

**Monitor National Marine Sanctuary (MNMS)
Advisory Council Meeting
October 2, 2008**

In attendance: Mitch Bowman (Heritage Tourism), Robert Neyland (U.S. Navy), Roger Kirchen (VA Department of Historic Resources—Alternate), Larry Murphy (National Park Service), Dave Conlin (National Park Service—Alternate), Anna Holloway (The Mariners’ Museum), Scott Boyd (Citizen-At-Large), James Bunch (Recreational Diving), Teri Kirby-Hathaway (Education), Dave Krop (The Mariners’ Museum—Alternate), Susan Langley (Archaeological Research), Richard Lawrence (NC Department of Cultural Resources), Joseph Schwarzer (Maritime Museum), Ron Grayson (VA Department of Historic Resources), Dave Alberg (Sanctuary Superintendent), Shannon Ricles (Council Coordinator), Jeff Johnson (Monitor NMS Historian), Joe Hoyt (*Monitor* NMS), and Paul Ticco (Regional Coordinator for Office of National Marine Sanctuaries).

Public Guests in Attendance: Robert Pride, Alex Varouxis, Jay Kavanagh, Melanie Schwarzer, and Dainel Pouch.

Absent: Wayne Smith (Conservation) and Joann Wilson (VA Department of Historic Resources)

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Welcome

Joe Schwarzer, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary (MNMS) Advisory Council Chair, called the meeting to order. After Mr. Schwarzer's welcoming remarks, the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) members introduced themselves. Mr. Schwarzer recognized the guests in attendance.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Schwarzer called for the approval of the minutes. A correction to the spelling of Ms. Kirby-Hathaway's name was made and noted. The minutes were approved.

MNMS Superintendent's Report

Dave Alberg welcomed everyone to the council meeting and provided an update to the council on a variety of topics, summarized below:

- Dave Alberg explained that the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries will be forming a Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Council. He encouraged interested members to apply for the national council. He reviewed the Federal Register notice and how to apply.
- Mr. Alberg also explained that there has been an addition of two seats to the council in the new Charter: a fishing seat and a youth seat. The deadline for applying for the fishing seat has closed and several applications were received. Mr. Alberg introduced two of the applicants in attendance and explained that although fishing is not a major issue in the sanctuary at this time, it may be in the future as we go through management plan review. Therefore, the purpose of the fishing seat is to help give fishermen a voice as we go through the process. The *Monitor* NMS will be the first sanctuary to have a youth seat. All youth applicants must be between the ages of 14-17 and will serve for a term of one year. Mr. Alberg suggested that we have a brainstorming session in the future to discuss how the youth seat will be advertised and selected. Anna Holloway and Teri Kirby-Hathaway agreed to work on youth seat with Shannon Ricles.
- Budget: Mr. Alberg highlighted that due to the recent fiscal year-end and the upcoming elections that the sanctuary will be operating on a continuing resolution until late February 2009. He feels confident that the budget for FY09 will be about the same as previous year with no major changes.
- Leadership Training Conference: Mr. Alberg related his experience at the Leadership Training Conference held in DC and how the focus of the conference was on the upcoming transition period after the elections. He also told how the participants of the conference met with other NOAA line offices for better communications between programs. Hopefully, additional collaborations will come from the visits. One of the most important topics that NOAA will focus on in the near future is climate change. We need to look at ways that our sanctuary can help to educate the public on climate change and greening initiatives. Mr. Alberg also detailed several other discussions at the conference concerning the National Park Service explaining the need for "branding," faith-based organizations and their role, social networking and how it has changed the way we reach our audience, and home schooled children.

