

mpa connections

A publication of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

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Letter from MPA Center Director, Joe Uravitch, on MPA Center 2009 Accomplishments

Dear MPA Connections Subscribers:

As we say goodbye to 2009 and begin 2010, I want to share with you some of the progress the National Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center) has been making in supporting the implementation of the national system of marine protected areas (MPAs) partnership. 2009 was an exciting year. On April 22, Earth Day, we welcomed 225 federal, state and territorial sites into the national system of MPAs. Then, in June 2009, we met with federal, state, territorial and tribal national system partners to collaborate on setting priorities and establishing next steps for the national system.

The national system of MPAs was established under Executive Order 13158 to provide a framework for more effective cooperation and stewardship of the United States' natural and cultural marine resources. Following this letter is a brief summary of the MPA Center's accomplishments for the year 2009, together with an update on some of the new initiatives in progress. We are particularly excited about our partnership plans. We'll be working with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to establish an MPA Fund to provide grants to national system partners and with NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Coral Reef Conservation Program to support training and capacity development. We'll also continue our "people and places" virtual North American MPA Network (NAMPAN) work, in cooperation with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation in North America and our U.S., Canadian, and Mexican counterparts.

The strength of the national system is in its partnerships across agencies, levels of government, states and regions and with stakeholders like you. Thank you for your continued engagement and support. We look forward to working with you in 2010 to fulfill the promise of the national system.

Sincerely,
Joseph A. Uravitch
Director
National Marine Protected Areas Center

MPA Connections was first published by the National Marine Protected Areas Center in October 2002. The newsletter is available electronically and distributed via listserve. Issues are archived on http://mpa.gov/information_tools/newsletters.html. To subscribe, send an email to the editor, Kara.Schwenke@noaa.gov.

Some MPA Center 2009 Accomplishments

MPA Center Holds Conservation Gap Analysis Scoping Workshop

In February, the MPA Center held a workshop in Monterey, CA to scope out the regional gap analysis process that will identify important ecological areas that can contribute to meeting the conservation objectives of the national system of MPAs. The gap analysis process is intended to lead to strengthened marine conservation, either through the national system of MPAs by identifying areas that may be in need of additional place-based protection, or through other forms of protection in order to support these objectives. The workshop drew on the expertise of approximately 20 national and international scientists and resource managers with experience in marine, terrestrial and ecological gap analysis.



NOAA and DOI Announce First Members of the National System of MPAs

On April 22, NOAA and the Department of the Interior announced the admission of 225 existing federal, state and territorial MPAs into the national system of MPAs. Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator, and Will Shafroth, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks attended the ceremony in Annapolis, MD, and provided opening remarks. The charter group comprises sites from state, territorial, federal and federal/state partnership agencies in 28 states, plus additional offshore areas under federal jurisdiction.

MPA Center Holds National System Partners Retreat

On June 2-3, the MPA Center held the first National System of MPAs Partners Retreat at the Aspen Wye River Institute in Queenstown, MD. Representatives from federal, state, and tribal MPA programs met to share information about their capabilities and needs. Specific objectives were to: 1) identify priorities for near term focus of the national system; 2) identify specific priorities for action to strengthen the national system; 3) identify key opportunities for collaboration with other coastal and ocean initiatives, and; 4) identify interim measures for national system coordination and communication.



MPA Federal Advisory Committee Completes National System Recommendations

The MPA Federal Advisory Committee met twice in 2009, and developed recommendation on: the benefits of linking ocean observing systems with the national system of MPAs; how MPA networks and the national system of MPAs can support ecological resilience in the face of climate change and other human impacts; guiding principles for an ecological gap analysis of the national system of MPAs; and a planning tool for evaluating the national system of MPAs.

Cartoonists Lend Their Pens to the National System of MPAs

Syndicated cartoonists Jack Elrod (Mark Trail) and Jim Toomey (Sherman's Lagoon) both highlighted the national system of MPAs in their work this year. On Sunday, April 12, Mark Trail featured a colorful panel highlighting the National System of MPAs. Jim Toomey created and donated a Sherman's Lagoon poster highlighting the three conservation goals of the National System of MPAs for the national system's celebration ceremony held on Earth Day 2009 in Annapolis, MD.



