



National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Representatives Webinar

Thursday, March 23, 2017

During the 2016 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit, advisory council chairs and representatives requested the opportunity to connect with headquarters and one another at additional points throughout the year. The notes below, organized by speaker, document the site updates, questions, and shared experiences that resulted in the third, post-summit virtual meeting.

AROUND THE CALL ORDER OF CHAIRS/REPRESENTATIVES BY SITE COUNCIL (selected randomly):

- 1) Chris Bergh, Vice Chair, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 2) Carol Shafto, Chair, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 3) Kelley Anderson Tagarino, Chair, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Advisory Council
- 4) Lee Whitford, Chair, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 5) Rick DeVictor, Chair, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 6) Jim Tobin, Chair, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council; Joe Poe, Vice Chair, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 7) John Largier, Chair, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 8) Tim Johns, Chair, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Advisory Council; Linda Paul, Vice Chair, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Advisory Council
- 9) George Clyde, Chair, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 10) Solomon Pili Kaho'ohalahala, Chair, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 11) Margaret (P.J.) Webb, Chair, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 12) Dianne Black, Chair, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 13) Richard (Rich) Delaney, Vice Chair, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- 14) Clint Moore, Chair, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

UPDATES FROM ACROSS THE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

John Armor, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Mr. Armor kicked off the call with his appreciation for the time each chair and representative took to participate in this webinar, the third held since the January 2016 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit. He emphasized that the primary purpose of this webinar was to enable chairs to communicate with one another; however, he caveated that statement with a few pertinent updates that have occurred since the last chairs' webinar in September 2016.

In late February 2017, the U.S. Senate confirmed the new Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross. Mr. Armor reported that Secretary Ross has "hit the ground running" in the few weeks since he has been a part of the department. Mr. Armor said the secretary has an investment banking background and will likely look at the department through that lens. Mr. Armor noted that Secretary Ross gave a welcome address to Washington, D.C. departmental staff on his first day in office (<https://www.commerce.gov/news/secretary-speeches/2017/03/us-secretary-commerce-wilbur-l-ross-jr-addresses-department-commerce>). In that address, the secretary discussed his departmental priorities, many of which were related to trade; however, Secretary Ross also hit on some topics relevant to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), such as weather and sustainable fishing. Mr. Armor stated that a new NOAA Administrator has not been nominated yet. Mr. Armor said that Benjamin (Ben) Friedman is the Acting NOAA Administrator, and he believes that Mr. Friedman is doing a great job keeping the agency headed in the right direction until a new administrator is appointed.

Mr. Armor continued by briefly discussing the president's budget proposal, especially in light of recent concerns and requests from chairs and other advisory council members. The week of March 13, Mr. Armor forwarded chairs the president's budget proposal. Also known as the "skinny budget," the president's proposal is a high-level view of his top funding priorities. Mr. Armor said that chairs may have read about this budget proposal prior to its official release in an article in *The Washington Post* that, according to a leaked government memorandum, talked about significant budget cuts to NOAA. Although the president's budget proposal does not specifically reference the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), other parts of NOAA that partner with ONMS were mentioned. Mr. Armor explained that this proposal is a part, and just the beginning of the budget process, where the U.S. Congress, along with the president, will determine the final budget for Fiscal Year 2018. For Fiscal Year 2017, Mr. Armor said that the federal government is under a continuing resolution (CR) until at least April 28, 2017, and that agencies will continue to plan at this level until directed otherwise.

Mr. Armor then discussed additional updates unconnected to the new administration. In the fall, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation named Kristen (Kris) Sarri as its new President and Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Armor noted that Ms. Sarri has an extensive background, including former positions on the Senate Commerce Committee and a high-level political appointment at the U.S. Department of the Interior. Mr. Armor shared that Ms. Sarri has a steady, pragmatic hand, but that she is concurrently establishing a strategic vision for the foundation to become a more powerful partner for sanctuaries going forward.

