

MINUTES

**Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) Meeting,
Including the concurrent Joint MPA Summit between the
MPA FAC and Representatives of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils (ACs)
Argonaut Hotel, San Francisco, CA
Jan. 17-19, 2018**

OVERVIEW

In January 2018, members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) met with the Chairs and other representatives of the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils (ACs) in San Francisco, California. The 3rd such joint gathering of the MPA FAC and ACs, this meeting provided a venue for each group to independently address their distinct programmatic agendas, as well as to convene together to explore future collaborations on MPA issues of common and growing concern. The meeting's three components were:

Joint Sessions between the MPA FAC and ACs (presented in this document)

Both advisory groups – the MPA FAC and the ACs – met together over parts of the 3 days to:

1. identify the diverse benefits that US MPAs provide to coastal ecosystems and communities; and,
2. to explore collaborative approaches for leveraging the groups' complementary roles to sustain MPA benefits in light of emerging issues, challenges and opportunities facing federal, state, territorial and tribal MPAs in US waters.

Other MPA FAC Meeting Sessions (presented separately)

The MPA Federal Advisory Committee also met separately during this period to address its new charge from the Departments of Commerce and Interior for the Committee's 2018 term. Opting not to create a new Subcommittee(s) for this charge, the full Committee set up four Theme Teams to further scope the Committee's charge and begin the analysis for its findings and recommendations.

Separate AC Representatives Meeting (presented separately by ONMS)

The AC representatives and staff from NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries also met independently during the week to discuss topics of interest across the Sanctuary Program.

For Additional Information about either the MPA FAC or Joint Summit Meetings, Contact:

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Joint Session of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and the Sanctuary Advisory Council Representatives

Introductory Business

Dr. Charlie Wahle, the MPA Center's Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the MPA FAC, formally opened the meeting. Charlie welcomed all participants and provided an overview of the Committee, its role, composition and audiences, and its basic operating rules during and between meetings. He also explained the purpose, structure and intended outcome of the Joint MPA FAC-AC Summit and the MPA FAC meeting, and engaged the participants in a discussion about the planned approach for the upcoming three days.

Nicole Capps and Kate Spidalieri, of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, provided important information to participants about meeting logistics, public comment periods and rules, travel, meals and meeting-related events.

Opening Session: The Importance of Citizen Advisory Groups in Sustaining MPA Benefits

This overarching plenary session provided an opportunity for key federal and state MPA programs and leaders to highlight the role and importance of public input and engagement in their sites, especially from advisory groups like the MPA FAC and ACs.

John Armor, Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, discussed the importance of community involvement in the sustained successful management of Sanctuaries and Monuments. After opening his remarks with a moment of silence for coastal communities, friends and family impacted by recent natural disasters, John emphasized the idea that "where marine protected areas matter is in communities." He also summarized NOAA's current strategic priorities, including the new Strategic Plan for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, and highlighted their alignment with the benefits of MPAs in US waters.

Samantha Brooke, Coastal and Ocean Program Lead for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provided examples of how FWS engages the public in understanding, enjoying and conserving its Refuges and Monuments. Samantha described two priorities of the new Administration at the Department of the Interior (DOI) of particular importance for the US Fish and Wildlife Service: restoring trust with communities and increasing public access to public lands such as Refuges and Monuments. She presented an example of a citizen science program in a refuge that gives visitors an opportunity to contribute directly to the scientific information used to manage the site and its restoration over time.

Brian Baird, MPA FAC Chair, stressed the growing importance of public engagement and input into the designation and sustained adaptive management of all MPAs, highlighting several examples from the state of California's exemplary MPA program. Brian summarized the many

ways in which MPAs contribute to a viable, productive and resilient ocean. He described examples of how MPAs had contributed to thriving ecosystems, tourism, recreation and the overall coastal economy in California. Brian also called attention to current challenges and threats to existing MPAs in California and elsewhere in the US, including recent federal proposals to eliminate MPAs or reduce the scope of their boundaries and/or protections. He emphasized the role of advisory groups to “protect the protected areas” and urged them to address that during this Joint MPA Summit. He also highlighted some of the MPA FAC’s recent products and recommendations to DOC and DOI that deal with timely and complex topics. At the end of the session, Brian moderated a short Q+A session that focused on questions about the new DOI and NOAA leadership’s views on the composition, strategic vision and utility of citizen advisory groups.