- *Monitor* Conservation Efforts: Mr. Alberg asked Dave Krop to brief the council on the status of the conservation efforts for the USS *Monitor*. Mr. Krop's report is summarized as:
 - Mr. Krop detailed that several large and many smaller pieces are either ready or about to be ready to go on display.
 - Some of these items will be going to the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras, North Carolina.
 - New holding tanks outside will allow for many additional artifacts to be conserved.
- Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum: Mr. Alberg and Joe Schwarzer discussed the sanctuary's efforts to provide a "gateway" to the sanctuary through the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras, N.C. Mr. Alberg said that ONMS gave the largest grant of funds ever to a museum that is not operational. He said that the donation shows the value that the program puts on working with the State of North Carolina. The funds will be used only to support the design and fabrication of exhibits, which will tell the *Monitor* story to museum visitors. Mr. Schwarzer said that the planning is going well and that they hope to have the main gallery finished by late February 2009. Mr. Alberg said that the museum will also provide the marine sanctuary program the opportunity to have a presence in the form of a visitor center for the mid-Atlantic region. Mrs. Schwarzer and Mr. Pouch explained the "Friends Group" and their fund raising abilities to help with the expansion of the museum to tell the Graveyard of the Atlantic story. Mr. Alberg said that he would like to host the Friends Group here at The Mariners' Museum once the group is formalized.
- Community Outreach: Mr. Alberg gave an overview of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and how their staff has worked with the community to turn it around from one of anger to one of acceptance and total support. Mr. Alberg said that Thunder Bay serves as a great model, and he would like for others on the council to see it, perhaps in the spring (2009).
- Staffing Updates: Lauren Heesemann was selected to join the team through a Women and Minorities in Science scholarship program. Ms. Heesemann will join the staff full time in May 2009 to work under Shannon Ricles and to also be the research coordinator for the *Monitor* NMS. Joe Hoyt will also soon be joining the team as an underwater archaeologist. Joe is from East Carolina University.
- Summer Field Project: The summer field project last July was a success.
 - All three U-boats were surveyed and documented. Mr. Hoyt will be working towards their nomination to the Federal Register of Historic Places.
 - The Battle of the Atlantic Expedition included great collaboration between Minerals Management Service, National Park Service, State of North Carolina, East Carolina University, University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute, and other NOAA sanctuary offices.
 - Mr. Alberg stated that the purpose of the expedition was to draw attention to our Nation's history and the cultural resources in the Graveyard of the Atlantic. The three ships are iconic pieces that generated a lot of media attention both good and bad.

- The expedition also gave the sanctuary program an opportunity to test the new 41 foot boat. The sanctuary will work with other sanctuaries on future expedition in order to acquire boats, but hope to have a boat of our own within five years.
- Mr. Neyland commented on what a great job the team did on the expedition and thanked Ms. Ricles for her efforts to keep the council informed throughout.
- Mr. Alberg said that Minerals Management Service is committed to the project and has requested funds from their budget for next year's expedition.
- Mr. Pouch asked if he had worked with the German government on the project, and Mr. Alberg explained that we have been working with the German embassy throughout and that they had requested the U-boats be treated as gravesites. Mr. Alberg went on to explain that although the U-boats are a great story, there is a much larger message to be conveyed to the public about the Battle of the Atlantic.
- Mr. Neyland asked if we had any plans for collecting oral histories from those still living in the Outer Banks who experienced the Battle of the Atlantic first hand. Mr. Alberg said that he had just purchased a high-end recorder for that purpose and that we are working with other museums to capture any archived oral histories.
- Allied ships will be surveyed next summer as the project continues. Mr. Murphy said that the U-boats could help to define NOAA as a sanctuary system and that there is more tonnage in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Mr. Alberg also explained the environmental threat the sunken ships pose to our Nation's coasts. Mr. Bunch commented that all three ships were sunk at approximately the same time but in different zones and that these ships would be a great research project concerning biologicals and corrosion. Mr. Hoyt explained that it was in the original plans to conduct corrosion tests, but the German government did not authorize anything invasive.
- A discussion then pursued detailing ships sunk during the Battle of the Atlantic and the possibility of expanding the research to many other wreck sites. Mr. Bunch commented that overall any expansion of the sanctuary's interest in other shipwrecks was met with approval in general by the dive community and that he was optimistic if expansion ever becomes an option.

ACTION ITEMS: Shannon Ricles, Terri Kirby Hathaway, and Anna Holloway will meet in January 2009 to discuss the youth seat and how to solicit applicants. Dave Alberg will check into having council members visit Thunder Bay NMS.

Update on *Monitor's* Management Plan Review and Timeline

Shannon Ricles and Paul Ticco updated the council members on the management plan review process and the current timeline of events.

- Ms. Ricles reviewed and summarized the identified issues/threats to the sanctuary that the council determined on May 16, 2008. She explained that those identified issues would be used to identify the stakeholders who would be affected by them.
- Mr. Alberg reiterated that the management plan review process is based only on the *Monitor* and that NOAA has no position on expansion at this time. Management Plan Review will focus specifically on the existing site at this time. However, he also explained that council members and staff will receive questions about possible expansion and everyone should be prepared to answer them.
- Mr. Alberg also explained that there are a lot of issues that remain to be dealt with during the process, but it should not be overwhelming. The timeline for the review process is 36 months, but a management plan has never been done in that short of a time period. We hope to be the first.
- Mr. Ticco said that although management plan review is required, this is also a tremendous opportunity to make the site better. Therefore, the public is crucial to help us get ideas on how to do a better job managing the sanctuary.
- Mr. Alberg said that the Condition Report that was released in May 2008 and the State of the Sanctuary Report, scheduled for release November 1, 2008, will help everyone to recognize areas of need. The reports will be sent to the council members and headquarters. He also explained the “Save the Date” mailing card and said that it will be mailed to everyone on our mailing list. He encouraged everyone to help get the word out about scoping meetings.
- Mr. Alberg asked if anyone had any questions on management plan review.
 - Did we renew the agreement for preservation?—5-10 years can be modified on agenda.
 - Should we activate working group to address any questions that may arise regarding expansion?—No, not at this time. Mr. Ticco reminded everyone that public comments from the scoping meeting may take us in a new different direction than where we thought we were heading, so we need to wait until the process is completed.

