proposals, and evaluate final reports submitted once the project scopes of work are complete.</p> <p>NFWF has also worked closely with communications staff to disseminate information about projects funded through the National MPA Fund. The effectiveness of the center would increase if it had more adequate financial resources. The National System is comprised of over 200 MPA located throughout the Nation's coastal waters. The center has done a remarkable job launching the national system with a limited budget relative to the scope. Recent budget reductions of the center have limited its ability to continue to strengthen the national system. For example, Fiscal Year 2011 was the first year that the MPA center was not able to contribute funds to the MPA fund, and as a result NFWF was unable to offer another Request for Proposals to National System members. Despite the lack of funding NFWF has continued to receive inquiries on the next round of the MPA Fund. This indicates to NFWF that there is a growing interest from current and prospective members of the National System in the Fund and that the</p>

<p>number of applications that would be received would continue to grow if the Fund is able to continue to exist.</p>
<p>Question 5: How effective has the MPA Center been in solidifying public/private partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MPA Programs/Managers</p>
<p>Respondent 3</p> <p>I would like to see greater resources directed to ecological linkages and data development and encompass threats, and emphasis on no-take and protection, levels of decreased human impacts would better reflect the ideas of "protected" area.</p>
<p>Respondent 4</p> <p>Engaging stakeholders at the national level has probably been one of the MPA Center's best accomplishments. The MPA Center's marine protected areas federal advisory committee has been useful and should be continued and improved. Unfortunately, the MPA Center's ability to follow through on and execute the advisory committee's recommendations has been hampered by its lack of funding, creativity, and authority.</p> <p>At the local level, the MPA Center's impact appears to have been limited. Rolling out the national system of marine protected areas has in some situations caused great confusion with local stake holders and communities. This confusion could have been avoided if the MPA Center had coordinated more fully with local management entities ahead of time to be aware of any sensitive issues. The management agencies with direct and long-standing community connections are often in the best position to engage local stakeholders.</p>
<p>Respondent 10</p> <p>Several years ago, the MPA Center partnered with the NFWF to engage the MPA community in research that responded to MPA management needs. This is an excellent example of how the MPA Center can leverage partnerships on behalf of community needs. More of this needs to occur. With limited funding, can the research needs of the MPA community be incorporated into existing grant/research programs at NOAA, DOI, etc.? A periodic needs assessment is critical to inform the research priorities for these grant programs and opportunities.</p>
<p>Respondent 19</p> <p>There is significant potential for doing more work in developing public/private partnerships that support MPA management. I would suggest that the MPA Center seek input from the MPAs already engaged in the network, to identify priority opportunities for private sector collaboration, and provide incentives for engagement.</p>
<p>Respondent 21</p> <p>It has been the Maryland Coastal Program's experience that the MPA Center has been somewhat effective in solidifying partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks. A strong emphasis has been placed on the nomination of individual sites to the MPA network. While this approach appears to have been successful at beginning to characterize the breadth and scope of MPAs nationwide, it appears that the vast majority of sites in the network represent Federal sites, with somewhat limited participation from states. The exception to this is those areas or states where the Center has invested a significant amount of time and resources assisting in mapping human uses of the ocean.</p> <p>While Maryland nominated a site from its original inventory, the value of including additional sites in the network could be better articulated. The Center has clearly defined how it has provided leadership in some regions (e.g. California and Hawaii per http://www.mpa.gov/dataanalysis/ocean_uses/). The type of projects and work the MPA Center completed in conjunction with its partners in these regions makes a compelling case for how the Center may further strengthen its partnership and expand the national system of MPAs, particularly at the state and/or regional level. As noted above, the establishment of regional ocean partnerships and an advancement of the application of CMSP tools to advance coastal and ocean resource management goals provides an opportunity for the Center to expand the goals and objectives of the Center from the Maryland Coastal Program perspective. The Coastal Program continues to follow the work and accomplishments that the Center is involved in on the west coast to learn more about MPA evaluation and development. The Center could potentially increase its</p>

effectiveness in solidifying additional partnerships in other regions by transferring some of its knowledge and experience to other partnerships.
(duplicated answer for question 3)

Respondent 23

Other than the funding partnership with NFWF, the NERRS has seen no tangible benefit from MPA Center public/private partnerships. On the contrary, the MPA Center has drawn on the expertise and staff of non-MPA system reserves to inform their projects (e.g., with NAMPAN) without benefit to the participating reserves themselves.

