

**DRAFT MINUTES & MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee**  
**December 3, 2013**  
**Meeting via Teleconference, based in Silver Spring, MD**

**Meeting Opening and Committee Business**

The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. Eastern. PowerPoint presentations provided during the meeting were emailed to members by Lauren Wenzel and are posted at <http://www.marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/fac/meetings>.

The meeting was called to order by Designated Federal Official, Lauren Wenzel. George Geiger, MPA FAC Chair, welcomed members. Lauren Wenzel began with a review of virtual meeting logistics.

Lauren Wenzel called roll of MPA FAC members and *ex officio* members, who indicated their presence by raising their hands via the webinar interface or by verbally responding. There were 15 MPA FAC members in attendance, four *ex officio* members representing the Departments of Commerce, Interior, the Coast Guard and the Navy (see list of attendees).

Committee Chair George Geiger reviewed the agenda and noted changes to the previous version sent to the MPA FAC. He asked for approval by the FAC and the motion was carried to approve the meeting agenda.

Committee Chair George Geiger then asked if there were any changes, additions, or deletions to the May 2013 meeting notes. Those minutes were subsequently approved by the committee with no changes to text.

**Lauren Wenzel, Update from National Marine Protected Areas Center**

Lauren Wenzel, Designated Federal Official, then gave an update on the MPA Center's latest work. She began with a recap from the last two MPA FAC meetings, and noted that the advisory committee agreed to strengthen relationships with other groups – including other advisory bodies, stakeholder groups, and agency partners from federal and state MPA programs. The MPA FAC is also broadening their approach to work products, evolving from a focus on white papers to an approach encompassing both formal recommendations and more informal partnerships.

Lauren noted that as the MPA FAC moves forward, a big theme will be engagement. NOAA has expressed interest in greater collaboration among its Federal Advisory Committees, as appropriate, and the National Ocean Service is planning a conference call of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Integrated Ocean Observing System Advisory (IOOS) Committee and the Hydrographic Services Committee. George Geiger and Della Scott-Ireton will represent the MPA FAC on this call. The MPA FAC has worked closely with the IOOS Office in the past on MPA monitoring issues.

Lauren then noted the three primary focus areas for the MPA Center: capacity building; stakeholder engagement; and, information/tools/analysis. The latest MPA center publication, *Conserving Our Oceans, One Place at a Time* is an example of integrating these focal areas; it aims to communicate information for both MPA programs and the public in a simple and accessible manner.

As an example of capacity building, Lauren noted that the MPA Center has developed a monthly live online webinar series which attracts anywhere from 40 to 120 people. The MPA Center has also partnered with the University of Michigan on a project to share lessons learned about how MPAs can more effectively engage with local communities, and is receiving funding from DOI's Bureau of Ocean Energy and Minerals for a Tribal Cultural Landscapes project. In addition, the center is currently in the process of securing funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for a cultural resources toolkit.

With respect to information/tools/analysis, the MPA Center has developed an inventory of geospatial information on 1,700 MPAs nationally, and is now using that data to tell "MPA stories" including an analysis of MPA representativeness. The Center also plans to conduct a survey of MPA managers on the trends and implications of increasing recreational uses in the nation's MPAs.

Lauren noted that the national system of MPAs grew this year with the addition of 82 new sites for a total of 437 MPAs. In addition, Lauren reported that the Center's international role is growing. For example, the Center was involved in the planning of the International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3) – although, unfortunately, due to the furlough, NOAA staff were not able to attend. In addition, the MPA Center and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries are co-leading the marine theme for the upcoming 2014 World Parks Congress. This is an opportunity for forward thinking, and an important forum in which to lay the groundwork for a strong MPA agenda. Lauren described that this meeting takes place once in a decade, and that from the forum, new programs and tools are developed. The MPA Center is also co-leading a project funded by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation to map and advance the science for coastal habitats as important areas for carbon storage and sequestration (Blue Carbon).

Lauren also provided an update on the presentation to the MPA FAC at their May 1 meeting on developing a new classification system for MPAs to align the U.S. definition better with the international definition of MPA. After consulting with partners, the MPA Center decided to retain the existing classification, but to focus their analyses and reports on those categories of MPAs that most closely align with the definition established by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). That focus on natural heritage and cultural heritage MPAs (but not fisheries MPAs) is reflected in the new MPA report, *Conserving Our Oceans*. The international target for MPA coverage is 10% of coastal and marine waters in effective MPA networks by 2020. The U.S. currently has 8% of its waters in natural and cultural heritage MPAs.