Mr. Armor proceeded to talk about the ONMS strategic plan. First, he thanked chairs and representatives for their feedback in January and September 2016 and that ONMS has since incorporated some, albeit not all, of the comments received. The plan is currently in NOAA clearance and once cleared, ONMS will publish a draft for informal public comment online for at least 30 days. Once the draft plan is posted, Mr. Armor indicated that it would then be appropriate for chairs to share the plan with other council members and interested parties. Lastly, he said

that he is proud of the work accomplished by a system-wide team, led by Rebecca Holyoke, Strategic Planning Coordinator, ONMS, and that he hopes advisory council members and other partners will be just as pleased with the plan's content. The plan was the product of multiple iterations extensively vetted internally and externally with the help of ONMS advisory council chairs. [Update: The draft version, titled *Our Vision for America's Treasured Ocean Places*, was released on March 30, 2017, and can be found at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/about/five-year-strategy-draft.html>.]

Third, Mr. Armor summarized the results of the 2016 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Recreational Fishing Summit. In December, advisory council fishing representatives from 10 councils met for two-days in Florida to consider how recreational fishermen perceive sanctuaries and how NOAA, including the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), can better work and partner with this constituency to simultaneously enhance recreational fishing experiences and resource protection. Mr. Armor believes that, due to shared goals like healthy water quality and marine habitats, recreational fishermen could be one of sanctuaries' biggest supporters. He indicated that he thought the summit was time well spent, and it allowed NOAA to refine future action items in a common beliefs document. He noted, however, that this is an ongoing discussion that will take concentrated, applied effort on both sides to advance together.

Before he ceded the floor for questions, Mr. Armor stressed that he is always available over phone and via email to hear from and speak with interested advisory council chairs and representatives.

Question: Regarding the federal budget, hopefully the CR will be extended until the end of Fiscal Year 2017; conversely, the worst case scenario would be a rescission of Fiscal Year 2017 funds. Have you heard anything regarding the possibility of such a rescission?

- Response from ONMS: There are rumors of a 1-3% rescission for Fiscal Year 2017; however, these are just rumors and we have to wait and see what actually happens.

Question: Could you talk about the highlights from last week's House subcommittee hearing?

- Response from ONMS: On Wednesday, March 15, the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans held an "Oversight Hearing on Examining the Creation and Management of Marine Monuments and Sanctuaries" (<http://naturalresources.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=401648>). The subcommittee heard from three witnesses (one was unable to attend because of inclement winter weather): one from academia, one representing the tuna industry in the Pacific, and another there on behalf of a port town in Louisiana. Overall, the hearing focused on the impacts monument and sanctuary designations could have on the fishing industry and local businesses. Much of the concern that sparked this hearing is related to a perceived lack of public engagement in the designation of marine national monuments, and sometimes sanctuaries. Accordingly, the majority of the hearing focused on criticism for how marine national monuments are designated.

Comment: I want to thank John for continuing to embrace the semi-annual chairs webinar model. My term as chair may be up soon, and I hope this tradition continues for years to come.

- Response from ONMS: The opportunity to connect with our advisory council chairs means a lot to me and our program, so I am glad that you also find it beneficial.

Question: In the past, we have talked about the possibility of councils becoming more involved in fundraising. With the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's new president, where do you see the future of fundraising headed?

- Response from ONMS: I am not sure about that yet. At the foundation's last board meeting in January, there was a lot of discussion regarding the foundation's niche or specialty; the board is still evaluating this question. Overall, the foundation wants to focus on what specific value it can add on a few, finite objectives in order to message itself more effectively.

AROUND THE CALL

1) Chris Bergh, Vice Chair, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Mr. Berg briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) and its advisory council:

- The FKNMS advisory council received a report out from its members that attended the 2016 National Marine Sanctuaries Recreational Fishing Summit. The council also has a Recreational Fishing Working Group predominantly assembled for the purpose of establishing a recreational fishing complement to an existing certification program for divers, Blue Star. Similarly named, Blue Angler, would certify responsible recreational fishing companies.
- The council approved the enforcement discussion panel letter.
- FKNMS is still in the process of regulatory review. A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) is expected to publish sometime this year.