Respondent 34

The MPA Center supported a project I worked on, which was focused on partnerships and efficient MPA management in the Gulf of Mexico. It is clear that this is a goal of their program, and the reason they have been instrumental in creating an MPA Network for the Gulf of Mexico region. While the work to date is exceptional there is a lot more work necessary to truly fulfill the goal of engaging a diverse array of partners and solidify their active participation.

Respondent 42

The MPA Center has made noteworthy accomplishments in this area particularly by engaging with the critics of MPAs. One success is that they have convinced the Fisheries Management Councils that MPA is not a bad word. The FMCs have gone from total opposition to even the use of the term to using MPA in their own materials and now nominating sites to the National System. The MPA Center has also been successful in communicating with the States, local stakeholders, and the public. The case of the Cape Hatteras NS nomination comes to mind. Also, although Tribes have been reluctant to nominate sites, the MPA Center has been able to keep them engaged. More recently they persuaded Puerto Rico to nominate some of their MPAs to the National System.

The MPA Center has been an impartial leader in coordinating the National System by not appearing to favor any single stakeholder group or agency.

Respondent 44

The MPA Center has facilitated public/private partnerships by integrating non-governmental organizations into a regional MPA framework. Efforts by the Center have helped to close the gap between MPAs of different government agencies, different levels of government, stakeholders, and NGOs. Using the National System as a vessel for coordination, the MPA Center has been very successful in bringing together various partners on both a national and regional scale. With the onset of regional MPA Center initiatives, communication, coordination, and collaboration between MPA partners has significantly increased, enhancing effective management in these areas. Efforts to continue and increase stakeholder involvement are currently underway with regional outreach initiatives designed engage and educate stakeholders and resource users. Increased support and resources would allow for the expansion of these efforts and help the MPA Center to fulfill its goals and objectives.

Natural Science

Respondent 2

In the processes with which I was involved, the MPA Center had a minimal role in solidifying public/private partnerships and engaging stakeholders. This work was conducted by contractors and agency staff in the field where the projects were conducted. I think that more leadership by the MPA Center could be helpful. However, the MPA Center may be perceived negatively as a high-level, federal agency with minimal or no local presence if they assert more influence over local planning, policy and management.

Respondent 9

Stakeholder engagement and partnerships: The MPA federal advisory committee is the most visible manifestation of such stakeholder engagement efforts over the decade. From my perspective, the FAC developed nicely and was productive in large part to your leadership and enthusiastic participation by many stakeholders. Consequently I felt it was worth investing my time and energy as a member to continue what you and other started.

It does seem that the time for internal education and white papers is ending, and a new role for the

FAC needs to be articulated. That discussion began at the last FAC meeting in November 2011. I think that partnerships with others is the next logical development for the Center. At least two dozen systems of MPAs already exist in the U.S., comprised of the 1600+ MPAs in the inventory. Helping the people responsible for those systems and individual sites find each other and learn from their experiences represents a major opportunity for the Center to contribute to ocean conservation.

Respondent 16

The MPA Center has been very effective engaging stakeholders, both by recruiting MPA FAC members and by inviting speakers to attend the various meetings.

Respondent 24

This is not a strength of the MPA Center. It appears that much of the dialogue by MPA Center is with federal and state agencies, tribes and national groups. The more grass roots organizations at the local level have largely never heard of the MPA Center or the national system of MPAs. That said, the small staff of the MPA Center has to make difficult decisions as they cannot be at all places at all times. In that regard selecting groups with a larger audience is the right call but in turn leaves a lot of potential partnerships unaddressed.

Respondent 26

This is an area that requires significant improvement. Clearly solidifying public partnerships is easier said than done and can be politically challenging. Existing federal agencies have had different views of the value of MPAs and sometimes these views have even been split within an agency itself. Progress has been made and knowledge of the potential benefits and expected performances of MPAs has improved since the MPA Center was created and this should continue into the future. Hopefully, improvements will be made in how federal agencies and management entities work with the MPA Center in the future. Much of the action regarding designing and establishing MPAs and MPA systems occurs in coastal waters and, therefore, falls under the jurisdiction of the states. The MPA Center must work more closely and effectively with the states as more states find the need to design, establish, and then ultimately evaluate MPAs and MPA systems. Lastly, I see no real evidence of private partnerships outside the possible involvement of environmental non-profits. Have there been any real MPA Center/private partnerships with noted accomplishments?

