

**Minutes of Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
May 24-26, 2016
Acadia National Park, Schoodic Institute
Winter Harbor, Maine**

TUESDAY, MAY 24

Meeting Opening and Committee Business

The meeting was called to order by Designated Federal Official Lauren Wenzel. She welcomed all members and guests.

Chair George Geiger asked all members to introduce themselves. He then reviewed the agenda, noted some changes to the agenda (starting at 8:10 instead of 8:30 am), and asked for a motion that it be adopted. Gary Davis moved that the agenda be adopted and the Committee agreed.

George asked that the Committee approve the minutes from the December 2015 meeting. Jason Patlis noted that there were some typographical errors in the minutes. The minutes were approved, with noted corrections.

Welcome by Mark Berry (Schoodic Institute) and Kevin Schneider (Acadia National Park)

Mark Berry, President and CEO of the Schoodic Institute, welcomed all the members. He explained that Schoodic is a nonprofit partner that works with the National Park Service (NPS) and is one of 19 such research and education partnerships across the NPS. Schoodic focuses on ecosystem science, including bird, forest and ocean ecology. They target learning for all ages, including citizen science. He also described the history of the site, which was a US Navy listening post, and was converted to the research and education center after the base closed in 2002.

Kevin Schneider, Superintendent of Acadia National Park also welcomed the group. He is relatively new to Acadia, coming from a previous post at Yellowstone, and is still learning about marine resources. He said that Acadia is the NPS ninth most visited park and is an American icon that serves as an economic engine for the region. He also noted that 2016 is Acadia's as well as the NPS' centennial. Kevin talked about the opportunity to engage a wide cross-section of Americans through the centennial, as well as challenges facing Acadia. These include increasing visitors (need to address congestion), climate change, the need to reach youth, and a need for more science to inform management decisions (particularly through partnerships like those with the Schoodic Institute). Acadia was the first national park created entirely from philanthropy, and is complex with many small parcels and in-holdings.

Several members had questions for Mark and Kevin. Martha Honey asked Kevin if he had any reflections on the current effort to designate a land-based monument within Maine that has met with some local resistance. She commented on the legacy of philanthropy in establishing

Acadia National Park and Grand Teton, both donated in large part by the Rockefeller family. Mark Carr asked about what climate change impacts were being seen at the land/sea interface, and whether climate change is included in exhibits. Mark Berry said that changes in phenology are the most notable -- the growing season is now 60 days longer than 100 years ago. Kevin commented that climate change is not currently a focus on exhibits, but there are very few and the park is seeking to expand its exhibits. Kevin discussed the recent decline in Acadia's budget, and the need for more partnerships and funding to address growing needs.

MPA Center Update

Lauren provided a brief [update](#) on recent work by the MPA Center. She noted that 2016 has been a year of transition, with a growing international role, updates to the MPA Inventory, and a completely revised website soon to be launched. Key international activities include coordinating the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' role in World Heritage (working to add more marine sites to the World Heritage List), UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program, Sister Sites, international MPA capacity building, and preparing for the World Conservation Congress, which will be held in the US for the first time in September 2016.

Lauren also showed a demonstration of the beta version of the new website, which will be launched soon. Members liked the site and appreciated its simplicity and intuitive design. They also noted the importance of posting and easily locating FAC materials on the website.

Finally, Lauren noted that ONMS is currently updating its Strategic Plan, an excellent opportunity to better reflect the work of the MPA Center and the FAC within the Office. She also said that the MPA Center will update its own Strategic Plan once the ONMS plan is finalized later in 2016.

Department of the Interior Update

Cliff McCreedy (NPS) provided an update on the National Park Service's centennial, being marked by several initiatives, including "Every Kid in a Park." This program aims to get all 4th Graders with their classmates and youth organizations to experience a national park or other public land. Cliff also discussed the BioBlitz held at many coastal parks and at the national mall to identify species and engage the public in citizen science. He noted that both NOAA and NPS are working on sister MPAs with Cuba. Cliff also mentioned Biscayne National Park's recent management plan update, which established 6% of the park's waters in a "no take" marine reserve.

Arctic MPA Working Group - Report and Discussion

Lauren gave a brief [powerpoint](#) summarizing the work of the Arctic MPA Working Group, which was co-led by Lauren and Stephanie Madsen (At-Sea Processors Association). The working group completed their recommendations, in the form of "Guiding Principles" for MPAs and MPA networks in the Arctic. Margaret Williams and John Jensen were the other FAC members on the Arctic MPA Working Group. Margaret said this was an important time for the Arctic, which is changing before our eyes due to climate change and the new uses that are beginning due to receding sea ice. Margaret said that MPAs are an important tool for a sustainable Arctic, and

are part of international dialogue, including recent meetings between President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada.