MPA Center Hires New Cultural Resources Coordinator



Dr. Valerie Grussing,
Cultural Resources Coordinator
for the MPA Center

The MPA Center would like to give a warm welcome to Dr. Valerie Grussing, the new Cultural Resources Coordinator for the MPA Center's Silver Spring office. Valerie obtained her Ph.D. in December 2009 from the Coastal Resources Management Program at East Carolina University, specializing in the Maritime Studies track. Her dissertation, "Reanimating the

Graveyard: Heritage Tourism Development of North Carolina Shipwrecks," is a comparative evaluation of ten programs designed to protect and interpret shipwrecks, concluding with a series of recommendations for North Carolina to expand such programs.

Previously, Valerie has done temporary and graduate assistant work as a teaching assistant, an archaeological field and lab technician as well as illustrator, and an intern with the Hunley Project at the Clemson Conservation Center. In the summer of 2005, she served as the MPA Center's Cultural Resources Research Fellow for Brian Jordan while he was our Cultural Resources Coordinator.

In her new role as Cultural Resources Coordinator, she is charged with helping develop the vision of the cultural heritage track of the National MPA System. To provide guidance for advancing the cultural heritage track, the MPA Center has assembled a working group of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee to engage the scientific and cultural heritage resource management experience of federal agencies, state and tribal managers, academics, and non-governmental organizations. Some of the tasks at hand include communicating the benefits of joining the national system, maximizing potential contributions of the national system to cultural heritage sites, and formulating a conceptual framework to guide cultural heritage gap analysis.

Cultural heritage MPAs are nonrenewable, and are in need of better protection through education and interpretation. Valerie is enthusiastic about the opportunity to coordinate with cultural heritage MPA managers, and to facilitate outreach and capacity building.

Second Round of National System Nominations Available for Public Comment

The National Marine Protected Areas Center has received the second round of nominations for existing MPAs to join the national system of MPAs, based on a call for nominations from August 2009 through November 2009. The **list of nominated sites** has now been published in the **Federal Register** for



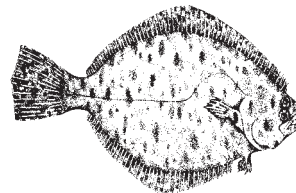
a 45-day public review period ending February 22, 2010. More detail about the nominated sites is available at www.mpa.gov. The group of 32 sites includes 21 National Parks, seven National Wildlife Refuges, and four sites managed by coastal state and territorial governments, including one National Estuarine Research Reserve. Territorial and state governments nominating sites to the national system included North Carolina, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Washington. Following review of public comments, the final nominations will be formally accepted as members of the national system in March 2010. For more information, contact Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov.

MPA Center Partners with NFWF on MPA Fund

The MPA Center and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) have established an MPA Fund to assist MPA agencies with enhancing stewardship and coordination among national system member sites. The fund issued its first call for proposals in October, and 11 pre-proposals were received. The MPA Center and NFWF will announce grant recipients in April 2010.

MPA agencies and partners could apply for funds for: Stewardship Projects as Part of a Regional/Sub-Regional MPA plan; Development of a Regional/Sub-Regional MPA Plan; or Meeting National System Eligibility Criteria.

Approximately \$190K is currently available for grants from the fund. NFWF and the MPA Center are seeking additional partners to expand the fund in 2010 and beyond. Updates on the fund, including approved grants, will be posted soon on www.mpa.gov & www.nfwf.org.



Looking Ahead: MPA Center Focus for 2010

In addition to projects mentioned in this issue of Connections, the following are ongoing initiatives for the MPA Center in 2010:

Partnership with NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Coral Reef Conservation Program to Support MPA Training

The MPA Center is working with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the Coral Reef Conservation Program to bring their training expertise to national system partners. Initial training sessions will focus on designing and managing MPA networks and planning for climate change impacts on the ocean. Additional training options will be identified in 2010 based on feedback from national system partners.

Partnership with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in North America, Canada and Mexico for the North American MPA Network (NAMPAN)

The MPA Center is working with U.S. MPA programs, Parks Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Mexico's Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP) to establish a common condition report on environmental conditions that can be used by MPAs across the three countries. The project has established pilot sites in the Pacific "Baja to Bering" region, and a report on the project will be published in FY2010. A "train the trainers" workshop was held in Port Angeles, WA, in September to increase the ability to apply the process elsewhere in North America. Participation in NAMPAN will be one of the topics of discussion at the 2010 national system partners meeting.

