

## 2014 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit: *Key Messages, Preliminary Recommendations, and Next Steps*

*The 2014 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit built upon the relationships, outcomes, and experiences from the 2012 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit. It was designed to further efforts to build a larger, more effective coalition for the National Marine Sanctuary System and other marine protected areas – particularly, by fostering support through their connection and value to recreation, travel and tourism. This document summarizes the key messages, preliminary recommendations, and next steps discussed during the meeting (including joint sessions with the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee).*

### Defining Our Relevance

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) Director, Daniel J. Basta, opened the meeting by reminding participants of ONMS efforts to build a larger coalition of support to create more, protect more, and invest more in national marine sanctuaries. He spoke to why we need to communicate clearly the value of special places and take steps together to redefine the relevance of our ocean, and special ocean places, to all Americans. He highlighted how place-based stewardship is beginning to resonate within the agency (e.g., National Ocean Service Priorities Roadmap) and how during this meeting we will have an opportunity to expand our reach even further. He noted that the summit was at the cusp of ONMS' *championship season* and how, along with a host of events, we will be having an impact across our country and the world.

### Refining the National Marine Sanctuary System

#### *Refining the Boundaries of the Existing System*

Two sessions during the summit illustrated how ONMS is leveraging increased interest and support of national marine sanctuaries to facilitate growth within the system. Matt Brookhart, ONMS Policy and Planning Division Chief, provided an overview of recent and proposed boundary expansions, including those associated with National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa and Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale, and Thunder Bay national marine sanctuaries. He discussed how timing and community and political support are critical to these efforts, and used ongoing efforts at *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary to illustrate how ONMS is using adaptive management when considering expansion of existing sanctuaries and the addition of new sites to the system.

#### *Empowering Community-Based Conversations along Our Coasts*

William Douros, ONMS West Coast Regional Director, followed Matt's presentation with one about empowering community-based conversations along our coasts. He explained how communities are identifying or "connecting" with national marine sanctuaries through shared interests in the protection of natural and cultural resources. He noted some of the drivers for these connections (e.g., business, tourism, recreation, public participation in the decision-making process) and highlighted how national marine sanctuaries and their advisory councils have been working together since 1990 to protect special ocean places. The presentation transitioned into an open discussion where advisory council representatives provided suggestions for how they, and other council members, may be able to get involved if ONMS moves forward with the sanctuary nomination process and the consideration of new sites. The below recommendations were made by individual advisory council representatives as possible avenues for members to consider to increase involvement.

#### **Proposed Recommendations for Advisory Council Involvement**

- Assist ONMS staff in disseminating clear, concise information on what are national marine sanctuaries.

- Ensure all advisory council members are familiar with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, its sites, and programs so they can disseminate information to interested parties.
- Assist in preparing and disseminating information related to the socioeconomic value of protections within national marine sanctuaries.
- Inspire other advisory council members to, when appropriate, answer questions and address misinformation related to national marine sanctuaries.
- Work with ONMS staff to identify examples of effective programs (e.g., education, research) that could come to a future national marine sanctuary community.
- Assist with the development of films, videos, and written materials communicating the value of national marine sanctuaries, what a sanctuary brings to a community, and the role advisory council representative play in these programs and processes.
- Set up one-on-one conversations or visits among advisory council members and specific groups interested in national marine sanctuary nominations/designations.
- Advise local steering committees for areas of interest on what sells and what won't relative to various user groups.
- Place local community organizations that propose new sites on the agendas of existing advisory councils.
- Attend public scoping meetings to answer questions (and correct misinformation) related to national marine sanctuaries.
- Work with ONMS staff to stay abreast of the Sanctuary Nomination Process, potential nominations, and potential opportunities for advisory council representatives to engage locally or regionally.

## Fostering Support through Recreation, Travel and Tourism

The purpose of this session was to review what the ONMS and its 14 sites have been doing since the 2012 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit with respect to fostering support through recreation, travel and tourism. Matt Stout, ONMS Chief of Staff for Communications, talked briefly about how ongoing efforts connect to the National Travel & Tourism Strategy and National Marine Sanctuary System travel and tourism goals. He provided a number of examples for how ONMS is working to help increase visitation by 100 million visitors by 2021 (e.g., new mini-grants, advisory council working groups, visitor centers, whale watch responsibly and marketing campaigns). He also reviewed the "proposed commitments for consideration" from December 4-6, 2012, and how these are leading to commitments to act by advisory council representatives and ONMS staff. As Matt walked participants through the commitments to act, advisory council representatives offered a suite of other recommendations for how to extend our reach beyond these actions.