Question: What is the status of the enforcement discussion panel among councils across the National Marine Sanctuary System?

- Response from ONMS: To date, ten councils have voted to approve of their chairs signing onto the letter. Conversely, one council, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, declined to support the letter at this time. Three councils, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale, American Samoa, and *Monitor*, will consider and vote on the letter by the first week in April. [Update: As of April 6, 2017, all three aforementioned councils voted to approve of their chairs signing onto the letter.]

Question: Can you elaborate on the status of the DEIS?

- The DEIS has yet to be released. The sanctuary has done a lot of community outreach in anticipation of its release, and the council formed three working groups that also had a lot of public engagement. The council forwarded its final recommendations onto the FKNMS staff for consideration in writing the DEIS.

2) Carol Shafto, Chair, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Ms. Shafto briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (TBNMS) and its advisory council:

- Since TBNMS expanded from 400 to 4,000 square miles a few years ago, Ms. Shafto shared that the council's new member composition is working well. Specifically, she believes it is beneficial for members of the site's local friends' group to participate on the council.
- Ms. Shafto noted the success of the sanctuary's mooring buoy program that enables ships to moor to buoys in lieu of shipwrecks. Since the expansion, the number of buoys at TBNMS has doubled to 40.
- The council and local friends' group are interested in evaluating new, external revenue sources in the face of potential budget cuts. Annually, the local friends' group can average approximately \$150,000 in sales and donations, which equates to a return of approximately \$50,000 for sanctuary programs. Ms. Shafto underscored that \$50,000 can go a long way in a small town like Alpena, Michigan with only 10,000 permanent residents.
- The council offered its support for the proposed Mallows and Wisconsin sanctuary designations, even in the face of potential federal budget cuts, because the council believes it is important to invest in new sites; moreover, when Thunder Bay was designated, federal budget prospects were similarly tight. The council hopes that the two maritime heritage sites can come online and arrive at a point of being "snorkel and dive ready" even if they are not "shovel ready."

Question: My council would like to know more about what members can do in the face of federal budget discussions. In particular, we work frequently work with the Michigan Sea Grant and Coastal Zone Management programs.

- Response from ONMS: As a federal agency, we cannot ask or direct any specific fundraising or advocacy action. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation has been taking action and may have more information relevant to your question.

3) Kelley Anderson Tagarino, Chair, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Advisory Council

Ms. Anderson Tagarino briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS) and its advisory council:

- Ms. Anderson Tagarino introduced herself as the council's new chair. Ms. Anderson Tagarino has been a council member for the past eight years and is assuming the position from former chair, Dean Hudson.
- At its next meeting, the council will vote on the *Rapid Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Strategies for the National Marine Sanctuary and Territory of American Samoa—Recommendations for Future Management Actions*, in addition to the enforcement discussion panel letter. The local government, community, and businesses extensively participated in the preparation of the former.
- The site is excited about work completed aboard the *Okeanos Explorer*, NOAA's live research vessel that has been mapping seamount areas including mesophotic reef habitats in American Samoa. New species were identified and collected in the sanctuary.

- Last year, the sanctuary's fishing classic tournament was a huge success. Ms. Anderson Tagarino reflected that it was great to see people get out into their sanctuary and use a rod and reel for the first time. The tournament brought families together and increased support for and awareness of the sanctuary.
- Ms. Anderson Tagarino reported that, as a result of the 2016 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Recreational Fishing Summit, council member Dean Hudson and sanctuary staff have been engaging with NOAA recreational fishing representatives in Hawaii. For instance, as a result of the summit, Mr. Hudson was asked to attend a NMFS roundtable in Hawaii.
- The sanctuary highly values its visitors' center, which reaches approximately 60,000 local residents and visitors annually.

