

# MPA CONNECTIONS

Newsletter of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

January/February 2004

The mission of the National Marine Protected Areas Center is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas. *MPA Connections* was launched to meet continuing calls by agency and external stakeholders for information about MPA Center activities.

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## Message from MPA Center Director Joseph Uravitch

The National MPA Center made considerable progress in 2003. Among our major accomplishments were the appointment and convening of the MPA Federal Advisory Committee, completion of the nation's first national strategy for MPA social science, development of a value-neutral system for classifying MPAs, and the first teaching of our new course, "Understanding MPAs," at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California.

We anticipate significant progress in 2004. Our planned projects include:

--Completing the national inventory of marine managed areas

- Initiating the public process to develop the national system of MPAs and national list of MPAs
- Developing a national MPA natural science strategy to complement the existing national MPA social science strategy
- Working in partnership with the Pacific Federal Fishery Management Council to demonstrate collaborative consideration of MPA development on the west coast across programs in a manner fully integrated with contemporary fisheries management under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Act
- Continuing our site stewardship improvement support through the development of a new course on MPA management effectiveness

We'll be adding field-based and/or national expertise in the natural and social sciences. We will also jump-start our cultural resources program by establishing a full time capability to work with tribes and native peoples and the archeological and maritime history communities.

We foresee a productive year and look forward to working with you.

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### **NOAA Launches Redeveloped Web Site on U.S. Marine Protected Areas**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, has re-developed the U.S. Web site on marine protected areas, providing an easier way to access updates on Presidential Executive Order 13158 on marine protected areas (MPAs). The user-friendly site contains improved and expanded information on topics such as MPA definitions, federal MPA legislation and programs, the marine managed areas inventory, the MPA Federal Advisory Committee, and online regional information centers. NOAA is an agency of the Department of Commerce.

The redeveloped Web site, <http://mpa.gov>, also includes frequently asked questions about MPAs, a glossary of terms related to U.S. MPAs, and archived portions from the original Web site. In addition, an extensive keyword search has been created for the online library. The library currently contains more than 1,000 resources on MPAs.

The MPA Web site, managed by the National Marine Protected Areas Center, offers improved navigation, extended topic selections, and a colorful new look. The National MPA Center is a collaboration between the Departments of Commerce and the Interior.

MPA Executive Order 13158 mandates that the Departments of Commerce and the Interior maintain a Web site as a main source of information about the nation's MPAs. The Executive Order was signed in May 2000, and the related Web site was launched in December 2000.

For more information online:

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

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

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

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**Clarifying Misconceptions about Marine Protected Areas**  
**(Eighth Part in a Series)**

**Misconception: The public is not consulted in decisions made about establishing, managing, evaluating, and/or monitoring marine protected areas.**

**Reality: Public involvement is crucial to the MPA decision-making process.** While there may be disagreements about the extent, nature, or outcome of a public process, public involvement generally is required by law. During the past few years several federal and state agencies have undertaken public planning processes to determine the value, effectiveness, and use of existing and new MPAs.

In many cases, government agencies seek public input on the design, location, and management plan for new MPAs or no-take areas within existing MPAs. Approaches used to gather stakeholder input varies widely depending on agency-specific requirements, policies, timelines, and other constraints. Public engagement in these different planning processes ranges from sustained substantive involvement over several years, to more limited participation focused mainly on commenting on internally generated preliminary plans.

For example, the National Marine Sanctuary Program periodically reviews sanctuary management plans, relying on public input from both local and national communities. This process begins with the release of a "State of the Sanctuary" report that provides information to the public about the sanctuary, its accomplishments, and current resource management issues. Following the release of these reports, the sanctuaries hold public scoping meetings, develop action plans, and prepare a draft management plan. Formal public hearings on the draft plan help staff revise the document into a final management plan, which, once approved, will outline the sanctuaries' priorities for the next five to 10 years.