### Proposed Recommendations for Furthering Commitments to Act

- Collaborate with chambers of commerce, visitors bureaus, travel advisory boards, trade associations and others to relay the value of national marine sanctuaries by establishing travel and tourism working groups.
- Consider increasing youth involvement in national marine sanctuary advisory councils.
- Extend intra-governmental relationships beyond the National Park Service.

- Diversify constituent-base by targeting audiences in different cultural or demographic groups.
- Increase interactions with recreational fishermen (e.g., adding fishing seats, engaging fishing groups).
- Take steps to foster stewardship-related tourism (i.e., VolunTourism).
- Include volun-tourism opportunities on ONMS websites by developing a stewardship directory/database for national marine sanctuary resources and citizen science programs.
- Learn from other community re-branding efforts (e.g., Alpena, Michigan).
- Identify ways to reward businesses for environmental stewardship (e.g., DolphinSMART).
- Leverage existing connections and partnerships (e.g., America's Cup, American Samoa wilderness program).
- Establish film festivals related to all national marine sanctuaries.

## Leveraging Connections, Partnerships and Investments

### *FGBNMS: Exploring New Connections and Opportunities*

G.P. Schmahl, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) Superintendent, introduced participants to FGBNMS and provided an overview of its current efforts, unique partnerships, and the challenges associated with building support for small, offshore areas. He discussed the history of the sanctuary and its designation, and described some of the features of the northern-most (and healthiest) coral reefs in the United States that exist within the sanctuary. He explained how research and discovery are a big part of the FGBNMS program and that climate is a significant consideration for Galveston and the sanctuary. He noted the connection to and history of resource utilization and extraction within the area, its importance economically, how one operation still exists within the sanctuary, and conversations associated with what to do with a decommissioned platform. G.P. also described the extensive research and monitoring programs occurring on the reefs, including touching on the movement of species to and from the banks to other locations within the Gulf of Mexico. He described how mapping, characterization, and monitoring played a major role in fostering advisory council recommendations related to boundary expansion, and how the healthy reefs are important to the local economy (e.g., sport diving, wildlife viewing). G.P. ended his presentation with a segment from the Louisiana Public Broadcasting episode, *Window in the Waves*. One copy of the documentary was provided to each advisory council representative in attendance so it could be shared with their respective councils and staff.

### *Leveraging Existing Connections and Partnerships*

Joseph Paulin, Conservation Ecology and Policy Specialist for National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS), initiated a discussion with advisory council representatives whereby he encouraged them to offer suggestions regarding the types of partnerships that could be developed or enhanced in the next 12 months to further increase support for national marine sanctuaries. He kicked off the discussion by walking participants through examples led by staff in the Pacific Islands Region and at Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and NMSAS. Examples were related to: Mokupapapa Discovery Center; Google Street View; Tokulea Voyage; Turtle Bay Resort; surfing events; Swains Island Expedition; Festival of Sites; cruise ship tourism and tour excursions; educational exchanges with Alpena, Michigan; search and rescue training with National Park of American Samoa; media coffee talks; and crown of thorns (sea star) removal.

### Potential Avenues for Leveraging Existing Partnerships

- Learn from NMSAS Google Street View relationship to establish connections for Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary “whale trail” locations.
- Add an additional seat, where appropriate, to advisory councils for a revolving/single representative for business alliances or chambers of commerce to expand recreation and tourism-based connections.
- Leverage neighboring tourism development councils.
- Identify ways to further leverage and partner with California State Parks.
- Work with recreational divers and associated clubs to conduct shipwreck surveys, lionfish and marine debris removal (with REEF), and restoration efforts (e.g., coral re-planting).
- Leverage relationships with aquaria, shipwrecks, divers and museums to increase support for national marine sanctuaries (e.g., increase support for specific boundary expansions, assist with filling advisory council seats that are historically difficult to fill, offering additional space for exhibits, and leverage funding for research and monitoring)
- Seek corporate sponsorship to facilitate an Ocean Health Index.
- Expand sanctuary-based kiosks and displays in hotels and resorts (by working with tourism boards).
- Engage universities for internships, exhibits (e.g., hydrophone exhibit), and research programs.
- Engage new user groups (e.g., diving, recreational fishing and tourism in northern California) when considering or proposing expansion into a new area.
- Feature advisory council representatives in visitor centers to foster increased connections and illustrate role of public in sanctuary management.
- Charter local diving and fishing boats, when needed and appropriate, for research.
- Identify new conservation-oriented partnerships with recreational fishing communities (e.g., stickers for boats, Sanctuary Classic).
- Work with regional dive shop owners to promote “trips with a purpose” and use advisory council representatives to facilitate relationship with shops.
- Seek corporate sponsorship for an underwater photo contest.
- Encourage ONMS staff and advisory council representatives to join visitor bureaus (once we figure out how to get the most out of it).
- Expand existing programs and technologies across national marine sanctuaries (e.g., whale app in conjunction with citizen science).
- Establish an artist in residence (e.g., symphony orchestra, children’s coloring book, rock ‘n roll concert).
- Extend additional outreach to colleges and universities (e.g., Cal Poly Tech).
- Further engage community colleges through peer-to-peer connections offered by the current Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chair, Olin Joynton.