ACTION ITEMS: Shannon Ricles will mail State of the Sanctuary Report to SAC members as soon as it is available.

Issues and Stakeholders

Paul Ticco tasked the council to break into groups to identify the main stakeholders for the previously identified threats. Guests were invited to participate. Groups were asked to 1) list stakeholders; 2) think about the identified threats and make a connection to the stakeholders; 3) develop an action plan for each. Groups were given approximately 30 minutes for breakout session.

- Group 1: Anna Holloway, Dave Krop, Scott Boyd, and Mitch Bowman
- Group 2: Dave Conlin, Roger Kirchen, Terri Kirby-Hathaway, Ron Grayson, and Daniel Pouch

- Group 3: Larry Murphy, Susan Langley, Richard Lawrence, Robert Pride, and Bob
- Group 4: Joe Schwarzer, Shannon Ricles, Joe Hoyt, and Jay Kavanagh

Groups identified the following stakeholders: Divers, fishermen, historic preservation groups, museums, local public, tourists, tourism bureaus, education community, academia, NOAA, K-12 population, governments (state, local, and federal), environmentalists, historians, researchers, military, law enforcement agencies (Coast Guard), NGOs, natural resource industry, all humans, and researchers,

Connections made between stakeholders and threats included: funding, human damage, natural damage, communication, cultural values, and apathy.

Key messages and calls for action that came from the working groups are summarized below:

- Communication is key to all issues with all stakeholders. Communication needs to be transparent and in plain English. It can reduce intensity of perceived threats. Enlist speakers from a speaker's bureau and tie talks to the community to capitalize on interest.
- Science and data are key to helping management make good decisions. Sanctuary needs a research plan.
- Evaluate human impact of the wreck site. A baseline is necessary. Permits are essential for collecting valuable information on the wreck site. The science is driven by management requirements. Need to develop a clear set of priorities and needs to help permitting process.
- Funding is always an issue. Is there a corporate interest? Could be good public relations for drilling companies to invest in sanctuary program, so they may be willing to provide funding. National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is one avenue to help search for corporate partners. Also Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic could help to secure partners.
- Natural damage may increase due to climate change issues. Storm intensity and frequency are increasing over time. Important to educate and communicate to the public about natural damage. Permitted divers can help to monitor the condition of the wreck site. They can also provide baseline research. Partners can lead to positive funding opportunities. Need to explore utilizing Sea Grant Extension Agents.
- Human damage—is it a diminishing threat to the *Monitor*? Will increased access increase the need to put safeguards in place, so as to mitigate the damage? Communication, education, and enforcement are important to help mitigate damage. Sport diving is a growing market and technology has changed drastically in recent years; therefore, the *Monitor* is now more reachable to a greater number of people. The depth is still deep and divers need to have a diver's experience card before safely diving the *Monitor*. There is a need to distinguish between human and natural impacts. An inventory of impacts would help to determine if human or natural. There must be quantifiable indicators. How would the

sanctuary monitor who is out on the wreck site and when? Could a web cam or site intrusion system help? Would they also be good tools to use so as to increase site availability to people who would never be able to go out and dive the wreck site? If the general public has more access to the site (through web cams and permits), then there may be less apathy.

- Cultural Values—There is a need to be more proactive. There is a need to educate the public on how tax dollars are spent on resources, so as to bring value to the economy. Also need to educate new politicians. Create a stewardship program that would help people to understand how to be good stewards, what stewardship means to NOAA and how NOAA and public are accountable for stewardship since public funds are used. Need to clarify public role for input into the process.

Public Comment Period

- Daniel Pouch commented that there is a need to have unity in the Outer Banks to come together as one. He encouraged protection and will do all he can to get the word out.
- Alex Varouxis asked if there was an evacuation plan for the *Monitor* artifacts at the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum. Mr. Schwarzer responded that there was not a plan because the safest place is inside the building. He explained that the building was built to withstand hurricane force winds and that high priority artifacts would be moved within the internal structure of the building if necessary. Mr. Varouxis also commented that he has only heard good things from the dive community, and he wants to continue to be a part of the process. He thanked the council for all that they do.
- Jay Kavanagh commented that any efforts towards expansion needs to proceed very cautiously. He cited recent experience with the National Park Service and how they originally promised access to the beach and now they have taken it away. Mr. Alberg said that the sanctuary is very sensitive to their fears and because we are listening, and that working groups have not begun on any expansion possibilities.
- Robert Pride commented that fishing access needs to be done cautiously also and thanked everyone for going through such an in depth process.