Joint MPA Summit Theme: Sustaining MPA Benefits in a Changing Future

Brian Baird, MPA FAC Chair, introduced the theme of the Joint Summit and described the plan to address it using a combination of: (a) an expert panel followed by audience questions; (b) participant group break-out discussions about emerging challenges to sustaining MPA benefits; and, (c) group discussions intended to identify key benefits and challenges facing many US MPAs, particularly those that apply to both the MPA FAC and ACs missions. Each of these sequential discussions among panelists, members of the MPA FAC and ACs, and invited experts examined MPA benefits and challenges in relation to four fundamental and common objectives of many MPAs:

1. Supporting robust coastal economies and communities
2. Maintaining healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems in a changing ocean
3. Managing expanding ocean uses and issues
4. Engaging diverse communities and users in ocean stewardship

(a) Panel Discussion: MPA Benefits and Challenges

Lauren Wenzel, Director of NOAA’s MPA Center, moderated a panel of six federal and state MPA managers, policy-makers and partners who provided concrete examples of the benefits (e.g. ecological, economic, social, cultural) and corresponding challenges (e.g. gaps in knowledge, capacity, authority) for US MPAs moving forward in 2018. Invited expert panelists included:

- *William Douros, NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), West Coast Region*. Bill used the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary’s experience with proposed desalination plants as a way to illustrate the evolving and expanding role of MPAs in ocean and coastal land-based governance issues, highlighting the need for MPAs to take a broader approach to management both within and outside their boundaries.

- *Cliff McCreedy, National Park Service, Ocean Resources and Coastal Branch.* Cliff used the Park Service’s “Healthy Parks, Healthy People” campaign to illustrate the diverse values of MPAs in actively engaging and facilitating local communities in exploring and experiencing nature in the Parks.
- *Pete Leary, National Wildlife Refuge System, Marine Program.* Pete described the Fish and Wildlife Service’s “Banking on Nature” approach to illustrate the economic value of protected areas in supporting tourism and other sectors that depend upon healthy ecosystems such as those fostered by MPAs. He also highlighted several examples of innovative and successful engagement with indigenous or native peoples to better understand and more effectively manage shared resources within the MPA.
- *Cyndi Dawson, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Marine Habitat Conservation Program.* Cyndi described California’s integrated network of MPAs, the nation’s only example of a multi-site network designed specifically to foster and take advantage of ecological connectivity among component sites. She described the state’s programs for outreach and education, research and monitoring, policy and permitting, and enforcement and compliance that sustain those MPAs and engage partners and stakeholders in their long-term management.
- *Calla Alison, MPA Collaborative Implementation Project.* Calla described California’s innovative partnership program with local communities to support and implement the state’s new MPA network. This model collaboration provides on-the-ground assistance to the state for site management, while also building strong and invaluable community investment and support among those most affected by these sites.
- *Michael Vasey, San Francisco Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR).* Mike described dedicated ecological restoration efforts at the SF Bay NERR and their beneficial impacts on coastal habitats and diversity, and on human activities (e.g. fisheries, recreation) that depend on healthy ecosystems.

Collectively, the panelists’ presentations highlighted the variety of ways that MPAs can provide ecological, economic and social benefits to coastal communities and broader groups. The ensuing Q+A session with the audience focused on potential solutions to emerging needs and stimulated much discussion about ways to address both the benefits and challenges of MPAs in the future. Ideas proposed ranged in scope and scale from local, project-level actions to national-scale strategic efforts to develop necessary capacities and policies to ensure that MPAs are sustained in the face of changing oceans, human uses and governance frameworks. Specific issues that arose included: plans for climate-resilient visitor centers in MPAs; lessons learned from California’s MPA Collaborative; navigational products to depict MPA boundaries and regulations; issues surrounding local salinity in MPAs; jurisdiction of MPAs downward into the underlying seabed; variety of approaches for advisory groups among federal and state MPA programs; and efforts to prevent and control invasive exotic species in MPAs.