### *Getting the Most Out of Our Investments*

Craig MacDonald, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS) Superintendent, introduced participants to how ONMS has been evolving in its approach to funding and partnerships, primarily since 2011, in an effort to increase outputs beyond those covered with government funding. We described the steps national marine sanctuary superintendents are taking to operate more like non-governmental organizations, whereby they are acting as force multipliers to incorporate research grant support, technological innovation, citizen science, corporate partnership, media exposure and marketing. He described how SBNMS is working to establish a Marine Mammal and Acoustics Center of Excellence within their existing marine operations center and how their conservation research (e.g., 13 top-tier journal publications) can attract additional research partners. Craig went on to describe a suite of activities that the sanctuary is currently engaged in, such as: whale approach guidelines certification program; collaborations with U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA Fisheries, Volpe Center and other non-governmental organizations, and MassPort to prevent ship strikes; Right Whale Listening Network; WhaleALERT app; National Geographic whale tagging partnership; academic partnerships using fecal samples to determine stress levels; sister sanctuaries; seabird surveys; Klein side-scan sonar testing; dive mooring designs; additional education and outreach engagement (e.g., Girl Scout badges, Charles W. Morgan); and a business and tourism draft framework and marketing plan developed with the sanctuary's advisory council.

### *Soliciting Corporate Sponsorship*

This session was structured in such a way to revisit recommendations and commitments from the 2012 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit, explore recent examples and accomplishments, and identify outcomes and priority audiences related to building corporate engagement. Matt Stout, ONMS Chief of Staff for Communications, discussed the Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council, how ONMS has launched outreach to corporations, and where ONMS is in formulating partnership proposals. He provided an overview of the *Campaign of Engagement*, including a description of various site projects that are raising the visibility of individual national marine sanctuaries, and how sanctuaries are often tourist destinations. He discussed why the Secretary of Commerce (i.e., ONMS) may enter into cooperative agreements and grants and the role of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and local Friends' Groups in facilitating proposed projects. Matt described how ONMS is looking towards developing common messages for similar programs across sanctuaries to enhance marketing and corporate support. He discussed how one message/brand is easier to market and, thereby, easier to identify funding sources. Advisory council representatives expressed the desire to seek a mechanism that can increase funding without losing the identity of current programs. Matt noted that the intent is not to limit the types of programs that can be funded, but to better focus efforts to make marketing and seeking funding easier. The idea is to have programs that corporations want to put their name on and fund. Advisory council representatives asked for a one-pager that gave examples of how programs would be branded and coordinated in a specific region and the types of programs that will be pitched to corporations for sponsorship. Matt concluded his session with an open discussion with advisory council representatives on how to move forward.

#### **Who to Engage in the Business Community**

- Airline and rental car companies
- Outrigger
- Whole Foods
- Larry Ellison, owner of Lana'i and Oracle, for marine debris projects
- Landry's (craft brewers and restaurateurs)
- Yacht racing sponsors
- Volvo

**Partnering for Visitor Centers**

- Rotary clubs and chambers of commerce
- Arena/stadium corporate sponsors
- Corporate stewardship days (e.g., Google employees work at a visitor center for a day)
- Guy Harvey Foundation
- Walt Disney Parks and Resorts
- Craft brewing companies, with bottle advertising specific causes
- Energy companies

**Rebranding National Marine Sanctuaries**

- To relevant community issues (e.g., ocean acidification at Gray's Reef)
- To new discoveries (e.g., Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument)
- To city-life or events (e.g., San Francisco)

**Increasing Awareness and Visitation**

- Professional Golf Association (PGA) system-wide
- Hotel infomercials

**Supporting Film Festivals**

- Camera makers (e.g., SONY)

**Enhancing Relationships with Waterfront Authorities**

- Marine campus concept (e.g., Olympic Coast)
- Historical or cultural connections with State programs or parks

**Joint Session: Setting the Stage for Our Discussion***Welcome and Introduction to Joint Session*

Daniel J. Basta, ONMS Director, welcomed participants to the second joint meeting among members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and national marine sanctuary advisory councils. He set the stage for the remainder of the day by addressing the need to turn to communities and places for solutions – the need to move beyond a top-down approach. He congratulated national marine sanctuary advisory councils and the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee for the work they have been doing over the last 18 months, particularly their role in the Sanctuary Nomination Process. He described what he hoped would be achieved during the day's joint sessions, and how we are collectively working to ensure that Americans understand the value of special places for their future.

*Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in the Gulf of Mexico: A Regional Perspective*

Billy Causey, ONMS Southeast Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Regional Director, provided an overview of the national marine sanctuaries within his region, as well as how he and others have been working to protect important ocean places and species with connections that extend beyond U.S. waters. He opened his presentation with an introduction to the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, highlighting how sanctuaries allow for multiple uses while

focusing on conservation and protection. He showed images of the spectacular resources within Flower Garden Banks, Florida Keys, and Gray's Reef national marine sanctuaries, and walked through how the program keeps a "pulse" on its resources through Condition Reports (and the collaborations and partnerships that allow these to happen). He noted where ONMS has historically heard from the public regarding interest in new national marine sanctuaries and talked about the high endemism and biodiversity (16,000 species) within the Gulf of Mexico. He mentioned a recent resurgence in interest in marine protected area networks within the Gulf (e.g., Beyond the Horizons workshop, Islands in the Stream concept), in part because of interest in using marine protected areas as restoration; and tri-national discussions with representatives from Cuba, Mexico and the United States. Billy's presentation fostered discussion related to the importance of the Gulf of Mexico, what a regional network might look like, and how one would go about restoring deepwater (coral) habitats.

### *Expanding the Reach of Marine Protected Areas through Recreation*

This session reminded participants of the audiences and actions recommended on December 5, 2012, as part of the previous joint session with members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and national marine sanctuary advisory councils (Santa Cruz, California). Matt Stout, ONMS Chief of Staff for Communications, reported on the progress made by ONMS, including the National Marine Protected Areas Center, and their respective advisory councils in reaching the institutions and organizations, target audiences, common threads and outcomes defined by these groups. He opened the discussion with an overview of the economic importance of travel and tourism (e.g., In 2013, the travel and tourism industry generated \$1.5 trillion, supported nearly 8 million jobs, and welcomed 70 million international visitors.). He highlighted a brand new (May 2014) released by the Executive Office of the White House, titled *Increasing Tourism to Spur Economic Growth*, and explained how the ONMS Travel and Tourism Strategic Plan and outcomes from the 2012 joint session feed into these initiatives.

He recapped the process and results from the 2012 joint session, and walked through examples of implemented recommendations spearheaded by ONMS Headquarters, National Marine Protected Areas Center and Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee, and national marine sanctuary advisory councils: (1) connecting remote sites with the public through technology (e.g., social media campaign, mobile apps, kiosks, documentary films, and Google Street and Sea view); assessing and strengthening marine protected area capacity to support and manage visitation (e.g., survey about recreational use issues and trends -- Common Language of Ocean Uses, OpenChannels, and article in U.S. Coast Guard *Proceedings* journal); and identifying ways marine protected areas can become part of existing or new tourism strategies (e.g., in AmS, participate in trade shows, collaborate with Cruise Lines, and village-based visitor development). Matt used a "heat map" to illustrate our collective relative level of effort for each of the target audiences, common threads and outcomes defined in *Expanding the Reach of Marine Protected Areas through Recreation and Tourism: Synopsis of Audiences and Actions* (Figure 1) of the joint synthesis from the December 2012 meeting. It illustrates that a lot of work has been done, but that there might be a few areas that ONMS might consider addressing further. Advisory council representatives followed this presentation with a few questions related to the economic figures in the agency reports, how we can raise awareness of the socioeconomic values of special ocean places, and whether there are ways for superintendents to adapt and account for increases in tourism and their potential, associated impacts.

### *Defining Our Unique Perspectives*

Participants were provided an overview of the unique roles and relationships between national marine sanctuary advisory councils, the Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council, and the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee. Rebecca Holyoke, ONMS National Advisory Council Coordinator, explained the history of these groups, noting the involvement of councils in ONMS decisions since 1990 (with the establishment of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council). She also addressed differences in the purposes of these groups and spoke to who these groups advise. Lauren Wenzel, Acting National Marine Protected Areas Center Director, compared the geographic scale, programmatic scope, and membership of these bodies, as well as highlighted that

although different these councils/committees all enhances ONMS' ability to involve more user groups, government agencies and the public at large in investing and protecting marine protected areas.

### *R/V Manta: A Platform for Partnerships*

All participants had an opportunity to learn about the *R/V Manta*, an 83-foot NOAA SRV class boat, home ported in Galveston, Texas, in advance of a tour of the boat on Tuesday afternoon. The *R/V Manta* supports operations at FGBNMS, including research, education, and diving activities, and has an 15-foot skiff as an additional research and diving platform. It is utilized by FGBNMS staff for remotely operated vehicle operations, diving, side-scan sonar and mapping, and by partners, including academic institutions, at a recoverable cost. The vessel is an asset to the region and a platform for leveraging partnerships and funding for the sanctuary.

