

CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

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The framework for a comprehensive, science-based and effective national system of marine protected areas (MPAs) in U.S. waters was published in November 2008, and is available at www.mpa.gov. The national system will include eligible existing MPAs across all levels of government, as well as those established in the future by agencies to protect important habitats and resources.

CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Marine protected areas (MPAs) have been established by federal, state, territorial and local governments to protect a wide range of natural and cultural resources. MPAs may have been established to protect a ship, aircraft, or other cultural artifact that rests on or is embedded within the sea floor. These resources also may be present in MPAs established primarily for natural heritage conservation purposes. The knowledge gained through careful research and analysis of historical artifacts scattered throughout our oceans and Great Lakes is fundamental to understanding our nation's maritime heritage. By continuing to preserve, protect, and respect these nonrenewable resources, we can ensure that our nation's cultural resources are available for future generations.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF SUBMERGED CULTURAL RESOURCES?

The *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America* defines cultural heritage as "the cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea, and the uses and values they provide to present and future generations."

Examples of submerged cultural resources found in the United States include historic shipwrecks, submerged remains of piers and docks, sunken naval vessels and aircraft, and submerged prehistoric remains, as well as cultural sites that are paramount to a culture's identity and/or survival, such as a sacred site for a Native American nation. The Framework's definition of "marine" includes only submerged areas (including the intertidal zone), so cultural resources on land such as lighthouses or remains of historic coastal settlements are not included within the national system of MPAs.

HOW WILL THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MPAs BENEFIT CULTURAL HERITAGE MPAs?

The national system of MPAs will strengthen the protection of cultural heritage resources by enhancing coordination among MPAs and conducting regional gap analyses to identify areas that contribute to the system's priority conservation objectives that would benefit from additional protection.

The MPA Center will partner with various agencies, states, and tribes that manage submerged cultural heritage resources to: collect, analyze and distribute information about cultural heritage MPAs; raise public awareness of the value of cultural heritage resources and the MPAs that protect them; and build the capacity of cultural heritage resource managers through information and training. The benefits of these activities include increased capacity for cultural resource management, strategic planning and evaluation, as well as education and outreach programming.



A diver inspecting the tower of the U 701 Shipwreck in North Carolina. Photo credit: Steve Sellers, NOAA

NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center's mission 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. The MPA Center works in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and stakeholders to develop a science-based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. These collaborative efforts will lead to a more efficient, effective use of MPAs now and in the future to conserve and sustain the nation's vital marine resources.



EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE MPAs IN THE NATIONAL SYSTEM



Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary: The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve was the first National Marine Sanctuary established in the Great Lakes. This region contains approximately 160 shipwrecks that span more than a century of maritime history. The sanctuary strives to protect and preserve shipwrecks through research and education.



Kaho'olawe Island Reserve: Encompassing the island of Kaho'olawe and surrounding waters in Hawaii, the reserve is a former military range containing unexploded ordnance. Today, the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission allows only permitted activities for Native Hawaiian cultural, spiritual, subsistence, preservation, restoration, and educational purposes.



U-1105 Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve: Maryland's first shipwreck preserve, established in 1994, is the wreck site of U-1105, a WWII-era German submarine outfitted with an experimental rubber skin. Experiencing only one successful mission, U-1105 ultimately was sunk by the U.S. Navy as part of demolition and salvage experiments. The Preserve promotes the preservation of historic shipwreck sites while making them accessible to the general public.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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