

DRAFT MINUTES & MEETING SUMMARY
Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
June 2-4, 2014
Galveston, Texas

Monday, June 2, 2014

Proceedings

The meeting convened at 9:04 a.m. Eastern. Draft documents referenced during the meeting were emailed to members by Lauren Wenzel.

Meeting Opening and Committee Business

The meeting was called to order by Designated Federal Official Lauren Wenzel. George Geiger, MPA FAC Chair, made the opening remarks. Members in attendance introduced themselves, followed by an introduction of ex-officio members and public participants. Lacking a quorum, the Chair noted that any actions by the Committee would be postponed until a quorum was present.

Committee Chair George Geiger asked if there were any changes to the agenda that had been distributed prior to the meeting. Michelle Ridgway, FAC member, asked for a discussion on the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) reauthorization to be added to the agenda. Chair Geiger asked for any objections to this addition; hearing none, MSA authorizations were tentatively added to the agenda.

Committee Chair George Geiger then asked if there were any changes, additions, or deletions to the minutes from the last meeting. Hearing none, those minutes were tentatively approved by the committee but as there was not a quorum, a final vote could not proceed.

Lauren Wenzel then described plans to develop a joint statement by the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and the MPA FAC on MPAs, Recreation and Stewardship during the joint session of the two groups on Tuesday, June 2. "Lauren explained that the aim of the document is to increase awareness of MPAs as recreational destinations, as well as the need for sustainable management of these activities. She noted that this document would be taken up for action by the MPA FAC on Wednesday.

Lauren Wenzel then reviewed the FAC agenda. Michelle Ridgway asked a clarifying question on the joint meeting wondering how much of the time would be dedicated to the joint statement.

George Geiger remarked that a vote on agenda would occur when there was a quorum.

National Marine Protected Areas Center Update, Lauren Wenzel, MPA Center

Lauren Wenzel reviewed the current thematic focus areas for the MPA Center: recreational uses and MPAs; MPAs' role in climate change adaptation and mitigation; cultural resources and landscapes; and capacity building. With regard to capacity building, the MPA Center has developed a webinar series in collaboration with the EBM Tools Network and OpenChannels (which is funded through the Moore Foundation). The MPA Center also created a new blog on contemporary MPA issues in partnership with OpenChannels. MPA partners and stakeholders are invited to be guest bloggers. Lauren also mentioned the goal to develop a peer-to-peer network, which would connect MPA practitioners, as well as a cooperative effort with graduate students from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and the Environment on community engagement with MPAs.

Michelle Ridgway asked if people were tapping into the science of the peer-to-peer network. Lauren Wenzel noted that it depended on webinar context, which varied from science to management. Lauren suggested that anyone with ideas for incorporating more science into the webinars bring those ideas to the table. Michelle suggested the sea star wasting syndrome as a possible topic of discussion that could bring managers and scientists together.

Lauren also described the MPA Center's new e-newsletter; an expansion of the center's social media site; an analysis of MPA representativeness; the development of a consistent language for ocean uses; updating the national system framework; and making climate change a priority for the MPA Center.

Lauren then proceeded to discuss the MPA Center's international efforts mentioning that the Center was very engaged in co-leading the marine theme for the World Parks Congress. She also noted that the Center is co-leading a blue carbon mapping and science project with Canada and Mexico, and is working with Caribbean partners on the SPAW Protocol (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife), involving Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Parks.

In response to a question, Lauren noted that the MPA Center staff consists of: Charlie Wahle, senior scientist; Robert Brock, scientist; Valerie Grussing, cultural resources coordinator; Jordan Gass, part time GIS analyst; and an Hugo Selbie, MPA analyst. Lauren mentioned that the program, even while mandated, is hanging on by its teeth. Specifically, noted that funding for the program has declined from 2003-2010 budget, when it received typically \$2-3 million a year. Currently, while operating under the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, it receives approximately \$670,000, enough to cover federal staff and minimal travel.

