

Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting

FINAL Key Outcomes¹

Friday, March 16, 2012

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 Council meetings are available upon request to michael.murray@noaa.gov.

Attendance: At peak, eighteen of the Council's twenty-one voting seats were present (see attached attendance roster). Six seats were absent for the day: Commercial Fishing, Chumash Community, US Coast Guard, California Resources Agency, Santa Barbara County, and Ventura County. Public attendance varied from 7 to 8 people.

Administrative Business and Announcements

SAC chair Eric Kett called the meeting to order and recognized the recent tragic deaths of Mike deGruy and Andrew Wight, as well as a recent boating accident in the channel that resulted in four deaths.

The draft key outcomes from the January 20, 2012 meeting were adopted as final.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Chris Mobley reported on the CINC volunteer recognition dinner and acknowledged Linda Krop's "Sanctuary Advisory Council Leadership" award and Marty Flam's Channel Islands Naturalist Corps "Blue Whale" award. Chris spoke briefly about recent grants awarded to the MERITO program and the upcoming SAC recruitment for eleven open positions. Chris also discussed a recent ONMS Leadership Team meeting in regards to budget cuts and how the sanctuary program is focusing on creative, collaborative initiatives. Chris introduced Pacific Regional Director Jaron Ming of the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE); Jaron spoke briefly about the reorganization of MMS and the role of BSEE to direct environmental compliance, safety, and inspections through regulation. Chris also introduced U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Roger Laferriere; Capt. Laferriere presented CINMS Maritime Heritage Coordinator Robert Schwemmer with a Coast Guard Operational Merit Award for his role in an expedition to the sunken USS Montebello. In turn, Robert presented Capt. Laferriere with photo gifts of the Montebello expedition and of CINMS in honor of his upcoming retirement. Capt. Laferriere spoke briefly about his appreciation of the sanctuary and the advisory council, and explained that this partnership is partially responsible for the USCG LA/LB sector leading the west coast on patrols.

Council Member Announcements

A number of Council members shared announcements (unrelated to meeting agenda items). Audio recordings are available upon request. A special introduction was made by Amanda Hendrickson, who welcomed students from Oxnard High School, led by their teacher Kevin Flint. The students will be participating in a pilot youth involvement project that will connect them to the advisory council and their Sanctuary Education Team (SET). For their project they will be conducting marine protected area public outreach at local events in both English and Spanish.

¹ Approved and adopted as final by the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council on July 20, 2012.

Council Executive Committee Report

Superintendent Chris Mobley summarized some concerns that had been voiced by council members in regard to a recently published review paper on the SAC (Flannery et al). Chris explained the nature of the analysis and mentioned that the Executive Committee and staff are considering this information, and other literature, to look at ways to make the SAC more effective. Chris also discussed the importance of the recreational fishing community and their role in conservation efforts. He shared ways to expand on this collaboration, including: producing reports and articles on the role of recreational fishers in conservation, investigating opportunities for the conservation and fishing seats to collaborate, and discussing the role of artificial reefs at a future SAC meeting. Captain David Bacon spoke about his perspective from the recreational fishing community and that he really looks forward to pursuing a deeper relationship and bringing back positive news from the sanctuary to this community. Eric Kett clarified that he sees the role of the SAC as helping to “educate the decision process” rather than “influencing” decisions.

Whale Ship Strikes

Sean Hastings, CINMS Resource Protection Coordinator, reviewed the recommendations previously endorsed by the SAC in 2009, noting where progress has been made and where work still remains to be done. Sean explained that continued research and monitoring of local whale populations is severely limited by funding and resources, but the Sanctuary has been very successful in tracking shipping traffic behavior. Sean discussed two methods of industry outreach: general notices to mariners when whales arrive in the area, and a “whale advisory zone” notice that recommends a 10 knot speed when whale density is high in the channel. These both have been largely unsuccessful. Sean also reported on the US Coast Guard’s Port Access Route Study (PARS) findings and resulting International Maritime Organization (IMO) proposal, the state of education and outreach to industry, and the consideration of incentive-based and mandate-based actions. Sean mentioned that a NOAA response to a petition calling for regulation of ship speeds in sanctuaries is due out at the end of March. There was brief discussion by the council on the slow speed recommendation.