Currently, the National Marine Sanctuary Program is updating the management plans for the Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, Monterey Bay, and Stellwagen Bank sanctuaries. This process includes a review of the resource protection, education and research programs, the program's resource and staffing needs, and regulatory goals and sanctuary boundaries. (To learn more, visit [http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan/.](http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan/))

The National MPA Center has sought public input on the criteria used to develop a comprehensive inventory of marine managed areas in the United States. The MPA Center published its request for input in the Federal Register Notice and on the MPA website. In addition, during MPA Federal Advisory Committee meetings, a portion of the Committee's schedule is set aside so that members of the public can address the Committee.

Fishery Management Councils also provide for public participation in the development or amendment of fishery management plans. For instance, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is currently holding a series of informational public hearings to collect input from area fishermen and others that may be impacted by the designation of MPAs in federal waters. The Council is considering the use of MPAs as one of several management options to address overfishing for some deepwater species of fish included in the Council's snapper/grouper management complex. (To learn more, visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/partnerships.htm>.)

The Northwest Straits Commission is a 13-member body that represents seven Marine Resource Committees (MRCs), Indian tribes, and the state of Washington. The MRCs are citizen-based committees appointed by local elected officials in each of the seven northwestern counties of Washington. The role of the MRCs is to determine local needs and to carry out habitat restoration, rehabilitation of marine populations, and outreach to citizens on marine environmental concerns and solutions. The Commission has numerous public participation meetings scheduled in 2004 to address various issues surrounding existing and new MPAs. (To learn more, visit <http://www.nwstraits.org/nsc.html>.)

Clearly, federal and state agencies view constructive public engagement in MPA planning, managing, evaluating, and monitoring as essential to achieving conservation goals.

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#### **MPA Federal Advisory Committee News**

The next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for April 6-8, 2004, in Key Largo, Florida. Details and a draft agenda will be posted on <http://mpa.gov/fac> soon.

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#### **MPA Center Completes Technology Needs Assessment**

From March to July 2003, the National Marine Protected Areas Center's Training and Technical Assistance Institute, housed at the NOAA Coastal Services Center, conducted a technology needs assessment. The assessment aimed to gather information on MPA-related applications of technology and to gauge technical capacity within the marine management community. The results will guide the National MPA Center, the Coastal Services Center, and other assistance providers as they design services and products to support U.S. marine protected areas.

In conducting the technology needs assessment, interviews were conducted with coastal managers, scientists, and technology specialists from federal and state entities involved with MPA management or enforcement activities. Interviewees were asked to identify and discuss three high-priority management issues that could be addressed through the application of technology.

Priority issues identified by those interviewed fall into three main categories: marine habitats, enforcement and boundaries, and monitoring the marine environment. The needs assessment has identified a number of technology needs that the National MPA Center, the NOAA Coastal Services Center, and other training and technical assistance providers should begin to address.

The process of addressing these needs should begin with:

- Expanding technology use in MPAs,
- Communicating the pros and cons of the variety of available benthic mapping technologies,
- Acquiring data that can be used to improve modeling efforts,
- Utilizing technology applications to address social and natural sciences,
- Improving accessibility of data and training,
- Continuing and expanding efforts to utilize historical data sets, and
- Evaluating the utility of existing tools and trainings.

For the full-text report, visit: [http://mpa.gov/mpa\\_center/tech\\_institute](http://mpa.gov/mpa_center/tech_institute) or [http://www.csc.noaa.gov/mpa/mpa\\_needs.html](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/mpa/mpa_needs.html)

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**Improved MPA Definitions: An Overview of the New MPA Classification System**  
**Developed by the National MPA Center**

When the National MPA Center completed its MPA Needs Assessment in 2002, one of the main issues identified in the report was general confusion over the definitions of various types of MPAs. There are many people who think all MPAs are no-take areas, or marine reserves. Others think all MPAs are multiple use areas.

In part, confusion arises because the same word may be used to name an area designated by a state or federal program, but the level of protection provided and the underlying statute will differ. For example, there is a federal National Marine Sanctuary Program and a Massachusetts Ocean Sanctuary Program. One is established by federal law and one is established by state law, and they differ in purpose and regulatory authority.

The MPA Center has been developing a definition system to help improve understanding of the different types and purposes of MPAs. This work has resulted in an MPA classification system that is designed to be consistent, relatively simple, and an accurate reflection of MPA goals and approaches.