MLPA Video

After lunch, the participants watched a short video about California's model MPA program – the Marine Life Protection Act's statewide MPA network.. This excellent and engaging film highlighted the extensive and inclusive planning process leading to the network's design and establishment, the diversity of habitats protected, and as well as the broad-community engagement in the long-term management and conservation of MPAs and regional networks.

(b) Break Out Group Discussions

Following the panel discussion, participants divided into four break-out groups to further explore the themes of the panel discussion. The groups were provided guidance on the desired outcomes and on the proposed process to achieve them. Each group was asked to provide a few concrete examples of recent benefits and/or challenges in their local MPA(s), and to identify the most important and widely understood challenges facing them. Federal staff from NOAA and DOI moderated and took notes for each group.

Group 1 – Moderator: Lauren Wenzel (NOAA/MPA Center)

MPA Benefits Identified: fostering new technologies for ocean exploration and management; greater engagement with tribal and native communities; capacity building and community development; MPAs as hubs for problem solving in the ocean; support for “MPA SWAT Teams” to bring problem-specific expertise to a site when needed.

Emerging Challenges Identified: Ocean mining; offshore aquaculture; invasive species; new and expanding human uses; expanding the influence of citizen Advisory Councils and other groups to help advance MPA management.

Group 2 – Moderator: Cyndi Dawson (CA/DFW)

MPA Benefits Identified: MPAs bring coastal communities together around shared resources and interests (e.g. tribes and fishermen); highlight and encourage engagement with local cultural and historical ties to the sea; help bridge barriers between different levels of government on local ocean issues; enhance the ‘sense of place’ in locals and visitors to the MPAs.

Emerging Challenges Identified: difficulties in highlighting connections between people and very remote offshore MPAs; overcoming and respecting people's fears about infringement on their rights to access and use the ocean; need to better understand the impact of MPA-related regulation on people's use of the area; proposals to expand exploration and production of oil and gas in MPAs; climate impacts to MPA ecosystems and services; decline in working waterfronts; confusion about the relative roles of different levels of government in MPA policy and management decisions at local, regional and national levels.

Group 3 – Samantha Brooke (DOI/FWS)

MPA Benefits Identified: discussed within the context of meeting emerging challenges.

Emerging Challenges Identified: threats include declining water quality; impacts of multiple human uses; climate change impacts; challenges include limits to MPA's ability to affect broader issues imposed by their specific jurisdiction and authority; need to expand management perspective from site-level to ecosystem-scale issues and actions; need to focus on changing people's perspectives and behaviors; need to engage people through story-telling and personal connections to the ocean; need to find more effective ways to explain, learn from and act upon 'MPA score-cards'; need to find ways to relate water quality issues to broader MPA conservation stories and actions; need to focus MPA monitoring on indicators that are meaningful and intuitive to affected people.

Group 4 – John Anderson (MPA FAC Member)

MPA Benefits Identified: the group recognized the uniqueness of every MPA and how that contributes to and influences both its benefits and its challenges; given the variability among different MPAs, we need flexibility and meaningful engagement with stakeholders and other uses of the area, both in their planning and designation and in their long-term management.

Emerging Challenges Identified: need to have and use better tools and strategies to explain the purpose and benefits of MPAs in order to provide a balanced picture to local communities that are either considering or affected by MPAs; need to recognize the unique perspectives, knowledge and legal authorities of native peoples in the design and management of MPAs.

(c) Report Out and Group Discussion of Priorities

The participants then coalesced to discuss these ideas in aggregate. They identified some key benefits of MPAs and priorities for additional consideration and action by the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and the National Marine Sanctuary System's 14 Advisory Councils. Chief among these were:

1. The MPA FAC should *identify high-level benefits of MPAs* and why they are important for society.
2. MPAs, such as National Marine Sanctuaries, should actively play a key role *as incubators and sentinel sites for fostering innovation* and application of new technologies and approaches to solve chronic challenges facing place-based ocean managers.
3. MPAs should build a more robust and institutionalized capacity for *anticipating, understanding and addressing emerging issues* (e.g. new human uses, climate change, policy changes) that affect the ecosystems they protect.