Karen Garrison asked about the provisions of the SPAW protocol. In response, Lauren noted that the Protocol is part of the Cartagena Convention and has a mandate to list protected areas that are important for biodiversity. While the protocol has been in place for over a decade, the listing process began only recently, with Florida Keys as the pilot site in the U.S. The protocol ensures that very specific requirements for both terrestrial and marine areas are met.

In response to Lauren Wenzel's description of sentinel sites – a NOAA program for monitoring climate change issues - Michelle Ridgway noted the importance of building bridges between science and management and using data to add rigor to policy discussions. She suggested building a regional approach to climate change observations, so MPAs can understand changes within a regional context. Cliff McCreedy, National Park Service, noted that the Integrated Ocean Observation Systems (IOOS) has developed regional observation data networks that should be involved in such an effort. Heather Sagar, NOAA Fisheries, suggested that this would be a useful dialogue to continue with federal and state MPA programs.

Reports from the Subcommittees

Recreational, Travel and Tourism Subcommittee – Priscilla Brooks

Priscilla Brooks, chair of the Recreation and Tourism Subcommittee, described how the subcommittee set out to review what was going on in our nation's MPAs. Their initial aim was to conduct a survey of the 1,600 MPAs nationally, but decided against this when learning about the Paperwork Reduction Act approval process for surveys. The survey will be conducted by the MPA Center, and is in development.

In response, the group conducted an informal survey of MPA managers for discussion at the George Wright Society Conference in 2012, and decided to host a webinar of MPA managers to hear about their experiences. This webinar included speakers from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Gateway National Recreation Area, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and the Upper Suwannee and Crystal River National Wildlife Refuges. Cliff McCreedy, who also took part in the webinar, talked about the National Park Service's approach to management. The subcommittee also drafted a letter to NOAA that was approved and sent by the full FAC to: 1) identify recreation as a priority issue, and 2) support NOAA's ongoing effort to collect related data, in particular, the survey.

Priscilla then noted that the subcommittee would draft a short document presenting their recommendations for principles regarding sustaining and managing recreation and tourism in MPAs. The subcommittee's hope is to finalize a document for FAC action at this meeting.

Michelle Ridgway asked if Sanctuaries had a statement that addressed their policy, views or priorities relating to recreation, travel and tourism, and its sustainability. The Sanctuaries do not currently have such a document.

Heather Sagar, NOAA Fisheries, related that NOAA participates in a Presidential initiative (America's Great Outdoors) focused on recreational activities.

Stakeholder Engagement – Gary Davis

Gary Davis, Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee Chair, noted that the MPA Center can help coordinate a community of practice among MPA managers, and the subcommittee aimed to provide practical, effective advice about communications. Gary described that the subcommittee began by considering key questions: who are the constituents, how do we reach them? The group then developed a four-step communications plan (issues, messages, audiences and delivery techniques). Gary noted that the messages in the communications plan centered on addressed three general topic areas (MPAs generally, MPAs and recreation, and MPAs and climate change); the audience to whom the messages were directed focused on MPA managers, ocean users and the general public. The delivery techniques considered would give people opportunities to participate in the discourse. Gary mentioned that the subcommittee had drafted most of the plan and would spend its time in session working on an executive summary and good examples of communications. He ended his summary of the subcommittee's work by asking FAC members to provide comments on the communications plan.

Joe Schumacker reiterated that the key to the document is accessibility and engagement of the public.

Jake Levenson, BOEM, questioned if there was any MPA Center equivalent to the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, to which Lauren replied that while no such entity exists for the Center, some individual MPA programs and sites have "Friends of" organizations. Jake also mentioned whale alert apps at Channel Islands and Stellwagen Bank national marine sanctuaries as model communication tools and proven opportunities of innovative connections.