FAC members discussed the process of reviewing and acting on the Working Group's report. They noted that the report could be substantively modified, but would then need to go back to the Working Group. The FAC recognized the diversity of perspectives balanced in the Working Group's report, and did not want to undermine their work. Joe Schumacker asked how the report and its ideas were received by Alaska Natives. Lauren and Margaret described the ways in which Alaska Native communities were engaged, and that the ideas they raised during the public meeting and in writing (importance of subsistence, need for substantive involvement of indigenous communities) were reflected in the final guiding principles.

Members agreed with the principles described by the Working Group, and decided to draft a cover letter that would articulate the FAC's position and perspective on this work. Members suggested that the cover letter should describe the report, how it should be used and who the audience is. Lauren agreed with work with members on a cover letter to be reviewed later in the meeting.

External Financing Subcommittee Report - Update

Brian Baird (The Bay Institute and Aquarium of the Bay) gave a powerpoint summarizing the work of the External Financing Subcommittee. Martha Honey (CREST) is the vice-chair. The working group has met twice by phone to discuss the ongoing development of the report which is expected to be ready for a full FAC vote by mid-August. The report will include finance categories for MPA sites to consider as ways to access external finance; a stepwise process to follow; a list of recommendations on the overall topic; case studies; examples; references; and possibly a matrix to assist sites in identifying categories that could work best for their particular MPA. FAC members asked about the review process and final audience for the report.

A discussion took place about the overall set of MPA documents which the FAC has developed over the years and how best to ensure they are well distributed and accessible. The idea of a central repository for FAC products was raised. Several members also recommended that the report include a caveat that sites should exercise due diligence regarding any possible legal restrictions or ethical issues before attempting to access external finance. Brian suggested that one of the final recommendations could be initiation of a federal trust fund. Jason Patlis commended Lauren and George for both subcommittee documents in development noting they will serve a broader purpose.

Connectivity Subcommittee Report - Update

Mark Carr (University of California Santa Cruz) presented a brief [overview](#) of the Subcommittee's plans and progress to date. The group has convened several times by teleconference and shared draft documents for review and input. The Subcommittee's final products will include: (Part I) a primer on the processes and consequences of spatial ecological connectivity in the ocean; (Part II) a summary of how connectivity can be taken into account in the design, management and use of MPAs and MPA networks to enhance their effectiveness;

(Part III) an exploration of the implications of climate change and connectivity on the effectiveness of MPAs and networks; and, (Part IV) a set of integrated recommendations to NOAA and DOI about incorporating connectivity into the design, management and use of resilient MPA sites and networks.

The full Committee broke for lunch, and then met in Subcommittees for the remainder of the afternoon.

Public Comment

No public comment was offered in person. Lauren noted two written public comments that were shared with the MPA FAC (see attached).

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

The FAC convened at 8:10, and then met in Subcommittees for the remainder of the morning.

Following lunch, the FAC departed on a field visit on the College of the Atlantic's vessel *Osprey* to tour Frenchman's Bay and learn about marine management of the area.

THURSDAY, MAY 26

Arctic MPA Working Group - Review of Cover Letter & Vote

The FAC convened at 8:10 a.m. The FAC reviewed and commented on the draft cover letter to accompany the "Guiding Principles for Marine Protected Areas and MPA Networks in the Arctic." Several members offered comments to the letter, including making reference to previous FAC work on cultural landscapes and on social science. The Committee considered editing the Executive Summary for length, but after some discussion, decided against this as it might open up the interpretation of some of the new language to different interpretations than those intended by the Working Group. The FAC voted by acclamation to adopt the edited cover letter and approve and transmit the [Working Group's recommendations](#).

At 9:30, the FAC broke into Subcommittees to continue working.

At 1:10, the FAC reconvened and heard updates from the two Subcommittees.

