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mpa connections

A publication of the National Marine Protected Areas Center



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The *mission of the National Marine Protected Areas Center* is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas. *MPA Connections* was launched to meet continuing calls by agency and external stakeholders for information about MPA Center activities and to feature other actions that address Executive Order 13158 goals.

National Marine Protected Areas Center Launches Online Regional Information Centers

The National Marine Protected Areas Center has launched a series of web-based regional information centers on the www.MPA.gov website to help stakeholders stay informed about ongoing MPA planning processes across the nation.

The online MPA regional information centers (some of which are not yet fully populated) were designed to provide "one-stop-shopping" for comprehensive information on ongoing federal, state, and tribal MPA planning processes. Stakeholders can search the information centers for MPA planning processes by region of the U.S. or by state. The information presented on each planning process relies heavily on links to existing MPA agency and organization websites. Strictly factual data on key steps in these processes, such as dates, times, locations, and points of contact are presented.

The regional information centers are comprised of eight regions in the U.S., including the Caribbean, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Hawaii and U.S. Pacific Islands, Mid Atlantic, New England, Pacific Coast, and South Atlantic. While the regional information centers are a work in progress and not all regions are completely populated, the Pacific Coast and New England regions are either complete or include a significant amount of information. In the meantime, each of the eight centers contains up-to-date information on relevant national and international MPA processes.

The MPA Center developed these web-based centers to meet public information needs resulting from growing number and increasing complexity of ongoing MPA planning processes in the United States. Each planning process has its own unique purpose, timeline of meetings, review documents, and other official events, and each is crucial to decisions made by the various MPA managing agencies.

The information centers focus on governmental planning processes and do not address underlying policy issues or advocate particular positions.

Check out the regional information centers at http://www3.mpa.gov/mpa_calendar/query/searchbyregion.aspx. To learn more or to provide feedback, please contact Amy.Nickens@noaa.gov.

MPA Connections was first published by the National Marine Protected Areas Center in October 2002. The newsletter is electronic and is generally distributed on a monthly basis via a listserve. Issues are archived on http://mpa.gov/information_tools/newsletters.html. To subscribe, send an email to Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov.

Check out Several New Web Pages on MPA.gov

The MPA Center continues to expand the information provided on the www.MPA.gov website. Over the last few months, several significant sections and pages have been added and updated.

In February, a section on the national system of MPAs was added. This section provides background information on the increasing use of MPAs as a place-based marine conservation and management tool, the benefits of establishing a national MPA system the United States as required by the MPA Executive Order, specific information on the MPA Executive Order that calls for a national system, how the MPA Center is developing it, and materials and updates about a series of regional federal, state, and public dialogues, sponsored by the MPA Center, to get feedback on developing the national system. The MPA Center will post responses from these regional agency and public dialogues.

The web page can be accessed at http://mpa.gov/national_system/.

The website also contains a web page focused on cultural and historic MPA resources. This page provides brief information about what cultural and historic MPAs are, the MPA Center's coordination work in this area, and links to a monthly newsletter that features short summaries and links to news sites or relevant agency websites. This page is available at http://mpa.gov/information_tools/cultural_resources.html.

Information on social science was added to the MPA.gov website. This page provides an overview on the importance of social science when reviewing or determining impacts of MPAs on communities (and vice versa). It features links to the National Social Science Research Strategy that the MPA Center developed in 2003, along with links to regional social science research reports. This page is available at http://mpa.gov/information_tools/social_science.html.



MPA Center Begins Series of Regional Public Dialogues on Developing a National System of MPAs

The National Marine Protected Areas Center has begun a series of regional public dialogues to gather ideas and feedback on developing the framework for a national system of MPAs. The framework is called for in MPA Executive Order 13158. A main step in this process will be to engage the nation in a participatory dialogue.

Input and recommendations from stakeholders, agencies, authorities, and the MPA Federal Advisory Committee are a cornerstone to the development of this guiding document. When drafted, the framework will describe the rationale, goals, and components of the national system, as well as the processes for designing and implementing it based on sound science and broad stakeholder input.