## **Joint Session: Giving Voice to the Value of Marine Protected Areas**

### *Giving Voice to the Value of Marine Protected Areas through Recreation*

Building on discussions at and progress since the 2012 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit, advisory council representatives and Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee members convened to craft a joint statement on the value of marine protected areas to recreation, tourism and coastal communities. A draft "call to action," summarizing the two advisory groups previous discussions on the shared opportunities and challenges of recreational uses in marine protected areas, was crafted prior to the meeting and was introduced by Dr. Priscilla Brooks, Vice-Chair of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee's Recreation and Tourism Subcommittee, and Mr. Jesse Cancelmo, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chair, to kickstart this session. Priscilla and Jesse reminded participants of previous and ongoing discussions occurring amongst the two groups, particularly as they related to risks of increased use and the need for proactive and effective management of marine protected areas to protect cultural, historical and natural resources. They encouraged participants to meet as complementary advisory bodies and work together to discuss, refine and develop a final statement that would inform Department of Commerce, Department of Interior, and other relevant audiences.

### *Developing Our Joint Statement: Group Discussion*

Participants were divided into five breakout groups (each consisting of members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and national marine sanctuary advisory councils) to discuss the initial draft introduced by Dr. Priscilla Brooks and Mr. Jesse Cancelmo. Each group reviewed the initial draft "call to action" and provided feedback on whether the initial draft fulfilled its purpose and intent, incorporated the appropriate suite of key concepts or objectives, and captured the spirit of previous and ongoing discussions relative to the value of marine protected areas. The following is a compilation of the major edits, suggestions, and additions recommended by participants to refine and craft a final "call to action".

#### **Proposed Recommendations for Refining the Joint Statement**

- Define *marine protected areas* in the introduction or in a sidebar, ensuring that differences in categories or types of marine protected areas are distinguished.
- Clarify the purpose of the statement so it more clearly and directly addresses why people are concerned about protecting and using marine protected areas.
- Specify what investments the Department of Commerce (rather than NOAA) and Department of the Interior should make and proposes how they should take action.



- Clarify who the audience is and who is making the “call to action”.
- Ensure the statement incorporates sustainable management, as well as promotion of recreational uses in marine protected areas (e.g., could be done by editing the first paragraph) such that it balances positive and negative impacts.
- Determine when it is more appropriate to use “sustain” versus “persist” and clearly address what should be managed for sustainability.
- Mention how the “call to action” is responding to both executive orders (e.g., Travel and Tourism and America’s Great Outdoors).
- Highlight the need to work with local communities, other government agencies, and tribes in which marine protected areas are located; currently, the focus is only on the federal government.
- Incorporate indigenous or native people into language referencing communities, agencies, etc. (e.g., “working with state, local, and tribal governments and communities”).
- Address the cumulative impacts of recreation on ecosystem services and community infrastructure.
- Determine whether it’s possible to add a statistic about what percentage of marine protected areas include opportunities for recreation (i.e., cite specific data to highlight the prevalence of recreational opportunities, such as the # of acres open to such use, etc.).
- Adjust the discussion regarding the process of ocean stewardship so that it addresses engaging recreational users in this process and more explicitly addresses the need for stewardship.
- Clarify whether there is a need for mentioning the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council.
- Be sure to insert text like “such as” or “including but not limited to” when providing examples or lists.
- Consider a different term for “human dimensions” that is less academic (e.g., socioeconomic).
- Clarify the role and importance of recreation throughout the human dimensions section.
- Better communicate the need to activate users.
- Be sure to highlight adaptive management concept in sub-items in Section 3.
- Modify, reshape or eliminate the graphic (Figure 1).
- Include mention of the Great Lakes (not just oceans), cultural resources, citizen science, and value of off-water visitation.
- Consider modifying the reference to “zoning” (since it may be a problem for advisory councils).
- Develop a strong conclusion – preferably one that doesn’t end with a focus on the lack of funding or that current funding levels are sufficient.
- Additional minor editorial comments were also offered.

*Sharing Our Voice: Group Discussion*

Participants returned to their previous breakout group (each consisting of members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and national marine sanctuary advisory councils) to discuss specific audiences and corresponding strategies for distributing the final “call to action” to these audiences. Groups were asked to identify steps for disseminating the statement to these audiences, as well as how these audiences would be encouraged to respond to the statement (e.g., by taking what action). The following is a synopsis of the diverse audiences and strategies outlined during this brief session.