Developing the Regional Conservation Ecological Gap Analysis

The MPA Center is working toward an effective, representative national system by supporting the stewardship efforts of existing MPAs, and through a regional ecological gap analysis process. The purposes of the gap analysis are to inform the MPA planning efforts of managing agencies across all levels of government, and to fulfill the MPA Executive Order's directive for "strengthening and expanding the nation's system of marine protected areas." The gap analysis will identify ecologically valuable areas that contribute to the natural heritage and sustainable production priority conservation objectives of the national system and would benefit from additional protection, either through MPAs or some other management measure. The MPA Center and its partners will collect and analyze information on ocean resources and uses, describe how current MPAs contribute to national system objectives, and engage the public.

Outreach to Fishery Management Councils

The MPA Center is working closely with NOAA Fisheries to inform the Regional Fishery Management Councils about the nomination process for the national system and encourage them to nominate eligible sites. MPA Center or NOAA Fisheries staff have presented to seven of the eight Councils. The Mid Atlantic Council is moving forward to recommend fishery management MPAs for nomination to the national system, while other Councils are at an earlier stage of deliberation. All sites recommended by the Councils will go through public comment periods at both the Council and the national level.

Upcoming Events and Conferences*

January 2010

11-15: New Hampshire/Maine Ocean Uses Atlas Workshop; Durham, NH; http://mpa.gov/science_analysis/atlas.html

February 2010

18-22: AAAS Annual Meeting; San Diego, CA; <http://www.aaas.org/meetings/2010/>

April 2010

20-22: MPA Federal Advisory Committee Meeting; Charleston, SC; http://mpa.gov/mpafac/mpafac_meetings.html

May 2010

10-14: Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, Halifax, Nova Scotia; <http://www.trilat.org/>

June 2010

13-16: The Coastal Society's 22nd International Coastal Conference; Wilmington, NC; <http://www.thecoastalsociety.org/conference/tcs22/index.html>

*Events and conferences listed above are not necessarily events that NOAA or the MPA Center will be sponsoring and/or participating in.



Artwork courtesy of Jim Toomey ©

Update on MPA Center Outreach and Communication Efforts

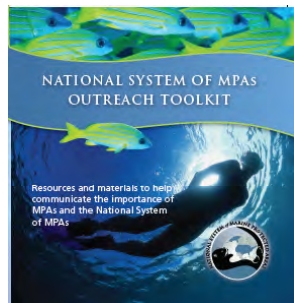
Throughout 2009, the MPA Center reached out to potential and current national system partners through presentations, newsletters, the national system website (www.mpa.gov), and other mechanisms. The information presented below provides additional information on the MPA Center's outreach and communication efforts, both completed and ongoing:

Conferences and Meetings

The MPA Center presented information on the national system at several meetings and workshops in 2009, and had a strong presence at the second International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC)/International Marine Protected Areas Congress 2 (IMPAC2) at George Mason University in May. Joe Uravitch, MPA Center Director, was a co-chair for the IMPAC2 component, and Lauren Wenzel, National System Coordinator, gave a presentation on the national system. Several MPA Center outreach products, including the new Sherman's Lagoon posters, were distributed at the NOAA booth.

Outreach to National System Partners

In October, Outreach Toolkit packages were mailed to all 225 national system partners. These packages contained a national system Outreach Toolkit CD which contains all of the MPA Center fact sheets on the national system, as well as various multimedia and mapping resources. Additionally, the package contained several outreach materials, including the new Sherman's Lagoon poster, and a national system membership door clinger, for sites to use to publicize their membership in the national system.



www.mpa.gov

At the request of system partners, a national system partners' internal web page was created to facilitate information sharing on meetings, workshops and other events and projects related to national system development. The MPA Center is currently working on a major redesign of www.mpa.gov, to better reflect the current work of the MPA Center, to provide information on the implementation of the national system, and to increase the utility of the MPA Center's online databases and mapping resources. A launch date of early 2010 is set, so make sure to bookmark www.mpa.gov so that you can access all the new features!

MPA Federal Advisory Committee Meets in Alaska

The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee met for the fourteenth time from September 9-11 in Anchorage, Alaska. During the meeting, the Committee heard from two panels of scientists and managers on how marine protected areas can contribute to ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change, and on opportunities and challenges for marine protected areas in Alaska. Several members of the public provided oral comments to the Committee.



