

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

**Final Key Meeting Outcomes  
September 24, 2010  
Casa Las Palmas  
323 E. Cabrillo Blvd. · 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](mailto:michael.murray@noaa.gov).*

**Attendance:** At peak, 15 of the Council's twenty-one voting seats were present (see attached attendance roster). Six seats were absent for the day. Public attendance varied from 8 to 15 people.

**Administrative Business and Announcements**

***Welcoming New and Returning Advisory Council Members***

New representatives were announced, and introduced themselves to the Council:

- Paulette Luhui Isha Ward (returning Chumash Community seat member)
- Vennise Miller-Forte (Chumash Community seat alternate)
- Amanda Hendrickson (Education seat alternate)

***Adoption of July 16, 2010 Draft Key Outcomes***

The draft key outcomes report from the July 16, 2010 meeting was adopted as final.

***Superintendent's Report***

Chris Mobley highlighted several items during his Superintendent's Report, including:

- CINMS' 30th Anniversary on Sept. 22, 1980;
- Recognizing and thanking Sarah Green, CINMS intern and graduate student from UCSB's Bren School;
- Congratulations on recent completion of the annual Chumash Tomol voyage from Channel Islands Harbor to Limuw (Santa Cruz Island), with comments by Luhui Isha and Vennise as well;
- Film premiere of *Beneath the Rainbow Bridge* was recently a big hit at the Shore to Sea public lecture.

***Council Member Announcements***

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

**California and the World Ocean Conference**

This discussion session allowed for informal reports from this recent conference (Sept 7-10) from participating staff and Council members. Linda Krop mentioned that conference was excellent, provided good opportunities to interact with others, and that she attended panel sessions on climate change, fisheries and rigs to reefs (she was a panel member). Bruce Steele talked about his participation on an ocean acidification panel. Sean Hastings described his role providing a ship strike presentation authored by himself, Monica DeAngelis, and John Calambokidis. Greg helms commented on the MPA monitoring talk given by Steve Katz. Amanda Hendrickson noted that sanctuaries were well represented and that there was a lot of good collaboration happening. CINMS intern Sarah Green attended nine sessions and passed around a written summary of her observations. Vennise Miller-Forte shared that some of the conference sessions would be available for viewing online at Cal Span [see <http://www.cal-span.org/cgi-bin/media.pl?folder=CWO>].

**CINMS Water Quality Characterization Report**

Kira Redmond, Executive Director of Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, provided a presentation (slides available upon request) on a recently completed report: "Water Quality Characterization of the Channel Islands National

Marine Sanctuary and Surrounding Waters” (see [www.sbck.org/pdf/CINMS\\_WQCReportFinal.pdf](http://www.sbck.org/pdf/CINMS_WQCReportFinal.pdf)). Kira explained that the comprehensive report aims to help the Sanctuary meet the objectives of two water quality action plan strategies within the CINMS management plan by synthesizing information on the current status of water quality in the Sanctuary, outlining the various authorities governing water quality in the Sanctuary, and providing an overview of federal, State and regional water quality management programs and monitoring efforts. The report has nine sections that describe the Sanctuary setting and pertinent watersheds, present potential sources of water quality impairments, outline applicable water quality standards, and provide an overview of the regulatory and management programs pertaining to water quality in and around the Sanctuary. It also describes efforts being undertaken by various agencies and groups to conduct WQ monitoring. It summarizes the findings of best available data characterizing existing water quality conditions in and around the Sanctuary, and lays out conclusions and recommendations for Sanctuary staff and the Advisory Council to consider in future efforts to craft a water quality protection plan for Sanctuary waters.

Kira’s presentation highlighted several areas of the comprehensive report, including: sources of CINMS water quality impairment (offshore and terrestrial, direct and indirect); Contaminants of emerging concern (such as pharmaceuticals, personal care products, pesticides, hormones and other trace organic chemicals); various monitoring programs or studies that have collected or are collecting data on aspects of water quality in and around the Sanctuary (e.g., Bight Regional Monitoring Program, mussel watch programs, CalCOFI, Plumes and Blooms, PISCO, LTER projects, CINP Kelp Forest Monitoring Program, Channelkeeper indicator bacteria monitoring) as well as select mainland monitoring programs; and water quality conditions in and around the sanctuary (e.g., Bight survey and mussel watch program findings, stormwater plumes) as well as coastal waters and watersheds.