4) Lee Whitford, Chair, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Ms. Whitford briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) and its advisory council:

- The council renewed its charter at the beginning of 2017.
- The council will look to consider challenging subjects, including how to encourage more people to visit the sanctuary, which is difficult to get to, and increase the sanctuary's awareness through different media, in addition to a forthcoming management plan review.
- OCNMS is working with coastal communities and other organizations to become an ocean acidification sentinel site.
- The site needs to evaluate options to repair or replace its research vessel, the R/V *Tatoosh*, which is on its last legs. In 2008, ONMS considered replacing the vessel.
- The sanctuary now has a life size humpback whale named, Big Mama, it can use for education presentations.
- OCNMS is working with graduate students from the University of Washington, who will help review the site's management plan as part of their capstone project. Advisory council members will also have a chance to work with these students.
- The council declined to approve the enforcement discussion panel letter. Ms. Whitford indicated that several factors affected the council's decision. The letter was first brought before the council at its January 2017 meeting. At that time, the council's tribal members said that they needed to go back to their tribes for discussion before they could vote on the letter. Then, at the council's March 2017 meeting, at least two tribes voiced that they wanted to be able to at a minimum, edit the letter. Additionally, other members were concerned about the letter's reception in the new administration. Ms. Whitford voiced her appreciation for the enforcement discussion panel's time and efforts to draft the letter. She also said that if other council members are interested in receiving a more detailed update on the council's deliberations, herself or headquarters could share an email thread between the panel's chair, Dianne Black, Chair, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, and herself.

5) Rick DeVictor, Chair, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Mr. DeVictor briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) and its advisory council:

- Mr. DeVictor began by saying that his council is always looking to make improvements and as of late, the council is in the process of evaluating two such improvements.
- First, the council is interested in increasing the diversity of vacant seat applicants. When the council was in the process of reviewing its charter, approved in September 2016, it asked itself whether it represents the communities served by the sanctuary. At that point, one member suggested adding a diversity and inclusion statement, or something to that effect, to the charter via amendment and that there are benefits to considering multiple factors in the recruitment process beyond just those affirmative qualifications for a given seat. The council then directed this discussion to headquarters for consideration at a national level. Headquarters staff then developed draft charter language for the council's consideration. With a few modifications, the council is in the process of putting final text forward to the ONMS Director for his approval. Mr. DeVictor indicated that he is happy to share the draft language with other chairs and hopes others might consider diversity and inclusion questions from the perspective of their own councils.
- Second, the council would like to better conceptualize and communicate the value of Gray's Reef given that it is a small, offshore site. Accordingly, the council held a "So What?" session to ask four self-evaluation questions in breakout groups in order to encourage members to speak up and consider whether the sanctuary's designation has made any differences.
 - The four questions posed were:
 - 1) Has GRNMS affected ocean conservation or influenced what people think about ocean conservation?
 - 2) Did sanctuary designation actually add any benefit?
 - 3) Would it matter if the sanctuary went away?
 - 4) Has GRNMS helped expanded knowledge of live-bottom communities?
 - The breakout groups responded with a "Yes" to each question.
 - As a result of this exercise, Mr. DeVictor reported that a few new questions were raised including why there has been an apparent decrease in sanctuary visitorship and how the term "sanctuary" could be perceived as an exclusionary term prohibiting other uses, like fishing, in lieu of permitting multiple uses.

Comment: I would to see the final diversity and inclusion language your council considers for its charter.

- Response: We can send it out to all chairs.

Question: Did your session consider the use of the word “sanctuary” in communication materials? How frequently did people think that the term sanctuary was exclusive of all other human uses?

- Response: We did not think about that before our last meeting. Our results did not have any quantitative data for support; the idea came to light only after one representative brought it up.

Question: How do you know that your site has had fewer visitors?