Respondent 30

I don't have enough information to answer this question, but I suspect that it has not been very effective. I know of no broad-based partnership between the MPA Center and another agency that would serve the national network as a whole. More local partnerships around individual MPAs likely do exist and may have been effectively promoted by the Center, but I do not know of any specific case. I am not aware that the Center has worked internationally. For example, the LME discussions in the Gulf of Mexico and the Wider Caribbean are quite advanced and include NOAA, but I am not aware that the Center has participated.

Environmental

Respondent 6

I do not have first-hand knowledge on the public private partnerships that the MPA Center has been engaged in, but I do have experience as a MPA FAC member with the MPA Center's work to bring together diverse stakeholders on a diverse set of topics. I have been a FAC member for nearly two years and have been very impressed with the high caliber and very diverse composition of the FAC. The FAC has enabled a multitude of relationships to build across sector and discipline which no doubt is having and will continue to have positive repercussions for management of current MPAs and the development of new MPAs in the future. With strong leadership from the MPA Center the FAC has been able to produce detailed recommendations to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior on topics around climate change, coastal and marine spatial planning, historic and cultural resources and a host of other issues as they relate to marine protected areas. This is not small feat when fishermen, oil and gas developers, environmentalists, Native Americans, and scientists are sitting around the table. The MPA Center has deftly managed the FAC to deliver these very impressive results which I hope have been helpful to and used by the agencies as they engage in their work.

<p>Respondent 14 Certainly effective at supporting the multi-interest FAC.</p>
<p>Respondent 41 The MPA Center demonstrated a real commitment to stakeholder engagement in Hawai'i by including diverse representatives in the participatory mapping project. To my knowledge, no formal agreements exist that would serve to solidify partnerships, but we are certainly open to the possibility.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>
<p>Respondent 12 The CHRWG white paper outlines potential partnerships yet to be realized by the MPA Center.</p>
<p>Respondent 20 By not being a federal property/asset management agency, it has been able to reflect a "national" view rather than a predominantly federal perspective. This allows the MPA Center to bring various interested parties together. A recognized strength of the MPA Center is its ability to bring the various parties together for problem solving and consensus building. A good example of the MPA Center's success was the establishment of the Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group (CHRWG) in 2010 in collaboration with the MPA FAC. In the CHRWG, the MPA FAC and Center have assembled a team composed of a diverse range of experts and able consensus builders. The working group reflects a "national" view rather than a predominantly federal perspective. It has the added benefit of robust tribal/indigenous engagement. The conference call/webinar meeting format was successful and fiscally prudent approach. It worked much better than anyone anticipated and our white paper certainly reflects our success. Another example of direct and broad stakeholder engagement is the funding support provided through partnership grants funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.</p>
<p>Tools/GIS</p>
<p>Respondent 22 I do not know.</p>
<p>Respondent 43 I am a university researcher who has partnered closely with one specific national marine sanctuary program, not the National Center, but my impression is that the Center could use more resources to provide: - training and workshops? - best practices or technical publications? - direct technical assistance and tools? - grants or contracts to potential collaborators, as well as a clearinghouse for targeted research on MPA issues;</p>
<p>Industry</p>
<p>Respondent 35 a) It seems that most of the outreach I heard about involved audiences friendly to MPAs (community groups, foundations, etc). b) Not aware (but there may be) of many instances of outreach to more cynical audiences, particularly in the user community. The risk is that failure on this front will create the perception that user engagement is just for window dressing. Know, for example, of such interfaces at the individual sanctuaries has been really positive and a model. The FAC balance is an adjunct: make-up might benefit from re-look as the current make-up seems heavy on fishing and too light on other users; too heavy on theory/too light on calloused hands. Also, the balancing decisions might benefit from a look more from what is one's point of view than what sector does one represent. c) Partnerships will be more important forum for 'coordination of activity' to address redundancy in public/private resourcing/priorities. d) Partnerships should have an objective(s) ... money, knowledge, political support, etc... Not sure that the MPA Center, for example, has pursued partnerships to get insights, knowledge on how to run its business.</p>