Public commenting period closed and group broke for lunch.

Permitting Process—Jeff Johnston

The MNMS first offered special use permits for non-research divers. Permits were requested yearly for about three years, but there has not been much interest in recent years. Since 2004, only one group has yearly requested a permit to conduct a private research expedition to the *Monitor*. The group has given us valuable information on the condition of the site. For the future, MNMS is looking into having a concessionary permit possibly in place by summer 2009. There is also a need to put a mooring system on the site, but there is then the issue of how to recap the cost. There are many questions

that will need to be answered before the concessionary permit is put into place, such as what's the baseline number of divers allowed on the site each year, do we want to limit the divers since divers are high on the list to gain access to the *Monitor*?

- Dave added that by April 2009, after looking at other models, we may have several types of permits in place.
- Jeff added that Florida's sanctuary has non-invasive permits. Many people have the perception that the *Monitor* is a non-access site, but it is not. So we need help from SAC to determine what type of permits we should have. We don't want to deny access, but too much access may be detrimental to the site.
- Jim Bunch asked how a person goes about getting a permit. Jeff said that anyone who wants a permit should contact him directly. The contact information and process is on the web site under Resource Protection in the side bar. Jeff said that it takes about two weeks to get a permit turned around. He also added that if other wreck sites become protected by the sanctuary system that does not mean that they will also require a permit to dive.
- Bob Neyland suggested that there needs to be a frequently asked question sheet distributed to the dive shops in the Outer Banks to help dispel myths about dive access. Joe Schwarzer suggested a poster with the information to be hung in the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum.
- Questions: Dave Conlin asked if we could make the permit process less restrictive. Alex Varouxis asked if it will limit other permits. Jeff responded "no and yes" and went on to explain that we always have to keep how best to minimize the impact to the *Monitor* in the forefront of our decisions. Ron Grayson asked if there was a training process that divers needed to go through before diving on the *Monitor*. Jeff replied that there is not any official training, but each permit request is looked at on a case-by-case basis. The current permitting guidelines expired in June 2008 and revised criteria will be put in place in January 2009.

ACTION ITEMS: Jeff will create a FAQ sheet and a poster design to better inform the dive public about the permitting process.

Scoping Process—Dave Alberg, Paul Ticco, and Shannon Ricles

Dave explained the timeline and why management plan is such a lengthy process due to public involvement. Ms. Ricles explained the public scoping meetings to be held in December:

- December 1, NC Aquarium, Manteo, NC
- December 2, NC Museum of History, Raleigh, NC
- December 3, NC Aquarium, Morehead, NC
- December 4, Graveyard of the Atlantic, Hatteras, NC
- December 6, The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA

Dave explained that the meetings will begin with a short presentation of the MNMS and then the public would be invited to comment. There will be a Federal Register Notice and a press release announcing the scoping meetings. We have also created a save-the-

date card, which will be mailed to everyone on our lists, dive shops, marinas, etc. Paul Ticco explained that the public will be broken into smaller groups to make it easier to fully collect their comments. Shannon went over the internal talking points and gave everyone a FAQ sheet to review.

Selection of Officers

Nominations were accepted for the secretary's position. Anna Holloway nominated Scott Boyd, Citizen at Large, and Susan Langley seconded the nomination. All were in favor, no one opposed.

Other Business

Navy alternate position remains vacant. Bob Neyland said that he would make recommendations, but the Admiral would send a letter announcing his choice for the position. It could be someone from the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. It was determined that the goal would be to have the Navy alternated onboard by next SAC meeting in January.

Closing Remarks and Film

Joe Schwarzer gave closing remarks thanking everyone for their time.

Shannon Ricles reminded everyone to submit their volunteer hours each month. She said that she would send a reminder at the first of each month for the previous month's hours.

Dave Alberg acknowledged that this council is very different from other councils in that it is not just local members. Instead we have cadre of expertise at the national level. The council is a unique group of people

CHOW film "What will you do?" was shown and Dave encouraged everyone to become involved in making a difference.

ACTION ITEMS: Bob Neyland will make recommendation to the Admiral for a Navy alternate. Shannon Ricles will make copies of the CHOW video and send to the SAC members. SAC members are to submit their volunteer hours each month.

Meeting Adjournment

Mr. Schwarzer thanked everyone for their attendance and dedication to the *Monitor* NMS. The meeting was officially adjourned.