In closing, Lauren noted that given the resource constraints affecting many government programs, the MPA Center needs focused to be most effective. Focal areas suggested for FY14 include: recreational uses in MPAs, the role of MPAs in climate change adaptation and mitigation; and cultural resource management in MPAs. Lauren also noted that the MPA Center is looking at questions including: Who is using MPA Center products (and how)? What is the return on investment for MPA Center efforts?

Lauren then opened the floor to questions.

### **Questions and discussion**

Michelle Ridgway asked if there was any engagement with the Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSR). Lauren responded that there has not been, but this can be explored. She noted that the MPA Center has been working with the Office of Coast Survey on getting MPAs on navigational charts.

Michelle commented that there might be good opportunities for collaborating on habitat mapping. Lauren suggested that any members interested in a conference call to discuss collaboration opportunities with the HSRP and the IOOS FAC should note their interest, and she would schedule a follow up call.

Priscilla Brooks asked about the Center's role in climate change adaptation and MPAs. Lauren responded that many MPA programs are working on climate change adaptation, and the Center can help share information among programs. An example within the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is the "climate smart sanctuaries" program. Michelle Ridgway commented that the MPA FAC has developed recommendations about MPAs and climate change that new members should be aware of (see link: [http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/pdf/helpful-resources/mpafac\\_tor\\_doi\\_5-3-10-1.pdf](http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/pdf/helpful-resources/mpafac_tor_doi_5-3-10-1.pdf).)

Robin Fitch, *ex officio* representative from the Navy, asked whether the MPA boundaries being included on navigational charts is also going to the Navy for inclusion in the PMAP system, so that the Navy operators have the most recent boundary information. Lauren said she would look into the question about get back to Robin.

#### **Update: Eileen Sobeck, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas**

Eileen reported on the recent success of the updated management plan for Biscayne Bay National Park in Florida, which has experienced a decline in coral and fish populations, and is heavily used by recreational fishermen and others. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission approved a fishery management plan and general management plan that will allow recovery areas for fish, and recreation fishing zone where permits are required. The process demonstrates that tailored approaches are needed to site specific management challenges.

Eileen also noted that the Coral Reef Task Force met recently in St. Croix, and discussed the importance of tourism and MPAs to the local economy.

With regard to the National Ocean Policy, Eileen described that all agencies are participating in the regional planning bodies, and that MPAs will be relevant to the regional ocean plans now being developed. The Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Caribbean and Pacific regional planning bodies have been established and have begun working on their regional plans.

#### **Questions and discussion**

Lauren Wenzel asked how we can ensure that MPAs are considered in the regional planning process. Eileen noted that different agencies are the lead for different regions, and that NOAA should reach out to the lead agencies, states and other stakeholders. She also commented that each region has their own priorities, and while MPAs may not be a focus, they should be considered as plans move forward.

Joe Schumacker asked how tribes are participating with the regional planning bodies. Eileen responded that she believes some funding was made available to foster tribal participation with the regional planning bodies, and would follow up. Priscilla commented that in the Northeast, there are 10 tribal members of the regional planning body, and Richard Getchell with the Aroostook Band is the co-chair.

Michelle Ridgway noted that as Alaska faces similar questions about tribal participation. For example, in the Arctic and Bering Strait tribes are interested in MPAs to protect sensitive areas that may be threatened by future commerce. Alaska has a tribal co-management group that wants to stay informed

about regional planning issues. Eileen responded that the state of Alaska has been reluctant to move forward with a regional planning body, but there is interest from other groups.

Robin Fitch mentioned that on the National Ocean Council recently sent letters to tribes in the Southeast related to that region's planning body.

Eileen concluded with a remark that the regional planning bodies should be set up in the next year, and that communication was very important step during this year with the focus on the regional level.

**Mark Schaefer, Ex Officio Member for Department of Commerce**

Lauren Wenzel introduced Dr. Mark Schaefer, the Deputy Under Secretary for Conservation and Management, who is the new ex officio member representing the Department of Commerce.

Mark spoke about his background. He has been at NOAA for three months and is responsible for oceans and fisheries issues. Mark previously worked under the Clinton Administration as a Deputy Secretary at Department of Interior on water and science issues, and at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. He believes that MPAs are one of the most tangible, visible actions that can be taken to protect marine resources. He noted that he appreciates the advice and guidance of the MPA FAC.

Mark commented that he is involved in the current administration's travel and tourism efforts via the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. He described increasing interagency activity as related to tourism, with the focus being getting people to visit special places, like MPAs and parks.

Mark concluded with remarks on the critical importance of stakeholder engagement. Despite budgetary restrictions, this is more important than ever. We face trends such as the continued loss of coastal wetlands, and need to use protected areas as a tool to educate and engage people in conservation.