Each regional public dialogue is organized to solicit and collect input that will be used to develop the national system. Each dialogue session will begin with a presentation from MPA Center staff on our current plans. We will then ask participants to break into small groups to ask questions, discuss relevant issues, and provide input on the future national system.

The first public dialogue was held in Washington, D.C. on March 7, 2005. Responses received from participants at that meeting have been posted on the MPA.gov website. The next public dialogue is scheduled for Monday evening, May 16, 2005 in Portland, Maine. A draft agenda and announcement for that dialogue session has also been posted. In addition, the MPA Center has met with federal agency partners and state and territory partners around the country (with additional meetings planned later this year). A full report from the federal agency workshop is posted online and notes from the state workshops will be available online soon.

For more information about the MPA Center's work to develop the framework for a national system of MPAs and to download workshop agendas and notes, go to http://mpa.gov/national_system/.

MPA Federal Advisory Committee Profile: Dr. Bonnie McCay, Vice-Chair

Although Dr. Bonnie McCay has never dissected a fish in her career, she is one of the nation's most distinguished fisheries scientists. Unlike most scientists assessing the effects of fishing, Bonnie doesn't specifically focus on environmental factors. Rather, as a social scientist, she studies the people who catch the fish and how their practices penetrate into the community, both human and ichthyoid.

While her research has made her a leading voice in fisheries management, Bonnie didn't expect to end up working in a field of science.

Before donning her graduation cap as an anthropologist, Bonnie gathered in the halls of the English Department to reflect on Donne, Milton, Dickenson, and Whitman. Yet, despite the talent of the world's best authors, her interests in human behavior led her away from the literary classics to face the rigors of scientific research. She bridged her affinity for humanities and developing interests in science by turning to anthropology, the study of humans. After receiving an opportunity to assist in her first anthropological study with fishing families of a Coast Salish tribe in Vancouver, British Columbia, Bonnie realized she could incorporate her passion for the environment into her work. She later took those interests to Newfoundland, Canada, where she studied the interactions between marine fish stocks and local fishing communities, which marked the beginning of her career as a 'human ecologist.'

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Profile: Dr. Bonnie McCay, continued

"I never thought this is where I would end up, as an English major," Bonnie says, now a professor in the Department of Human Ecology at Rutgers University.

Bonnie defines 'human ecology' as the study of humans and the environment: how humans, like all organisms, drive ecological processes and systems; and how changes in the environment, in turn, affect human lives, cultures, and social practices. She recognizes that both the sciences and the humanities are needed to better understand the interactions between people and the environment. In particular, Bonnie tries to understand the consequences of viewing natural resources as commodities and the ultimate effects of applying market principles to marine resource management. She also examines the conditions that can and do lead people to cooperatively achieve goals such as sustainable and fair use of seafood.

Her work in this field has demonstrated her keen ability to see beyond the dinner table and to recognize how fishing infuses a people's culture. This ability has won Bonnie countless awards, honors, and appointments, including a lifetime position as a national associate for the National Research Council.

Bonnie's ability to further mediate the opposing goals of resource extraction and environmental conservation made her a natural choice for the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Federal Advisory Committee.

When the Departments of Commerce and the Interior convened the first meeting of the MPA Federal Advisory Committee in June 2003, Bonnie saw an opportunity to expand her knowledge about MPAs. While she viewed MPAs as a useful tool for fisheries management, the level of controversy surrounding these areas confirmed that not everyone agreed with her. Alongside this controversy came the challenge of trying to build consensus among a large multi-disciplinary group, an equally appealing prospect for the social scientist. With aims of building consensus, Bonnie was elected as the Federal Advisory Committee's vice-chair.

