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**SANCTUARY SYSTEM BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**SEPTEMBER 27, 2016 MEETING MINUTES**  
The National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

Participants:

- Ms. Elizabeth L. Cheney, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council Member
- Ms. Elissa Loughman, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council Member
- Ms. Sophia Leonora Mendelsohn, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council Member
- Dr. Mark Penning, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council Member
- Ms. Andrea Pinabell, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council Member
- Ms. Lisa M. Swanson, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council Member
- Mr. John Armor, NOAA
- Dr. Rebecca Holyoke, NOAA
- Ms. Elizabeth Moore, NOAA
- Ms. Kate Spidalieri, NOAA
- Mr. Matt Stout, NOAA
- Mr. Mitchell Tartt, NOAA
- Ms. Kate Thompson, NOAA
- Mr. Bob Trainor, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Members of the Public:

- Carliane Johnson, SeaJay Environmental
- Brent Greenfield, HBW Resources, LLC.
- Kevin O. Swanson, Michael Best Strategies

**Opening and Introductions**

Dr. Rebecca Holyoke, National Advisory Council Coordinator, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) opened this in-person meeting of the Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council and welcomed everyone to the National Press Club. Dr. Holyoke then facilitated participant introductions, and gave a brief overview of the day's agenda and intended outcomes.

**Updates from Across the National Marine Sanctuary System**

John Armor, Acting Director, ONMS seconded Dr. Holyoke's welcome and began by stating that he believes it is an incredible time for the council, and him personally, to be a part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Before proceeding with updates from across the National Marine Sanctuary System, Mr. Armor spoke about new people and positions at both ONMS and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF). First, Mr. Armor said that, before the council convenes in 2017, ONMS will hire a new, permanent director. Second, NMSF appointed Bob Trainor as the new Chair of its Board of Trustees, and is searching for a new President and Chief Executive Officer. And, of course, America will have a new president in 2017 as well.

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Concluding his opening remarks about new leadership, Mr. Armor proceeded with system updates. The system is proceeding with the designation of the first two new national marine sanctuaries in 20 years. At both sites proposed for sanctuary designation—Mallows Bay-Potomac River and Wisconsin-Lake Michigan—ONMS staff is working with its respective state partners on draft environmental impact statements, draft management plans, and proposed regulations based on comments received during the public scoping processes. Mr. Armor elaborated on how these nominated sites, in particular, stood out because of their level of bipartisan support, which is emblematic of how sanctuaries are apolitical and a source of pride for communities.

Mr. Armor continued with the system's two proposed sanctuary expansions at Flower Garden Banks and *Monitor* national marine sanctuaries. He noted that both expansion proposals started with advisory council recommendations. Additionally, he let participants know that there are two areas on the sanctuary nomination inventory—Chumash Heritage off the coast of California and Erie, Pennsylvania. NOAA has not made a decision about whether to move forward to potentially designate either or both sites. ONMS is aware of several nominations that are in development, but have not been submitted yet by communities.

Mr. Armor then highlighted the recent expansion of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, which spatially dwarfs all the other proposed designations and expansions combined. Furthermore, he caveated that even before the monument's expansion, it was drastically larger than the largest national marine sanctuary, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa. In August, President Obama more than quadrupled Papahānaumokuākea's size, from 139,818 square miles to 582,578 square miles, an area larger than all the national parks combined and bigger than the total land area of the state of Alaska. Using his executive authority under the U.S. Antiquities Act (i.e., through a presidential proclamation), President Obama extended most of the monument's boundary—and its prohibition of commercial fishing—out to the 200-mile limit of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), making Papahānaumokuākea larger than any other land or ocean conservation area on Earth; Mr. Armor noted that the monument does not go into the main Hawaiian Islands.

Mr. Armor then proceeded with two of the proclamation's more unique features. First, the proclamation states that the U.S. Secretary of Commerce “should consider initiating the process under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act” to designate the original and expanded monument as a national marine sanctuary to “supplement and complement existing authorities.” Second, the proclamation added the Office of Hawaiian Affairs as a fourth co-trustee to manage the monument. Although it is not an official part of the state government, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs is a constitutionally organized Native Hawaiian body.

As a result of the monument expansion, Mr. Armor proclaimed that the National Marine Sanctuary System's size increased from more than 170,000 to 600,000 square miles. Regardless, he stated that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is still “digesting” what the proclamation and expanded territory will mean in terms of management.

Mr. Armor then connected the monument expansion to marine protected areas on a global stage. Specifically, Mr. Armor discussed how ocean conservation, and particularly marine protected

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areas, were featured very prominently at the World Conservation Congress (WCC) in Hawaii the week after the expansion announcement.

Then, after the WCC, at the Our Oceans conference in Washington, D.C., President Obama announced the establishment of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. Mr. Armor contrasted the northeast monument with Papahānaumokuākea, where the former is off Georges Bank, where many activities occur, like commercial and recreational fishing and shipping, compared to the latter located in the remote Pacific.