The classification system breaks MPAs into six fundamental characteristics of design and management. They are:

- Primary Conservation Goal
- Level of Protection
- Permanence of Protection

- Constancy of Protection
- Scale of Protection
- Allowed Extractive Activities

Over the next several months, MPA Connections will include a series of articles featuring each of these characteristics, including MPA examples or applications of each. For the March issue of *MPA Connections*, we will focus on the Primary Conservation Goal. In the meantime, if you would like to read more about these definitions, please visit [http://mpa.gov/what\\_is\\_an\\_mpa](http://mpa.gov/what_is_an_mpa).

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### **Question of the Month: Where can I find concise definitions of MPA-related terms?**

The redeveloped website on marine protected areas now includes a glossary, located on the top tool bar, with terms related to United States MPAs. Many of the words included in the glossary are also used in the ongoing inventory of marine managed areas across the country. The online glossary will be updated periodically. You can access the site by going to: <http://mpa.gov/glossary>.

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### **Events and Conferences**

#### February

12 – 17: American Association for the Advancement of Science, Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington: [www.aaas.org/meetings](http://www.aaas.org/meetings).

20 –21: Dive into Education: Workshop for Hawai'i Educators; Honolulu, Hawaii: <http://hawaiireef.noaa.gov/education/diveintoed.html> or contact [Christine.Brammer@noaa.gov](mailto:Christine.Brammer@noaa.gov).

25: U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, Eleventh Meeting, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.coralreef.gov>.

#### March

1-2, Gulf of Maine Council Working Group meeting, Walpole, Maine, <http://www.gulfofmaine.org>

8-10: OCRM Annual Program Managers Meeting, Washington, D.C.

21 – 27: White Water to Blue Water Conference, Miami, Florida: [www.international.noaa.gov/ww2bw](http://www.international.noaa.gov/ww2bw).

27: Understanding MPAs Workshop, Seattle Aquarium, Washington.

30-April 1: Regional Social Science Strategy Research Strategy Workshop, Honolulu, Hawaii.

#### April

6-8: MPA Federal Advisory Committee Meeting; South Florida.

12-14: Federal Fishery Management Council Chairs and Executive Directors, Hawaii.

19-22, National Tribal Environmental Council Conference, Myrtle Beach, Florida,

<http://www.ntec.org/>

#### May

2-6: Fourth World Fisheries Congress, Vancouver, British Columbia. Theme is "Reconciling Fisheries with Conservation: The Challenge of Managing Aquatic Ecosystems." <http://www.worldfisheries2004.org>.

3-6, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Annual Meeting, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, <http://www.nafws.org/2004Conference.htm>

5-6: U.S. Man and the Biosphere National Committee, Reactivation Planning Meeting, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Missouri.

23-26: The Coastal Society's Biennial Conference, Newport, Rhode Island:

<http://www.thecoastalsociety.org/conference/tcs19/index.html>

#### June

17-20, Indigenous Environmental Network Protecting Mother Earth Conference, Bear Butte, South Dakota: [http://www.ienearth.org/13conf\\_2004.pdf](http://www.ienearth.org/13conf_2004.pdf)

21-24, Gulf of Maine Council meeting, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, <http://www.gulfofmaine.org>

27-30: Coastal Zone Canada, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. Theme is "All Within One Ocean: Co-operation in Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Management." <http://www.czca-azcc.org/index2.htm>

#### July

30-August 2: Society for Conservation Biology, 18th Annual Meeting, New York. The MPA Center's Science Institute will convene a special session on "Incorporating Non-Use Values into MPA Planning." <http://cerc.columbia.edu/scb2004/>

September

12-15: Restore America's Estuaries, Second National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration, Washington State Trade and Convention Center, Seattle, Washington:  
<http://www.estuaries.org/>

October

26-29, Gulf of Maine Summit, St. Andrews, New Brunswick,  
<http://www.gulfofmainesummit.org/>

2005

October 23-27, The First International Marine Protected Areas Congress,  
Geelong, Australia, <http://www.impacongress.org/>

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