Summary points that Kira highlighted:

- Surveys of the available data suggest that water quality in the Sanctuary is relatively good, but available data are limited and spotty.
- SCCWRP Bight sampling shows that water quality in and around the Sanctuary is higher than at most other sites in the Bight.
- Water quality impacts from regional anthropogenic point and nonpoint source pollutant discharges are mitigated by distance from the mainland and have likely declined over the years due to improved regulation and management
- Existing threats include pollution from offshore oil and gas platforms, storm water plumes from the mainland, large and small vessels, invasive species, dredged materials, marine debris, and harmful algal blooms.
- Emerging or potential threats include new energy production in the Channel, pharmaceuticals and personal care products discharged in sewage effluent, open ocean aquaculture, and ocean acidification.
- It is likely that pollution from many of these sources will increase over current levels, which could threaten Sanctuary resources.
- the Sanctuary should take a proactive approach to addressing existing and potential water quality threats to maintain and protect the integrity of Sanctuary resources.
- The Management Plan’s Water Quality Action Plan provides roadmap for a WQ protection program to address existing and emerging threats.
- Plan’s strategies address need for the Sanctuary to support and conduct monitoring for pollutants, identify sources of pollutants, prioritize Sanctuary water quality threats, work closely with existing and new partners and water quality authorities, and develop and implement priority corrective actions and Sanctuary programs to address water quality concerns.
- This report aims to help focus the direction of the action plan.
- The Next step is for Sanctuary managers use this report to prioritize WQ threats to Sanctuary resources and to identify needs and opportunities to coordinate and/or partner with groups concerned with improving WQ in the Sanctuary. This should include:
  - formulating research and monitoring priorities to address the most important existing and emerging threats to Sanctuary WQ,

- forming and strengthening partnerships with others working to address these threats,
- helping to coordinate and improve enforcement of existing WQ protection laws and regulations,
- assessing the need for and feasibility of implementing additional WQ management strategies using existing resources and programs, as well as resource needs to develop a Sanctuary WQ management program.
- These tasks may best be carried out by the formation of a WQ working group on the SAC

Recommendations provided by Kira included the following:

- The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's Water Quality Protection Program provides an excellent model, and Sanctuary staff and the SAC should refer to this program and consult with the MBNMS in developing its own program.
- It is important for the Sanctuary to clearly identify WQ monitoring needs and develop a monitoring plan for Sanctuary waters based on identified priorities and gaps in research and data.
- An ideal plan would include regular monitoring in Sanctuary waters for bacteria, marine debris, toxicity, metals, nutrients, hydrocarbons, salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll and currents.
- To address some of the more prominent known threats to Sanctuary water quality, it should also include targeted monitoring of contaminant concentrations around oil platforms near the Sanctuary; bacteria monitoring at high-use anchorages and nearshore island sites; assessment of impacts from mainland storm water plumes (particularly from the Ventura and Santa Clara rivers) on Sanctuary WQ; and coordination on a comprehensive marine debris collection and tracking program.
- There is also a pressing need for better enforcement of the multitude of laws and regulations governing WQ in the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary should focus in particular on enforcement of its new discharge prohibition as well as monitoring of vessel operations in Sanctuary waters.
- Finally, it is essential that Sanctuary managers keep abreast of emerging issues that could impact Sanctuary resources in future: climate change and ocean acidification, open ocean aquaculture, contaminants of emerging concern, and offshore energy projects, as well as emerging technologies and scientific methods to study their effects on aquatic life.

Kira fielded a variety of questions about the report. Chris Mobley, responding to questions about how the report would be used by CINMS, indicated that staff will review it and compare it with current capabilities and plans, looking to see where important gaps are and how best to apply the sanctuary's limited resources.

### **Public comment (morning)**

Reid Crispino from the Marine Exchange of Southern California described how the city of Corona has water use restrictions that have resulted in less fertilizers being washed off landscapes. Kristi Birney-Rieman from the Environmental Defense Center thanked Channelkeeper for their work on the water quality report, and reminded Council members that their Conservation Working Group is still working on a report about offshore renewable energy. Lauren Garske introduced herself, briefly described a study she has started on the use of science by Advisory Councils, and will be back in November to explain more. Jackie Dragon from Pacific Environment explained that she is on a new vessel traffic working group of the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council.