<p>Respondent 40 If the MPA FAC is any example I think this may be their finest achievement. During my tenure on the FAC I can only remember one occasion in which there was not unanimous agreement to a work product and in that case there was only one dissenting vote (this from memory). To bring together such a diverse group of stakeholders and to work diligently with those stakeholders to bring the entire group to consensus is no small task and the MPA Center should be commended for it.</p>
<p>Commercial Fishing</p>
<p>Respondent 39 I think they have been very effective.</p>
<p>Other</p>
<p>Respondent 15 The NFWF managed National MPA Fund exemplifies the MPA Center's ability to create public/private partnerships and engaging stakeholders to support efficient management of MPAs and MPA networks. Thanks to the support from the MPA Center NFWF has managed to secure funds from the Fish and Wildlife Service for the National MPA Fund. All MPA Fund grants also included a 1:1 match requirement. As such, while \$313,406 of federal funds have thus far been awarded to grant recipients, close to \$330,000 has been presented in match for these same funds. Therefore, through this Fund, close to \$650,000 has been contributed to the national system priority conservation objectives.</p>
<p>Question 6: How should the MPA Center change its priorities or activities to more effectively meet the requirements of Executive Order 13158?</p>
<p>MPA Programs/Managers</p>
<p>Respondent 3 An annual offsite meeting for the managers should be budgeted for that's the best way to collaborate.</p>
<p>Respondent 4 The MPA Center should primarily focus on two core functions: capacity building for marine protected area managers and communities; and demonstrating how marine protected areas provide value-added benefits to Americans everywhere. These two functional areas are where the MPA Center can make the biggest difference in marine resource management because they are functions that are not fully developed across the Nation. In shifting its focus in this way, the MPA Center should reevaluate: activities that overlap with the management responsibilities of marine protected area authorities including the formation of the national system; producing spatial analyses and reports that are too broad-scale for any management application; and attempting to identify gaps in marine resource protection. Capacity building efforts should focus on training the current and next generation of marine protected areas managers and communities in areas such as: planning, public involvement, communication skills, resource protection, adaptive management, and scientific monitoring. In addition, capacity building should include efforts to improve the current marine protected areas federal advisory committee for studying and conveying multi-stakeholder perspectives on marine protected area issues. In promoting the benefits of marine protected areas, the MPA Center should focus on: characterizing and publicizing the social and economic benefits of marine protected areas to coastal communities and the Nation; providing a mechanism for supporters of new marine protected areas across the country to exchange ideas and work together; and expanding the community of marine protected areas supporters beyond traditional support bases. Funding economic valuations of marine protected areas in a consistent and sophisticated way would promote the designation of new marine protected areas where vitally needed. Done strategically, this would expand the support base for marine protected areas beyond the coast by linking supporters of marine protected areas with those who support protected areas on land.</p>

Respondent 10

For the period of performance to date, the MPA Center has done a very nice job in meeting the primary tasks outlined in the EO. Most notably this is the construction of the network, initiation of data products and services, and transfer of information.

Now, it is time to begin to address the research and management needs of the system. This will be expensive and require years to address. Perhaps this is a good time to conduct a national needs assessment, identify the most pressing management information needs of the community, and develop a blueprint for conducting the necessary research. In addition, a strong mechanism must be developed to facilitate research translation to the target audience. This blueprint should also identify funding strategies to enable the program. Reliance on new funding at this time is a non starter. Leveraging of existing resources and partnerships (including NOAA Cooperative Institutes, DOI CESUs, and novel associations with private foundations) must be part of the strategy.

Respondent 19

The MPA Center should aggressively seek private sector partnerships that build capacity for the MPA system to develop and sustain regional MPA networks that, at a minimum, engage DOI and DOC MPAs.

Respondent 23

- Section 4 of EO 13158 provides direction to develop a national system of MPAs and share information, tools and strategies to further enhance and expand protection of MPAs. The way in which the Executive Order has been implemented blurs the distinction between the national inventory and the national system such that efforts have been spent on supporting the inventory of MPAs at the expense of the national system of MPAs. By focusing on the national system, the MPA Center can better demonstrate the benefits to being in the national system, which may encourage additional membership in the national system through these incentives and at the same time strengthening those incentives.
- The MPA Center and the FAC have focused on the budget and capabilities of the Center and not those of the programs that are and could be part of the National MPA System (see November 21, 2011 letter to Dr. Lubchenco). Without focusing on both the Center and the actual federal, state, etc., programs that designate and manage MPAs, the Center and MPA FAC limit their influence and impact to coordination rather than real MPA protection and management.
- The MPA Center could make better connections and better inform the MPA FAC about the real opportunities and challenges of actual MPA management. Only once since the establishment of the MPA FAC have they been briefed on the programs and capabilities of the NERRS (field trips not withstanding). This disconnect and gap between the reality of MPA designation and management by programs and the academic questions and issues taken up by the FAC serve to strengthen the perception that the work of the MPA Center is not relevant to the management issues faced on a daily basis by real MPA managers.