- Response: Staff reported their own observations based on site visits in which fewer boats were seen. Additionally, this conclusion has been supported by other studies and surveys at Gray’s Reef. We need to consider how to balance increasing visitation with potential threats to sanctuary resources.

6) Jim Tobin, Chair, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council; Joe Poe, Vice Chair, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Mr. Tobin and Mr. Poe briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary (MNMS) and its advisory council:

- In January, the council first considered the letter. At that meeting, some members wanted additional time to evaluate how a request for increased enforcement might be perceived by the sanctuary’s fishing constituents, particularly in light of a proposed site expansion. In order to balance that potential concern with a desire to collectively support enforcement across the National Marine Sanctuary System, Mr. Tobin will propose a resolution asking the council to approve the letter at its April 6 meeting.
- The Mariners’ Museum in Newport News, Virginia has new artifacts on display and continues to be a great attraction everyone should visit.
- On March 9, celebrations and newly installed plaques commemorated the 155th anniversary of the Battle at Hampton Roads, in which the USS *Monitor* played a historical role.
- The site has been busy with multiple events (e.g., Battle of the Atlantic) helping to communicate the sanctuary’s purpose and significance. MNMS will continue to have a lot to plan for in the next year or two, with the emphasis on the proposed sanctuary expansion.

7) John Largier, Chair, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Mr. Largier briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) and its advisory council:

- The council established a new working group, the Sonoma/Marin Sediment Management Working Group, to evaluate the effects of beach erosion and sea level rise on sanctuary resources. Specifically, the goal of this working group is to develop sediment management recommendations for specific, prioritized locations experiencing sediment issues along the Sonoma and Marin County coastline, and determine a governance structure for select projects. These recommendations will be presented to the full council in November 2017 for discussion and approval before being forwarded to the sanctuary superintendent for consideration and inclusion in a final regional sediment management plan.

- In February 2017, the council's Low Overflight Working Group presented its final report and recommendations to the full council. The working group specifically focused on the potential effects of low overflights on marine species. The working group's final report included recommendations, some supported by the group's members and some with a split vote. Mr. Largier stated the report was sent forward to the sanctuary's superintendent, Maria Brown, for her consideration. Mr. Largier also acknowledged the working group's chair, George Clyde, Chair, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, for his time and effort and giving a voice to people on both sides of the line.
 - Mr. Clyde said that the working group learned a lot from pilots, particularly in the areas of pilot safety and how to increase compliance in low overflight zones.
 - For a copy of the Low Overflight Working Group's final report, see February 1, 2017 Meeting Documents at http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/sac_meetings.html.
- Mr. Largier went on to emphasize the council's ongoing commitment to evaluate the site's potential impacts from climate change and the future adaptability of the sanctuary and its resources.
- The council is still in the process of adjusting to the June 2015 boundary expansion, including the addition of new citizen-at-large members.
- Mr. Largier concluded by stating his belief that there is an increased opportunity for ONMS to partner more successfully with other parts of NOAA, state and local agencies, and universities in order to better protect sanctuaries and learn more about and track the effects of different phenomena on sanctuary resources, especially on the education and science fronts (e.g., Citizen Science programs).

8) Tim Johns, Chair, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Advisory Council; Linda Paul, Vice Chair, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Advisory Council

Mr. Johns and Ms. Paul briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve (NWHICRER) and its advisory council:

- As a result of the August 2016 Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument expansion proclamation, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs has since been added as a fourth monument management co-trustee.
- The council passed the enforcement discussion panel letter.
- Mr. Johns indicated that issues currently before the council include the expansion that quadrupled the size of the monument and what that could mean for purposes of managing such a large area. The council is also asking related questions about future management plan reviews and whether it would recommend a sanctuary overlay to ONMS.
- Given recent questions before the new administration, it is unclear whether the monument expansion and/or any of the monument's protections could be rolled back or changed. In general, the council, in addition to many others, are asking to what extent, if any, a new president can alter his predecessor's executive actions. Recently, the nation's eight fishery management councils convened in Arlington, Virginia to discuss the effects of marine national monuments' fishing restrictions on their ability to manage fisheries. As a result

of this meeting, the councils sent a letter to the president requesting that he consider the effects of these restrictions on fisheries management.

