

THE NATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS CENTER



ABOUT MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

In the ocean, as on land, some places are more important than others. Consequently, coastal societies around the world have chosen to protect these important areas in order to sustain their ecological, cultural and economic benefits for this and future generations. Marine protected areas are special places with long term protection, and have a critical role in America's future. Familiar examples include National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and their state, local and tribal counterparts.

MPA CENTER MISSION

The National Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center) was established under Executive Order 13158 (May, 2000) to connect and strengthen the nation's diverse marine protected area programs and to create a National System of Marine Protected Areas. The national system enables MPA programs to increase their impact by working together strategically on shared conservation goals.

HOW WE WORK

The MPA Center is located within NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and works with the Department of Interior to serve as a resource to all federal, state, territorial and tribal programs responsible for the health of the nation's oceans. The MPA Center works in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and stakeholders to build a National System of Marine Protected Areas, and to support and enhance existing marine protected area programs.



KEY FUNCTIONS

The MPA Center focuses on three primary functions:

- Building capacity of federal and state marine protected area programs to more effectively manage natural and cultural marine resources.
- Communicating with and engaging stakeholders to help connect marine protected areas to communities.
- Serving as a unique and neutral source of marine protected area-related science, information and tools for coastal and ocean decision-makers.

The Nation's Hub for Building Innovative Partnerships and Tools to Protect Special Ocean Places

www.mpa.gov

PRIORITY PROJECTS AT THE MPA CENTER



Stewardship of the National System of MPAs. The MPA Center supports member sites from federal and state agencies to share and leverage capacities to meet today's conservation challenges, including climate change adaptation.

<http://www.mpa.gov/nationalsystem/>



Engaging Stakeholders. The federally authorized MPA Federal Advisory Committee is a 20-member stakeholder body that has been instrumental in engaging key stakeholder groups on the development and implementation of an effective and equitable National System of MPAs and related MPA issues.

<http://www.mpa.gov/nationalsystem/>



Understanding our MPAs. The MPA Center created and maintains a unique geospatial database, the MPA Inventory, that provides information, maps and other products on the characteristics, resources and authorities of the nation's 1,700 MPAs.

<http://www.mpa.gov/dataanalysis/mpainventory/>



Explaining MPAs. Visited over half a million times each year, the MPA Center's website, www.mpa.gov, is the leading source for information on U.S. marine protected areas for resource managers, scientists and the general public.

<http://www.mpa.gov/>



Spotlight on Ocean Uses. Recognizing the need to comprehensively plan for human uses of the ocean, the MPA Center is developing innovative tools for understanding patterns, requirements, conflicts and compatibilities of the full spectrum of human activities in the nation's coastal and ocean waters.

http://www.mpa.gov/dataanalysis/ocean_uses/



Sharing Lessons Learned. The MPA Center works with other MPA programs to provide training and capacity building to marine protected area managers and staff in the U.S. and internationally.

<http://www.mpa.gov/resources/training/>

Lauren Wenzel
Acting Director, National MPA Center
(301) 713-7265
Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov

