

Mavericks Surf Contest



Chronicle/ Kurt Rogers



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Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

February 15, 2007
GFNMS and MBNMS Joint Advisory Council Meeting

Mavericks Surf Contest Area Overview



Background

- Mavericks Surf Ventures (MSV) organizes the annual surf contest
- Contest is held with 24 hours notice (based on surf predictions) on a weekday between January 1 - March 31
- ~50,000 people attended the contest in 2006
- ~1,000,000 households watched the 2005 NBC Sports TV special, Contest is also followed internationally
- Event occurs within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
- No Sanctuary permits are issued (regulatory prohibitions are not triggered by event activities)



February 15, 2007

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Sanctuary Goals

- Work with contest organizer in order to address environmental impacts not prohibited by regulations (e.g. voluntary actions by MSV to decrease impacts)
- Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary staff are working with MSV to:
 - address impacts to Sanctuary resources
 - educate the public about Sanctuaries
 - inspire students about science of oceanography



February 15, 2007
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Memorandum of Agreement (10/06)

MSV commits to:

- Hosting paddle-in only events within the MBNMS
- Cleaning up the beach after the event
- Following sanctuary recommendations regarding aircraft overflights and voluntary avoidance of sensitive areas
- Providing 10 x 10 foot tent display space for sanctuary
- Posting link to sanctuary website

MSV and GFNMS jointly commit to:

- Develop environmental best management practices
- Conduct outreach regarding ecology, geology, oceanography of contest location
- Work on interpretive sign to be placed near the beach at Pillar Pt.

GFNMS commits to:

- Providing staff, volunteers to prevent public straying into sensitive areas and implement pre-determined best management practices
- Staffing a booth at the event with information about Sanctuaries
- Providing information to MSV on the natural environment of the contest area



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2007 Planned Activities

- Address actual and potential environmental impacts from the contest
 - Wildlife disturbance
 - Tidepool trampling
 - *Marine debris*
 - *Cliff erosion (outside NMS jurisdiction)*
- Observe and learn about what needs to be done in the future to make this a zero impact event
- Public outreach and education about the Sanctuary
- Report potential violations to NOAA-Office of Law Enforcement







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2007 Planned Activities addressing Wildlife Disturbance

- Notice regarding wildlife disturbance regulations sent to media, USCG, local enforcement, MSV
- Notice will be re-sent once event is announced

PREVENT WILDLIFE DISTURBANCE

- It is recommended to **remain at least 2000 feet AGL** when flying within 1/4 mile of the coast, over offshore rocks and islands or within California National Marine Sanctuaries
- Avoid sudden changes in direction, altitude, and speed
- Avoid flying directly over, and making multiple passes over seabird and marine mammal colonies and resting areas
- If birds or marine mammals are observed fleeing or reacting to your presence, vacate the area
- Report wildlife disturbances caused by low flying aircraft to the **NOAA Enforcement Hotline: 1-800-853-1964**

IT'S THE LAW!!!

- Harassment of wildlife by aircraft can be a violation of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law, punishable by a \$1,000 citation or a mandatory court appearance that could result in a fine of up to \$10,000, one year in jail, aircraft forfeiture, and/or revocation of pilot's airman certificate. Harass means to disturb, worry, molest, rally, concentrate, harr, chase, drive, herd, or torment.
- In addition to the 1,000 ft AGL overflight restrictions within the local national marine sanctuaries (see map inside), the following can be a violation under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act: taking any marine mammal, sea turtle or seabird in or above the Monterey Bay Sanctuary. "Take" means: (1) if listed as endangered or threatened: to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect or injure, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct; (2) for any other: to harass, hunt, capture, kill, collect or injure, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. This includes... to operate a vessel or aircraft.
- Download the file titled, "Agencies with Overflight Restrictions" for a list of state and federal regulations and authorities related to aircraft disturbance at: www.farallones.noaa.gov/ecosystemprotection/mapsandregulations.html



MAVERICKS 2007 SURF COMPETITION

NOTICE TO: Media, Pilots and Vessel Operators

From: Maria Brown, Superintendent
 Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, San Francisco, CA
 415/ 561-6622 ext. 301

RE: APPROACH RESTRICTIONS AFFECTING
 MAVERICKS SURF CONTEST

The annual Mavericks Surf Competition could happen any day now! Please note that there are PERMANENT, YEAR-ROUND federal and state restrictions on wildlife disturbance along the California coast, including the areas near the Mavericks' Surf Competition site near Half Moon Bay, California.

The Mavericks contest coincides with the seasons when tens of thousands of marine mammals (whales, dolphins, seals/sea lions) are migrating through or residing in nearshore waters. Harbor seals at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve are caring for their newborn pups. Seabirds are engaged in breeding activities on hillsides and offshore rocks (e.g. Devil's Slide rock). Do your part at this sensitive time in their lives to protect wildlife!