- Ms. Paul indicated that the reserve has a 50-mile boundary and that she thinks the council and the site could also look at the potential for the reserve's own expansion and sanctuary overlay.

9) **George Clyde, Chair, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

Mr. Clyde briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (CBNMS) and its advisory council:

- In December 2016, the council's charter was amended to eliminate the distinction between primary and alternate council positions; accordingly, all non-governmental alternate positions were converted to primary members. Mr. Clyde cited that the council believes that all persons on the council regularly attend meetings and are equally qualified to sit at the table, and thus, did not want to have a distinction for the purposes of voting rights. The charter amendment also increases the pool of eligible candidates for executive officer elections.
- Mr. Clyde stated that he is approaching the term cap on his run as chair and that a former alternate may consider running for the post.
- Mr. Clyde emphasized the site's good relationship with its local friends' group, which has at least one representative attend every advisory council meeting. He noted that he believes this relationship is a good model that he would be happy to discuss with others.
- Mr. Clyde said that CBNMS is continuing with its work, which is mostly research-based, and is partnering with an increasing number of external organizations to achieve those ends.

Question: I would similarly love the ability to convert the TBNMS advisory council alternates to members; however, is that possible under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act? I was under the impression that the act governed the total number of members differently at different sites.

- Response from ONMS: Section 315 of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. § 1445a) limits council membership to 15 for sanctuaries designated after November 4, 1992. Right now, that limitation only applies to Olympic Coast and Thunder Bay national marine sanctuaries. Unless the act is amended, new council membership cannot exceed 15.

10) **Solomon Pili Kaho'ohalahala, Chair, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

Mr. Kaho'ohalahala briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS) and its advisory council:

- Mr. Kaho'ohalahala said that his council will consider the enforcement discussion panel letter at its next meeting on March 29.
- The council's new charter was finalized in August 2016.

- Mr. Kaho'ohalahala expressed that the challenge currently before his council is how to address a new sanctuary management plan in light of the management decision in 2016 to not pursue the sanctuary expansion process and a switch to ecosystem-based management.
- Given the aforementioned challenge, the council is in the process of trying to regroup and reorganize and look at how and where it wants to redirect its efforts. The council will look to draft a three-year council work plan, supported by four different standing subcommittees (i.e., Conservation, Education and Outreach, Native Hawaiian, and Research subcommittees) to further the objective to guide its work. Overall, Mr. Kaho'ohalahala would like to bring the council back together through the identification and prioritization of goals.
- Mr. Kaho'ohalahala also indicated that the council is interested in learning more about the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's local chapter in Hawaii, and how the sanctuary can be involved in developing that chapter's future direction.

Question: Do you think the state will consider the possibility of expanding the sanctuary and/or switching to an ecosystem-based management model again, or is that door closed for now?

- Response: I do not think that door is affirmatively closed, but we are still reeling from last year's decision. We are in the process of talking with ONMS about future plans. I personally believe that an expanded sanctuary that focuses on the holistic management of our environment, in lieu of a single-species model, is more conducive to Hawaii and the culture and traditions of the Hawaiian people. Regardless, we are redirecting the council's focus, as how I stated, for the time being.

11) Margaret (P.J.) Webb, Chair, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Ms. Webb briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) and its advisory council:

- Ms. Webb reflected that 2016 and 2017 have been fun years on the council and at the site, particularly in regards to the site's education and science speaker series. She also opined that she has never seen or been a part of a more engaging council, with full participation at council, subcommittee, and working group meetings alike.
- Eight council working groups are currently in the process of drafting advice and recommendations to the full council on the site's forthcoming management plan.
- The council is interested in the subject of marine debris. Ms. Webb expressed an interest in learning from other councils that have considered or taken action on the subject.
- The council has been receiving a strong pool of candidates during advertised recruitment periods.
- The council passed the enforcement discussion panel letter.
- The council has outstanding questions related to the CEMEX sand mining operations near Monterey Bay and the operation's potential effects on sanctuary resources.