New Chair Eugenio Piñero Soler accepts the gavel from outgoing Chair, Mark Hixon

Elections for the positions of Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Parliamentarian were held at the end of this meeting. Eugenio Piñero Soler, Chair of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, was elected Chair, and Lori Arguelles, Vice President of Media and Policy Strategy, SeaWeb, was elected Vice Chair. Victor Mastone, Director and Chief Archaeologist for the

Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources, was elected Parliamentarian.

During the meeting, the Committee finalized and adopted recommendations to guide the future evaluation of the national system. In September, these recommendations were formally transmitted to Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator, and Eileen Sobeck, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. The recommendations included an Evaluation Planning Tool to help guide evaluation of the national system.

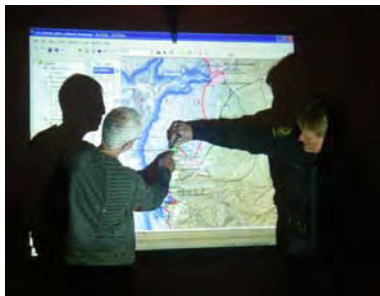


A tidewater glacier in Prince William Sound

Because the FAC has been charged with providing recommendations on ecosystem resilience and climate change impacts in consideration of the design and implementation of the National System of MPAs, committee

members were asked to attend a field trip as part of the Alaska meeting. The glacier cruise through Prince William Sound provided FAC members the chance to witness marine ecosystem changes and climate change impacts first-hand, and was a wonderful way to end the September meeting.

MPA Center Completes CA Ocean Uses Atlas Project



In July 2009, the MPA Center, in partnership with Marine Conservation Biology Institute, held the fourth California Ocean Uses Atlas Workshop in Seaside, CA, completing the series of workshops held to map human uses along the entire California coast. Participating resource managers, stakeholders, and scientists used innovative interactive GIS techniques to map patterns of consumptive, non-consumptive, and industrial/military human uses of the ocean from the high tide line out to 200 nautical miles. The resulting maps and analyses will help guide State, Federal, and regional ocean planning and management efforts, by programs such as California's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative, NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries, and the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health. Four workshops were held along the California coast between January 2008 and June 2009.

What's Next?

FY10 will expand the Atlas project to New Hampshire and Southern Maine (UNH Coastal Conservation Research Center partnership). Partnerships for other regions are in development.

Coming Soon

Online GIS data and mapping products of all the uses, sectors and regions in California will be available on www.mpa.gov in early 2010. Also, an online atlas data viewer will be available in early 2010, and will provide a dynamic web-based mapping interface to visualize and compare human use patterns for California. Visit www.mpa.gov for more information.

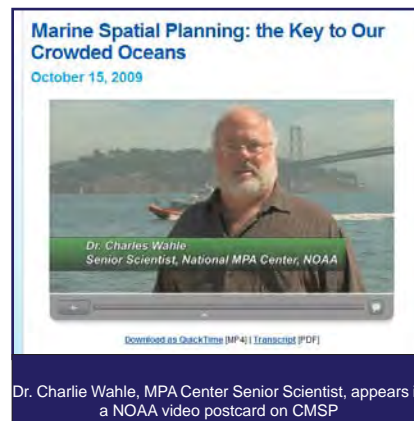
Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning and the MPA Center

We use the ocean for a wide range of purposes – conventional and alternative energy, fishing, transportation, recreation, and conservation, to name just a few. To address the growing need for a comprehensive ocean planning process, in light of a rapidly changing environment, the Administration's Ocean Policy Task Force (OPTF) released the *Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning* (CMSP) on December 9, 2009. The Interim Framework outlines the scope and breadth of ocean planning in the United States and defines CMSP as "a comprehensive, adaptive, integrated, ecosystem based, and transparent spatial planning process, based on sound science, for analyzing current and anticipated uses of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes areas." As CMSP moves forward, agencies such as NOAA will be called upon to provide their unique skills, tools, and technologies to help develop and implement the proposed comprehensive ocean planning process.