**Audiences Considered as Potential Recipients of the “Call to Action”**

- Individuals or groups engaged in governance of ocean resources
- Federal agencies engaged in management of ocean resources (e.g., NOAA)
- Local, state, territorial, and tribal agencies engaged in management of ocean resources
- Marine protected area managers (e.g., National System Partners)
- Fishery management councils or managers
- Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council members involved with outdoor recreation
- White House (e.g., President, Council on Environmental Quality, or key staff)
- Congressional committees with influence on factors affecting federal ocean agencies
- Congressional members in districts or states with marine protected areas
- Other elected officials
- Department of Commerce (e.g., small business loans)
- Users of ocean resources (e.g., commercial or sport fishermen, tourism operators)
- American Sportfishing Association
- Environmental or conservation-oriented non-governmental organizations
- Marine protected area educational or interpretive partners (e.g., aquaria)
- County or state-level tourism development councils and convention and visitor bureaus
- Chambers of commerce
- State Historic Preservation Offices
- Land-locked regions and visitors to seashores
- Museum forums and aquariums
- Charter boat associations
- Coastal planning commissions

- Dive associations
- Students (e.g., universities, colleges, high schools)
- Corporations

#### **Potential Strategies for Distributing the “Call to Action”**

- Establish a series of meetings or workshops with specific user groups, and their corresponding leaders, to identify ways to promote recreation and tourism while ensuring appropriate protections of natural, cultural and historical resources. Work within these groups to ensure the transfer of experiences, lessons learned, and accurate information. Use members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and national marine sanctuary advisory councils, who represent specific user groups, to assist in organizing these meetings.
- Distribute the final, signed “call to action” to The White House (e.g., Council on Environmental Quality), relevant Congressional Committees, and federal ocean agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations associated with recreation, travel and tourism. Ensure that messaging associated with this distribution highlights the socio-economic benefits of marine protected areas and connections directly with each individual audience.
- Develop a tailored cover letter or memo for members of Congress to explain the purpose, intent and need that led to the development of the “call to action.”
- Encourage marine protected area managers to develop an inventory of tourism operators, convention and visitor bureaus, and tourism boards in the vicinity of their respective marine protected areas.
- Provide a template for a site-specific message that translates the “call to action” into language/lingo relevant tourism operators, convention and visitor bureaus, and tourism boards so that it can be modified and distributed to neighboring organizations. Engage members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and national marine sanctuaries with connections to recreation, travel and tourism to assist in crafting and disseminating site-specific messages.
- Use members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and national marine sanctuary advisory councils to promote the “call to action” by developing messages relevant for other offices within the Department of Commerce, elected officials, State travel and tourism organizations, and chambers of commerce.

#### *Joint Session Remarks*

Daniel J. Basta, ONMS Director, congratulated participants on a great afternoon (June 3, 2014), specifically noting the progress the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils had made since first meeting together December 4-6, 2012 (Santa Cruz, California). He acknowledged their hard work and how they have transitioned from advisors to active participants, raising awareness and spreading important messages regarding the value of marine protected areas. He explained why recreation is an important opportunity for getting messages out about marine protected areas, and how he envisions the joint “call to action” supporting ongoing efforts to build a larger coalition of support for all marine protected areas. He noted his appreciation of how we were all there, in one place, being part of the solution.

## Affirming Your Voice

Dr. Charles Wahle, Chief Scientist for the National Marine Protected Areas Center, provided an overview of morning (June 4, 2014) discussions with members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee. He also explained the process by which Dr. Priscilla Brooks, Ms. Lauren Wenzel, and others incorporated input from the previous day's sessions to develop an updated "call to action" that addresses the conversations and suggestions of the broader group. He noted how, in his opinion, the changes made it clearer how this is an issue of significant national importance and one that involves all of our coastal areas. He then circulated the latest draft "call to action" to all advisory council representatives, providing them an opportunity to review and further comment on the statement. A suggestion was made to include indigenous groups, not just tribal communities or agencies, in the second paragraph so that it is representative of Native Hawaiians. Once this suggestion was incorporated, advisory council representatives noted their concurrence and support for this new "final" version (Appendix 1) and agreed to present it at their next advisory council meetings for their respective full council's consideration. Daniel J. Basta encouraged advisory council representatives to ask their councils to consider the final "call to action" before September 4, 2014. Moments later, advisory council representatives were informed that the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee had formally approved and adopted the final "call to action" (complete with the suggestion regarding indigenous groups).

