

**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Sanctuary Advisory Council**

**FINAL Key Meeting Outcomes
November 20, 2009**

**Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center Auditorium, Channel Islands National Park
Headquarters
1901 Spinnaker Drive · Ventura Harbor, CA**

*Note: This document will be posted on line at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>.
Audio recordings of this and other Council meetings are available upon request to
michael.murray@noaa.gov.*

Attendance: At peak, fourteen of the Council's twenty-one voting seats were present (see attached attendance roster). Public attendance varied from five to ten people.

Administrative Business and Announcements

The draft key outcomes report from the September 18, 2009 meeting was adopted as final.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Chris Mobley highlighted several items in the Superintendent's Report (provided to all SAC members and the attending public, and available at <http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/super.html>).

Council Member Announcements

A number of Council members shared announcements (unrelated to meeting agenda items). Audio recordings are available upon request.

MERITO

Rocio Lozano-Knowlton provided an overview of the Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) Program at CINMS (slides available upon request), which delivers bilingual ocean conservation products and services to students, teachers, adults, and families living near the Santa Barbara Channel. Rocio described the Program's development and significant accomplishments, noting that the program has received awards and recognition including a Department of Commerce Silver Medal award. She also explained that while the program is supported by many partnerships, it does not have stable base funding.

Chris Mobley explained that MERITO is an important program but that it is unable to be funded through our base operations given the CINMS budget level at this time. Chris explained that because of inflation and the CINMS budget being kept flat for several years, at this point there is no funding left for discretionary spending beyond rent and salaries. CINMS partners have been critical in helping us to keep key programs going. The MERITO program is run on grant funding.

Debra Herring introduced and summarized a letter of support for stable base funding for MERITO. The draft letter was prepared by Council members Debra Herring and Maria Petueli, with assistance from Conversation Working Group member Kristi Birney-Rieman.

During a public comment period Kristi Birney-Rieman voiced her support for the letter. Jackie Dragon from Pacific Environment also voiced her support for the letter, stated how impressed she is with the MERITO program, and encouraged the SAC to support the letter.

A Council discussion followed about the amount of money needed and prioritization of other CINMS programs. A motion to adopt the proposed letter, as is, was unanimously passed (13-0) by voice vote. (The adopted letter will be posted at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>).

Invasive Alga

Dr. Jack Engle from UCSB provided a presentation on the identification, life history, and local occurrences of *Sargassum horneri* (slides available by request to j_engle@lifesci.ucsb.edu). After the presentation, a few questions focused on clarification of its life history and ecosystem effects. There was also a discussion of how to get the word out about the seaweed. Phyllis Grifman asked if there is a list of research priorities but Jack responded that we do not have that prepared yet. Jack stated that a rapid response is needed for the next time and that working on developing this should be part of the follow up of this invasion. Perry Ferguson expressed interest and a willingness to help get groups of divers trained in identifying *Sargassum horneri*.

Ship Strike Reduction Efforts -- Update and News on Recent Strikes

Chris Mobley introduced this item, thanked the SAC for their hard work on this issue, and mentioned that their recommendations have been shared with others in Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and NOAA. Chris also mentioned that sanctuary staff continue to work on this with our colleagues at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Mike Murray shared news that two whale strikes occurred in October 2009 in central and northern California. Mike summarized the event of a whale strike by a research vessel on October 19 2009 and corrected some misinformation that was presented in the press. Dayna Matthews from NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement added that both whale strike incidents are being investigation by NOAA.

Elizabeth Petras described NMFS' involvement in the two whale strikes. The blue whale strike by a research vessel occurred on October 19 near Fort Bragg, CA. The animal apparently surfaced underneath the vessel and struck the propeller. There was a deep cut on the back of the animal which penetrated to the spinal cord and probably paralyzed the animal. The animal died as a result, probably by bleeding to death. In the other incident, a juvenile male blue whale was first seen at Ragged Point on October 9. The necropsy was completed on shore, revealing bruising and fractures indicative of a ship strike (blunt force trauma).

A discussion about the events followed. The whale off Fort Bragg that was cut by a propeller was not seen beforehand; no whales were seen that day. Bob Warner asked if there should be a reconsideration of speed recommendations since the SAC's recommendation of 10 knots is above the 5.5 knots the ship was traveling. A response by NMFS was that this was an unusual case and that the whale came up under the boat. The question was posed: Is there any indication that the sonar the mapping vessel was using could have had an effect on the whale? Elizabeth responded that the sonar is high frequency and is out of the hearing threshold of the blue whales.

Ocean Acidification

Mike provided these updates on ocean acidification (OA):

- Council member Bruce Steele is in meetings this week in Washington DC with various members of Congress. He is traveling on his personal behalf, and not representing the SAC.

- The CINMS Advisory Council has now inspired OA resolutions at 10 other advisory councils. The remaining 4 councils are considering resolutions and by early next year we may see that all Councils have followed suit.
- NOAA is still developing regional comprehensive plans for OA research, and the west coast plan includes sanctuaries as places where research, monitoring and education can get done.

Linda Krop added that the Conservation Working Group has been pursuing the education recommendations from the SAC's 2008 report, and that they have hosted showings of "A Sea Change" and made other outreach efforts.

Debra Herring reported on the Sanctuary Education Team's (SET) efforts on OA. At their recent meeting the SET brainstormed ideas for getting the word out on OA. The Channel Islands Naturalist Corps is also looking for ways to learn more about OA as part of their annual training.