Elizabeth Petras reported for the National Marine Fisheries Service on initiatives taken to address ship strikes, including: funding received for some whale tagging research around the channel islands; Jessica Redfern’s submitted paper to *Conservation Biology* on whale distribution in the Southern California Bight; a new North Atlantic Right Whale program paper that reported inconclusive results on the efficacy of that program; and Stephanie Koes’ (new NMFS SAC seat alternate) role to work with the shipping industry.

Council discussions related to the challenge of lacking sufficient data on whale distribution and static definitions of whale hot spots; the need for meshing together various whale data sources over time; recent improvements in whale sightings data collection that include the effort (track lines) of local whale watch vessels (thus also showing where whales were not seen); the potential for additional vessels of opportunity to report whale sightings (including dockside reporting, with possible cooperation from the US Coast Guard Auxiliary); the seemingly ripe fundability of many of the research gaps; lack of effective techniques to deter whales through the use of sound; how a 1nm northward shift of the southbound lane in the SB Channel could help; and how AIS messaging to ships could help. To the specific question about whether or not NOAA requests should again be made this summer for ships to voluntarily slow to 10 knots or less, some members stated that there would be no harm in continuing to do so and such standing seasonal warnings, which are used elsewhere regarding other sensitive habitat areas (e.g., plover habitats), help keep the message out there about special areas. Chris Mobley wrapped up the discussion with the following suggested actions: document the “zeroes” in whale watching data; continue use of whale distribution data to determine hotspots, such as along 200m isobaths; integrate surveys of various scales and methods; and determine the efficacy of the general Local Notice to Mariners.

Public Comment (morning)

Kristi Birney, of the Environmental Defense Center, reported that she attended a recent California Air Resources Board meeting with Maersk representatives. From this she felt that important opportunities for collaboration could be developed.

Research Activities Panel (RAP) Report and Proposed Memo

Dr. Bob Warner summarized a recent RAP meeting, underscoring the value of exchanging information among researchers. Bob mentioned highlights from that meeting, including: most of the Channel Islands marine monitoring and research that is long term is from two sources (PISCO, whose funding is dwindling, and the Channel Islands National Park, with their kelp forest and intertidal monitoring work); discussion of the possibility of a 10-year review of Channel Islands MPAs; signs of some black abalone population recovery in select areas (San Nicolas Island and Santa Cruz Island); an invitation to local researchers to speak to the SAC on marine reserves research; and the discussion of the California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG) slow process for permitting scientific take in marine reserves. On that last point, Kristine Barsky reported good news: the permit request backlog has been addressed, a new CDFG hire will take this on, and permits can now be issued in 4-6 weeks.

Dr. Steve Katz, CINMS Research Coordinator, presented on research prioritization for the sanctuary's Research Department, offering a condensed version of information that had been provided to the RAP. Steve explained that research efforts at CINMS are funded externally as discretionary budget allocations for sanctuary research have gone to zero. Steve emphasized that there has been a need to prioritize use of any available resources. He reminded council members that the CINMS Condition Report process led to an assessment of gaps, which led to the identification of CINMS science needs. Steve explained a model developed internally to help identify priorities, and that takes into account the push for the department to do more, and the pull that limits staff in many ways. Steve explained the rankings arrived at by the research department, noting that "human dimensions" and "climate change" work were near the top, while historical ecology, decision support systems, and invasive species were near the bottom. He emphasized that such rankings do not mean those needs are not important, but it could reflect such aspects as having limited relevant capacity within the department or seeking not to be redundant with others' work. Steve fielded questions from council members about the methodologies used.

Bob Warner presented a memo developed by the RAP, proposing that it be accepted by the SAC and delivered to the Superintendent. The memo expressed concerns regarding the limited capacity of the sanctuary's research department to address recognized sanctuary science needs. Bob explained that the RAP generally supported the CINMS research department's new decision support tool to help rank identified scientific needs and aid in the allocation of manpower and other resources. Bob explained that the memo also acknowledges that the sanctuary has numerous and diverse science and research needs, but the research department has limited manpower and no funds explicitly allocated (i.e. non-vessel operations) in the sanctuary's base budget to address those needs. Bob also noted that this has been the state for the last four years, and that now even vessel operations funding appears to be approaching inoperable levels. Thus, Bob, with insufficient funds or personnel to carry out these activities, the research department's ranking procedure becomes "an exercise in frustration." In the memo, the RAP specifically suggested that the sanctuary "allocate to the Research Division the appropriate resources to acquire the necessary scientific information to address the high-priority needs", and noted it would likely require "additional manpower and a significant budget for research activities." Knowing that the superintendent did not have the discretionary funds to allocate to the research department, the RAP commented that "if such an allocation is not possible, the RAP recommends consulting with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to determine if they concur with the CINMS research priorities, and if so, determine if they are willing to support this research at an adequate level." The RAP's memo went on to