Unlike the National Research Committees that Bonnie has participated in, where most members are scientists, the MPA Federal Advisory Committee offered the opportunity to work through contentious issues with 30 representatives from state, fishing, oil, environmental, tribal, and scientific affiliations. Despite the range of perspectives that each Advisory Committee member represents, Bonnie reports that the committee successfully reached consensus on a suite of issues. She also touts the tremendous experience and wealth of knowledge that this collective committee brings to the issue of MPAs and ultimately hopes that the role of a Federal Advisory Committee will be incorporated into other programs.

The MPA Federal Advisory Committee plans to make their first set of recommendations to the Departments of Commerce and the Interior in June 2005. Bonnie commends the committee members for their "great respect of differences and ability to find areas of agreement."

To learn more about the MPA Federal Advisory Committee, go to <http://www.mpa.gov/fac/fac.html>.

Notable Additions in the MPA Virtual Library

A "Pacific Science" article discusses fish surveys and benthic habitat surveys conducted in three kinds of areas in western Hawaii: Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs); areas open to fish collecting; and reference areas. Surveys collected data before and after closure of the FRA network in 2000. The research notes recovery of some species important to aquarium fish collecting, and suggests large recruitment events are likely to be an important factor in assessing the effectiveness of MPAs to help restore depleted fish stocks. "Evaluating the effectiveness of a marine reserve network in West Hawaii to increase the productivity of an aquarium fishery" is available at:

<http://www.coralreefnetwork.com/kona/Tissot%20et%20al%202004.pdf>.

Training Updates from the MPA Center

These items are included to provide our subscribers with an idea of the kinds of training that the National Marine Protected Areas Center offers through its Training and Technical Assistance Institute (in cooperation with the NOAA Coastal Services Center), which is based in Charleston, South Carolina.

Visitor Use Management Workshop at Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve:

In March, staff conducted a two-day visitor use management workshop in Biloxi, Mississippi, to introduce participants to a planning framework for balancing visitor use and resource protection in coastal and marine protected areas. Attendees received training on a detailed problem identification process, methods for identifying indicators and standards for monitoring visitor impacts, and management tactics. The workshop also incorporated guest presentations of local visitor use issues and management approaches. Participants included representatives from local, state, and federal natural resource management agencies, ecotourism industry, nonprofit conservation organizations, and education institutions. Other workshops are scheduled for South Carolina, Florida, and New York. The workshop was hosted by the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Evaluating MPA Effectiveness for Florida Aquatic Preserve Managers:

This new two-day workshop supports MPA managers in their efforts to develop and track meaningful performance measures. It builds upon existing training on program design and evaluation, as well as the recently published IUCN guidebook, *How Is Your MPA Doing?* As part of the training development, the MPA Center partnered with the Florida Aquatic Preserves Program, which is embarking on a system-wide strategic planning process to incorporate evaluation as individual site management plans are updated. An initial pilot of the training was provided to a small group in October 2004, followed by a second training session for approximately 40 managers from across the aquatic preserve system in Tampa in January 2005. During the session, managers identified and connected goals, activities, and resources for their sites, and examined indicators that they might use to measure progress towards their long-term goals.

"Understanding Marine Protected Areas" Workshop and Condensed 60-Minute "Understanding Marine Protected Areas" Presentation:

Earlier this year, the MPA Center brought its one-day "Understanding Marine Protected Areas" workshop to the National Mississippi Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa. Attendees included high school and college science instructors, museum staff, state Department of Natural Resources staff, local environmental non-profit volunteers, and other interested citizens. The goal of the workshop, which has also been held in other aquariums across the county, is to provide attendees with a better understanding of the variety of MPAs and MPA issues. In addition, the MPA Center adapted the full-day workshop into a 60-minute presentation. This version, designed for conferences and other special events, was delivered recently at the George Wright Society conference in Philadelphia. The George Wright Society conference targets those involved in protected area conservation, from historians to biologists, managers to researchers, public agencies to private organizations, academics to field personnel.

For more information about these and other training opportunities, visit http://mpa.gov/information_tools/training.html.

