

# MPA CONNECTIONS

Newsletter of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

**October/November 2003**  
**First Anniversary Issue**

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.

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## **Table of Contents**

Message from MPA Center Director Joe Uravitch

Clarifying Misconceptions about Marine Protected Areas (Seventh Part in a Series)

MPA Federal Advisory Committee Sets Agenda for Meeting in Mid November

MPA Training and Technical Assistance Institute Pilots "Understanding MPAs" Workshop

Question of the Month

Events and Conferences

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## **Message from MPA Center Director Joe Uravitch:** **MPA Connections Celebrates First Anniversary**

This edition of *MPA Connections*, the newsletter of the National Marine Protected Areas Center, marks its first anniversary. In the past year, we hope you have enjoyed our ongoing series to clarify various misconceptions about marine protected areas. We look forward to keeping you up-to-date on the progress of the newly established MPA Federal Advisory Committee's activities, as well as the marine managed inventory, which is the process for developing the list of MPAs and the framework for the national system of MPAs called for in Executive Order 13158.

We are pleased with several other projects that have been underway in 2003. One highlight is a workshop developed by the MPA Training and Technical Assistance Institute called *Understanding MPAs*, which was tested in Long Beach, California in September. You can read more about the workshop and plans for future workshops in this issue.

Another highlight comes from our MPA Science Institute, which completed an MPA Social Science Research Strategy based on a series of national workshops held in 2002 and 2003. The Science Institute held its first regional workshop for the Caribbean and Florida, and will continue to hold regional meetings this year to help plan regional MPA social science research strategies.

Finally, the MPA Center has hosted or been represented at numerous conferences and exhibits, including education workshops, scientific symposiums, MPA workshops hosted by Fishery Management Councils, and other MPA-related events.

We are excited about the many projects we have underway for the next fiscal year. In our efforts to improve access to and understanding of information about marine protected areas, we are in the process of redeveloping our website, MPA.gov. Look for the first phase of the revamp in late November or early December, with new menu items, better navigation, and a new look. We are planning to further develop a series of online regional information centers, similar to <http://www.PacificMPA.org>. We are seeking partners in this effort. We are also nearly ready to release a user's guide to MPA terms and definitions, which we expect will be extremely useful to all our stakeholders.

We have accomplished some substantial projects this year, and look forward to continuing to keep you current on the work of the National MPA Center.

Please contact me at [Joseph.Uravitch@noaa.gov](mailto:Joseph.Uravitch@noaa.gov) if you would like more details on any of the items I have mentioned.

Enjoy our anniversary issue.

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**Clarifying Misconceptions about Marine Protected Areas**  
**(Seventh Part in a Series)**

**Misconception:** The majority of marine protected areas and marine managed areas are in federal waters.

**Reality:** The complexity and diversity of marine protected and managed areas under state, commonwealth, and territory jurisdiction adds up to hundreds of sites, established under numerous legislative acts. Federal data on marine managed and protected areas is nearly complete, and the number of sites is well over 250. But there are more sites found in state, commonwealth, territory, and tribal waters.

In fact, the MPA Center has estimated that there will be between 1,000 and 1,500 total sites included in the inventory database when the collection process is finished. The database will be accessible on the official U.S. MPA website. Once complete, the inventory will then be used to create a list of the nation's marine protected areas.

Local officials, resource managers, and others will be able to search the database by various features including management measures, restrictions, natural and cultural resources, and habitat types. They will also be able to access local and regional maps of sites created using geographic information systems (GIS).

There will be many benefits to using the database. Users will have the capacity to access information that will help them better identify issues that may require collaboration, such as regional initiatives, species migration patterns and area protections, fishery management options, beach closures, cultural artifacts and resources in need of protection, and specific monitoring and evaluation methods.

The MPA Center plans to complete a full draft of the inventory database over the next year. Currently, data is posted online once it has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate agencies and officials.

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*To request a compilation of the ongoing Misconceptions About MPAs series, write to Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov.*

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### **MPA Federal Advisory Committee Sets Agenda for Meeting in Mid November**

The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet in San Francisco from November 17-19, at the San Mateo Marriott Airport Hotel. The hotel is located about eight miles south of the airport, and is accessible via public transportation.

The agenda for the meeting has been planned and what follows is a brief description of activities proposed for each day.

On Monday, November 17, the Committee will elect and install a Chair and Vice-Chair. This will be followed by a discussion and adoption of procedural rules by which the Committee will operate. The Committee will receive several presentations from NOAA officials both to help place their mission in perspective vis-a-vis the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior and to clarify their charge and relationship to the National MPA Center. Representatives from both Departments will then brief the Committee on the status of selected federal marine protected area programs. The Committee will spend the remainder of the day exploring the formation of suitable subcommittees and working groups for addressing facets of its mission.

On Tuesday, November 18, the Chair will oversee the process for the establishment of proposed subcommittees. Once formed, members will break into these smaller groups over the course of the day to discuss their respective goals, tasks, individual assignments, and the nature of the reports and other products that the full committee will deliberate on and issue, based on the input developed by the subcommittees. At several junctures on Tuesday, the subcommittees will

report back on progress during plenary sessions. The public is welcomed to observe these breakout sessions, although space may be limited in some cases.

On Wednesday morning, the Committee will reconvene to review and conclude discussions based on the previous day's work. They will then receive verbal comments or questions from the public. The Committee will conclude the meeting with a discussion of the timing and location of the next meeting, as well as a consideration of potential agenda items.

For more information, go to <http://mpa.gov/mpabusiness/fac.html>.

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### **MPA Training and Technical Assistance Institute Pilots Understanding MPAs Workshop**

In early September, the MPA Center's Training and Technical Assistance Institute piloted the newly developed Understanding MPAs workshop in Long Beach, California.

The one-day workshop provides training to stakeholders, including the general public, on the basic principles and issues surrounding MPAs. Designed to be politically neutral, workshop topics include MPA types and uses, history, the role of science, and information on how to get involved. Basic information on the MPA Executive Order and the MPA Center are also offered, although this is not the principal focus of the workshop.

The pilot workshop was well received, with 30 participants in attendance and more than 40 on a waiting list. Attendees included teachers, volunteers from the aquarium and local protected areas, recreational users, marine resource managers, and one high school student.

Attendees provided essential feedback on the various presentations and activities, and the overall response was extremely positive. Many attendees reported that the workshop exceeded their expectations. They also provided valuable input on how to improve the workshop. For example, several attendees called for more local examples of MPAs and issues. MPA Training and Technical Assistance staff will work to include these examples in future offerings.

Participants completed an evaluation where they listed ways to enhance the workshop and demonstrated their understanding of the topics and ideas presented. Attendees identified the following "take home messages" based on what they learned during the workshop:

- There are many different types of MPAs,
- Not all MPAs are no-take marine reserves,
- The management authorities involved with MPAs are complex, and
- Social and natural science are both important for effective MPAs.

Finally, many attendees stated that they particularly liked the "getting involved" section of the workshop. They appreciated hearing about volunteering at MPAs, tracking marine management decision-making at various levels of government, and learning more about MPAs and resources.

Since the pilot, Training and Technical Assistance Institute staff have made improvements to the workshop based on the feedback received, and look forward to offering the workshop again soon.

The Aquarium of the Pacific hosted the Understanding MPAs pilot, providing ample meeting space and offering participants free admission to the aquarium following the workshop.

The MPA Center has partnered with Coastal America to bring Understanding MPAs to a number of aquariums that are designated as Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers. Several aquariums have expressed interest in hosting future workshops, including the Seattle Aquarium and the South Carolina Aquarium. The MPA Center will also offer the workshop at other locations and in conjunction with marine management related events.

For more information about the workshop, please contact Heidi Recksiek at the MPA Center's Training and Technical Assistance Institute, located at the NOAA Coastal Services Center in Charleston, South Carolina: [Heidi.Recksiek@noaa.gov](mailto:Heidi.Recksiek@noaa.gov); (843) 740-1194.

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### **Question of the Month: What kinds of changes will be made to MPA.gov?**

The MPA Center is in the midst of re-designing and reorganizing MPA.gov. We plan to launch the first phase of the redevelopment in late November/early December.

We are working on creating new sections, including one on MPA programs in federal, state, commonwealth, and territory agencies. We are adding a section on Information and Tools, and we are significantly revising our MPA terms and definitions section. We are also adding a glossary and improving our navigation and search capabilities.

If you have any specific comments about the website, please send them to [Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov](mailto:Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov).

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### **Events and Conferences**

#### November

2-5: Eighth Estuarine and Coastal Modeling Conference, Monterey Hyatt, Monterey, California; <http://www.oce.uri.edu/ecm8/>.

8-12: National Association of Interpretation, Reno, Nevada: <http://www.interpnet.com/niw2003/>

10-14: Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Tortola, British Virgin Islands. Featuring sessions on MPAs and the management of marine fisheries. [http://www.gcfi.org/56th/56th\\_gcfi\\_tortola.htm](http://www.gcfi.org/56th/56th_gcfi_tortola.htm)

13-15: Managing Our Nation's Fisheries: Past, Present and Future, Washington, D.C.;  
<http://www.managingfisheries.org/>

17-19: Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee meeting, San Mateo Marriott  
Airport Hotel, San Francisco, California

17-20: Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship, Los Angeles, California;  
<http://www.partnerships2003.org/home.html>

#### December

11: National Association of Charterboat Operators, Annual Meeting, Arlington, Virginia

#### **2004**

##### May

2-6: Fourth World Fisheries Congress, Vancouver, BC. Theme is “Reconciling Fisheries with  
Conservation: The Challenge of Meeting Aquatic Ecosystems.”  
<http://www.worldfisheries2004.org>.

23-26: The Coastal Society’s Biennial Conference, Newport, Rhode Island:  
<http://www.thecoastalsociety.org/conference/tcs19/index.html>

##### June

27-30: Coastal Zone Canada, St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada. Theme is “All Within One  
Ocean: Co-operation in Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Management.” <http://www.czca-azcc.org/index2.htm>

**TO SUBSCRIBE: Send an email to [Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov](mailto:Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov)**