External Finance Report - Update

Brian Baird provided a closing report on the subcommittee's work and timeline for finalizing the report. The subcommittee plans to meet twice by phone during the summer to refine and complete the report. Brian discussed the potential utility of having the reports reviewed outside of the FAC, and before they are distributed to headquarters. It was suggested that the external review be considered if it could be conducted in a timely manner. He then summarized the subcommittee's draft recommendations which are focused on three categories: 1. big picture, 2. MPA Center and 3. MPA managers and supporter needs. They included the need to evaluate successes of terrestrial protected areas; potential legislative actions (e.g. establishing a national

trust fund); building capacity within the MPA Center; conducting a baseline survey on current funding practices; MPA website role in educating corporate America; consideration of the United Nation's sustainable development goal on the ocean (Goal 14); emphasizing the importance of sound management and business plans; caveats/legal considerations for soliciting funds; and recommendations for applied management.

Connectivity Subcommittee - Update

During the Maine meeting, the subcommittee accomplished all of its objectives, which include:

1. Finalizing Part I - the primer on connectivity.
2. Refining Part II - the illustration of the role of connectivity in MPA site and network design, management and use.
3. Reviewing and restructuring Part III - the examination of climate change and connectivity.
4. Developing a set of graphics illustrating key concepts in each of these background reports.
5. Scoping out an integrated set of recommendations for action by MPA agencies and their partners to enhance connectivity and site and network effectiveness in the face of climate change.
6. Develop a practical workplan and timeline for completing the Subcommittee's work in the coming months.

Panel Presentation: Marine Conservation Issues in the Northeast

Lauren introduced the four speakers who would be addressing marine conservation issues in the region (link to powerpoint presentations [here](#)).

- Ecosystem Impacts of Climate Change in the Gulf of Maine – Graham Sherwood, Gulf of Maine Institute
- Northeast Regional Ocean Plan – John Weber, Executive Director of Ocean Planning, Northeast Regional Ocean Council
- Community-based Nominations for Sanctuaries in the Northeast Region, Matt Brookhart, Acting Deputy Director, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
- Coastal and Marine Management at Acadia National Park, Rebecca Cole-Will, Chief of Resource Management

Graham Sherwood explained that the Gulf of Maine is warming faster than 99% of the world's oceans, and that several fish species are moving northward. This can cause problems for other species, and affect commercial harvests. For example, butterfish are not the right body shape for foraging seabirds to feed on. He also described increasing heat waves and the potential impacts of warming water on fisheries productivity. Graham also described changes in lobster phenology. Lobster now has a longer season, which can affect prices -- scientists are now trying to predict season start dates to assist the industry. Graham also discussed the closed areas in the Gulf of Maine for groundfish, including recently proposed changes that will result in more, smaller areas. GOMI is conducting research to see how well these areas are achieving their goals. Some closed areas have found 10 times the number of older cod inside than

outside - important because these include big, old, fecund female fish that produce many more eggs than younger fish (as well as sometimes producing them in multiple episodes and locations, resulting in better viability). He said that closed areas are the best tool for protecting old fish.

John Weber provided an update on the [Draft Northeast Ocean Plan](#). This was released on May 25 for a 60 day public review period. The plan was called for as part of the Obama Administration's National Ocean Policy, and is the first of the regional plans to be completed. John described the work involved in bringing together all of the key decision-makers (federal, state and tribal governments) as well as stakeholders. They created a [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#) to deliver ocean information. Agencies then commit to using this information within their existing review and management decisions. The portal includes information on both ocean uses and resources. The Northeast Regional Ocean Council is also looking at compatibilities among ocean uses and identifying ecologically important areas.

Matt Brookhart described the new (2014) Sanctuary Nomination Process that allows communities to nominate areas they believe are nationally significant and should be considered for Sanctuary designation. In the early days of the program, nominations came from NOAA, based on scientific criteria. The agency now wants to turn this process around and give communities the lead. All nominations are reviewed against established criteria, and those meeting the criteria are placed on the Sanctuary Inventory to be considered for designation (a separate process). Two community-based nominations --- Mallows Bay on the Potomac River in Maryland and Lake Superior in Wisconsin -- have been accepted to move forward for designation and have begun the public scoping process.

Matt noted that there has been tremendous interest in the nomination process in the Northeast and Great Lakes region, including:

- Apostle Islands (Lake Superior)
- Lake Ontario
- Baltimore, Hudson and Norfolk Canyons (off E. Coast)

Rebecca Cole-Will described the coastal and marine management issues at Acadia. She began by describing the context of Acadia, which includes 19 towns within the park boundary, had 2.75 million visitors last summer and has 65 miles of marine shoreline. Rebecca explained that Acadia was created in 1916 as a monument and later became a national park, built through donations of private land. This makes jurisdiction (both land and marine) very complicated since the deeds vary. Commercial harvesting is not allowed within the national park, but boundary issues are complex and sometimes disputed. Commercial activities in the marine environment include rockweed harvesting, clamming, worming and aquaculture leases. She also described the park's ethnographic and historical research, which has been a close collaboration with park communities, as well as work with four federally recognized tribes.