suggest that if no further support for the research department can be acquired, “then the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, CINMS staff, and the SAC will need to be much more judicious in assigning high priority to science needs that cannot be met with existing resources.” The RAP memo concluded that the RAP “cannot endorse a proposition that the CINMS undertake the research enterprise in a superficial manner.”

Council discussions were robust, with many members expressing appreciation for the honest review of the situation, and several also expressing appreciation for the thoughtful and rigorous decision support tool that the research department had developed and used. A motion was offered by Greg Helms, and seconded, calling for council acceptance of the RAP memo. The council voted to forward the RAP memo to the superintendent with the understanding that he will make efforts to share the messages with sanctuary leadership and bring back responses.

Sanctuary Education Team (SET) Report and Proposed Letter

Amanda Hendrickson introduced a draft proposed council letter that highlighted how important this program is to the community, and expressed strong support for restoring B-WET funding. The council discussed the timeliness of the letter, and offered a few comments on the contents and organization of the letter. The council requested that the letter be revised to: express gratitude for the 2012 funding at the beginning of the letter, include the number of people the program reaches, and, if possible, highlight where students have continued their education. The council agreed that the letter should be brought back for action at the next SAC meeting. Amanda also reported that a youth group was selected from Oxnard High School (as mentioned earlier), and that the students would focus on MPA education and outreach projects. The council then engaged Kevin Flint and the students in general conversation about their project and what they think so far about the sanctuary advisory council.

Public Comment (afternoon)

Kristi Birney commented the Conservation Working Group welcomes working with any SAC member. Kristi stated that anyone is welcome to attend their CWG public meetings that are held 2 days before SAC meetings. Kristi stated that the CWG looks for win-win projects.

Ocean Acidification

Carol Blanchette from UCSB began by presenting background information on ocean acidification (OA), and describing a new consortium of scientists that are looking at OA on the west coast (OMEGAS). Carol was followed by Lydia Kapsenberg, a PhD student with UCSB’s Hofmann Lab at the Marine Science Institute. After describing the process of OA, Lydia explained that understanding the impacts to organisms requires understanding the environment they are experiencing. In contrast to other ocean areas, the Santa Barbara Channel sees high fluctuations in pH. Lydia said that they are now using a sensor called a “SeaFET”, a long term pH logger that takes measurements every half hour. Two were recently deployed at Anacapa Islands (Landing Cove) and Santa Cruz Island (Scorpion Anchorage pier). They would also like to get a sensor at San Miguel Island. Lydia explained that through this work it may become possible to detect a natural long-term acclimatization of organisms. Lydia said she will be studying urchins because they are good models and they play a dominant role in the ecosystem.

Council discussions with Lydia and Carol touched on the frequency of instrument deployment (3 months); working with others (agencies or fishers) to deploy sensors; challenges about making longer term predictions about how the marine community will respond; and the importance of looking closely at individual differences and trans-generational differences in responses to lab experiments. Lydia explained that the SeaFETS cost them \$5,000 each, with about \$1,000 in maintenance and repairs, and the lifespan is currently unknown. Satlantic is now producing them for \$8,000, she said, and a pumped unit

that reduces fouling would cost more. Park Superintendent Russell Galipeau expressed support for the monitoring project and suggested that the Santa Rosa Island pier could be a potential attachment point.

Working Group Reports

Channel Islands Technical Advisory Committee on Enforcement

Bill Struble reported that the committee met recently. Bill stated that the recently clarified sanctuary overflight regulation is helpful for enforcement, and that he will be following up with some operators regarding complaints about certain observed flights. He added that when reporting something, photographs (zoomed in for aircraft identification and zoomed out for big picture view) are really helpful, as well as the recorded location, time, date, and aircraft tail number.