### **Ocean Acidification**

Linda Krop reported that progress by the ONMS west coast Ocean Acidification Task Force has slowed a bit due to many staff being deployed to the Gulf of Mexico to assist with oil spill response. She received limited input from other west coast SAC members, but did hear from Capt. David Bacon. She will keep us posted on progress and the next step, which would be a chance to review a draft Ocean Acidification Action Plan. Bruce Steele distributed a booklet on the NOAA Sea Grant workshop "Is Ocean Acidification Affecting Shellfish" (July 2010), and talked about the difficulties in monitoring, such as calibration of instruments, as well as the lack of long term data sets and field-based data collection efforts. As such, he explained, we are not really able to predict what the actual effects to animals will be in the ocean. He also noted that at the Blue Ocean Film Festival there was a lot of talk about/acceptance of ocean acidification as a reality, and that the film Acid Test

won an award. Mark Steele noted the significant increases he has seen in ocean acidification research, and associated opportunities to seek funding. Eric Kett reminded members that they can attend either of the upcoming SET workshops (Understanding Ocean Acidification) on October 7<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Update on US Coast Guard Port Access Route Study (PARS) for LA/Long Beach and the Santa Barbara Channel**

Mike Van Houten from the US Coast Guard's District 11 Waterways Branch provided a presentation (available upon request) on the Port Access Route Study (PARS) for LA/Long Beach and the Santa Barbara Channel. Mike explained that the Port and Waterways Safety Act gives the Coast Guard authority to designate or make adjustments to fairways and traffic separation schemes, which recognize the paramount right of navigation over all other uses in the designated areas. Port Access Route Studies are required before establishing new traffic separation schemes or making adjustments to existing schemes. The Coast Guard must coordinate with other government agencies, consider the views of maritime community representatives, environmental groups and other interested stakeholders. A primary purpose of the coordination is to reconcile the need for safe access routes with other reasonable waterways uses. Through the study, the Coast Guard will determine vessel traffic density and patterns in the area, determine if existing measures are adequate, or if not, and determine what type of modifications should be considered. The Coast Guard will collect and analyze data on vessel traffic trends, fishing activity, military activities, environmental factors, and economic impact. A range of possible recommendations includes extending or shifting existing routes, creating new routes, or validating existing measures don't need to be changed. Mike talked about some of the issues with vessels using western routes to transit south of the Channel Islands, including potential for increased interference with hazardous operations in the Navy test range and an uncertainty about impacts on marine mammals from increasing vessel traffic south of the islands. Mike also characterized the types of comments the Coast Guard had received from the Navy, Air Force, National Marine Fisheries Service, CINMS, SB Air Pollution Control District, and others. He concluded by stating that it is the Coast Guard's goal to publish a notice of study results by June 2011.

There was a variety of questions and comments from Council members. Highlights include:

- The Coast Guard has not provided additional funds to his unit to conduct the study, and specifically to go collect more data such as by conducting additional whale surveys. Thus, he said, they will be relying on data provided from other agencies.
- The Coast Guard will be consulting with CINMS on the study.
- Eric Kett: If ships were to no longer transit the SB Channel, boaters might become less alert about cross traffic, start using auto-pilot controls, and this could lead to more accidents.
- Eric Kett: Perhaps all of the PARS work and possible recommendations for big changes in response to the shifter traffic patters might be for naught if the IMO ship fuel requirements (off US Coast out to 200 nm from shore) scheduled to begin in a few a years mean that ships just go back to using the SB Channel as before.
- Capt David Bacon: It would still be safer and better for air quality if ships transited outside the Channel Islands.
- Capt Mat Curto: Be careful where you consider moving the shipping lanes, as there are whales all around the area. For example, the new routes that ships are now using have them passing through whale congregation areas near San Nicolas Island. Consider also that John Calambokidis has seen huge numbers of whales outside (south of) the northern Channel Islands.
- Chris Mobley: Explained that NMFS plans to do modeling work on ship strike risk that could be helpful.

### **Whale Ship Strikes**

Sean Hastings explained that a blue whale had recently washed up on San Miguel Island near Point Bennett. Due to fog, unsafe boating access, the presence of sensitive marine mammals hauling out as well as seabirds, and the fact that the whale had not yet completely beached, Sean explained that access to the whale by a necropsy team from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History has been delayed, but that they will be trying again and hope to help determine the cause of death.

Sarah Green presented slides (available upon request) showing a recent analysis of AIS (Automatic Identification System) data from ships in our area, including the amount of traffic using the Santa Barbara Channel and waters to the south of the Channel Islands, as well as vessel speeds. 71% of cargo vessels are using the area south of the Channel Islands, and cargo vessels in the SB Channel were averaging 14 knots compared to 18 knots south of the Channel Islands. Sarah also provided an update on the status of the UCSB Bren School team project on ship strikes, and explained that an AIS data analysis user manual is nearing completion and will be shared with other sanctuaries.