George Geiger thanked both Mark and Eileen for their commitment and engagement with the MPA FAC in representing their agencies.

**Subcommittee update: Recreation and tourism - presentation by Priscilla Brooks, Subcommittee Chair**

Priscilla Brooks, reported on the MPA FAC's subcommittee on recreation and tourism. She began by naming and thanking subcommittee members and staff.

Priscilla Brooks mentioned that the subcommittee's charge was to examine the connections between MPAs, recreation and tourism. The charge from NOAA and DOI asked for the MPA FAC to provide advice about connections between MPAs and national-level Administration initiatives related to recreation and tourism such as America's Great Outdoors and the National Travel and Tourism Strategy.

Priscilla noted that the subcommittee plans to look at the travel and tourism issue by examining current trends and developing a set of guidelines or recommendations for sustainable management of recreation and tourism at MPAs. Priscilla mentioned that the Subcommittee originally intended to conduct a comprehensive survey about recreational uses at MPAs, but discovered that this would require OMB approval, and is more appropriately conducted by NOAA. The MPA Center will build on work by the Subcommittee to design a survey that will assess the status, trends and implications of increasing recreational uses in the nation's MPAs.

Meanwhile, the Subcommittee will work with graduate students to conduct a literature review on the subject, and will hold 4-6 webinars with select MPA managers in order to understand trends, challenges and opportunities. The subcommittee will then draft guiding principles for managing recreation and tourism at MPAs.

Priscilla noted that the subcommittee has drafted a letter to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior to encourage those agencies to enhance sustainable recreational uses in MPAs and support MPA Center efforts to gather more information on this subject. Priscilla then opened the conversation to comments on the letter from the FAC.

### **Questions and discussion**

Cliff McCreedy, National Park Service, noted that enhancing recreational use needs to take into account the stewardship requirements of the MPA. He suggested an edit to the letter to make this clearer. Michelle Ridgway noted the importance of reflecting passion for MPAs in communications, and agreed with Cliff's comments. She noted that people want to know how they can help MPAs. Sarah Robinson also agreed with this change, and suggested an edit to make clear that we're talking about all MPAs in the nation, not just federal MPAs. Joe Schumacker seconded the language changes, noting that they made the letter more clear and concise. Gary Davis, FAC member, voiced that the letter expressed an important topic, worth covering, but that there was no need to wordsmith.

Chair, George Geiger asked for any public comments on the letter, of which there were none. He then asked if there was any opposition to adopting the letter, and it was approved without opposition. He thanked John Jensen, the original chair of the committee, and Priscilla Brooks, the current chair.

### **Subcommittee update: Stakeholder engagement working group – presentation by Gary Davis, Subcommittee Chair**

Gary Davis noted that each member has ties to its own stakeholder group and this is helping to inform the work of the Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee. The subcommittee worked on identifying issues, crafting relevant messages and preparing messages for delivery, and assessing the efficacy of these messages.

Gary noted that the five products the group is currently working on include: a communications plan for fishing communities, the role of the MPA Center as an information sharing clearinghouse, developing peer-to-peer networks, stakeholder engagement on travel and tourism issues, and improvement of the MPA Center website.

Regarding the website recommendations, Gary noted that Felicia Coleman came up with detailed recommendations for an improved web presence, which were circulated to the full Committee for input. The Subcommittee would like to have the full FAC formally accept these recommendations.

With regard to the role of the Center as a clearing house for information, Gary mentioned that the Subcommittee is exploring the use of Yammer and Google drive as tools for flexible and easily used data sharing. A pilot for data sharing is being undertaken with NOAA and other scientists working on grouper/snapper in the Gulf of Mexico and Southeast.

With regard to peer-to-peer networks, Gary mentioned that the Subcommittee is continuing to explore communication via Open Channels, and a monthly webinar series.

With regard to a communication plan, Gary noted that a draft plan for tribal and fishing communities is in draft, which will include a concrete example of how MPAs work.

As for 2014, Gary noted that the working group's plan is to identify how to best connect with the target audiences, including citizen science. They ultimately aim to increase understanding of the issues related to MPA management.

Gary then opened the floor to questions, but there were neither questions nor comments.

Chair, George Geiger, asked if there was any public comment on the Subcommittee's presentation; there was none. George also asked, by a virtual show of hands, if there was any Committee objection to the work plan. Seeing none, the Subcommittee's recommendations on the website were accepted, and the workplan approved.