Respondent 34

No.

Respondent 42

The MPA Center needs to stay engaged with the National Ocean Policy and CMSP and be the collective voice for MPAs in a climate where there remains much skepticism about the need for and the effectiveness of MPAs.

Natural Science

Respondent 2

I tried to read the MPA Center FY11 Projects and Activities (and Adobe pdf) but the document kept crashing on my computer so I cannot provide informed feedback about the priorities.

Respondent 9

Change MPA Center priorities: I suggest the Center refocus on providing services and products to MPA stewards, while continuing to engage stakeholders and sustain a dynamic MPA inventory and national system of MPAs. Specifically I suggest the Center move to:

- a) Lead research and development in natural sciences, social sciences, and cultural scholarship for individual MPAs and for MPA systems.
- b) Coordinate and encourage cooperation among MPA managers and stakeholders, both domestically and internationally, with formal and informal mechanisms, such as the International MPA Congress, and the creation of regional and national multi-agency MPA stewards' councils.
- c) Ask MPA managers what they want and need that can be acquired through cooperation and shared experience and then figure out how to deliver those products and services better than any other group or organization, e.g., professional development, policy and legal training, environmental observing/monitoring systems scaled appropriately for MPAs.

Respondent 16

I would like to reiterate two urgent needs:

First, partner with universities / foundations to harness the resources required to fill in the gaps concerning the following natural science / conservation needs and targets:

- science-based identification and prioritization of natural resources for additional protection;
- integrated assessments of ecological linkages among MPAs, including ecological reserves in which consumptive uses of resources are prohibited, to provide synergistic benefits;
- a biological assessment of the minimum area where consumptive uses would be prohibited that is necessary to preserve representative habitats in different geographic areas of the marine environment;
- assessment of threats and gaps in levels of protection currently afforded to natural resources.

Second, partner with the CMSP process at the federal and state levels, to achieve this critical next step: ensure the identification of emerging threats and user conflicts affecting MPAs and appropriate, practical, and equitable management solutions, including effective enforcement strategies, to eliminate or reduce such threats and conflicts.

Respondent 24

No. The MPA Center has the right priorities and is doing a terrific job with them. The big problem is that the MPA Center has demands/requirements that would take a staff four or five times the size of the current staff. Thus to fully address the requirements of the Ex. Order the MPA Center has to either staff up (unlikely in this current budget climate) or get the Ex. Order rewritten to match more closely the current resources of the MPA Center.

Respondent 26

The MPA Center should continue its work along established lines after paying attention to information gained in this evaluation. I think it is important that the MPA Center get out in front on issues such as climate change and marine spatial planning. I recommend more attention to the evaluation component of MPAs (individual and system level) across biological, social, cultural heritage, and economic indicators. Also, more attention needs to be given to the 'real' advantages of MPAs that are developed, established, and managed at the state level becoming part of the National System.

Respondent 30

Given the continuing decline of the nation's natural and cultural marine resources, it is startling that within the single, albeit large and complex, federal agency of NOAA there is so little collaboration between the MPA Center and NOS Sanctuaries. The MPA Center web site, managed by NOS, does not highlight the Sanctuary Program nor visa versa. In an era of declining resources, this should be addressed. From scuttlebutt, I understand that there has been at times an uncooperative relationship between personnel in the two programs, but this could be overcome as there are obvious ways in which the work can be partitioned.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the Sanctuary approach does not fit the current models of marine resources management where the emphasis is less on "walling off" people from particular areas preventing the use of marine resources and more about, for example, the priorities of the Ocean Policy