Notable Additions in the MPA Library, continued

A scientific consensus statement signed by more than 200 scientists and policy experts proposes an integrated ecosystem approach to conserving and managing U.S. marine systems, including management of human activities which impact marine ecosystems. The statement recommends ocean zoning, including networks of fully protected marine reserves, to protect biodiversity and habitats. "Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Ecosystem-Based Management" is available on the Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea (COMPASS) web site at:

[http://compassonline.org/files/inline EBM%20Consensus%20Statement FINAL Mar%2021%202005 v2.pdf](http://compassonline.org/files/inline%20EBM%20Consensus%20Statement%20FINAL%20Mar%202021%202005%20v2.pdf)

A recent publication on Cuba's national system of MPAs provides an overview of coastal and marine protected areas in Cuba, which comprise a subsystem within the national system of protected areas. The report describes the evolution of the subsystem, its legal framework, its managing and planning principles, MPA zoning and network connectivity issues, international issues, and plans for future improvements. "The National System of Marine Protected Areas in Cuba" is available at: http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/3692_mpasCubaIngles.pdf

An ocean economics website supported by researchers and economists, and sponsored by NOAA's Coastal Services Center, provides useful data on ocean-related economic activities and resource trends. The site includes a market values database, a non-market values portal, a living marine resources database, and a federal marine expenditures section. "The National Ocean Economics Program" website is available at: <http://www.oceaneconomics.org>

A special Honolulu Advertiser insert funded by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program reviews the status of marine protected areas in Hawaii. This review provides historical and cultural background, MPA definitions, discussion of MPA benefits and challenges, information on the status of Hawaii's ecosystems and marine managed areas, and an overview of MPAs in other parts of the Pacific. "Marine Protected Areas in Hawaii" is available at: <http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dar/library/index.htm#MPApub>

Events and Conferences

May

16: Envisioning a National System of Marine Protected Areas: New England Public Dialogue; Portland, Maine; http://mpa.gov/national_system/.

17-19: MPA Federal Advisory Committee Meeting, Doubletree Hotel, Portland, Maine; http://mpa.gov/fac/fac_meetings.html.

June

3: NOAA Ocean Service Constituent Roundtable, "Promoting Coastal Stewardship," Washington, D.C.

6-8: National Fishing and Boating Week, American Sportfishing Association, Washington, D.C., http://www.asafishing.org/asa/shows_events/nfbw/index.html.

8: NOAA Fish Fry, Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.

8-9: Capitol Hill Oceans Week 2005, Washington, D.C.; www.nmsfocean.org/.

July

11-16: National Marine Educators Association annual conference, "Look to the Source, Look to the Sea," Maui, Hawaii; <http://www.hawaii.edu/mcc/oceania/NMEA05.html>.

18: Envisioning a National System of Marine Protected Areas: Gulf of Mexico Public Dialogue, New Orleans; http://mpa.gov/national_system/.

18-21: Coastal Zone '05, New Orleans, Louisiana. The MPA Center will host an exhibit booth. <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz/>.

September

11-15: American Fisheries Society, 135th annual meeting, "Creating a Fisheries Mosaic: Connections across Jurisdictions, Disciplines, and Cultures," Anchorage, Alaska; <http://www.wdafs.org/Anchorage2005/index.htm>.

17-24: Coastweek; <http://living-edge.org/>.

19-23: Oceans 2005, sponsored by the Marine Technology Society (MTS) and the IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society (OES), Washington, D.C.; <http://www.oceans2005.org/>.

24: National Estuaries Day; <http://www.estuaries.gov/>.

30-October 6: 8th World Wilderness Congress, Anchorage, Alaska; <http://www.8wwc.org/index.htm>.

October

23-27: First International Marine Protected Areas Congress, Geelong, Australia, <http://www.impacongress.org/>.

November

1-3: MPA Federal Advisory Committee meeting, Gulf of Mexico (location TBD); http://mpa.gov/fac/fac_meetings.html.

2-4: Maritime Heritage Education Conference; location and other information to be announced.

28-December 2: Third International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals, Miami, Florida; <http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/coral>.