The discussion ranged across many issues raised by the speakers. Steve Kroll asked Graham about the process to establish closed areas. Graham responded that this was led by the

Fishery Management Council and was long and involved - originally focused to reduce groundfish mortality, but also addressing other goals as well. Several members commented on the Northeast Ocean Plan, and commended NROC on this accomplishment. Brian Baird asked about how the organizers worked with state governments. John said that all decision making was consensus based, and it time (especially at the beginning) to develop a common understanding of the issues and process. Others asked about geographic scale and data availability, funding (initially Congressionally appropriated, then a mix of sources including in-kind, nonprofit and competitive grants). Lauren asked whether Acadia has limited public access to intertidal areas because of visitor impacts. Rebecca said this has not been done, but the park is doing more science to better understand intertidal resources and use impacts.

A member of the public (a visiting group from the University of South Carolina) asked how the Sanctuary nomination process encourages ecotourism and conservation. Matt responded that economic opportunity associated with a sanctuary is one of the national criteria against which nominations are evaluated. Pete Stauffer asked what factors are considered as a nomination moves from the Sanctuary inventory to the designation process. Matt responded that once a nomination goes through the evaluation process and is placed on the Sanctuary inventory, it has been found to meet the criteria of being nationally significant. Moving to the designation process looks at other factors, including public and political support. Brian Baird asked how NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) was weighing decisions regarding expansion versus supporting existing sites. Matt responded that nominations are asked to identify partnerships that can help with funding or in-kind support, and ONMS has been impressed with the responses.

Future FAC Charge

Lauren explained that the charge to the MPA FAC is updated every two years, and is based on discussions with the FAC and with leadership at NOAA and DOI. She asked for input from members on ideas that should be considered for the future charge (2017-2019). The following ideas were suggested:

- Analysis of what authorities are available to create no take areas in federal waters.
- How to strengthen public support for and engagement with MPAs (relevance).
- Revisiting the National System of MPAs -- how can we encourage MPAs to become a part of this? What is its added value? What are the barriers?
- Blue Carbon and MPAs (this also connects to the UN Sustainable Development goal on oceans).
- How can US MPAs best work with MPAs in other countries? What are the most important opportunities to connect internationally?
- How can we learn from the National Park Service, particularly given the agency's reflections on its centennial? (Gary Davis mentioned the book -- "A Thinking Person's Guide to National Parks" as a good review of what NPS has been doing).
- Retrospective review of MPA Center and effect of the Executive Order -- what has worked and what didn't? Lessons learned. (Lauren mentioned that an [external review](#) of the MPA Center was done in 2012, but may be time for another look.)

- Explore a different kind of FAC product that takes lessons learned and packages them beyond white paper approach (in a public friendly, visual format).
- Technology for effective enforcement (enforcement was looked at by FAC in 2008; may be time for another look.)
- Monitoring -- how do we monitor MPAs? What does this tell us about MPA effectiveness?
- [MPA website](#) - review and provide feedback (also want to make sure FAC work remains visible).

Other discussions about FAC actions included:

- Seeking feedback from NOAA leadership on previous FAC letters regarding need for funding for MPA Center.
- Possible meeting of FAC leadership with NOAA leadership.

Closing

George and Lauren thanked the members again for their hard work and for a productive meeting. Lauren said that, based on Subcommittee reports, a virtual meeting would be scheduled for mid/late August to review and vote on the External Financing and Ecological Connectivity recommendations.

Attendance

MPA FAC Members

Brian Baird
 Mark Carr
 Gary Davis
 George Geiger
 Martha Honey
 John Jensen
 Stephen Kroll
 Stephanie Madsen
 Samantha Murray
 Ryan Orgera
 Jason Patlis
 Sarah Robinson
 Joe Schumacker
 Della Scott-Ireton
 Pete Stauffer
 Margaret Williams

Federal Ex Officio Members and Designees:

Cliff McCreedy, NPS
 Steve Tucker, USCG
 Lauren Wenzel, Designated Federal Official

NOAA and DOI Staff:

Gonzalo Cid, NOAA MPA Center
 Joanne Flanders, NOAA Office of Exploration and Research
 Valerie Grussing, NOAA MPA Center
 Charles Wahle, NOAA MPA Center