## Open Discussion

### *Your National Marine Sanctuaries: Open Discussion*

Matt Brookhart, ONMS Policy and Planning Division Chief, facilitated an open discussion whereby advisory council representatives had an opportunity to ask follow-up questions from previous sessions or new questions related to the National Marine Sanctuary System and its advisory councils. Questions were raised relative to: the development of business plans for expansions (e.g., Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary); experience with authorizations; the need for additional law enforcement; emerging issues related to the use of drones within national marine sanctuaries; alternate sources of funding (e.g., dive tags); internet forums or topic-specific meetings among advisory council members representing a particular interest or constituency; and other methods for sharing information across advisory councils. Discussions pursued on how to bring law enforcement in national marine sanctuaries into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (e.g., by using cameras and automated ticketing). It was suggested that a national working group or law enforcement round table be setup to think about how to go about doing this across the system. Additionally, participants discussed possible options for bringing more resources into national marine sanctuaries; for example, by instituting dive tag fees or mooring buoy sponsorship to support buoys, monitoring, enforcement or restoration projects. Rebecca Holyoke, ONMS National Advisory Council Coordinator, was asked to work with advisory council representatives (particularly Kirk Schmidt) to determine how to leverage and share ideas across advisory councils (e.g., volunteers, internet forums). Daniel J. Basta committed to setting a date and time for a conference call or webinar with all available advisory council members, including alternates, after September 2014 and to sending two advisory council representatives (possibly one from each region) to the next Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council meeting, scheduled for September 24, 2014, in Baltimore, Maryland.

### *Setting Our Course*

William Douros, ONMS West Coast Regional Director, provided a recap of the 2 ½ day meeting, noting key actions and follow-up from the joint session with the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee. He reminded advisory council representatives of their responsibility to share information from this summit and, at a minimum, distribute the notes from the meeting with all members of their council. He reconfirmed their commitment to raising the final "call to action" with their full advisory council for its consideration prior to September 4, 2014. Mr. Douros also revisited some of the key points raised regarding similarities and differences among the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee, national marine sanctuary advisory councils, and the Sanctuary System Business

Advisory Council. Rebecca Holyoke, ONMS National Advisory Council Coordinator, was asked to prepare a one-pager highlighting the main objectives and differences of these entities. Participants discussed logistical concerns associated with the conference call or webinar for all available advisory council members. They determined that each advisory council would have one individual designated to represent the site during the interactive part of the webinar, and that the call/webinar would occur once all advisory councils had been presented with the final "call to action." Advisory council representatives were encouraged to setup meetings with their superintendents to discuss the *Campaign of Engagement* and other activities related to recreation, travel, and tourism that have occurred since the 2012 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit. Matt Stout, ONMS Chief of Staff for Communications, agreed to develop an updated document on campaign-related activities, and participants were encouraged to reach out to advisory council coordinators, superintendents, or Rebecca Holyoke with questions. Proposed actions from the open session/discussion related to the next Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council meeting, enforcement, and internet forums were noted again briefly. Advisory council representatives concluded the session by noting their take away messages: volunteer programs are valued across the system; advisory councils are better positioned today than five years ago; presentations on our combined progress since the previous summit were enlightening and inspiring; participants are leaving motivated to continue moving forward; and the program as a whole is making great strides to increase its visibility by focusing on relevant and important issues in resource conservation and beyond.

### *Closing Remarks and Wrap-up*

Daniel J. Basta, ONMS Director, concluded the 2 ½ day summit by once again acknowledging the efforts and role of advisory councils in helping ONMS achieve success. He spoke to their active participation in this meeting and in matters culminating up to this point. He explained how the joint "call to action" will help all of further protect special ocean places, and how the ONMS *Champion Season* will provide an opportunity to embrace community interest, increase awareness, and take additional steps towards protecting important resources and communities. Dan said that we must continue to find ways to help empower people and build new relationships rooted in trust and good communication. He noted how risk – or taking chances – is a part of moving forward and how our ability to be adaptive will keep us on course to success. He thanked everyone for their participation – particularly advisory council representatives, presenters and members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee, and reminded them that when they speak (like we've seen during this meeting) people listen.

**Appendix 1**  
*Final Call to Action*

*Destination Marine Protected Areas: Sustaining America's Most Treasured  
Ocean Places for Recreation and Stewardship*

*A Call to Action from the  
Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and the  
National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils*

**Destination Marine Protected Areas: Sustaining America's Most Treasured  
Ocean Places for Recreation and Stewardship  
June 2014**

***This is a call to action from the nation's leading advisory bodies on marine protected areas. It reflects our collective commitment to ensure proactive management of growing ocean recreation in these special places in order to sustain the natural and cultural assets that we treasure.***

Recreation is growing rapidly throughout the US, and recreation along our coasts and in our ocean is no exception. From sport fishing, to bird and whale watching, to stand-up paddling, Americans are playing in our oceans, Great Lakes and along our coasts in numbers and ways not anticipated just a few years ago. We believe strongly that healthy, viable marine ecosystems are fundamental to successful ocean recreation and tourism. People are drawn to clean waters, healthy habitats, diverse biological communities and intact cultural resources. Consequently, maintaining these qualities within marine protected areas through management of recreational uses will, in turn, ensure continued visitation and use along with the attendant benefits they generate to coastal communities. Most importantly, visitation to these places may help reshape how we, as a people, relate to our oceans.