Mr. Armor concluded his system-wide updates with the release of the inaugural *Earth is Blue (EiB)* magazine at Capitol Hill Ocean Week in June 2016. Mr. Armor expressed his pride in the magazine that builds off the successful *EiB* social media campaign by realizing that everything cannot be digital and it is worthwhile to have something printed and tangible. Even at a briefing with the Senate Commerce Committee, ONMS noticed that the magazine was on a conference table along with other important books.

Council members and participants had the following questions and comments during this session:

- *Did you have the opportunity to plan for the monument announcement? Who is behind the proposition?*
  - *Response:* Generally, propositions are initiated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and then brought to the administration through different means. It is unclear whether the monument could have had a similar backing for a sanctuary nomination.
- *Could the Northeast monument become a sanctuary?*
  - *Response:* It could, but it would be more difficult than for Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, given each proclamation's text.

### **What is the Difference? Comparing National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments**

Matt Stout, Communications Director, ONMS used this session to remind participants about the difference between national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments. Mr. Stout began with how sanctuaries are designated under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) in one of three ways. First, sanctuaries can be designated through a publically-driven process (i.e., the sanctuary nomination process [SNP]) to identify marine and Great Lakes areas of national significance. Second, Congress can designate a sanctuary through legislation, Third, in the past, NOAA could place a site in an “inventory” of nationally significant places and then proceed with a highly public designation process.

Conversely, monuments are created by presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act. As a result of the executive authority allowed under the Antiquities Act, Mr. Stout pointed out that monuments can be created more easily, and often faster than sanctuaries because the Antiquities Act does not require public notice, review, and comment. Mr. Stout continued with additional points of contrast between the two acts. As a more modern act, passed in 1972 and last authorized by Congress in 2000, the NMSA allows for the collection of civil, criminal, and natural resource

damages and penalties in order to account for the various ways in which humans can affect marine resources. Similar damage provisions are not included in the Antiquities Act because it would have been difficult to predict future resource management needs in 1907, the year the act was passed. Another distinct provision of the NMSA also benefits sanctuary management. Specifically, the NMSA provides for the creation of community-based advisory councils that can offer advice and recommendations to ONMS. In order to create a similar council or committee for a monument, that committee would have to be created under the more restrictive Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Council members and participants had the following questions and comments during this session:

- *Have any new financial or staff resources been allocated for the new monument designations?*
  - *Response:* No additional resources have been allocated to the monuments at this point; however, it is still early and usually, appropriations are made one year after a monument's designation.
- *What can happen to a monument if it later becomes a sanctuary? Is the former dissolved?*
  - *Response:* New mandates do not displace, but rather supplement existing authorities.  
*Response:* If a proclamation contains language that directs the Secretary of Commerce to initiate sanctuary designation, a monument can have a sanctuary overlay.
  - *Response:* As a matter of law, a monument should continue to exist despite additional overlays. Monuments often end up becoming something else, given the limitations of monument designations discussed above.

### **Catching-up with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation**

Bob Trainor, Chair, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Board of Trustees, introduced himself to participants and discussed the current state and future direction of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF or foundation). In June 2016, Mr. Trainor became the Chair of the NMSF Board of Trustees. Mr. Trainor said that he first viewed his appointment as an honor; however, he now views his chairmanship an obligation. The foundation was founded in 2000 to support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, in particular. At present, Mr. Trainor stated that the foundation is at a turning point in its 16-year history and evaluating how it can better maximize its potential. Accordingly, new changes in leadership in 2016, both on the board and at the staff-level, were precipitated by a need to better reflect how sanctuaries can be managed. Specifically, Mr. Trainor expounded that NMSF wants to generate more than just “talk” about sanctuaries, but the action taken to interact with and protect sanctuary resources.

He then provided participants with a description of “Who is the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation?” The foundation’s board is composed of eight volunteer trustees, which includes prominent attorneys, a dean at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and corporate sustainable entrepreneurs (e.g., a co-founder of Method Products). Mr. Trainor emphasized that

the board has and will continue to discuss the foundation's impact, which includes its ability to attain an adequate level of support for sanctuaries and monuments. He acknowledged that this impact is a tall order, but that he believes that the foundation's board and staff can help to accomplish it. Moreover, he noted that the foundation intentionally seeks to minimize its staff and administrative costs in order to maximize the amount of money that goes toward the National Marine Sanctuary System. Currently, the foundation's annual budget is approximately \$16 million, with the majority going to program support for ONMS. Mr. Trainor is hopeful new priorities will be evaluated and identified through a new board and new President and Chief Executive Officer.

Regardless, he continued with how new priorities must be accompanied by new revenue streams. For example, he talked about community service payments, environmental damage penalties that the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) can distribute to non-profits for specific projects. Community service payments are a new, but important source of revenue the foundation is beginning to explore. Mr. Trainor stated that his fellow board member, attorney Richard Ben-Veniste's experience with DOJ has benefitted the foundation in this pursuit.

Despite considering new priorities, Mr. Trainor was clear that one of the foundation's continuing foci is Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW). In 2016, CHOW attracted over 700 participants. Next year, Mr. Trainor announced that CHOW will be moving from its Washington D.C. location at the Newseum to the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in order to capitalize on the current attention given to the ocean and accommodate an increased number of in-person attendees. CHOW has experienced incremental growth, year by year, and the foundation needs the proper facilities to make this growth possible, especially since CHOW is a significant venue to reach the nation's policymakers.

After completing a summary of the foundation's current priorities, Mr. Trainor expressed that he is excited about the future, and would appreciate connecting with the Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council's members in furtherance of new goals. Compared to the National Park Service's foundations, Mr. Trainor believes that NMSF can definitely do more and he would like to discover how, in conjunction with the council, the foundation may be able to refine its message in order to make targeted and significant impacts. Mr. Trainor also added that the foundation is seeking new board members who want to make a difference through hard work and a consistent commitment to sanctuaries. Mr. Trainor reflected that, for the foundation to be successful, it must broaden its scope. He then concluded by citing the foundation's great relationship with ONMS and that both entities, though independent, work together towards mutual objectives. Accordingly, he acknowledged his appreciation for the council's time and asked for questions.

Council members and participants had the following questions and comments during this session:

- *Generally, how do you obtain corporate funding as an organization?*
  - *Response:* We have staff specifically dedicated to corporate funding, but are nonetheless looking to be more aggressive in this area; therefore, we are interested in your feedback on how we might enhance this capacity. Currently, refining our skillsets and priorities is the number one priority for new leadership. Regardless,

we are already very diligent about how we track and spend any money we receive and we do not have a lot of administrative waste.

- *Response:* Right now, our biggest foci is Capitol Hill Ocean Week; however, again, we definitely looking to grow and reach out to new corporate donors with new leadership.
- *Response:* As a result of donations, corporate or otherwise, the foundation works with ONMS in a variety of ways. For instance, the foundation can help to fund research and monitoring through a grant. Donors can put their dollars to work for impactful projects that answer ongoing, important questions.
- *Is the CHOW gala your biggest fundraiser? What portion of your gross revenues is generated from the gala?*
  - *Response:* Historically, we only yield about \$400,000-500,000 after accounting for costs associated with the gala; however, the gala's biggest draw is that it gets us exposure among relevant audiences, which is increasing year after year.
  - *Response:* I have documents that I can share about CHOW.
- *We are all familiar with the dilemma of how to do more with less. Sometimes staff can be a greater or the best investment with limited resources. Have you evaluated or quantified the extent to which your staff is a resource and not a liability?*
  - *Response:* At the most basic level, our staff run our different programs. I cannot think of anyone not being utilized effectively.
- *How can the penalties be used?*
  - *Response:* How a penalty can be used depends on the type of damages awarded and the relevant statute. For example, with unlawful dumping, we can get the benefit of non-specific money damages.
  - *Response:* The first part of the battle is getting in the door with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and then evaluating how any money can be spent. We are just starting to see the benefits of our efforts.
- *Is the board poised to jump on this opportunity with penalties?*
  - *Response:* At our next board meeting in Monterey, California, we will convene with DOJ attorneys on the West Coast. Generally, once an expenditure is identified, and NMSF as a recipient, we have faced little opposition. Over the past year, we have received approximately \$1.2 million in penalties. Penalties have only recently been identified as a source of funding. Regardless, we need to diversify our revenue sources and look at private donors too; we cannot rely solely on the government.
- *Bob and Ted, can you talk about the local chapters and their community footprint?*
  - *Response:* Local chapters are assets and we think we could use them better to enhance local support for each site. There are lots of grassroots opportunities for active engagement (e.g., serve on local chapter boards).
  - *Response:* This would be a great opportunity, especially for the two proposed sanctuary sites.
  - *Response:* Great point. People can work for NOAA, serve on an advisory council, or start or serve on a local foundation chapter. NMSF can work to bring in friends' groups to the mutual benefit of all.

- *Response:* We are working to develop leadership models so that chapters can capitalize on local leadership and simultaneously interact with national leadership. Right now, we are looking to build off of the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Chapter example.

### **Sanctuaries in 360: Using Technology to Reimage-ine Our Underwater Treasures**

Mitchell Tartt, Chief, Conservation Science Division, ONMS led an interactive session about a current initiative to capture images of the National Marine Sanctuary System for virtual reality goggles. Mr. Tartt began by framing his presentation. First, he described how the Conservation Science Division, and this project specifically, fit within ONMS and contribute to other parts of the program. Specifically, conservation science at ONMS is very integrated with sanctuary management. From natural sciences to social sciences and economics, each affects the lives and livelihoods of our nation and the system's diverse ecosystems.

Providing additional background information, Mr. Tartt put up statistics on sanctuary users. One statistic showed that only a small percentage of Americans, 1%, scuba dive. Mr. Tartt drew on this statistic to demonstrate the fact that not many Americans have the chance to visit their underwater treasures beneath the ocean's surface. In an effort to bring sanctuaries to more people, ONMS continuously looks for new tools that can bring sanctuaries to more people.

Mr. Tartt's session then introduced one such tool: virtual reality imaging. Specifically, Mr. Tartt is interested in collecting underwater images of sanctuaries for use in goggle-based experiences that engage people's senses on different fronts and show them what it is like to be physically present in a sanctuary. Mr. Tartt is optimistic that virtual reality imaging can inspire resource protection by transporting people to environments with otherwise limited access. Mr. Tartt then prefaced any images by starting that they are largely un-processed in an effort to maintain the authenticity of what a person would actually see if he/she went diving.

As Mr. Tartt provided everyone with the chance to test virtual reality goggles and view sanctuary images, council members and participants had the following questions and comments:

- *Is it possible for the images to include information pop ups?*
  - *Response:* Infographics are our next step because they are a very effective way to communicate targeted messages with visual representation.
- *Mr. Tartt:* We are producing singular 360° images, in addition to transects. For instance, at Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, we can look at the differences between current and proposed marine protected areas. Between 2014 and 2016, we captured images at the monument and the following sanctuaries: Flower Garden Banks, Florida Keys, Gray's Reef, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale, Monterey Bay, and Thunder. In the future we have plans for Olympic Coast and *Monitor* national marine sanctuaries, in addition to two sites currently proposed for sanctuary designation.

Now that we have a considerable amount of content, what can we do with it? There are a lot of possibilities, including, but not limited to: engagement with the public, advisory councils, and Congress; education; marketing and branding; applied resource protection

(e.g., permitting and zoning; natural resource damage assessment and restoration; project planning and long-term monitoring). Through one partner mission with the Ocean Agency, we reached 7 billion impressions globally.

- *Is the current focus on coral bleaching motivated by scientific concerns or public attention?*
  - *Response:* Both.
  - *Response:* XL Catlin—XL is an insurance company—wanted to survey 10,000 kilometers of coral reefs around the world to benefit coastal insurance property owners; however, this one investment will have downstream benefits for others. This unparalleled source of data should be available to the public by the end of this year.
- *Is there a commercial advantage here (e.g., visiting sanctuaries)?*
  - *Response:* I am not sure about “commercial advantage,” but certainly there is an application in communication, partner engagement, and fundraising. These are engaging and informative images and experiences. They can significantly enhance discussions with potential partners and funders, and move the conversation from an abstract idea of what a sanctuary looks like, to a more immersed understanding. From a marketing perspective, it is different. The original funding for the XL Caitlin Project was \$5 million. The resulting market value of media exposure was of \$150 million in three years, which is clearly a great success.
  - *Response:* I would like the people that calculated these numbers to speak to the council at a future meeting. (*Mr. Tartt stated that arrangements can be made to accommodate this request*).
  - *Response:* If there is a good mapping resource, you could leverage different funding sources for one project that can serve multiple purposes. At some point, you do not necessarily need more mapping, but you do need something to do with it.
  - *Response:* These images can help change the conversation to change people’s behaviors. If you see something differently, you may act differently. I would like to engage the council as soon as we have our virtual dive gallery constructed and provide a full tour of the National Marine Sanctuary System, and teach all of you how to use this resource on your own.
- *How do we get this information out to the public?*
  - *Response:* *Earth is Blue* and ONMS website; digital screens in visitors’ centers and zoos and aquaria (also with a sound component); a topic at conferences, like DEMA (Diving Equipment Manufacturer’s Association).
- *What is ONMS’s relationship with National Geographic (NatGeo)?*
  - *Response:* There are many parts of NatGeo, but generally good.
  - *Response:* You could look at participating in the NatGeo series, *Living Dangerously*, for next season.
- *Mr. Tartt:* From XL Catlin to the Ocean Agency, which is now partnering with Google on Ocean America, we are striving to show more than just a place, but tell the stories of places. Google Expeditions enables schools to take classrooms on a virtual experience, guided by a lesson plan, where each student has a set of goggles controlled by one teacher on a tablet. To date, sanctuaries has created lessons plans for Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

and National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa. Also, we would like to generate content for hotels in order to show guests what is outside their hotel rooms from inside their hotel rooms.

- *How are people responding to this in terms of how images compare to reality?*
  - *Response:* We do not do a lot to the images in post-production in order to maintain the actual underwater experience.
- *Does it matter if virtual reality is different than actual reality if no one is going to go there?*
  - *Response:* It depends.
- *Mr. Tartt:* Unfortunately, the cost of smartphones and tablets has been cost prohibitive for schools. Schools need grants or an ability to control and provide images wirelessly, which could be less expensive than providing students with individual devices. There are kits now available (e.g., by Google, but that can be purchased at a store like Best Buy) for several thousand dollars that are designed for classrooms with a maximum of thirty students. We may soon explore working with Google to develop content for these kits.
- *In these images, have you seen sanctuary-specific issues?*
  - *Response:* We first chose locations based on those with which people most easily identify (e.g., popular diving locations); regardless, if we saw resource issues, we photographed them. Ultimately, documenting resource concerns would be a second phase, whereas the first was about who wanted content and how we could get the “biggest bang for our buck.”
  - *Response:* In the future, you could look at revenue-generating opportunities through the foundation, for example with dive shops.
  - *Response:* NMSF could have an online gallery and market to online viewers. Or, if there was a specific campaign for a given issue, people could donate to what they just experienced.

### **The Terrific Twos: *Earth is Blue* on Its Second Anniversary**

Kate Thompson, Chief, Education and Outreach Division, ONMS provided participants with an update on ONMS’s social media campaign, *Earth is Blue (EiB)*, as it approaches its second anniversary in October 2016. Ms. Thompson began by connecting her session to a previous council meeting in Boston, Massachusetts in October 2015. In Boston, Ms. Thompson first spoke to the council about *EiB* and received helpful feedback that has since benefited the campaign. Regardless, for newer council members and participants, Ms. Thompson briefly introduced *EiB*. Specifically, *EiB* tells the story of sanctuaries, in addition to the entire ocean because the environment is interconnected. The concept for *EiB* started with an astronaut’s view of Earth from space. Ms. Thompson said the campaign launched on October 24, 2014, the National Marine Sanctuary System’s anniversary, with approximately 7,000 friends on Facebook. Since then, *EiB* has accrued a total of 706 photos and 101 videos through its commitment to one photograph a day and one video a week every day and week, respectively. Currently, the *EiB* website ranks as the eleventh highest or most visited webpage on the National Marine Sanctuary System’s entire website. Moreover, Ms. Thompson proudly proclaimed that the campaign’s online presence increased by 711% in only two years; this increase exceeded ONMS’s first-year goal to increase *EiB*’s online presence by 50%.

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Following her introduction, Ms. Thompson took the session further similarly asking participants, “How can ONMS go further with this campaign?” She started by telling participants how ONMS has tried soliciting feedback thus far. First, ONMS surveyed *EiB* users to ask them what they would like to see in future images and videos. Those surveyed reported that research and science, marine life, communities and heritage, climate change, and sanctuary threats were their top priorities. Survey respondents were also interested in seeing or learning more about how people use sanctuaries (e.g., Get into Your Sanctuary photo content; 500 submissions from across the National Marine Sanctuary System). Ms. Thompson discussed how she would like to take *EiB* from a knowledge and awareness transfer platform, to action (e.g., Are people volunteering because of *EiB*?). The survey also showed that people are fascinated by new scientific discoveries.

Ms. Thompson continued with another example of how *EiB* can go, and has gone, further. For instance, ONMS researched what additional tools *EiB* could capitalize on, apart from its website and a weekly newsletter. In particular, Ms. Thompson wanted an answer to the question of whether “print media is dead.” Accordingly, Ms. Thompson said that her answer to that question was “no.” Specifically, she talked about a neuro-marketing study completed by the U.S. Postal Service that explained or justified why people still like or need print media.

Inspired by the study, Ms. Thompson sought for ONMS to capitalize on the benefits of print media through *EiB* in the form of an annual magazine. In making decisions about the magazine’s appearance, layout, and content, ONMS looked at the most popular or best qualities of the top outdoor, back packing, and photography magazines. Next, ONMS took that initial information and compared it to what might appeal to a sanctuaries’ audience, and still enable the program to promote system-wide accomplishments. The result of all of this hard work produced the inaugural *Earth is Blue* magazine. Released at Capitol Hill Ocean Week in June 2016, the magazine was printed in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The magazine’s varied sections include: Explore the Blue: Science and research; Get into the Blue: Sustainable recreation; Our Blue Heritage: Historical, maritime, and cultural heritage; and The Blue and You: Outreach and education; among others.

Ms. Thompson added that the magazine process did not end there. Moreover, ONMS wanted to evaluate the magazine’s reception; therefore, every copy of the magazine included a survey. This survey had 150 respondents, where 76% said they would pay more than \$10 for a copy of the magazine. Moreover, a majority of people said that they would keep the magazine for more than one year and found it to be “inspiring,” “deep,” and “fresh.”

Ms. Thompson then discussed another initiative, *Stories from the Blue*, a print and video piece released once a month that tells the stories of people impacted by sanctuaries. *Stories from the Blue* launched in conjunction with the magazine and is already producing returns on investment for ONMS. In one year, the number of people watching *EiB* videos went from 20,000 to 90,000 people.

After providing participants with an overview of what ONMS has explored internally, she prompted participants for feedback on “where *EiB* can go from here?” Ms. Thompson said that, since October 2015, council members from TripAdvisor and jetBlue have already expressed an

interest in the campaign. For example, TripAdvisor plans to share *EiB* photos on its social media accounts. Additionally, Patagonia provided the recipients of ONMS's Nancy Foster scholarship grants with a 50% discount on merchandise and equipment.

Ending her presentation on an inspiring note, Ms. Thompson said that one idea she had for a "next step" would be to emulate the U.S. National Park Service and move beyond still visual images and video alone with online, guided tours of sanctuaries and monuments. More than anything, Ms. Thompson believes that narration adds a human touch to any story and makes it more convincing. Before she concluded, Ms. Thompson pulled up the National Park Service's website she referenced (<https://artsandculture.withgoogle.com/en-us/>) for participants.

### **Planning Ahead: One Agency's Transition to a New Administration**

Matt Stout, Communications Director, ONMS briefly discussed the 2017 presidential transition from an agency perspective. Mr. Stout said that there are 4,000 political appointees in the federal government and five within NOAA. In advance of new appointments, "landing team" or staffers circulate among and report to the outgoing president's agency officials in order to ease the transfer of power. Historically, at least in NOAA, appointments have been confirmed as early as February and as late as June.

Council members and invited guests had the following questions and comments during this session:

- *How do you plan in the face of pending political climates?*
  - *Response:* Generally, we try to setup plans so that regardless of the new administration, we have a firm direction (e.g., ONMS strategic and business plans).

### **Our Vision for America's Treasured Ocean Places: A Five-Year Strategy for the National Marine Sanctuary System**

Rebecca Holyoke, Strategic Planning Coordinator, ONMS briefly discussed the program's process to draft its new strategic plan, before asking for council feedback. To begin, Ms. Holyoke emphasized that the plan is the product of an ONMS team effort. ONMS's previous strategic plan, which expires in 2016, was for a span of ten years; in contrast, the new plan will only be in effect for five years. In drafting the plan, Ms. Holyoke described how ONMS looked at many successful strategic plans, including private and non-profit examples, in order to learn from others all sectors. Ultimately, ONMS wanted to produce a plan that simultaneously conformed with government standards and accurately reflected ONMS's unique identity. Ms. Holyoke said that right now, ONMS was working on finalizing the plan's key priorities, which will be clear, tangible measurables that will guide the attainment of the plan's goals; however, she also added that the plan will have additional uses, such as for marketing purposes. Ms. Holyoke then provided everyone with a list of questions to start the session's informal discussion: Are we on the right track? Are the goals and objectives in the right order? Do you agree with calling out our highest priorities? Are there major holes or gaps in this plan you would like to see addressed?

Council members and participants had the following questions and comments during this session:

- *How big or small are you aiming for the key initiatives?*
  - *Response:* That is something we are asking ourselves. The first two are more along the lines of what we are striving for; however, we have to be mindful of federal rules for certain priorities related to external investments.
  - *Response:* You could look at the “you can solicit” part of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to refine that priority.
- *Comment:* I like the idea of key initiatives, but it would be helpful for people to see how they align with the goals as you try to prioritize and operationalize the plan.
- *I agree that the key initiatives do not flow well with the document’s organization and should be better integrated with the goals. Would it make sense to have a goal to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary? It would not be as lofty of a goal, but it is a big accomplishment.*
  - *Response:* We have tried to capture the anniversary in other parts of the plans, but it could be good as a goal too.
  - *Response:* It is a big deal and only a five-year plan, so I would call it out.
  - *Response:* It might not generate as much attention as you want it to if it is not a goal.
  - *Response:* We also want to make this a communication tool, so we want to make sure that the goals are inclusive enough to draw attention to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- *Comment:* There are certain things you have to do to make strategic plans livable and successful. It is important to be able to measure your goals and words like “enhance, ensure, and increase” may not be quantifiable enough. The measureable aspect of the plan is what will make it last.
- *Comment:* Different aspects of your program can then rally to effectively measure their achievements against clearly defined goals that extend across the board.
- *Comment:* You previously mentioned local chapters of the foundation, and if that is a priority, you would want to put it in here.
- *Comment:* It could be a question of whether it is more of a priority for the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation or ONMS, but we could put it under goal three.
- *What is the cross-pollination between ONMS and NMSF in two strategic plans?*
- *What is the difference between the key initiatives at the beginning of the plan and the key priorities under each goal?*
  - *Response:* The key initiatives originated as what we termed “big lifts” that spanned across all goals and the program in general to focus resources, whereas key priorities were more site-specific. The key initiatives are the most important items we want to accomplish; however, it might not be necessary to call them out here.
  - *Response:* Maybe it is just a nomenclature problem. You could put the initiatives after the goals and objectives and then define what they are instead.
  - *Response:* I feel that they could fit under the objectives.
  - *Response:* I agree.
  - *Response:* I would call them out typographically, like boldening the specific key priorities, and not create a separate page.
- *What is the reasoning behind “other ocean parks” in goal one?*

- *Response:* ONMS also includes the Marine Protected Areas Center. The Marine Protected Areas Center provides scientific and management expertise for and maintains a global inventory of marine protected areas, in addition to sanctuaries and monuments, as an information-sharing and capacity-building resource; hence, “other ocean parks” was selected to encompass the Marine Protected Area Center’s work. Overall, we have discussed terminology a lot.
- *What is a realistic expansion goal for five years?*
  - *Response:* It is hard to say exactly what will happen, but we know that we can continue to move forward on the current expansions and designations underway. It could be reasonable to guesstimate that we can finalize the two proposed expansions and two proposed designations; beyond that, it is difficult to predict. Part of this question, since it is a grassroots process, dictates what new nominations might be put forth; therefore, we do not want to be too prescriptive in the plan.
- *If you are not outsourcing for nominations, why would you have it as a goal?*
- *Once a nomination is on the inventory, how agency-driven is the process to move it to designation?*
  - *Response:* It is an internal, agency-driven process affected by a lot of factors, like funding, levels of support, and scientific information. The decision-process itself is not prescribed by law and can evolve based on the sites in the inventory. Moreover, it is harder to compare sites, especially apples and oranges, when there are only a few on the inventory. For instance, right now, we have two sites on the inventory, a Great Lakes maritime heritage site and a West Coast cultural heritage site.
- *How much bandwidth does your organization have to designate new sanctuaries?*
  - *Response:* I think we have enough capacity to complete the two proposed expansions and two proposed designations, unless new resources become available. One of the reasons we have been able to move ahead with the two proposed designations is state support in Maryland and Wisconsin.
  - *Response:* Maybe it is about reconceiving growth, as it is initiated by an external force (i.e., communities) rather than an internal goal.
- *Does the National Marine Sanctuaries Act call for the program to outsource and grow?*
  - *Response:* Before 2014, sanctuaries were created by our scientists first identifying nationally significant sites and resources and then we went to communities later. Today, we encourage and support the submission of nominations.
- *Comment:* If you are really pushing grassroots efforts, you could possibly put goal two as an objective under the community support goal in order to make sure that the goals reflect what ONMS is doing and not what communities or external partners are doing. If you support communities, it is visually important to put it under the right goal and not make it a standalone goal if it is not something you control.
- *Comment:* I think it should be encompassed within community support and the spirit of the NMSA. It is about the thrust of the growth.
- *If you added one more site to those currently proposed for designation, would the funds appropriated to ONMS increase over the next five years?*

- *Would an addition like that to the plan (i.e., a “stretch goal”) help ONMS obtain more resources?*
  - *Response:* We do not want the plan to limit us too much or turn off potential partners by only calling out two proposed designations or alienate proponents of the new Sanctuary Nomination Process but two years after its inception.
  - *Response:* Who is responsible for the growth? To me, growth is something totally new.
  - *Response:* Maybe it is about finishing or completing the current designations and growing the inventory or starting to designate “X” number more sanctuaries.
- *Do you find that the Sanctuary Nomination Process is well-understood by relevant communities?*
  - *Response* I think so. One of our regional directors’ jobs is to explain the process to interested communities; conversely, those that are marginally interested do not know as much about it. The Sanctuary Nomination Process can also be a recursive process where we provide communities with feedback on application denials.
- *What are your next steps with the plan?*
  - ONMS: Next, we will incorporate today’s comments and recent feedback from our advisory council chairs into the plan and finalize the key priorities. Our hope is that the plan will be ready to go out for informal public comment in January. As a point of contrast, advisory council chairs forced on how the plan addressed the system’s current management, whereas you all focused more on the system’s growth.
- *When I think of goal three’s intent to increase support, I think money. What types of support is goal three intended to capture?*
  - *Response:* I think it encompasses both financial and in-kind support, in addition to advocacy; however, through several iterations of the plan, the goal may have started as one but has become broader based on different comments received. We may need to refine goal three’s objectives and be more specific.
- *Comment:* You may want to try and keep every goal down to three objectives, because some objectives can be collapsible, and embolden the key objectives for an earlier timeline.
- *Comment:* I like the way the plan looks, it is colorful and engaging, especially with people in the pictures, which is important.
- *Comment:* I would have a specific link or mention to *Earth is Blue*.
- *Comment:* I would put people on the front cover.
- *Comment:* You want to communicate that people are a part of sanctuaries and not excluded from them right out front.

### **Getting Down to Business: The Draft National Marine Sanctuary System Business Plan**

Elizabeth Moore, Chief of Strategic Projects and Partnerships, ONMS walked participants through the draft National Marine Sanctuary System Business Plan. Moreover, she welcomed questions and comments at any point during her presentation. Ms. Moore started by redirecting everyone to the plan’s origin at a council meeting approximately one year prior. Since then, an intern from the University of Ontario’s sustainability program helped ONMS produce a first draft. Ms. Moore

continued by giving participants an overview of the plan, section-by-section. First, Ms. Moore asked the question underscoring the entire plan, “Why a business plan?” She responded that the plan should advance partnerships; facilitate new and increased sanctuary and monument uses; foster innovation; and leverage ONMS’s existing assets. In Fiscal Year 2016, ONMS’s budget totaled \$51 million. Ms. Moore said that, although personnel is ONMS’s largest cost, there are nonetheless increasing costs for operations, which includes facilities and vessels. Regardless, Ms. Moore noted that ONMS is appropriated less funding than comparable programs. For instance, the National Park Service’s dollars per acre managed is \$40.20 compared to \$0.44 for ONMS. Ms. Moore clarified that the numbers used to calculate the latter figure only include money appropriated by Congress (e.g., not visitors’ centers fees, etc.) and the total number of acres in the National Marine Sanctuary System to date (i.e., proposed boundary expansions were excluded).

*Comment:* I would note that on the plan in the figures.

Ms. Moore then talked about the plan’s external investment strategies. Strategies include the improved use of existing funding authorities under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and the potential pursuit of others through reauthorization (e.g., the National Park Service endowment funds, dollar-for-dollar matching, etc.). The plan also prioritizes exploring sanctuary communities as “gateways” to sites, like gateway communities to national parks (e.g., Savannah, Georgia for Gray’s Reef National Marine Sanctuary and Provincetown, Massachusetts for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary). For instance, Ms. Moore said that the system currently benefits from “default” gateway communities, like Alpena, Michigan for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary; however, the term “gateway communities” has not yet been used consistently. OMNS would also like to create additional recreational business certification programs and take already established local certification programs nationwide (e.g., BlueStar at Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary). Lastly, Ms. Moore stated that as a part of the plan, ONMS wants to enhance and expand its partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Currently, ONMS has about 500 said partnerships; going forward, ONMS would like to focus on its relationships with zoos and aquaria, in particular.

In regards to marketing, the plan strategizes how ONMS can sell its brand by telling its story through immersive and participatory experiences. Nevertheless, the plan poses other questions like whether ONMS should update its logo and branding, for example, with different colors.

- *Comment:* The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary would be a great angle to market pro bono and in-kind services.
- *Comment:* We also want to test the merchandising of branded gear (e.g., create “superfans” to show how sanctuaries belong to the nation and not the federal government).
- *Comment:* Be careful with merchandising because it can become a slippery slope regarding how and where materials are made, do they contribute to pollution, etc.
- *Comment:* We have already thought about some of those factors. Except for one product, our current test lines are all made in America and sustainable.
- *Comment:* You may want to wait until you are further along with your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning to set lifestyle brand choices.

## FINAL

- *Comment:* You should explore new audiences, like bird watchers. You could also consider building site-specific business plans off of the national plan.

Ms. Moore then rounded out this session discussing the plan's remaining sections. First, the plan evaluates ONMS's current assets, including: 321 staff members; 11,000 volunteers; 16 advisory councils; collaborative centers to cultivate expertise on finite subjects (e.g., climate change at Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary); media reach; partners; and ecosystem services. Ms. Moore specifically highlighted that ONMS considers its staff to be its greatest asset and that more work needs to be done to quantify the economic value of resource protection for ecosystem services. The final section contemplates what ONMS needs as a program going forward and how to focus limited funding and achieve divergent objectives in a national system. For instance, the plan looks at how to: address increased operation and management costs for facilities, and, in particular, the fact that not all sites have visitors' centers yet; purchase or otherwise acquire new boats because even though ONMS currently owns 46 different vessels, many are on their last legs; expand volunteerism; reach new partners and other audiences; and obtain an increase in the appropriation of discretionary funds beyond those fixed costs for personnel and operations.

- *Comment:* You could raise money for new boats by having corporate sponsors for on-the-water events.

Before she opened the floor for discussion, Ms. Moore concluded with the plan's next steps. Specifically, ONMS intends to complete a program review of the document, finalize it, develop an implementation strategy, and lastly, a companion document for operationalizing the strategy.

- *Is anything missing? What is most important to do first? What is the best and highest use of the plan? Would a more in-depth financial analysis be useful? We are also looking at how to dovetail this with the strategic plan, by aligning it with the key objectives.*
  - *Response:* The document is looking good, but it needs to clearly show what added value partners will get from working with and why they should work with ONMS.
  - *Response:* The plan could benefit from including macro and micro values for everything from visitors to ecosystem services.
  - *Response:* A lot of those details may be in the assets section, but they should also be put upfront in the plan.
  - *Comment:* Gateway communities seem like a priority to cut across a lot of the plan's objectives.
- *Would more financial information be useful? We want to balance enough information for context without bogging down readers.*
  - *Response:* I think it is enough.
  - *Response:* I like the benchmarks to show how ONMS compares to other federal agencies and can make a greater impact looking at what ONMS does with a lot less.

## Public Comment

FINAL

No comments were received from any members of the public.

### **Potential Administrative Actions**

Advisory council representatives were asked to consider adopting the meeting summary for the March 23, 2016, Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council webinar. No revisions or objections were noted. As such, the draft meeting summary will be updated to reflect that it is a final meeting summary.

Dr. Holyoke then announced two upcoming opportunities for council members. First, in November 2016, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation will host a field experience at Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Second, the next Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council meeting is scheduled to occur in Washington, D.C. in either the winter or spring of 2017.

### **Looking Ahead**

John Armor, Acting Director, ONMS concluded the meeting with a request for feedback from the council members in attendance. Specifically, Mr. Armor asked members, “Is the council worth your time?” He followed that question by responding that ONMS finds the Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council an important investment, and that he values each member’s time and attention. Lastly, Mr. Armor noted that the council, only three-years old, is still somewhat of an experiment; therefore, any comments or suggestions are that much more meaningful.

- *Response:* In the future, I would love to hear more from local stakeholders to understand their public-private partnership concerns (e.g., How can the tourism industry benefit and benefit from local economies that include sanctuaries?). I would also like to hear updates on past presenters, like Laurie and Wayne Nunez.