<p>Task Force-- creating regional ecosystem-level planning to sustain human uses and ecosystem services. Effective or not these are the approaches that the MPA Center and the FAC have championed.</p>
<p>Environmental</p>
<p>Respondent 6 Going forward, the MPA Center should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be integrally involved in the implementation of the National Ocean Policy and, in particular, the design of regional coastal and marine spatial plans and the identification and protection of important ecological areas. • Develop mapping and science tools for MPA identification and management as well as CMSP implementation. • Continue to convene the MPA FAC to provide input and advice and build linkages and relationships across sector and discipline. • Continue to populate the National System of MPAs. • Complete a comprehensive gap analysis to identify gaps in the National System • Based on the gap analysis, work to expand existing or create new MPAs to fill the gaps in the National System, possibly as part of the development of regional coastal and marine spatial plans. • Continue to educate policy makers and the public about the critical role of MPAs in ocean management and
<p>Respondent 14 Addressed above⁴. I appreciate that the Center's website provides quite a bit of how-to information for people who are designing MPAs, and some useful tools. I'd like to see more emphasis on informing the public about evidence that well protected and well-designed MPAs are providing benefits, and analysis of why unsuccessful protected areas aren't performing well. Also, would like to see links to sites with information about the amazing resources in our sanctuaries and other MPAs, if they're not currently on the website (I couldn't readily find them).</p>
<p>Respondent 41 If there is potential to increase MPA Center capacity in support of strengthening MPAs in Hawai'i, there is an immediate need to generate public support through positive outreach including broad based media. There is also a need in Hawai'i to support on the ground meetings in communities interested in establishing or strengthening MPAs in the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area. The objectives of the MPA Center are sound, and their involvement in Hawai'i thus far has advanced initiatives related to MPA design. If public support could be increased through MPA Center support, the trajectory for improving the function of Hawai'i's coral reefs could be maximized.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>
<p>Respondent 12 See above⁵. Implement recommendations of the CHRWG white paper to strengthen the cultural program. Devise measures to gauge how much change results from adjusting program emphasis.</p>

⁴ See respondent's previous comments

⁵ See respondent's previous comments

<p>Respondent 20</p> <p>As the Center has reached the implementation stage for the National System, greater focus should be placed on creating a relationship between the MPA FAC and Partners, and among the Partners. The work efforts of the MPA FAC are a prime example of information sharing and consensus building to achieve goals. The Partners would benefit from closer interaction with the FAC and the Center should foster a strong relationship among these two diverse groups.</p> <p>The MPA Center should consider the greater use of outside working groups to further its objectives. Unlike other FAC subcommittees, working groups are established under the Center in collaboration with the FAC. There was strong agreement that the working group mechanism is a beneficial way to augment FAC expertise and Center staff. As with the FAC subcommittees, the CHRWG was able to meet its charge in a timely fashion with exemplary products.</p>
<p>Tools/GIS</p>
<p>Respondent 22</p> <p>I do not know.</p>
<p>Respondent 43</p> <p>Again, I don't have the involvement or advisory experience with the center (e.g., not on the MPA Federal Advisory Committee) to be fully knowledgeable on this, but I'm wondering if the Center could develop and publish guidance for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the *entire* national system. It may have already done this, but I have not been aware of efforts and have not come across such a document. I'm not sure if priorities have to be completely re-organized in order to do this, but this but it would be a wonderful contribution. Perhaps international engagement could help in developing this too (best practices from other countries along these lines). The guidelines might also consider relevant sets of **social science** indicators and protocols, which seem to be lacking in national assessments of this sort.</p> <p>Also, how is the National MPA Center doing on the "Seamless Network Initiative" in coordinating with the National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Marine Sanctuaries, and National Estuarine Research Reserves?</p> <p>Has the National Park Service adopted an Ocean Parks Stewardship Action Plan and could the Center assist here, if not already?</p> <p>And once again, what about on an international basis? As mentioned above, there continue to be numerous international MPA efforts underway with linkages that could contribute to and benefit from the U.S. national system and vice-versa should the center do more in this area (Section 4 of the Executive Order)?</p>
<p>Industry</p>
<p>Respondent 35</p> <p>a) The MPA Center would benefit from a planning exercise (probably already done) in which the assumption is made that its budget is cut by 30-40 percent). Under such a scenario what would the program look like? My instinct is that a cut of this level couldn't be handled by a pro-rata cut across existing activities/expenses. It would require a hard look at core priorities. My further instinct is that a logical progression would be to first get the priorities that are also required under the 'gap analysis' mission really buttoned up. Those same critical measures would be used here; just a different "cut point".</p> <p>b) Look at a shared services model where common activities are shared across many programs, e.g. communications, GIS mapping, economics, etc. Private sector had to do this two decades ago to find efficiencies/cut costs.</p> <p>c) Maybe worth a quick look at other government cutting experiences, e.g. the DoD (BRAC) base reduction process.</p>
<p>Commercial Fishing</p>
<p>Respondent 39</p> <p>The MPA Center is carrying out the EO well with the resources at their disposal. There priorities and activities are on the right course.</p>

Other

Respondent 15

The MPA center needs additional resources to more effectively meet the requirements of the Executive Order 13158. If additional resources were made available the MPA Center should enhance its efforts in the implementation of Section 4 of the Executive Order, working through the MPA Fund to reach member programs, as this will ensure the greatest benefit to the Nation from an effective National system of Marine Protected areas.