### **Discussion**

Lauren Wenzel mentioned that she appreciates the feedback on the MPA Center's website and will continue to accept future comments and suggestions. These edits are being made gradually, as the Center does not have a dedicated webmaster. George Geiger thanked Felicia Coleman for her work on reviewing the website.

Felicia Coleman thanked Lauren Wenzel. She then explained that the example case study of the deepwater grouper for the clearinghouse would bring academics as well as NOAA scientists together. The first call regarding the clearinghouse would be an organizational meeting. Felicia also mentioned that FAC members could join this group if interested. Lauren noted that Yammer is like a cross between Facebook and DropBox.

Chair, George Geiger, then moved the conversation to the cultural resources working group.

### **Update: Cultural resources working group – presentation by Della Scott-Ireton, Working Group Chair**

Della Scott-Ireton noted that working group plans to create a virtual toolkit promoting cultural resource management for MPA managers and staff. Contents would include: Cultural resource management 101; management plans; tribal issues including traditional ecological knowledge; underwater archaeology; and climate change impacts. The group secured funding from NFWF to develop the toolkit and will hold a workshop in person in early February. Lauren Wenzel noted that the NFWF funding originated with NOAA and DOI and illustrates the importance of even small amounts of funding from the agencies.

### **Update: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' Sanctuary Nomination Process – presentation by Matthew Brookhart**

Lauren Wenzel introduced Matt Brookhart and Liz Moore from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, to provide updates from ONMS.

Matt Brookhart, Chief of the Conservation, Policy and Planning Division at ONMS introduced his update on the sanctuary nomination process and the expansion of West Coast sanctuaries. He noted that the MPA FAC sent a letter to NOAA and DOI endorsing the reactivation of the nomination process one year ago, and thanked the FAC for their interest and support. ONMS issued a proposed rule earlier this year,

which will replace the Sanctuary Evaluation List (SEL). The new proposal focuses on a community-based, bottom-up approach. Since the deactivation of the SEL, many communities have recommended sites as potential Sanctuaries, but the agency lacked the authority to follow up. The public comment period on the proposed rule closed in August 2013, with approximately 19,000 comments. Sierra Club contributed to the majority of the comments (standard template), but at least 1,600 individual, substantive comments must be addressed. Nearly all the comments are in full support. The final rule is to be published in the first half of 2014.

### **Questions and Discussion**

Joe Schumacker asked how will NOAA evaluate nominated sites. Matt Brookhart answered that in the proposed rule, the public was asked to comment on the evaluation criteria. ONMS is currently working on responding to public comments on the criteria and the new criteria and process have changed significantly from what was originally proposed.

Joe Schumacker then followed-up to ask whether budgetary implications on new sites would be considered. Matt Brookhart responded that ONMS is required by law to look at budgets in designating new Sanctuaries. However, budgetary implications do not need to be considered during the nomination process.

Matt Brookhart then briefed the MPA FAC on two major proposed expansions to Thunder Bay and Gulf of the Farallones/Cordell Bank. He noted that NOAA has received support from local communities and elected officials on these expansions. Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary would increase in size from 1300 to 3000 sq. miles, and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, would increase from 530 to 1300 sq. miles. Matt mentioned that he anticipated final rules on these expansions in FY14.

Michelle Ridgway asked if new sites would have priority over expansion of current sites given the current budgetary constraints. Matt Brookhart responded that neither would be automatically prioritized over the other, but it will depend on specific circumstances, including community support and opportunities for partnerships. Matt noted that the ONMS budget has been level in recent years, so new sites will require additional funds –through appropriations and/or other types of partnerships.

With respect to site nomination, Michelle Ridgway noted that there are areas where new Sanctuaries may be easier to establish, versus places like Alaska where MPAs are a “heavy lift” due to political/budgetary challenges. Thus, regarding the final process, identifying resources to support a nomination will be important.

Steve Tucker, US Coast Guard, encouraged ONMS to begin discussions about implementation early in any expansion or designation process, noting that there should be a robust review as the office moves forward with rule making.

### **Update: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries’ Business Advisory Council – presentation by Liz Moore**

Liz Moore, Senior Policy Advisor, gave a brief overview of the Business Advisory Council (BAC) now being formed. She explained that it will be the first advisory council to operate across the whole system, rather than at a site. As such, it will operate according to the policies and procedures in the National Marine Sanctuary Act. The aim of the BAC would be to provide advice on how to the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries can better engage with the business community. The BAC would not advise on policy, management or site-based issues. As a system-level body, they would also advise and work on

behalf of the MPA Center, as part of ONMS. Currently, ONMS is in the process of vetting members. Seven corporate members have agreed to serve; the office is awaiting two responses and will be inviting six more members. The first meeting will be in DC, on January 29. Future meetings will be determined in consultation with BAC members.

