

**Minutes of Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
December 17, 2015, 1:00-3:00 EDT
Via Webinar / Teleconference**

Meeting Opening and Committee Business

The meeting was called to order by Designated Federal Official Lauren Wenzel. Lauren called the roll based on the webinar sign-in, and asked members on the phone to identify themselves (see attendance list). She welcomed all members and guests, and reviewed webinar logistics. She also noted that the public comment period would be at 2:40 and asked members of the public to hold their comments until that time. Lauren then introduced Acting Director of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), John Armor.

Remarks by Acting Director, John Armor

John noted that 2015 had been an important one for ONMS, and that the MPA Federal Advisory Committee had played a significant role in many of the issues that moved forward over the past year. He highlighted the “Our Oceans” conference held in Chile in October, where President Obama announced the beginning of a designation process for two new National Marine Sanctuaries in Maryland and Wisconsin. John also noted a major milestone in November, when he accompanied the NOAA Administrator Kathryn Sullivan on a visit to Cuba to sign the first agreement with that nation since the Cuba revolution. The agreement focuses on collaboration on marine protected areas, including the establishment of sister sanctuary partnerships between the two countries. In December, Dr. Sullivan attended the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP-21), and spoke about MPAs as part of the solution to building resilience to climate change impacts. John thanked the MPA FAC for their hard work and said he looked forward to their recommendations on their current areas of focus (MPA connectivity, external financing and the Arctic). George Geiger thanked John for formally designating Lauren as Director of the MPA Center.

MPA Center Update

Lauren provided a brief update ([here](#)) on some of the issues that the MPA Center has been focused on in 2015, including the growing role of the Center on international collaboration and capacity building for MPA Programs. The ONMS MPA Capacity Building Program has recently become part of the MPA Center. It works in countries around the world to build management capacity for MPA programs, working closely with other agencies and NGO partners.

Department of the Interior Update

Cliff McCreedy (NPS) provided an update on key milestones within the Department of the Interior. These included National Park Service participation in the new partnership on MPAs with Cuba, and Secretary Jewell’s presentation on coastal adaptation at COP-21 and the publication of a [Coastal Adaptation Case Studies Handbook](#).

Connectivity Subcommittee Report

Mark Carr reported that the Subcommittee met earlier in December and decided to develop four separate products (see summary document [here](#)).

Part 1 - Spatial Connectivity and MPAs (explaining connectivity)

Part 2 – Connectivity and MPA Network Design

Part 3 – Climate Change and Connectivity Among MPAs

Part 4 – Designing and Managing a Resilient MPA Network – An Action Agenda

In the discussion that followed Mark's presentation, Brian Baird said that the work was very impressive, and he was very glad that the Subcommittee was working on this topic. Mark mentioned that there had been excellent feedback on earlier drafts from Subcommittee members. Subcommittee members Joe Schumacker and Gary Davis commended Mark for his work, and for the way in which he incorporated input from other members. George Geiger expressed concern about the language used in the draft, and the need to emphasize the purpose and need for any MPA in order to build public support. Some audiences have very negative responses to terms like "MPAs" and "climate change," so any recommendations to make MPA networks more resilient to climate change impacts need to clearly address why MPAs are being established, and their role in a changing climate. Stephanie Madsen agreed. Brian Baird mentioned the work California has done to establish MPA collaboratives that bring together fishermen, agencies, NGOs and others to work together on MPA implementation. Sarah Robinson noted George's contribution to an earlier MPA FAC product on MPAs and Healthy Coastal Communities, and the importance of stating the purpose and need for MPAs. She urged the Subcommittee to review relevant past FAC products (also on climate change and gap analysis) to ensure those ideas continue to be included. Mark Carr thanked all for their comments, and noted that the Subcommittee is also exploring visual tools as a way to convey key messages.

External Financing Subcommittee Report

Brian Baird reported on the work of the External Financing Subcommittee (see summary document [here](#)). The Subcommittee has met three times and also held one webinar on NPS business plans. The Committee will:

- Identify funding mechanisms, evaluate each for effectiveness, and make recommendations regarding procedures to pursue these mechanisms.
- Provide Case Studies of successful mechanisms to use as model approaches, ie. Learning by example.
- Develop final report with recommendations, examples and references – including matrix/evaluation tool for determining which mechanisms are most applicable, in which circumstance.

Our preliminary recommendations will emphasize the importance of having a clear and compelling Business Plan and will provide guidance on critical components (National Park Service is providing guidance on this. We anticipate making clear recommendations regarding funding mechanisms with guidance on the ones that are proven, and those that have future potential.

The Subcommittee will develop a final document including a matrix with an evaluation tool noting how different types of financing tools apply in different situations. He noted that the NPS has done some great work with individual parks establishing business plans. Gary Davis commended the subcommittee, and noted that the report would be like a treasure map, telling people where to dig. Sarah Robinson suggested that examples that were not successful could also be useful (pitfalls). "Friends" groups are discussed in the document, and Jason Patlis mentioned that the Foundation's recent work in establishing local chapters illustrates how Friends groups can be scaled up to a national scale.