One of the many goals of CMSP is to alleviate multi-sectoral conflicts and balance the demands of ocean uses. Dr. Charles Wahle, Senior Scientist at the MPA Center, and Program Analyst Julia Townsend, are working to integrate the expertise and capabilities of the MPA Center into the broader CMSP context through the application of spatially-based conservation tools and products. The Center's Ocean Uses Atlas project demonstrates an innovative approach for collecting information on ocean uses needed by all ocean planning efforts. Similarly, the Center's Gap Analysis Project is developing new approaches to mapping ecologically important areas - another fundamental data layer for CMSP. Finally, the National System of MPAs, and the National MPA Inventory, represent comprehensive portfolios of conservation areas that meet many of the multiple objectives of CMSP.

Dr. Wahle is bringing his expertise on ocean planning to the Ocean Policy Task Force's Science and Data Integration Subgroup. He also co-leads NOAA's CMSP budget planning for FY11-12, and is currently leading the NOAA-wide effort to plan for implementation of the national CMSP Framework. He was recently featured on a NOAA video postcard on marine spatial planning, sent from Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator.

The OPTF Interim Framework is available **online** and the MPA Center encourages those interested to provide comment during the 60 day comment period. For more information on the Ocean Uses Atlas project, visit http://mpa.gov/science_analysis/atlas.html. For more information on CMSP, visit <http://msp.noaa.gov/>. To submit a comment on the Interim Framework, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans/interim-framework/submit>.



Recent Additions to the MPA Virtual Library

A web site representing the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA), established by Kiribati in 2008 and the world's largest marine protected area at the time (410,510 square kilometers), features historical background on the islands, information on the MPA and its administration by Kiribati and international partners, and links to publications, multimedia tools and other resources.

Government of Kiribati, Phoenix Islands Protected Area, "Phoenix Islands Protected Area".

<http://www.phoenixislands.org/index.php>

The first outlook report from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority identifies climate change, declining water quality from catchment runoff, loss of coastal habitats from coastal development, and impacts from fishing, illegal fishing, and poaching as the priority issues reducing the resilience of the reef.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, "Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2009". Queensland, Australia: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, July 2009.

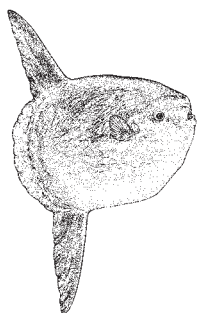
http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/about_us/great_barrier_reef_outlook_report/full_report

A new article in the open access journal PLoS Biology describes the decline in production of world's fisheries, international efforts towards improved management and sustainable fisheries, and the authors' survey to assess effectiveness of fisheries management regimes worldwide. For each regime, authors calculate probable sustainability of reported catches to see how management affects fisheries sustainability. Management effectiveness of each regime was judged by 1) scientific robustness; 2) policymaking transparency; 3) implementation capability; 4) extent of fishing capacity; 5) reliance on subsidies; and 6) access to foreign fishing. Results indicate that the conversion of scientific advice into policy is crucial for achieving fisheries sustainability, and illustrate the need for clear guidelines for sustainable fisheries management.

Mora C, Myers RA, Coll M, Libralato S, Pitcher TJ, et al. (2009) Management Effectiveness of the World's Marine Fisheries. PLoS Biol 7(6): e1000131.

<http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pbio.1000131>

The **mission of the National Marine Protected Areas Center** is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas.



MPA Connections was launched to meet continuing calls by agency and external stakeholders for information about MPA Center activities and to feature other actions that address Executive Order 13158 goals.

The next issue of **MPA Connections** will be published in Spring 2010. Comments, suggestions and news items can be sent to the editor, Kara.Schwenke@noaa.gov.

MPA Center Science and Stewardship (A continuing series from the MPA Center)

MPA Center Presents at World Ocean Forum:

On November 11, Katya Wowk, MPA Center Policy Specialist, presented at the 3rd World Ocean Forum in Busan, Republic of Korea. The theme of the Forum was "Ocean, the Future of Humankind." Nearly 1,000 attendees participated, including the President of Palau. Participants at the meeting discussed changes in the marine environment, including climate change impacts in the ocean, and the response to these changes by governments, civil society and ocean industry, with a focus on sustainable exploitation of the sea. Ms. Wowk presented on global ocean changes and the international community's response, including some recent initiatives by the U.S. Participants expressed great interest in the work of the Ocean Policy Task Force and their recommendations for a national ocean policy and coastal and marine spatial planning framework. For additional information, contact Katya.Wowk@noaa.gov.