Hans Radke asked for a definition of Citizen Science, spurring a conversation about this form of citizen engagement. Gary noted that the aim of citizen science was not to influence policy decisions, but to engage people in science beyond those in the scientific community itself. Citizen science was recognized as only one form of public engagement. Hans noted the challenges of quality control for data gathered by non-experts.

Priscilla Brooks, FAC member, asked for recognition of the delicate balance between promoting ecosystem function and integrity and promoting sustainable tourism. She expressed a desire for the products of both subcommittees to fit together.

George Geiger then called for a break, after which subcommittees would meet.

10:30 – 4:15 Subcommittee work sessions

4:30 – Committee reconvenes

Committee Chair George Geiger asked for public comment. Hearing none, the FAC subcommittees proceeded to give a summary of their recommendations.

Priscilla Brooks, chair of the Recreation, Travel and Tourism subcommittee, gave an overview of the draft recommendations her group developed. Comments were made on the language.

Gary Davis, chair of the Stakeholder Engagement subcommittee reviewed the executive summary of his group along with its four recommendations.

Hard copies of the subcommittee recommendations were to be handed out in advance of the Thursday session.

Tuesday, June 3, 2014

8:30 – 10:00 Subcommittee work sessions

10:00-10:15 Committee reconvenes

Lauren Wenzel noted that a quorum was present, and George Geiger called for consideration of the minutes of the December 2013 minutes, which were unanimously approved without changes.

10:30-5:00 Joint session with the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs (See attached notes for this portion of the meeting.)

Wednesday, June 4, 2014

Discussion of Joint Statement on MPAs, Recreation and Stewardship

At 8:40 am, the meeting was called to order by George Geiger and began with a discussion of the joint document crafted the day before with the Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs. Charlie Wahle, MPA Center, summarized the changes that were made to the draft document based on comments from each breakout group. He noted that the document was now clearer, but not substantively different.

Cliff McCreedy asked who would receive the document. Charlie Wahle noted that the document was targeted towards the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce, and that the FAC would transmit it with a cover letter to the Secretaries of each Department, asking them to act on this

FAC-supported statement. Charlie noted that the joint statement and the MPA FAC recommendations on recreation were related, but focused on different elements of the issue.

The FAC provided several suggestions for additions and changes to the joint document began with changes to the preamble, where FAC members asked for greater recognition of marine areas as important to people and the economy; the inclusion of the word “recreation” and the values (natural and cultural) that recreation sustains, and mention of MPAs as an investment in the future and the community.

Following a discussion on the preamble, edits on the remaining document were addressed, primarily focused on ensuring a sufficient focus on ocean stewardship and the distinction between sustaining recreation and sustaining special places. Several members noted the potential harm to MPAs from excessive or poorly managed recreation. Michelle Ridgway noted that this document was an opportunity that should be seized in an effort to make the growing recreational uses of the ocean, and their promotion as destinations for recreation, sustainable. Lauren Wenzel noted that this joint statement was about joining the voices of two influential groups to create a big impact.

The FAC incorporated the suggested edits and then sent a revised draft of the document to the Sanctuary Advisory Chairs for a courtesy review.

Nicole Capps, NOAA, spoke to the group regarding travel logistics

Discussion of FAC Recommendations on Recreation and Tourism Subcommittee

Priscilla Brooks reviewed her subcommittee’s recommendations for managing recreational use to sustain the natural and cultural assets of U.S. MPAs. She then opened the floor to comment.

The MPA FAC then addressed a series of comments. Included in their discussions, and reflected in the final document was a recognition of: natural and cultural MPA assets, an empowered public, and a diversity of uses and regulations in MPAs.

Cliff McCreedy noted that a serious hindrance to compliance and enforcement within an MPA occurs when visitors don’t know they’re in a protected area. He suggested that information be available through official navigation charts, and similar means. Michele Ridgway noted that the MPA Center maintains official MPA boundary data through the MPA Inventory. Lauren Wenzel commented that the MPA Center has been working with the Office of Coast Survey to add more MPAs to navigation charts for several years. Gary Davis suggested that members download the new FishAlerts! app which has all MPA boundaries accessible through the MPA Center database.