Capt. Mat Curto commented that whales have not been numerous in the SB Channel lately, and that the water has been quite cold. He did report that whales were more concentrated down south recently, and that there were some problems with people approaching too close. Related to that, a NMFS press release had been distributed to Council members: "Viewing Guidelines for Blue Whales and Other Marine Mammals" [<http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/pdf/nmfsrelease.pdf>]. Reid Crispino from the Marine Exchange of Southern California spoke about shipping traffic starting to pick up again, and suggested that slightly lower ship speeds measured in the Santa Barbara Channel could be related to fog and the use of lower sulfur fuels. Reid added that whale advisory messages are shared with Marine Exchange offices, and suggested that a survey of shipping agents could help determine the extent to which they are receiving the notices. Sean Hastings also commented on a shipping services company (ECM Services) that recently wrote a short newsletter article about the whale advisory zone in our area and was distributing it within the shipping industry (copies were provided, and available upon request).

#### **Public comment (afternoon)**

Jackie Dragon from Pacific Environment expressed appreciation that the maritime industry was engaging in the ship strike issue. She also stressed the importance of dealing with all the issues associated with shipping activity.

#### **Working Group Reports**

- **CINMS Interagency Enforcement Working Group.** Dayna Matthews reported that the Enforcement working group met on September 23<sup>rd</sup> with the usual members present as well as a new representative from the EPA. He described enforcement activities as being slow over the last 60 days given the poor marine weather. The NOAA Twin Otter aircraft has been deployed to the Gulf of Mexico, but the Coast Guard is making available some surveillance flight time on a C-130 aircraft. Group is gearing up for the opening of lobster season and the squid fishery. Two new classes of CDFG Wardens have completed training and will be in the field. Chris Mobley acknowledged the significant value of enforcement agency contributions, specifically drawing attention to the Coast Guard's deployment of C-130 flight time.
- **Commercial Fishing Working Group.** Bruce Steele asked about the CINMS collaborative research program with fishermen that used to be active. Sean Hastings explained that we were not able to financially sustain it after the few years of seed money dried up.
- **Conservation Working Group.** Linda Krop reported that the CWG met on Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> and primarily discussed the PARS, ship strike work, ocean acidification, the MLPA Initiative process, rigs to reefs, and NMSA reauthorization. Written notes were distributed to the Council. A Rigs to Reef bill passed by the State Legislature will go to the Governor for signature, and he has until September 30<sup>th</sup> to act on it.

#### **Future Meeting Schedule**

The Advisory Council voted to adopt the following Friday meeting schedule for 2011:

- January 21 (Santa Barbara), March 18 (Ventura), May 20 (Santa Barbara), July 22 (Ventura), September 23 (Santa Barbara), and November 18 (Ventura).

**Meeting Attendance Roster (September 24, 2010):**

Andrea Mills	Tourism	Present
Mat Curto	Tourism - Alternate	Present
Debra Herring	Non-Consumptive Recreation	Present
Perry Ferguson	Non-Consumptive Recreation - Alternate	Present
Capt. Richard McKenna	Business	Absent
Michael Wm Gould	Business - Alternate	Present
Linda Krop	Conservation	Present
Greg Helms	Conservation - Alternate	Present
Bruce Steele	Commercial Fishing	Present
<i>Vacant</i>	Commercial Fishing - Alternate	--
David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	Present
Merit McCrea	Recreational Fishing - Alternate	Absent
Maria Petueli	Education	Present
Amanda Hendrickson	Education - Alternate	Present
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	Absent
Dr. Mark Steele	Research - Alternate	Present
Phyllis Grifman	Public At Large #1	Absent
Vic Cox	Public At Large #1 - Alternate	Present
Eric Kett	Public At Large #2	Present
Marilyn Kelly	Public At Large #2 - Alternate	Present
Luhui Isha	Chumash Community	Present
Vennise Miller-Forte	Chumash Community - Alternate	Present
Peter Fischel	NOAA Fisheries	Present
Elizabeth Petras	NOAA Fisheries - Alternate	Absent
Russell Galipeau	National Park Service	Present
David Ashe	National Park Service - Alternate	Present
CDR Jason Collins	US Coast Guard	Absent
LT Steve Arnwine	US Coast Guard - Alternate	Absent
Donna Schroeder	BOEMRE	Absent
Ann Bull	BOEMRE - Alternate	Absent
John Ugoretz	Dept. of Defense	Absent
Walt Schobel	Dept. of Defense - Alternate	Present
Marija Vojkavich	CA Dept. of Fish & Game	Absent
Kristine Barsky	CA Dept. of Fish & Game - Alternate	Absent
Brian Baird	CA Natural Resources Agency	Absent
Amy Vierra	CA Natural Resources Agency - Alternate	Absent
Steve Hudson	CA Coastal Commission	Absent
Barbara Carey	CA Coastal Commission - Alternate	Absent
Dianne Black	Santa Barbara County	Present
Susan Curtis	Santa Barbara County - Alternate	Present
Lyn Krieger	Ventura County	Absent
Marilyn Miller	Ventura County - Alternate	Absent
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