- Ms. Webb noted that the council's current member in its college/student seat has been an asset contributing expertise to the research working group's spatial assessment of the sanctuary.
- The siting of an offshore wind farm outside MBNMS is being proposed.
- Ms. Webb said that she has been keeping apprised of the bills currently proposed in the U.S. Congress and is personally concerned about the future of sanctuaries. Accordingly, she stated that she plans to contact the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation regarding her concerns.

Question: What is the status of the tidal energy project proposed in the sanctuary?

- Response: The tidal project lost its funding grant. The project proponents are currently re-evaluating the project and the possibility of pitching their proposal again; however, no one knows what will ultimately happen. Ideally, the project would like to combine the use of wind and tidal turbines.

12) Dianne Black, Chair, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Ms. Black briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) and its advisory council:

- The sanctuary and its council are consistently proud of the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps. The corps is composed of trained volunteer guides that lead tours of Channel Islands National Park and CINMS and provide visitors with a wealth of information about the Channel Islands' terrestrial, marine, historical, and cultural resources.
- Ms. Black also praised the sanctuary's Marine Vessel Speed Reduction Program. The purpose of the program is to voluntarily encourage ships traversing the Santa Barbara Channel to reduce their speed through monetary incentives in order to decrease the occurrence of life-threatening and deadly whale strikes. Vessel speed reductions can also reduce air emissions. Funding for incentive payments and program operation was provided by the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and Volgenau Foundation. Staff support and program planning and administration was provided by CINMS. Program participants were recently awarded for their efforts to reduce both deadly whale ship strikes and air emissions. Ms. Black noted that the monetary incentive was low compared to benefits realized, and the site hopes to continue the program in coming years.

Question: Will additional sites currently on the inventory of areas NOAA could propose for sanctuary designation in fact be proposed for designation?

- Response from ONMS: At present, ONMS is focusing on the proposed Mallows Bay—Potomac River and Lake Michigan—Wisconsin sanctuary designations and proposed Flower Garden Banks and *Monitor* national marine sanctuary expansions. Beyond that, NOAA has not made any decisions regarding the potential designation of any other site currently on the inventory.

13) Richard (Rich) Delaney, Vice Chair, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council:

Mr. Delaney briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS) and its advisory council:

- At the end of 2016, the sanctuary's superintendent, Craig MacDonald, retired. Mr. Delaney said that Deputy Superintendent, Ben Haskell, has stepped right up and is doing a great job as acting superintendent.
- The SBNMS advisory council approved of its chair signing onto the enforcement discussion panel letter without any controversy. Moreover, Mr. Delaney stated that the council's governmental representatives from NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Maryland Department of Environmental Protection did not have objections to the letter.
- The council launched programmatic efforts to initiate the site's next management plan review in conjunction with its next condition report update; each document should inform the other. Mr. Delaney reported that the council will look to staff to help to divide the management plan review process into three areas of evaluation: accomplishments, partial accomplishments, and areas of improvement. A subcommittee will then take the lead on reviewing the management plan, including to what extent Stellwagen Bank could be impacted by the effects of climate change, given its location.
- The council voted to establish a Small Boats and Whale Interaction Working Group to look at how small private boats are interacting with whales.
- The council is also interested in evaluating the effects of a mid-water trawling fishery off the coast and on top of Stellwagen Bank. Specifically, eight ships drag nets over the bank and gather fish that are the ecological foundation for other marine species. The council would like the New England Fishery Management Council to engage the sanctuary and consider its concerns on decisions related to this action.
- This year, the sanctuary is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