Hans Radke moved that the FAC recommendations on recreation and tourism be approved as amended, and Steve Kroll seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

FAC Action on Joint Statement with Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs

Charlie Wahle returned from discussions with the Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs regarding the revised joint statement. Charlie reported that the group concurred with the FAC’s changes and supported its approval. Individual Sanctuary Advisory Councils will take up this statement for action at their meetings this summer.

George Geiger asked for a motion on the approval of the joint statement on MPAs, Recreation and Stewardship. Steve Kroll motioned that the statement be approved as amended, and Hans Radke seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Gary Davis reviewed the changes to the recommendations on Constituent Communication developed by the Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee. He noted the role the MPA Center can play as a coordinating entity for all MPA programs. Michelle Ridgway moved that the FAC approve the Subcommittee recommendations, and Karen Garrison seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Magnuson-Stevens Act

Michelle Ridgway raised the issue of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), which is up for reauthorization. She described one version of the bill put forward by Representative Hastings, and another drafted by Senator Begich. According to Michelle, both bills propose very significant changes to the MSA. Hastings' bill is focused on changes regarding the requirements to rebuild fisheries stocks within a prescribed amount of time, citing economic hardship. George Geiger noted that Hastings' provisions would overturn rebuilding plans from 2006, to the detriment of many fisheries stocks. Hastings' bill also specifically notes that the MSA would, in all cases, supersede the Antiquities Act, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Begich's bill focuses on ecosystem-based management and bycatch reduction plans. Furthermore, Begich's bill calls for improved science and addresses tribal issues and rebuilding, though very differently than in Hastings' bill.

In response, George Geiger noted that if members had strong comments about MSA reauthorization, that they should call their member of Congress and express their sentiments. He added that the Hastings bill was marked-up and awaiting movement.

Steve Welch noted that the current 10-year timeline for rebuilding fisheries is not supported by data, the biggest problem with the 2006 rebuilding language. George noted that many rebuilding plans already take more than 10 years.

Charlie Wahle noted that many Sanctuary Advisory Councils may also be interested in MSA reauthorization, and this could be an issue of potential future collaboration between the two groups.

Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas

Lauren Wenzel updated the FAC on the Framework for the National System of MPAs. Lauren noted that the document was originally completed in November 2008, and the Center would like to update it to reflect the experience of implementing the national system since 2008, and to incorporate changes recommended by the FAC. Key changes would be to simplify and streamline the document, incorporate FAC recommendations related to cultural resources, and focus more on outcomes and capacity development than on the mechanics of how the system would operate.

Lauren also noted the next steps involved in the Framework revision, which was currently out for federal agency review. Agency comments are expected by mid-June, with a release to the public for their comments in late summer. The aim would be to release a final, revised framework by end of 2014.

Joe Schumacker noted the important role the FAC has played in developing this document, and asked how FAC comments would be addressed in this revision. Lauren noted that new members to the FAC will be appointed by Fall 2014, and the FAC would be invited to comment on the revised Framework,

both as a Committee and as individuals. Karen Garrison asked at what level the document would be approved, and Lauren said that while the first draft was approved by NOAA, as an update, this version may be approved by the National Ocean Service.

Cultural heritage working group report

Valerie Grussing, MPA Center Cultural Resources Coordinator, gave a report on the Cultural Heritage Working Group, describing a 2011 white paper with 13 recommendations related to cultural landscapes. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation sponsored a small grant to operationalize the recommendations. To this end, a working group was formed to develop an on-line cultural resources toolkit. Valerie invited input on the product from non-cultural resources specialists.

Karen Garrison noted that it would be a good practice for the FAC to identify important projects for the MPA Center and the National System that could be ready to implement should grant funding or other funds become available.

