



# **NEWS RELEASE FROM**

## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

### **NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION**

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### **FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE DELIVERS MARINE PROTECTED AREA RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMMERCE AND INTERIOR DEPARTMENTS**

The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee delivered its first set of recommendations for the creation of a national system of marine protected areas to the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior today.

The report, which is consistent with the Administration's U.S. Ocean Action Plan, recommends processes to establish a national system of marine protected areas (MPAs) built upon existing sites and new areas that meet specific criteria. The committee states that the system's goal should be "to enhance effective stewardship, lasting protection, and sustainable use of the nation's natural and cultural marine resources with due consideration of the interests of and implications for all who use and care about our marine environment."

"This report offers recommendations that are in line with NOAA's mission to manage coastal and ocean resources," said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "The goal is to develop MPAs as an important tool in the effort to produce benefits for the environment and the economy."

As called for in the committee's charter, the report will go through Admiral Lautenbacher to the Secretary of Commerce and through Rebecca W. Watson, assistant secretary of the interior for land and minerals management, to the Secretary of the Interior. The committee unanimously approved the report at its meeting last month in Portland, Maine.

The committee recommendations include:

- Primary responsibility for the creation and management of MPAs must lie with existing legal, statutory, and legislative authorities to the extent feasible.
- The public, user groups, tribes and state and local governments must be integral parts of the nomination, planning, implementation, evaluation and adaptive management process.
- There must be awareness of and respect for the sovereignty of states, territories, tribes and local jurisdictions. International commitments must also be respected.
- Incentives for participation and cooperation by government agencies and by existing and future stakeholders must be provided. Incentives might include training, technical assistance, or funding to offset the costs of participating in the national system.

“I am enormously pleased that the MPA Federal Advisory Committee has managed to work together in a spirit of goodwill to produce this document,” said Daniel Bromley, Ph. D., chairman of the committee and a professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “We expect that our work will contribute to the enhanced management and protection of our nation’s marine ecosystems.”

“I’m glad to see that the advisory committee emphasizes the need to involve the public, user groups, tribes, state and local governments in establishing and managing marine protected areas,” said Assistant Secretary Watson. “I know that a lot of wisdom resides outside the Washington Beltway. It’s right to invite these citizen stewards — folks who live near the oceans and Great Lakes, earn their living with these resources, or recreate in coastal areas — to work with us to protect and conserve our marine resources for future generations.”

These recommendations come at the end of the inaugural advisory committee’s two-year term, and are based on deliberations since the committee first met in June 2003.

Over the course of two years, the federal advisory panel has invited diverse MPA stakeholder groups to address the committee on issues of concern. These groups included representatives from fishery management councils, tribal and cultural panelists, recreational fishermen, scientists, as well as federal and state MPA program officials. Committee meetings were held in various regions to ensure broad public comments.

Authorized in 2000 by Presidential Executive Order 13158 to provide advice and recommendations to the Departments of Commerce and the Interior, the 30-member advisory committee represents scientists, academia, commercial and recreational fishermen, tourism, the oil and gas industry, state and tribal resource managers, environmentalists, and other resource users. Committee members are appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, in consultation with the Department of the Interior, and serve two-year terms. A new committee will be appointed later this summer and will meet in November.

The Committee’s report is available on [www.MPA.gov](http://www.MPA.gov). Transcripts, presentations, and other documents from past meetings also are posted on the Web site.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through research to better understand weather and climate-related events and to manage wisely the nation’s coastal and marine resources.

The Department of the Interior is the nation’s principal conservation agency. Interior serves as the steward for approximately 426 million acres of America’s public land, representing about 19 percent of the U.S. land surface and 66 percent of all federally owned land. Interior also manages mineral development on the 1.48 billion acre U.S. outer continental shelf.

On the Web:

Department of Commerce: <http://www.doc.gov>

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

Department of the Interior: <http://www.doi.gov>

Marine Protected Areas Center: <http://www.MPA.gov>