Arctic MPA Working Group

Lauren and Stephanie Madsen [reported](#) on the working group's progress, including a recent 2-day in person meeting that was held in Anchorage on November 9-10. They reviewed the common themes

that emerged from this meeting, and some of the key points from the public comments. These included recognizing the differences in the sub-regions that include the US definition of the Arctic (e.g. between the Bering and the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas), and the need to involve local communities and recognize the importance of subsistence uses. Stephanie Madsen noted that Alaskans are diverse and skeptical about a top down approach. Successful approaches need to consider Traditional Knowledge and Local Knowledge. There is also some concern that MPAs are not flexible or dynamic enough to address climate change impacts. She echoed the earlier comment by George Geiger, that when establishing new MPAs, the purpose and need must be clear and it must be an open and transparent process. John Jensen, also a working group member, added that there was a lot of interest in the MPA discussion, and that Alaska is very environmentally and culturally diverse. We need to recognize and build on past work, including that of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, and acknowledge the importance of economic concerns. Stephanie also noted new information from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council on a [Bering Sea Fisheries Ecosystem Plan](#) that will incorporate ecosystem approaches to management into fisheries management.

Joe Schumacker asked what was being done to increase participation by indigenous groups. Stephanie responded that we may not be able to expand working group, but we are reaching out via public comment. We also need to be clear that we are not creating new MPAs, but working on broad recommendations. Sarah Robinson noted that the charge to the working group is very broad, and the messages from the public relate to some of these points. She raised the question of whether we should limit the initial set of recommendations to issues raised by the public to show that we are listening. She was impressed with the strong message about the importance of traditional knowledge.

Stephanie noted that the group did not have an in depth discussion on the international component of the charge.

Mark noted that a major focus in the Arctic is climate change, which is also a focus for the Connectivity Subcommittee. One key tool is long-term monitoring to understand climate change. This can be an important nexus between climate change and the role of MPAs (e.g. monitoring change in the absence of other major impacts – sentinel sites). Stephanie responded that there is a lot of long-term monitoring in the Arctic, and Lauren noted that the Alaska Ocean Observing System had a representative at the meeting. Mark emphasized the importance of distinguishing between monitoring change and monitoring background conditions.

Public Comments

Greg DiDomenico (Garden State Seafood Association) posed a question to Mark Carr: the term “connectivity” was initially called a concept a long time ago. Carr’s report out also referred to it as a concept. How much ground truthing research has been done on this? Mark responded that connectivity is a recognized process by ecologists today even though it’s still referred to as a concept. It shouldn’t convey that it is not well understood or established. Greg referred to work on the movement of adult fish in reef systems. Mark added that much work has been done in coral reef ecosystems on both adults and larval dispersal. Greg wondered how much of this could be applied to migratory species in the mid-Atlantic. Mark said that for migratory species, the role of MPAs has primarily been to protect areas used repeatedly over time for important life stages such as breeding and foraging. Mark provided his contact info to Greg for follow up.

Closing

George thanked all members for their hard work, and encouraged all of them to continue to participate in order to have final products that represent the MPA FAC's diversity. George and Lauren wished everyone a very happy holiday.

Attendance

MPA FAC Members

Brian Baird
Mark Carr
Gary Davis
George Geiger
Stephen Kroll
Stephanie Madsen
Samantha Murray
Jason Patlis
Sarah Robinson
Joe Schumacker
Pete Stauffer
Trisha Watson

Federal Ex Officio Members and Designees:

Cliff McCreedy, NPS
Brian Melzian, US EPA
Steve Tucker, USCG
Lauren Wenzel, Designated Federal Official

NOAA and DOI Staff:

Robert Brock, NOAA MPA Center
Gonzalo Cid, NOAA MPA Center
Mimi D'lorio, NOAA MPA Center
Valerie Grussing, NOAA MPA Center
Pete Leary, USFWS
Heather Sagar, NOAA Fisheries
Charles Wahle, NOAA MPA Center

Guests:

Bonnie Brady
Samantha Brooke, NOAA Fisheries Pacific Region
Fuller Callaway
Quinton Carroll, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
Gina DeFerrari, World Wildlife Fund
Gregory DiDomenico, Garden State Seafood Association
Sandra Elvin, Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Jose Gerhartz
Brent Greenfield
Charlene Griffin
Daniel Hubbell
Ellie Humphrie, Pew
Carliane Johnson
Tom Lohman, North Slope Borough
Amy McElroy, Sen. Murkowski's office
Mayra Milkovic
Alfredo Montanez Acuna
Makeda Okolo, NOAA Legislative Affairs
Drue Pearce
Kryisia Pohl, Sen. Cantwell's office
Kimberly Puglise, NOAA NCCOS
Becca Robbins Gisclair
Saiontoni Sarkar, NOAA ONMS
Todd Stevenson, The Ocean Conservancy
Mary Sweeters, Greenpeace
Brian Zane