Miscellaneous

George Geiger noted that Lauren Wenzel is helping to plan the World Parks Congress in November, 2014. Lauren added that in concert with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Parks Australia and IUCN, NOAA will aim to advance the marine conservation agenda through this meeting, which is held only once a decade. The Congress is expected to host 3000-4000 people and is a key opportunity to set major conservation milestones for the global community. Lauren will meet with NGO representatives in Washington after the FAC meeting to garner their related input. Joe Schumacker noted that tribal representatives also plan on attending. Karen Garrison also asked that Lauren share ideas that are being put forward as possible future commitments (called “the Sydney Promise.”)

Future FAC Charge : how we work and what we work on

Lauren Wenzel facilitated a discussion about future issues the FAC may work on, as well as how the FAC works operationally. Some issues being considered for a future FAC charge include: connectivity (connecting MPAs at the landscape and seascape scale); addressing management issues and challenges faced by different MPA programs; and models for sustainable financing of MPAs.

Karen Garrison noted the important role the FAC has played in policy development, and recommended that this continue.

Hans Radke inquired about the representation of oil and gas industries, noting that the affiliation of FAC members, and a broad representation, was important. Lauren noted that Cathy Reheis-Boyd represents this industry on the FAC.

Michelle Ridgway inquired about a plan to further engage DOI. She also noted that the FAC and Sanctuary Advisory Council chairs together are an incredible force, and that the working groups should take their joint call to action to the next level by crystallizing their messages and sending out press releases. She identified a need for talking points to capture key parts of the messages that the FAC is attempting to relate to NOAA.

Karen Garrison questioned how the joint statement would be used, noting that the background could be used to bolster other projects. Priscilla Brooks noted that the issues raised in the joint statement should be on the Secretaries’ radar screens in order for any action to be taken. Steve Kroll, FAC member, noted

the MPA managers who help serve the ultimate recipients and end-users in the joint statement, could also help move the issue forward.

Karen Garrison noted that the first priority for the FAC should be advising how to strengthen and expand the national system of MPAs, mentioning that she would like to see bottom-up and science-informed expansion of MPAs. Karen suggested that perhaps there should be a science-advisory group for the national system. Michelle Ridgway expressed her interest in helping with this idea.

Priscilla Brooks suggested that the FAC meet in-person at a minimum once a year, noting that working remotely is difficult. Lauren also noted that NOAA may seek additional shorter term projects and feedback from the FAC, to make better use of time when the FAC cannot meet in person. The use of workgroups including members who are not FAC members may also be further explored.

Lauren Wenzel then addressed the last order of business -- recognition of the members who were attending their last meeting, after which she handed out certificates of appreciation to those whose term with the FAC are ending this year. These members include: William Aila, Dave Blazer, Priscilla Brooks, Felicia Coleman, John Frampton, Karen Garrison, David Hyrenbach, Gary Kania, Hans Radtke and Michelle Ridgway.

Priscilla Brooks suggested that the FAC should have an alumni network and Lauren invited suggestions on how to tap into the established FAC Emeritus network.

George Geiger, MPA FAC Chair, adjourns the MPA FAC meeting at 12:54pm.

Attendees:

FAC Members

Priscilla Brooks
Gary Davis
George Geiger
Karen Garrison
Steve Kroll
Hans Radke
Catherine Reheis-Boyd
Michelle Ridgway
Joe Schumacker
Della Scott-Iretton
Stephen Welch

Ex Officio Members

Cliff McCreedy, National Park Service
Steve Tucker, US Coast Guard

NOAA Staff

Cirse Gonzalez, ONMS
Valerie Grussing, MPA Center
Heather Sagar, NOAA Fisheries
Charles Wahle, MPA Center
Lauren Wenzel, MPA Center
Chiara Zuccharino-Crowe, ONMS

Guests

Michael Colby, Florida Coast Charters