A new Executive Order (#13597) calls for the significant expansion of travel and tourism in the US, particularly among federal lands and waters. As members of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils, we call upon federal ocean agencies, working with state, local, territorial and tribal governments, and indigenous groups and communities, to chart a new course for America's MPAs. That course must embrace recreational uses where appropriate, and manage them to ensure these places have a lasting role in America's future.

When planned and managed sustainably, recreational activities in MPAs can yield health, education and economic benefits to users and coastal communities. However, if recreational uses are allowed to expand haphazardly, they have the potential to inadvertently undermine the very qualities that draw people to these special ocean and coastal places everywhere in America today. The following federal actions in four related areas will, in our view, greatly enhance the ability of all MPAs to meet both the challenges and the opportunities posed by America's renewed attention to the sea, especially in a time of change.

**1. Invite People to Play (Responsibly) in MPAs**

Ocean agencies, working with local communities, should actively shape how and where ocean recreation occurs in MPAs and along our coasts. Powerful actions with lasting benefits for protected ecosystems, cultural resources and coastal communities, include: (i) highlighting MPAs as destinations for sustainable recreation through travel, tourism and outdoor equipment industries; guides and charters; educational programs; hospitality industry; general media; and visitor centers; (ii) using a consistent set of messages to inform visitors about compatible uses in MPAs and along our coasts; and, (iii) ensuring that ongoing national recreation, travel and tourism initiatives sustains the natural and cultural assets that make these places special.

## **2. Embrace the Human Dimension of Ocean Places**

Ensuring that recreational uses are sustainable in MPAs and along our coasts requires more than just a welcome sign. To effectively manage growing recreational uses and to realize their largely untapped potential for building lasting constituencies, MPA agencies must also better understand how, where and why people connect to these special places, and how their recreational activities reflect and shape local communities, cultures and economies. To this end, federal programs should collaborate and invest now in understanding: (i) the origins, drivers, status and emerging trends in recreational uses of MPAs; (ii) the social, cultural and economic benefits and possible detriments of those uses to coastal communities; (iii) how recreational uses fit into the broader and evolving picture of other commercial, military, scientific and tribal and indigenous uses in these areas and along our coast.

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are defined as “Any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by federal, state, territorial, tribal or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.” MPAs vary widely in their purposes and level of protection. Familiar examples include National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges and the state counterparts to these programs.

## **3. Sustain MPA Ecosystems and Values**

Expanding ocean recreation poses new challenges to MPA managers who may lack sufficient information, tools or authorities to sustainably manage them. MPA agencies should invest in filling that gap where it exists, for example by: (i) improving understanding of carrying capacities for common recreational uses (i.e. how much is too much?); (ii) implementing new and proactive management approaches to ensure sustainability, including special use areas to allocate specific activities to appropriate areas within the MPA; (iii) evaluating the adequacy of, and if necessary, adjusting existing management authorities to meet anticipated needs for ecologically sustainable recreation and thereby informing all communities along our coast.

## **4. Engage Recreational Users as Ocean Stewards**

Many recreational users share strong conservation values and understand the importance of sustaining the ecosystems and cultural sites they choose to visit. MPA sites can do much to encourage sustainable recreation by, for example: (i) engaging key user groups in adopting best practices that ensure the long-term viability of the ecosystems they value; (ii) forging innovative public-private partnerships with recreational industries and associations with the ability to influence key user groups; (iii) fostering citizen science to engage visitors in data collection for management; (iv) promoting visitor centers to connect inaccessible sites to the broader public; and, (v) developing cadres of ocean stewards (e.g. on the water docents) including youth and underserved communities, linked by common experiences of recreating in MPAs and carrying those conservation messages to other ocean areas wherever they travel.

## **Making It Happen**

We are acutely aware of the fiscal challenges facing all coastal and ocean agencies. Many of the actions recommended above involve collaborating and sharing resources and capabilities across agencies. Others require additional funding and can build capacity among our partners. It is in the national interest, and critical at this time, for you to consider these ideas and commit the necessary resources, guidance and programming to ensure that our nation’s special ocean places can realize their vast potential to serve America and its future.



This statement was developed based on joint sessions of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and the Chairs of the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils in December 2012 and June 2014. It was formally adopted by the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee on June 4, 2014, and will be presented to each of the 13 National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council for formal approval during Summer 2014.

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Chair, Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory  
Council

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