Public comment

Kristi Birney-Rieman added that she was at the SET meeting and another idea they brought up was to work with other Advisory Council working groups to help get the word out to those groups.

Jackie Dragon thanked the SAC for their efforts on many issues, such as ship strikes, acoustics and OA, and stated that this work can be looked to by other sanctuaries and other groups and shows good leadership. However, she also acknowledged that there are funding challenges. She encouraged the SAC to pursue these efforts in the face of these challenges, and expressed hope that progress can be made on these issues.

Linda Krop read a comment from Michael Smith of Gray Whales Count. Michael found the recent blue whale ship strike death off Fort Bragg to be disturbing. He recalled how several years ago he witnessed the R/V *Shearwater* on a collision course with gray whales near Coal Oil Point, how hard he had to work to hail someone about it, and how it was acknowledged by staff afterward that mistakes were made. He would like this incident to lead NOAA and sanctuaries to take seriously precautionary vessel operation measures. Chris Mobley acknowledged these points, and said that sanctuaries are also learning from reports and proposed modified procedures that stemmed from a whale strike incident in the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

Leslie Purcell asked about propeller designs and how that can be changed to protect whales. This led to a discussion about technologies such as jet propulsion technologies or covered propellers that can help protect marine animals.

Working Group Reports

Dayna Matthews reported that the Enforcement Group met on November 19. He provided updates on recent enforcement actions against members of the squid fishery, a progress report on the enforcement group over the past year, and announced an upcoming training session for USCG and sanctuary staff. He also reported that work is being done to develop a summary settlement schedule for less-egregious violations (similar to a ticket).

Bob Warner reported that the Research Activities Panel (RAP) will meet on Monday November 23, 2009. The group will discuss what resources are available and how to keep programs going in these challenging times.

Linda Krop reported that the Conservation Working Group (CWG) met on Wednesday November 18, 2009 and discussed the MLPA Initiative, ship strikes, and an interest in hearing a staff progress report on the SAC's acoustics report recommendations. Linda also reported that the Environmental Defense Center is working with a UCSB Bren School graduate student to investigate offshore energy projects. Linda reported that Mike Murray shared a FAQ document by the ONMS that helped to answer some questions about offshore energy. The CWG will continue to examine the issue.

Social Interactions

The Council discussed opportunities and ideas for social get-togethers. No definite plans were made and the discussion will continue.

Future Meeting Schedule

- Friday January 29, 2010 (SAC meeting, Santa Barbara)
- Friday March 19, 2010 (SAC meeting, Ventura)
- May 11-14, 2010 (Annual National SAC Summit, Olympic Peninsula, Washington [Chair attends])
- Friday May 21, 2010 (SAC meeting, Santa Barbara)
- Friday July 16, 2010 (SAC meeting, Ventura)
- Friday September 24, 2010 (SAC meeting, Santa Barbara)
- Friday November 19, 2010 (SAC meeting, Ventura)

Meeting Attendance Roster

Kathleen Fitzgerald	Tourism	Absent
Andrea Moe	Tourism - Alternate	Present
Debra Herring	Non-Consumptive Recreation	Present
Perry Ferguson	Non-Consumptive Recreation - Alternate	Present
Capt. Richard McKenna	Business	Present
Vacant	Business - Alternate	-----
Linda Krop	Conservation	Present
Greg Helms	Conservation - Alternate	Present
Bruce Steele	Commercial Fishing	Absent
Vacant	Commercial Fishing - Alternate	-----
Capt. David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	Present
Merit McCrea	Recreational Fishing - Alternate	Present
Maria Petueli	Education	Absent
Vacant	Education - Alternate	-----
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	Present
Dr. Mark Steele	Research - Alternate	Present
Phyllis Grifman [Council Secretary]	Public At Large #1	Present
Amy Spandrio	Public At Large #1 - Alternate	Absent
Eric Kett [Council Chair]	Public At Large #2	Absent
Dan Powell	Public At Large #2 - Alternate	Absent
Jacy Ontiveros	Chumash Community	Absent
Vacant	Chumash Community - Alternate	-----
Peter Fischel	NOAA Fisheries	Present
Elizabeth Petras	NOAA Fisheries - Alternate	Present
Russell Galipeau	National Park Service	Present
Vacant	National Park Service - Alternate	-----
CDR Jason Collins	US Coast Guard	Present
LTJG Brittany Steward	US Coast Guard - Alternate	Present
Dr. Fred Piltz	Minerals Management Service	Present
Donna Schroeder	Minerals Management Service - Alternate	Absent
Steven Schwartz	Dept. of Defense	Present
Walt Schobel	Dept. of Defense - Alternate	Present
Marija Vojkovich	CA Dept. of Fish & Game	Absent
John Ugoretz	CA Dept. of Fish & Game - Alternate	Absent
Brian Baird	CA Natural Resources Agency	Absent
Amy Boone	CA Natural Resources Agency - Alternate	Absent
Steve Hudson	CA Coastal Commission	Absent
Barbara Carey	CA Coastal Commission - Alternate	Absent
Dianne M. Black	Santa Barbara County	Present
Susan Curtis	Santa Barbara County - Alternate	Present
Lyn Krieger	Ventura County	Absent
Marilyn Miller	Ventura County - Alternate	Present
Chris Mobley	Channel Islands NMS [non-voting]	Present
Paul Michel	Monterey Bay NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Karen Grimmer	Monterey Bay NMS - Alternate [non-voting]	Absent
Maria Brown	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Brian Johnson	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent