

**Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council**  
**December 11, 2014 Meeting Minutes**  
Virtual via *GoToWebinar*

Participants<sup>1</sup>

- Dr. Fred Boltz, Foundation Seat #1
- Ms. April Crow, Other Business Seat #1
- Ms. Sophia Mendelsohn, Other Business Seat #3
- Ms. Andrea Pinabell, Travel and Tourism Seat #1
- Mr. Rich Pruitt, Travel and Tourism Seat #2
- Mr. Joseph Stella, Recreation Seat #1
- Mr. Steven E. Stock, Foundation Seat #2
- Ms. Melissa Trotto, Other Business Seat #4
- Ms. Maura Welch, Travel and Tourism Seat #1
- Mr. John A. Armor, NOAA
- Mr. Daniel J. Basta, NOAA
- Mr. Gonzalo Cid, NOAA
- Dr. Stephen R. Gittings, NOAA
- Dr. Rebecca R. Holyoke, NOAA
- Ms. Rosemarie McKeeby, NOAA
- Mr. Matthew Stout, NOAA
- Ms. Maya Walton, NOAA
- Ms. Lauren Wenzel, NOAA

Members of the Public

- Mr. Mark Barker, President, Interlake Steamship Company
- Ms. Carliane D. Johnson, SeaJay Environmental
- Dr. Kristine Lynch, Shell Exploration and Production Company

Opening and Webinar Overview

The webinar convened at 3:00 p.m. EST. Rebecca Holyoke, National Advisory Council Coordinator for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), welcomed members and other participants to the fourth meeting – second virtual meeting – of the Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council (council). She confirmed that each of the expected participants, including members of the public, were on the conference call and webinar and asked participating ONMS staff to introduce themselves. Rebecca also provided an overview of the logistics for the webinar, ensured all participants had the attachments distributed as background, and walked quickly through the agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. Elizabeth L. Cheney (Energy Seat), Mr. Terry Garcia (Communications and Marketing Seat) and Dr. Mark Penning (Other Business Seat #2) were unable to attend.

### Potential Administrative Action

In order to facilitate discussion, the meeting summary of the September 24, 2014, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council meeting will be considered at the next *in-person* meeting of the council.

### Purpose and Objectives for Meeting

Daniel J. Basta, Director of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, discussed the purpose and expected outcomes for the meeting, as well as highlighted how things – like national marine sanctuary condition reports – set ONMS apart from some other government programs.

### ONMS Sentinel Monitoring Program: A Discussion of Corporate Involvement

Dr. Steven Gittings, ONMS National Science Coordinator, introduced participants to the ONMS Sentinel Monitoring Program and engaged the council in discussions about the role of this program in developing collaborations with local, state and federal governments, academic institutions, and other non-governmental entities to enhance understanding of special ocean places and their ecosystems. He provided an overview of research and monitoring within national marine sanctuaries, explaining how sentinel site monitoring can provide early detection or warning of impending change, and how monitoring results are reported in condition reports for the National Marine Sanctuary System. Dr. Gittings highlighted a few existing partnerships, including *Seaview* with Catlin Insurance and *WhaleALERT* with energy and shipping companies, and facilitated a question and answer session on the potential for corporate involvement in developing and promoting initiatives, like citizen monitoring and technology development. Advisory council representatives were asked to provide insights and feedback on how the ONMS Sentinel Monitoring Program could be improved, tailored or targeted for potential corporate involvement. Specifically, Dr. Gittings asked the council the following:

- If citizen science in marine sanctuaries is a viable outlet for corporate social interest, what is the best approach to generate support?
- Is there advertising or marketing value in citizen science for corporate sponsors, and how could it be used to enhance program awareness and growth?
- To what extent should we match sectors with issues-based programs or particular ecosystem services (recreation, clean water, food)?

The following questions, comments and responses were offered by council members and ONMS staff during this session:

- *What adversely affects the second question is that there is no specific physical thing. Rather, you are limited to social media.*
- *The value for a corporation is making clear that they actually support a thing, such as Adopt-a-Highway.*
- *Do you have partners that have signage available? For example, "You are X number of miles away from Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary," sponsored by Y Corporation.*

*Response:* We have a national interpretive signage program. There is a digital, flat-screen sign on the way to Stellwagen Bank. We did a similar thing in the Great Lakes (Alpena, Michigan) that was sponsored by a contracting company. Is there a way we could expand this though so it becomes more than a one-time or one-sign thing?

- *Public-private partnerships are key; you should consider putting together a marketing kit.*

*Response:* Agreed.

- *Are sentinel sites discrete or functional? Is there a set of information in these areas, or is it more conceptual?*

*Response:* The short answer is that it depends. It's a bit of a mix between discrete and functional sites and, across the system, some sites are further along than others. I wouldn't think it would be too hard to get there though. We could generate a list of sites, or even priority sites. We just have to identify which to select within the various national marine sanctuaries.

- *Are the priority science needs you mentioned NOAA's or ONMS's?*

*Response:* The science needs assessments I highlighted are specific to national marine sanctuaries and, therefore, are ONMS's. We typically post them on our individual, site-specific websites so researchers and students can know what they are (for the areas they are interested in).

- *Is there a way that cruise ships, for example, could engage in this initiative? We have three labs on our ships that transit within and near national marine sanctuaries. It's possible there may be ways that we could get involved and then let people know that we are engaged.*

*Response:* Generally, we don't invest in collecting information outside national marine sanctuaries, but what you're suggesting could be an alternative that offers consistency and additional information about fluxes/exchanges across our boundaries.

It also points out what we and corporate America all know and get, which is that civic and social responsibility are important. Everyone seeks to demonstrate their value-added. Are there links, in addition to the signage idea, that we need to think about? For example, are there links to customers or employees? Are we barking up the wrong tree, or do you see real potential? We have been struggling with the "how to start."

- *There could be an opportunity to draw in corporate actors interested more broadly in contributing to social good by using national marine sanctuaries as a base to connect with local communities through job creation and networking. Many more corporations are interested in social development, skill development, education and social objectives. It's very promising, and could allow you to open up a broader network of supporters.*

*Response:* Would you say then that the best approach is to identify corporate priorities and which specific entities have the most interest in the ONMS mission or vision?

- *You should identify the social benefits that sanctuaries are most poised to develop and then build bridges to relevant communities.*
- *You should look into ways that ONMS or specific sanctuaries can contribute to desirable social outcomes like education, skill development, etc. This could offer more general opportunities for sponsorship locally.*
- *A lot of corporations sponsor different conservation programs, but since they treat it as “checking the box” there tends to be no follow-up. To ensure better engagement, you have to be able to illustrate measurable results. Companies want to be able to answer: what’s my company going to do to make me proud? If you can show that it’s easy to get involved (in a step-by-step way) to support the ocean and national marine sanctuaries, it will be easier for the corporation to understand and decide that they want to get involved.*

*Response:* Agreed. I’ve mentioned before our unexpected partnership with UPS (through the transport of the *U.S.S. Monitor* sailors). These are the types of things that we need to do more often and really try to create things out of the circumstance or initial connection.

- *I recently spoke to REEF at a sustainers’ conference and noticed that involvement in citizen science often stimulates activity in the dive community.*
- *Response:* It’s important to consider the age range, location, history and interest of the diving community and to connect with them through a variety of interests. There’s a huge drop-out rate in diving; people get bored sometimes. There’s a big opportunity to teach people about what’s happening in the ocean, how to choose where to go, how to get involved (e.g., lionfish removal), etc.
- *I’m wonder if there’s an approach to figuring out the connectivity between where divers come from and work (i.e., often in various corporations).*

*Response:* I think there is. Collectively in industry we have a lot of names out in the tourism sectors that could help with this.

- *You want to consider matching business sectors with specific aspects of the monitoring program. If you can align with a company’s goals, it’s generally a home run. We, for example, have done an in-depth review of what guests expect from us. We align with that in corporate philanthropy. It’s a logical connection. Our guests expect us to do the right thing for the ocean. You need to start in your communities.*

*Response:* When I was working in the Gulf of Mexico, I always thought it would make sense for a consortium of oil and gas companies to support monitoring programs at Flower Garden Banks. There were a number of cases of support by individual companies

for monitoring, research, fellowships, cruises and education programs, but not collective support that might have been used to provide a more comprehensive look at changing conditions in the Gulf and their effect on the reefs of Flower Garden Banks. I think it could have been possible to do this, but unfortunately, I didn't know how to reach out and make the appropriate connections. That's where we still need help with things like this initiative.

- *There are instances where we've tried this in the past, like on the west coast awhile back. The corporate view, at the time, was there was too much potential for the information to be used against them. Given this, we weren't able to take this concept very far. We also didn't have the voices need to speak for us; we were really just a single voice (perhaps, lost in the mix).*

*Response:* In Bar Harbor, the cruise ship industry was accused of discharging. To address this concern, we encouraged the community to put together a monitoring program that we paid for. What we/they found out was that the problem was related to bad septic systems (not us as previously suggested).

- *Do you think the industry would have funded it if it had been asked before the bad press?*

*Response:* I think so, but the request needs to be specific. It can't be a "fishing expedition."

- *Are there other benefits or things you can pull out as a case study (like your experience with UPS)? These types of things could be your "ally" or other voice when reaching out to others.*

*Response:* This is definitely something for us to consider. UPS was a huge reach for us so we've been careful not to mess it up. I think our problem is that we don't know exactly what to ask or how to ask it.

### Public Comment

During the public comment period, Mr. Mark Barker, President of the Interlake Steamship Company (Middleburg Heights, Ohio), commented on his experience with Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, including the recent boundary expansion. Mr. Barker mentioned that Interlake Steamship Company has nine freighters on the Great Lakes and that he is the Board Chairman for the Lake Carriers Association. He described the Lake Carriers' and his connection to Thunder Bay and noted how, in general, they are very aligned with Thunder Bay. He went on to discuss his concerns about the recent boundary expansion, how they collectively tried to bring up their interests and issues, and a proposed legislative fix that should allow Lake Carriers to continue to operate in the expanded boundaries. He expressed concerns over differing views of the law and how instances like this alienate some of the corporations ONMS is actually looking to recruit. Daniel J. Basta, ONMS Director, responded by saying that he thinks we are totally aligned and that we've done everything possible in law to resolve this issue. He noted the role of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Coast Guard in this and how hard ONMS has worked to resolve this situation. Mr. Basta also noted that he thought it

was a red herring to think that the sanctuary is not aligned. Mr. Barker followed up by saying that, as new proposals are being put forward, we all need to think this through, and Mr. Basta responded by saying that ONMS wants to work with them.

#### Looking Ahead

Daniel J. Basta noted that he had recently returned from the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia. The World Parks Congress is a huge gathering of parks professionals from all over the world and is held once every (approximately) ten years. Mr. Basta shared that there was an undertone, throughout the meeting, of wanting to connect with corporations and how surprised he was that he was unable to identify any other similar organizations with a business advisory council. He noted that people will be following the sanctuary system to see how we're working with this council.

Mr. Basta also revisited the concept of "leadership pairings" with council members. The idea here is to link each council member with a member of the ONMS Leadership Team (e.g., superintendent, division chief) as another point of contact. He encouraged council members to reach out to Rebecca Holyoke or him with any questions or concerns, and mentioned that he would like to initiate the pairings, if they agreed, after the New Year. ONMS Leadership Team members would be provided professional contact information (e.g., email, phone numbers) for their respective council member and be asked to make initial connections.

Mr. Basta also noted that the next in-person meeting of the Business Advisory Council would likely occur in April 2015, although specific dates and locations have not yet been chosen.

#### Adjourn Meeting

Rebecca Holyoke adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m. EST by thanking all council members, presenters and public participants for their interest and engagement in webinar topics and their national marine sanctuaries.