### **Questions and Discussion**

Joe Schumacker asked what the ultimate goal of this advisory body was and if ONMS was looking for the support of the corporations on it. Liz Moore responded that the corporations joining will not be asked for any financial support or partnerships outside from the advisory body. Liz noted that there are significant problems facing our oceans and Dan Basta, Director of ONMS, believes it is important to engage everyone in solutions. Liz noted that the BAC is one way to engage a key audience in place-based ocean conservation.

Bret Wolfe, USFWS, asked how the BAC could help all MPA system partners. Lauren Wenzel noted that the BAC, as a system-level advisory body, would be providing advice to the MPA Center, as well as the Sanctuaries. Liz Moore added that the BAC's primary focus would be on the 14 sanctuary sites. Liz suggested that advisory bodies typically determine their own foci, so details will be developed together with the BAC. No government members will be a part of the advisory body.

Bret Wolfe asked how the BAC would differ from the Corporate Ocean Initiative and Secretary Kerry's ocean initiative. How would this council avoid redundancy? Liz noted that the group would be focused on MPAs, rather than more broadly on ocean conservation, and that connections with other groups would be made as appropriate.

Jason Patlis asked how the council would coordinate with the Sanctuary Advisory Councils (SACs) and the MPA FAC. Liz Moore responded that little interaction was planned with SACs. SACs are primarily concerned with their own sites. Connections with the MPA FAC may develop depending on the interests of both groups.

Sarah Robinson commented that she looked at the BAC website and from the language on it, was still left wondering if these businesses would be primarily marine, or might they be from other fields. Liz Moore responded that ideas have evolved some since the description on the Sanctuaries website, and that many, but not all the corporations have strong ocean connections.

### **Public Comment**

Chair, George Geiger: then opened up the floor to public comment.

Paul Engelmeyer responded, a member of the Audubon Society of Portland (OR) and member of the State's the Ocean Policy Advisory Committee. Paul works with many resources and MPAs. He complimented the recent report that was circulated by the MPA Center (Conserving Our Oceans), but thought it could have done more to note Oregon's efforts in reserve establishment. Paul suggested that more time be spent addressing the issue of marine reserves within federal waters, and that this discussion occur at the Large Marine Ecosystem scale. He urged the importance of continuing to work with Fishery Management Councils on MPAs in federal waters.

Paul then commented that most of US waters are still not in MPAs, and that we need a strategy to deal more comprehensively with ocean protection. He also noted that he appreciated the section from the report on blue carbon. He sees this solution as a great opportunity for conservation of coastal habitats. Paul closed his comments by noting that in engaging the public, more land/sea connections need to be made, such as the marbled murrelet. He also commented that citizen science, such as seabird monitoring, is a great way to engage the public.

George Geiger referenced the email address in the report to which Paul could direct his comments. Lauren Wenzel then gave her email and mentioned that she was happy to address Paul's comments directly.

Lauren Wenzel mentioned one written public comment that was circulated to all FAC members prior to the meeting from Helene Beck in Denmark, calling for the establishment of additional no-take areas to protect sensitive marine habitats.

### **Closing Discussion**

Chair, George Geiger announced his gratitude to the MPA staff and his appreciation to the FAC, thanking all who were in attendance.

Lauren Wenzel thanked the members and staff and then adjourned the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm, Eastern.

### **Attendance**

#### **FAC Members**

Dave Blazer  
Priscilla Brooks  
Felicia Coleman  
Gary Davis  
John Frampton  
George Geiger  
John Jensen  
Gary Kania  
Steve Kroll  
Jason Patlis  
Hans Radke  
Michelle Ridgway  
Sarah Robinson  
Joe Schumacker  
Della Scott-Ireton

#### **Ex Officio Members**

Robin Fitch, Navy  
Mark Schaefer, DOC  
Eileen Sobeck, DOI  
Steve Tucker, US Coast Guard

**NOAA and DOI Staff**

Robert Brock, MPA Center  
Michael Dukes, NOAA Legislative Affairs  
Joanne Flanders, NOAA Office of Exploration  
Cirse Gonzalez, ONMS  
Becky Holyoke , ONMS  
Brittany King, ONMS  
Cliff McCreedy, National Park Service  
Charles Wahle, MPA Center  
Lauren Wenzel , MPA Center  
Bret Wolfe, US Fish and Wildlife Service

**Guests**

Jay Sterne, Sen Murkowski's Office  
Paul Engelmeyer, Portland Audubon Society