14) Clint Moore, Chair, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council:

Mr. Moore briefly presented a summary of pertinent items currently before Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) and its advisory council:

- For the past few years, the council has been evaluating the possibility of establishing a mandatory permitting program for sanctuary visitors. The council discussed this possibility at three of its meetings. Members are continuing to reach out to the public for input on the proposed permit requirement and to learn more about the sanctuary's user groups.
- Seaside Chats in the Galveston, Texas-area are very popular and beneficial for purposes of increasing sanctuary and ocean awareness, more broadly. Seaside Chats are presentations from sanctuary staff on different ocean-related topics for the public. On average, 50-75 attendees have been present at each individual chat.

- On Saturday, March 25, the sanctuary will hold its annual Ocean Discovery Day. The well-attended public event is anticipated to draw over 1,000 people with sanctuary-related presentations and interactive projects.
- The council passed the enforcement discussion panel letter because it believes FGBNMS has an increased need for enforcement. Mr. Moore expressed that he does not see the letter as sending a “wrong” or ill-timed message to the new administration given the sanctuary system’s present needs.
- The council addressed the issue of marine debris in conjunction with a proposal before the Galveston local government to pass a single-use plastic bag ban rule, which the council voted to support at its February 2017 meeting.
- As of at least Fall 2016, NOAA scientists and other partners were still in the process of evaluating the Summer 2016 mass coral mortality event at East Flower Garden Bank. At least four major causes have been explored, with no determinative cause concluded yet (For more information, see <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/sep16/investigation-of-coral-die-off-continues-amid-bleaching-event.html>). Mr. Moore stated that approximately six acres on East Flower Garden Bank’s coral cap were affected by this event.
- Mr. Moore continued that the invasive species threat posed by increasing numbers of lionfish in and around the sanctuary, even on banks proposed for sanctuary expansion, is also of concern. Just trying to remove lionfish is a daunting task in and of itself.
- Mr. Moore concluded noting that the majority of his council’s time has been spent on evaluating the sanctuary’s proposed boundary expansion alternatives. The sanctuary received approximately 8,000 public comments on its draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). Mr. Moore said that the proposed expansion alternative originally put forward by the council in 2007, alternative two, would add six banks to the sanctuary and expand the boundaries of the existing three. In contrast, the DEIS’s preferred alternative would add an additional six banks (for a total of 15). The council’s boundary expansion working group is currently evaluating its future recommendations to ONMS regarding the proposed expansion.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

ONMS: On March 21, Carol Shafto was honored by the Michigan Municipal League with its highest individual honor, the Honorary Life Membership Award. The Honorary Life Membership, first awarded in 1932, is the league’s highest individual honor, reserved for the most active and inspiring leaders dedicated to the league and its mission. The league presented Ms. Shafto with her award at its annual Capital Conference Awards Gala in Lansing, Michigan. Among her many achievements, Ms. Shafto served Alpena for 24 years, including being elected to multiple terms on the Alpena Municipal Council. She ended service with Alpena as mayor, retiring in 2011.

Ms. Shafto’s recognition not only showcases her commitment to her community and Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, but it also underscores the exceptional work and dedication of each and every one of our system’s council members that is just as worthy of celebration.

Question: It is beneficial that advisory council coordinators attend the chairs virtual meetings. Would it similarly be possible for advisory council chairs to participate in bi-monthly advisory council coordinator virtual meetings?

- Response from ONMS: We can evaluate that possibility, especially given recent efforts to make coordinator meetings more interactive; however, any participation from advisory council members would have to be considered against internal communications that also occur during these meetings. We will discuss this possibility and report back when an answer is reached.

Ms. Holyoke and Kate Spidalieri, National Advisory Council Specialist, ONMS thanked chairs and representatives for their attendance and participation, and commitment to this series of webinars. A future meeting, in approximately six months, will be scheduled in the coming months.