4. MPAs should continue to *engage proactively in ocean management issues and decisions* that extend beyond their immediate boundaries but that affect their local ecosystems and the people who depend upon them.
5. MPAs should rely more heavily on *story-telling and community-building* to forge stronger ties with the people they affect and that depend upon the ecosystems they protect.
6. MPAs can serve as models for *constructive, meaningful and respectful engagement* between federal, state and local governments and the diverse tribal and native peoples along our nation's coasts.
7. MPA Advisory Groups (e.g. the MPA FAC and ACs) should actively collaborate and *leverage their complementary roles* in order to advance ocean management issues of mutual concern.

Closing Remarks

Charlie Wahle (MPA FAC DFO) thanked the participants for sharing their insights and experiences with the group during the first day of the Joint MPA Summit. He also highlighted the objective of the Joint Summit to both identify shared challenges and concerns, as well as to explore ways the MPA FAC and ACs might collaborate together to address them and sustain MPA benefits in US water.

Brian Baird (MPA FAC Chair) also thanked the group and urged them to highlight the diverse benefits of MPAs to coastal communities and the nation as a whole.

Brian then adjourned the first day of the Joint Session of the MPA FAC and AC Representatives, after which each group met separately for the remainder of the day.

January 19, 2018

Final Joint Session between Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and the Sanctuary Advisory Council Representatives

Shared Priorities and Future Collaboration among MPA FAC and AC Members

The final session of the Joint MPA FAC and AC Summit began with summaries of each group's deliberations during the 2-day joint meeting.

Sanctuary Advisory Councils – *Kate Spidalieri* explained that the AC Chairs and Representatives focused on three of the four joint themes (see page below), excluding Engaging Diverse

Communities, which had been addressed earlier). They reflected on work already completed or ongoing in these areas, and on how the efforts relate to the Office of National Marine Sanctuary's new Strategic Plan and the Administration's priorities. There was a strong emphasis on developing robust ways to manage emerging ocean uses, especially expanding ocean recreation (e.g. fishing and boating) in Sanctuary sites. The group also discussed the status and future of the program's Sanctuary Advisory Councils, acknowledging the considerable leadership turnover in recent years and the need for, and benefits of, greater collaboration and information sharing among different site-based Councils to advance the Sanctuary Program's overall goals consistent with emerging administration priorities.

MPA FAC – *Brian Baird, Chair*, summarized the group's work and noted that with the recent reauthorization of the MPA FAC by the new administration, it would be beneficial to revisit and restate the core goals and benefits of MPAs in the US. Noting that this Committee reports directly to two cabinet Secretaries, and thus to their implementing MPA agencies, he highlighted the timeliness and potential impact of the Committee's work on articulating the benefits and challenges of MPAs throughout US waters. He encouraged the MPA FAC to pursue innovative approaches to collaborating with the ACs to meet common goals of place-based ocean management in an increasingly dynamic world.

Lauren Wenzel, MPA Center Director, then moderated a series of brief summaries of the MPA FAC's internal deliberations on MPA benefits and challenges as they relate to the four joint themes: (i) supporting robust coastal communities; (ii) maintaining healthy and resilient ecosystems; (iii) managing emerging issues and uses; and, (iv) engaging diverse communities. Emerging ideas for addressing sustaining MPA benefits included: focusing on economic and social resilience and benefits; illustrating MPAs' contributions to resilience in protected ecosystems and nearby communities; building MPAs' capacity to address emerging issues; and, help communities understand MPAs and contribute substantively to their long-term stewardship.

