



# Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee

January 12, 2017

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20240

The Honorable Kathryn Sullivan  
Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Madam Secretary Jewell and Under Secretary Sullivan:

In April 2015, you charged the Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee with making recommendations on connectivity and climate change in marine protected areas and marine protected area networks (hereafter "MPAs"). Ensuring connectivity within, across, and around MPAs is essential to effective MPAs. It is also of utmost importance if MPAs are to meet their conservation goals as the distributions, abundances, and productivities of marine species change in response to climate change.

In response to the charge, we are pleased to submit to you a [comprehensive product](#) comprising an Executive Summary, a Scientific Synthesis, and an Action Agenda:

Executive Summary: Harnessing Ecological Spatial Connectivity for Effective Marine Protected Areas and Resilient Marine Ecosystems: Scientific Synthesis and Action Agenda

The Central Importance of Ecological Spatial Connectivity to Effective Marine Protected Areas and to Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change in the Marine Environment: A Scientific Synthesis

Action Agenda: Connectivity-Informed MPAs and MPA Networks for Effective Marine Conservation and to Meet the Challenges of Climate Change in the Marine Environment

The Committee's specific Recommendations are contained in our Action Agenda, which also provides a set of Guidelines for enhancing connectivity in MPAs. Briefly, our Recommendations are that you:

1. Enhance connectivity in all MPAs under your jurisdictions, using the provided Guidelines.
2. Urge and aid all other MPA programs in the nation to do the same.
3. Distribute the Guidelines and the Scientific Synthesis to all MPA programs.

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Chances Are Charters (Recreational Fishing)

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**Stephen Welch**  
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## **DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL**

**Lauren Wenzel**  
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4. Develop measures of connectivity and make them available to all MPA programs.
5. Lead efforts to ensure funding and capacity to monitor, evaluate, and adaptively manage MPAs.
6. Improve collaboration across the Departments of Commerce and Interior in these efforts.

You have the power to make our MPAs more effective conservation tools and resilient to the effects of climate change in the marine environment. By carrying out these recommendations, you will significantly enhance connectivity in, around, and among MPAs. This will strengthen our nation's MPAs and make them more effective in the face of a changing marine environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our Executive Summary, Scientific Synthesis, and Action Agenda. We look forward to your timely response and implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Geiger", is positioned above the typed name.

George J. Geiger  
Chair, Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee

cc: Dr. Christine Blackburn, Senior Advisor, NOAA  
Dr. W. Russell Callender, Assistant Administrator for National Ocean Service, NOAA  
John Armor, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, NOAA  
Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director, National Park Service  
Daniel M. Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Lauren Wenzel, Designated Federal Official, MPA FAC, NOAA

Attachments:

[Harnessing Ecological Spatial Connectivity for Effective Marine Protected Areas and Resilient Marine Ecosystems: Scientific Synthesis & Action Agenda \(January 2017\).](#)