Special guest Brandon Earhart, an Enforcement Officer with the US Coast Guard's Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach, addressed the matter of illegal activities in panga boats. Brandon explained that pangas are open boats with 1 to 4 outboards, and more are being seen in our area lately as enforcement has increased in San Diego, Orange and LA counties. These boats are being used to transport migrants and drugs, and they want to keep out of the public eye so the Channel Islands are a desirable area for them. Outreach among enforcement agencies is highly increased with a new task force. The task force is working on outreach and is developing a new public brochure (to be available soon). Brandon explained that they look for: unusual boats operating at odd hours in odd locations, people watching maritime activities from land when no special event is occurring, and even suspicious activity in neighborhoods. Russell Galipeau added that reports can be made to Park Rangers and they will pass the information onto the USCG. To report suspicious activity directly to the USCG Sector LA-LB, call 310-521-3801 (24 hours).

Recreational Fishing Working Group

Captain David Bacon reported on a National Marine Fisheries Service meeting about handling and releasing thresher sharks. This species is important recreationally and commercially. The goal is to educate fishers on mouth-hooking vs. tail hooking.

Conservation Working Group (CWG)

Greg Helms reported briefly on the most recent CWG meeting, held two days earlier. The working group discussed the Coast Guard's IMO proposal, other shipping issues, a meeting between Maersk and the California Air Resources Board that offered new opportunities for industry collaboration, and CWG support for the SET's proposed B-WET letter.

Future Meeting Schedule

- Monday April 9, 2012 (SAC Summit Webinar – SAC Chair participates)
- Friday May 18, 2012 (Santa Barbara)
- Friday July 20, 2012 (Ventura)
- Friday September 21, 2012 (Santa Barbara)
- Friday November 16, 2012 (Ventura)

Meeting Attendance Roster, March 16, 2012:

Andrea Mills	Tourism	<i>Present</i>
Matthew Curto	Tourism - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Debra Herring	Non-Consumptive Recreation	<i>Present</i>
Nicole Peters	Non-Consumptive Recreation - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Capt. Richard McKenna	Business	<i>Present</i>
Michael Gould	Business - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Linda Krop	Conservation	<i>Absent</i>
Greg Helms	Conservation - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Bruce Steele	Commercial Fishing	<i>Absent</i>
Stephanie Mutz	Commercial Fishing - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Capt. David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	<i>Present</i>
Merit McCrea	Recreational Fishing - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Maria Petueli	Education	<i>Absent</i>
Amanda Hendrickson	Education - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	<i>Present</i>
Dr. Mark Steele	Research - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Phyllis Grifman [Council Secretary]	Public At Large #1	<i>Present</i>
Victor Cox	Public At Large #1 - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Eric Kett [Council Chair]	Public At Large #2	<i>Present</i>
Marilyn Kelly	Public At Large #2 - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Luhui Isha	Chumash Community	<i>Absent</i>
Venisse Miller-Forte	Chumash Community - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Elizabeth Petras	NOAA Fisheries	<i>Present</i>
Stephanie Koes	NOAA Fisheries - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Russell Galipeau	National Park Service	<i>Present</i>
David Ashe	National Park Service - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
CDR Christina Davidson	US Coast Guard	<i>Absent</i>
LCDR Elisa Garrity	US Coast Guard - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Donna Schroeder	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	<i>Present</i>
Dr. Ann Bull	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management - Alt	<i>Absent</i>
John Ugoretz	Dept. of Defense	<i>Absent</i>
Walt Schobel	Dept. of Defense - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Marija Vojkovich	CA Dept. of Fish & Game	<i>Absent</i>
Kristine Barsky	CA Dept. of Fish & Game - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
<vacant>	CA Natural Resources Agency	---
Amy Vierra	CA Natural Resources Agency - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Dr. Jonna Engel	CA Coastal Commission	<i>Present</i>
Steve Hudson	CA Coastal Commission - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Dianne Black	Santa Barbara County	<i>Absent</i>
Susan Curtis	Santa Barbara County - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Lyn Krieger	Ventura County	<i>Absent</i>
Marilyn Miller	Ventura County - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Chris Mobley	Channel Islands NMS [non-voting]	<i>Present</i>
Paul Michel	Monterey Bay NMS [non-voting]	<i>Absent</i>
Karen Grimmer	Monterey Bay NMS - Alternate [non-voting]	<i>Absent</i>
Maria Brown	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	<i>Absent</i>
Brian Johnson	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	<i>Absent</i>