Lauren then led a brief and often spirited discussion among all participants about growing concerns over emerging issues affecting US MPAs and their stakeholders. Topics included: recent federal policy proposals to eliminate or weaken existing MPAs; conflicts among co-occurring ocean uses; impacts of increasing recreational uses, including fishing, boating and diving; and, inadequate consideration of tribal and native peoples' perspectives and standing in ocean management decisions. There was a candid exchange of views about the different perspectives held by some ocean users and conservation advocates regarding the Administration's recent Executive Orders related to Monuments and Sanctuaries. Meeting participants also acknowledged the deep cultural ties of Native Hawaiians to the Marine Monuments in the Pacific Islands, and highlighted some members' concerns about potential impacts of new policies to these sites. Participants noted the challenges and benefits that advisory bodies have in allowing individuals to share their concerns and work toward collaborative solutions. While both advisory groups have much to learn about each other's

roles, niche and ways of interacting with and influencing MPA programs, the Joint Summit participants clearly saw several pathways to explore for leveraging their unique but complementary roles toward common aims. Key suggestions included:

1. Clearly articulate both groups' relative missions, authorities and operational rules and how their overlaps and their differences can be used to advance important MPA issues.
2. Develop regular communication channels for both groups to routinely share information about timely MPA issues, new management approaches, opportunities and challenges (e.g. by attending each other's meetings, providing webinars on topics of mutual interest, sharing strategic planning).
3. The Advisory Councils could increase the value-added and impact of MPA FAC recommendations to NOAA and DOI by suggesting topics of immediate or emerging management concern in their sites.
4. Identify a few important MPA issues that can be addressed at the national (MPA FAC) and site levels (ACs), and develop practical joint strategies and actions to tackle them.
5. In addition to investigating and proposing *new approaches to emerging ocean issues*, both advisory groups could also have a beneficial impact on MPA management by simply urging the implementing agencies to invest in and *act upon known and important issues using existing tools, authorities and information*. The groups felt strongly that there can be a value in delivering the simple "just do it" message, especially during times of complexity and competing demands.

Both advisory groups supported the idea of exploring an ongoing MPA FAC-AC collaboration. Since the January meeting, the Marine Protected Areas Center and the Advisory Council coordinators in the National Marine Sanctuary Program have initiated discussions to scope out options for enhancing collaboration.

Closing Remarks on Joint Advisory Group Summit

John Armor, Director NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, wrapped up this wide-ranging discussion among the two advisory groups by reminding us all the without difficult conversations, we aren't doing our job. He highlighted the critical role that MPAs play in: making connections between people and their ocean; building our relevance to sustainable and resilient coastal communities; and, giving hope for a healthy and productive ocean.

Brian Baird, MPA FAC Chair, thanked all the participants and urged further collaboration on all of these important and timely issues we all share.

John, Lauren and Cliff briefly provided guidance and information about the impending government shutdown, including how it would affect the activities of the MPA FAC and ACs.

Meeting Adjourned

Charlie Wahle, MPA FAC DFO, adjourned the meeting.

APPENDIX I. PARTICIPANTS (* via teleconference)

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and Staff

MPAFAC Members

Brian Baird, Chair

Katy Croff-Bell, Vice-Chair

John Anderson

John Ballotti

Alex Brylske

Mark Carr

Chris Horton

Jacque Hostler-Carmesin

Stephanie Madsen

William McClintock

Lynn McClure

Samantha Murray

Ryan Orgera

David Robinson

Pete Stauffer

Trisha Kehaulani Watson

MPA FAC Members Not Present

Jack Cox

Martha Honey

Federal Staff

Charlie Wahle, DOC/NOAA MPA Center, Designated Federal Officer

Lauren Wenzel, DOC/NOAA MPA Center, Director

Joanne Flanders, DOC/NOAA Research *

Justyna Nicinska, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Ex Officio Members and Agency Liaisons

Cliff McCreedy, National Park Service

Pete Leary, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Samantha Brooke, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Heather Sagar, DOC/NOAA Fisheries

Steven Tucker, DHS US Coast Guard
Brian Melzian, US EPA *

National Marine Sanctuary Program

Council Representatives

Phyllis Grifman
Kevin Krick
Leslie Adler-Ivanbrook
Bruce Popham
Michael Denmark
John Largier
Sol Kaho'ohalahala
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John Armor
Maria Brown
Nicole Capps
Chiara Zuccarino-Crowe
Beth Devieney
Bill Douros
Matt Stout
Chris Butler-Minor
Beth Dieveney
Joe Paulin
Jean Prevo

Public Speakers

Lance Morgan, Marine Conservation Institute
Jesus Ruiz, Independent (former MPA FAC Member)