Seabirds and marine mammals are federally protected. Disturbance – *even if unintentional* – can result in citation and fines for individuals and their organizations. Media are not exempt from these regulations. It is the responsibility of pilots, vessel operators, and media to be aware of protective regulations that apply. One example, **"It is prohibited to use an aircraft to harass any wildlife which means to "disturb, worry, molest, rally, concentrate, harr, chase, drive, herd or torment" (CFR 922.132)."**

Harassment can also result if a vessel approaches marine mammals or birds on the water, or if a helicopter or plane fly in close proximity to or hover above hillsides or rocks where seabirds are resting or nesting.

To be safe, we request that you maintain a minimum distance of 1/4 mile from shore, and altitude of 2,000 feet. See the attached map depicting overflight restrictions and sensitive habitats within the national marine sanctuaries.

Please don't hesitate to contact me or sanctuary Superintendent Maria Brown if you have any questions.

Mary Jane Schramm, Media Liaison
 415/ 561-6622 x205

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2007 Planned Activities addressing Wildlife Disturbance

- Sanctuary observers will be posted on airforce station, breakwater:
 - Wildlife counts (offshore, intertidal reef, beach, cliffs)
 - Human use counts (offshore, intertidal reef, beach, cliffs)
 - Vessel counts (by type)
 - Aircraft counts
 - Wildlife disturbance
- MSV will make loud-speaker announcements during contest that this special area is part of a National Marine Sanctuary and ask people to take precautions not to disturb or feed wildlife



- MSV has sent out email blast asking people to minimize impact and not come to Pillar Point during the contest

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2007 Planned Activities addressing Wildlife Disturbance

MSV will use 8 motorized personal watercraft (> 2 seat)

- 5 water patrol

- 1 filming

- 2 contestant shuttles (surfers will swim from beach to end of breakwater and then will ride on MPWC to line-up spot)

additional (> 2 seat) MPWC at the event
include harbor search and rescue,
other private users



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2007 Planned Activities addressing Tidepool Trampling

Pillar Point Tidepools will be CLOSED
during the contest ONE DAY ONLY

IF predicted LOW TIDE is LESS than +0.5 ft



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2007 Planned Activities Preventing Tidepool Trampling

GFNMS staff and volunteers (~20 people) will set-up barriers with signs and conduct interpretive enforcement

MSV will provide: barrier, caution tape, general supplies, volunteer vests, free volunteer parking, free volunteer lunch, volunteer gift of a t-shirt

— Barricade location



Protect Your National Marine Sanctuary

REEF CLOSED TODAY

Spare animals from thousands of footsteps.
The reef in front of you is one of the most
biologically rich tidepool areas on our coast.
Come back another day to explore.

So what lives on the reef?



This giant green anemone has tiny algae (zooxanthellae) living within its tissue that provides the anemone with nourishment and oxygen.

Enjoy the beach and the Mavericks Surf contest!



2007 Planned Activities addressing Tidepool Trampling

Fitzgerald staff and volunteers will provide interpretive enforcement for the north end of Pillar Point at Ross Cove

~5 public viewing scopes set up by Sanctuary staff/volunteers for individuals wanting a closer view of the contest and wildlife



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2007 Planned Activities addressing Marine Debris and Cliff Erosion

Marine Debris:

- 2006 contest produced 20 bags of trash (~50,000 people)
- MSV will have recycling, compost, trash cans on site with signs and 'green team' volunteers to help people use correct can
- 2 food vendors only - MSV insisted on recyclable materials, where possible and no styrofoam
- MSV will conduct post-event beach clean-up

Cliff Erosion:

- GFNMS has expressed concern to MSV regarding cliff erosion from climbing spectators (cliffs are not in NMS jurisdiction)
- MSV and public agencies (?) will rope off cliffs and post signs



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2007 Planned Activities Education and Outreach

- Sanctuary will have a well-positioned booth at the event to provide information about the Sanctuary and answer questions
- Sanctuary providing information to MSV:
 - This is in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
 - Reasons this is special place/time (e.g. rich tidepools, harbor seal pupping, seabirds prospecting for nesting sites, migrating gray whales)
 - Ways to minimize impacts
- Sanctuary providing information to MSV being broadcast on:
 - MSV web page
 - Email blast to MSV contest notification listserv
 - Public Announcements over loud speaker
 - Contest information booth
 - Live webcast (thankyouocean PSA, interview with Superintendent (TBD))
 - Contest DVD (thankyouocean PSA)
 - MSV media kit



February 15, 2007

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Future Activities

Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary staff are working with MSV to address impacts to Sanctuary resources, educate the public about Sanctuaries, and inspire students about science of oceanography

- Observe and learn about what additional ecosystem protection measures may be needed
- Sanctuary and MSV will develop a sign for Pillar Point beach explaining that Mavericks is in MBNMS and factors controlling big wave formation
- Sanctuary has developed middle school curriculum on waves (MSV may arrange for surfers to conduct public and/or school programs)
- Publicity that Mavericks is in NMS and on the science of why this is a big wave location
- Sanctuary will develop visitor center display on geology, oceanography of Mavericks big waves



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Questions?



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