

NATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS CENTER FY 2011 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

www.mpa.gov

NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center) works in partnership with the Department of the Interior and other federal, state, territorial, tribal and local agencies to support marine protected area programs through the National System of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The national system was established to leverage the capabilities of over 100 MPA programs that span the nation's coastal, marine and Great Lakes regions in order to strengthen natural and cultural marine resource conservation and represent diverse U.S. marine ecosystems.

The national system became a reality in 2009 with the publication of the *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America* (Framework) and acceptance of 225 existing federal, state, and territorial MPAs into this voluntary partnership, and will expand over time as more MPAs participate. Currently, as of February 2011, 258 MPAs are members of the national system.

In FY2011, the MPA Center was funded at \$2.128M. These funds support scientific, technical, training, information, planning, coordination, outreach, and communication activities. The MPA Center's foci for action, based on Executive Order 13158 (May, 2000) requirements and guidance from federal, state and territorial national system partner agencies, are to enhance the effectiveness of MPAs and MPA networks through :

1. Engaging Partners and Stakeholders
2. Developing and Analyzing Geospatial Information
3. Advancing MPA Science
4. Building Capacity of MPA Partner Programs

ENGAGING PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS:

- Participate in the Administration's implementation of National Ocean Policy to highlight the role of MPAs as a critical component of coastal and marine spatial planning, ecosystem approaches to management, ecosystem protection and restoration, and other objectives.
- Conduct an annual round of nominations to include existing MPAs in the national system
- Seek the advice of the Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee to develop strategies for accomplishing conservation objectives for the cultural heritage component of the national system
- Support the MPA Federal Advisory Committee in the development of recommendations on MPAs and coastal and marine spatial planning, more effective conservation at the land/sea interface, and fostering resilient communities
- Complete NOAA guidelines for implementing the requirement to "avoid harm" to resources protected by national system MPAs
- Conduct outreach on the national system to non-participating MPA programs; scientific, technical, and education agencies and institutions; and stakeholders
- Partner with the Integrated Ocean Observing System, regional ocean governance initiatives, and the Coral Reef Conservation Program to address conservation priorities



The MPA Center's website: www.MPA.gov

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.



ENGAGING PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS, CONTINUED:

- Improve access to and utility of information on the www.mpa.gov website, including the MPA Virtual Library and databases
- Establish an MPA Center Facebook page, and engage partners and stakeholders through social media
- Complete short web-based videos on MPAs role on conserving natural heritage, cultural heritage and sustainable production



The MPA Center's online MPA Mapping Tool, available at: <http://www.mpa.gov/mpaviewer/>

DEVELOPING AND ANALYZING GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION:

- Expand the MPA Inventory to include information on the natural and cultural resources within MPAs, and their legal authorities, to support a wide range of applications
- Complete Ocean Uses Atlas Workshops in Hawaii, and initiate in other places based on resources and need
- Partner with the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science to conduct a Spatial Resource Assessment for the California coast as a “proof of concept” for identifying ecologically important areas within and outside MPAs to inform MPA planning as well as coastal and marine spatial planning

ADVANCING MPA SCIENCE:

- Launch “MPA Science Briefs” to make scientific information about MPAs readily available to the general public
- Conduct a North American MPA Network workshop with scientists from Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to develop scientific guidelines for MPA network design and management to address expected climate change impacts
- Coordinate symposium on MPAs and Sustainable Fisheries at the American Fisheries Society annual meeting

BUILDING CAPACITY OF MPA PARTNER PROGRAMS:

- Award National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) MPA partnership grants for stewardship and planning for FY2011
- Support implementation of FY2010 NFWF projects, including the development of a regional MPA network for the Gulf of Mexico
- Work with federal, state, territorial and tribal MPA Partners Workgroup members to develop a National System Communications Strategy and priorities for FY2012
- Conduct a training and capacity needs assessment for MPA Partners and design training opportunities and materials to address priority needs
- Provide national system outreach and education information to new national system programs and sites
- Conduct “in-reach” to partner programs to ensure understanding of and participation in the national system



Participants at the National System Partners Workgroup Retreat

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