

NATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS CENTER FY 2010 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

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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. It is charged with establishing and implementing a comprehensive, scientifically-based, effective National System of Marine Protected Areas (national system) representing diverse U.S. marine ecosystems and natural and cultural resources. The national system was established to leverage the capabilities of over 100 existing federal, state, territorial and tribal MPA programs that span the nation's coastal, marine and Great Lakes regions in order to strengthen natural and cultural marine resource conservation. 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.

A total of \$3,000,000 has been appropriated for the MPA Center for FY2010. These funds will support MPA Center staff, and national MPA system-related scientific, technical, training, information, planning, coordination, outreach, and communication activities. The MPA Center's foci for FY2010 action, based on Executive Order requirements and recommendations from the June 2009 National System Partners Retreat, are:

1. **Strengthening Marine Conservation through the National System Partnership**
2. **Planning for the Future of the National System Partnership**
3. **Engaging Stakeholders and the Public in Support of the National System and Marine Conservation**

ACTIVITIES: STRENGTHENING MARINE CONSERVATION THROUGH THE NATIONAL SYSTEM PARTNERSHIP

- Form a Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group to help develop the vision for the scope of the cultural heritage component of the national system, and strategies for accomplishing conservation objectives
- Conduct a second round of nominations to include existing MPAs in the national system
- Meet with federal, state, territorial and tribal MPA Partners Workgroup to review system implementation and identify priorities for FY2011
- 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
- Develop a robust national system partnership section on www.mpa.gov
- Provide National Fish and Wildlife Foundation MPA partnership grants for stewardship and planning
- Provide climate change and MPA network training in partnership with NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
- Expand participation of national system members in the North American MPA Network's ecological scorecard reporting project
- Develop NOAA guidelines for implementing the requirement to "avoid harm" to resources protected by national system MPAs



Participants at the first annual MPA Partners Workgroup meeting

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.



ACTIVITIES: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM PARTNERSHIP



A participant of the Ocean Uses Atlas Workshop in California uses GIS technology to indicate areas of human use in the ocean

- Participate in the Administration's Ecosystem-Based Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning initiative to highlight the role of MPAs as a critical component of coastal and marine spatial planning
- Develop the ecological gap analysis methodology at regional and national scales, consistent with broader ecosystem-based coastal and marine spatial planning efforts.
- Develop a framework for conducting the cultural heritage gap analysis
- Develop ecological databases from the shore to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for Oregon and Washington
- Complete Ocean Uses Atlas Workshops in New Hampshire, Maine, and Hawaii, and initiate in other places based on resources and need
- Enhance the MPA Inventory by adding new data fields
- Conduct tri-national North American MPA Network workshop on climate change and networking considerations for the identification of priority conservation areas
- Partner with the Integrated Ocean Observing System, regional ocean governance initiatives, and the Coral Reef Conservation Program to address conservation priorities
- Provide MPA information to mariners by including MPA information on navigational materials in partnership with NOAA's Office of Coast Survey
- Lead the pilot project to list U.S. MPAs for the Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife of the Wider Caribbean Region (SPA-W) in conjunction with the National Ocean Service International Programs Office and Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

ACTIVITIES: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM AND MARINE CONSERVATION

- Support the MPA Federal Advisory Committee in the development of national system recommendations
- Conduct outreach on the national system to non-participating MPA programs; scientific, technical, and education agencies and institutions; and stakeholders
- Partner with Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers to communicate information about the North American MPA Network, the national system, and the MPA Center to the public
- Improve access to and utility of information on the www.mpa.gov website, including the MPA Virtual Library and databases
- Publish an MPA networks edition of the National Marine Educators Association's *Current* journal



www.mpa.gov: the MPA Center's website on the national system of MPAs

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