¹ The following numbered references refer to those numbered within Respondent 37's comments: 1 76 FR 74777 (Dec. 1, 2011), available online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-12-01/pdf/2011-30700.pdf>. 2 Available online at http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Foaspub.epa.gov%2Ffeims%2Ffeimscomm.getfile%3Fp_download_id%3D494270&ei=dWXwTpn5L4bi0QHK2tGkAg&usg=AFQjCNHY2WeZIIVCfpyKRi-BX2hoZBrQXQ&sig2=vWmSq7tNoz5OUSfM6xG0Dg3 Available online at http://www.cio.noaa.gov/Policy_Programs/IQA_Overview_7-30-10-FINAL.pdf 4 Available online at http://www.cio.noaa.gov/Policy_Programs/IQ_Guidelines_110606.html 5 Available online at http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-115.html 6 Available online at <https://reefshark.nmfs.noaa.gov/f/pds/publicsite/documents/procedures/04-108-03.pdf> 7 Available online at http://www.cio.noaa.gov/Policy_Programs/OMB_Peer_Review_Bulletin_m05-03.pdf 8 Available online at http://www.cio.noaa.gov/Policy_Programs/prplans/PRsummaries.html 9 Available online at http://www.cio.noaa.gov/Policy_Programs/NOAA_PRB_COI_Policy_110606.html .In addition to the links provided above, all these NOAA IQA requirements are also available online at Http://www.cio.noaa.gov/Policy_Programs/info_quality.html 10 This NMFS Instruction is available online at <https://reefshark.nmfs.noaa.gov/f/pds/publicsite/documents/procedures/30-123-01.pdf>

Appendix 7

External Panel Review Meeting Agenda, 17-19 January 2012

Final Agenda

External Review Panel – National Marine Protected Areas Center Center for the Future of the Oceans, Monterey, CA January 17-19, 2012

Tuesday, Jan 17

Objectives:

- *Identify key issues and themes based on input from:*
 - *MPA Center staff*
 - *Written comments from stakeholders*
 - *Verbal presentations from local/regional stakeholders*
- *Review input from review panelists based on pre-meeting review of materials.*

8:30 Welcome, review objectives, and timeline

8:45 Key issues and themes from MPA Center (presentation & discussion with panel)

10:30 Break

10:45 Key issues and themes from expert stakeholders (discussion with panel)

- Sarah Allen, National Park Service
- Dan Basta, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
- Mary Gleason, The Nature Conservancy
- Zeke Grader, Pacific Coast Federation Fishermen's Associations
- Tom Raftican, Sportfishing Conservancy

11:30 Executive session: panel discussion with expert stakeholders over lunch

2:30 Panel discussion of key issues and themes with MPA Center staff

4:30 Review agenda for days 2 and 3 (modify if necessary)

5:00 Adjourn for the day

Evening – Panel dinner with MPA Center staff

Wednesday, Jan 18

Objectives:

- *Review/refine key findings*
- *Develop recommendations*

8:30 Review of key themes from day 1 and identification of findings

11:30 Break

12:00 Panel discussion with MPA Center staff over lunch

2:00 Break

2:30 Discussion of key themes and recommendations

5:30 Adjourn for the Day

Thursday, Jan 19

Objectives:

- *Outline timeline, workplan and panel assignments for drafting report*
- *Develop report outline*

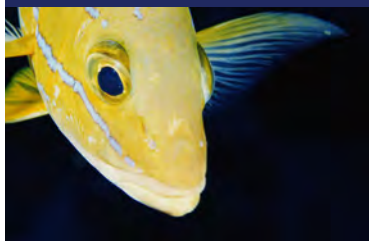
8:30 Panel working session

11:00 Panel discussion with MPA Center staff

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Panel working session

3:30 Adjourn



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