

# Implementing a Regional Structure for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

## Decision Document



November 2005



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# Implementing a Regional Structure For the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

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## *The Vision for the Regional Structure*

*A regional structure that better and more efficiently addresses resource management issues within an ecosystem framework, develops strategic partnerships, delivers services and program, and protects sanctuary resources at the local, regional, national and international level.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

For the past several years, the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) has taken small but calculated steps towards developing and implementing a regional structure. Several staff have been serving as regional coordinators to help identify and implement regional priorities, the NMSP is reviewing sanctuary Annual Operating Plans (AOPs) in regional settings to better integrate programs, and the formal office elevation package to create a new Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), which is in the final stages of the approval process (see Appendix I), contains a regional structure.

This document builds upon the successes of the last few years and reflects a more deliberate strategy to fully implement a regional structure for the NMSP. It describes why a new regional structure is needed, what changes will be made to the existing organizational structure, how this new structure will function, and when it will be implemented given alternative funding scenarios. While many aspects of regionalization have been decided (e.g., hierarchy, AOP approval and reporting), many details are expected to evolve on a region-by-region basis with the full participation of the Regional Superintendents, Sanctuary Superintendents, and national program staff.

### **2.0 Why is a Regional Structure Needed?**

Regions are not a new concept to the NMSP. Throughout the 1980s to the mid-1990s, the program operated under various regional organizational structures at the national program level. Due to the size of the program, including the number of sites and funding constraints at that time (see Table 2.1), a regional presence in the field was neither necessary nor practical. In the mid-1990s, the NMSP was separated from the National Estuarine Research Reserve Program and a “flattened” organizational structure was implemented to organize the program along functional branches.

#### **2.1 A Focus on Program Integration**

While this flattened structure met the program’s need at the time, it did not anticipate the growth the NMSP has experienced over the last decade. During this period, the program added new sites, increased its budget and staff, expanded community participation, and

began to address resource management issues on an ecosystem basis (see Table 2.1). As the NMSP has matured into a more proactive and strategic program, it has reached a point where it has outgrown its existing organizational structure. This existing structure does not easily promote consistent decision-making or widespread program integration, nor allow the overall NMSP as a system of protected areas to capitalize on potential regional and national opportunities. The purpose of regionalization is to create a structure that will maximize program integration among the sites, regions, national program and other NOAA programs and partners – at all levels. A regional structure will also dedicate program leadership and staff resources directly towards integrating programs and forging partnerships.

Table 2.1 Growth of the NMSP from 1994 to 2005.

| NMSP Program Area                         | 1994                  | 2005                                  |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Area managed                              | 18,170 sq. miles      | 150,436 sq. miles                     |
| Budget                                    | ~\$10 M*              | ~\$61 M*                              |
| # of Staff (FTE & contractors)            | ~180                  | ~300                                  |
| # Sites undergoing Management Plan Review | 0                     | 7                                     |
| # of Sanctuary Advisory Councils          | 4                     | 14 (chartered)                        |
| # of Facilities/Locations                 | 16                    | 26                                    |
| # of Foundations/Assns.                   | 2 (site only)         | 6 (5 site & 1 national)               |
| # of Volunteers                           | 725                   | ~4000                                 |
| Programmatic Focus                        | Site-Based Management | Integrated Ecosystem-Based Management |

\* includes Operations, Research and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition and Construction (PAC) funds.

## 2.2 Improved Coordination and Joint Programming Within NOAA and Other Agencies

A regional management structure will help fulfill a program requirement to more efficiently and consistently coordinate program activities with other federal and state agencies that already operate at a regional level (see Appendix II). ONMS regional leadership and staff will be able to represent the program at a level equal to their agency counterparts and ensure consistency both within the region and across the ONMS. This will enable a more consistent and coordinated approach to working with states that have more than one sanctuary (e.g., California). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the regional structure will allow the ONMS to be responsive to specific recommendations from the NOAA, National Ocean Service (NOS) and ONMS strategic plans, and the U.S. Oceans Commission and the Pew Oceans Commission reports which all call for greater regional integration and ecosystem-based management (see Appendix III).

The ONMS regional structure will:

- Maximize the program's intellectual and resource capital;
- Provide an improved basis for program integration with NOAA's evolving ecosystem-based management approach;
- Delegate authority to coordinate and integrate programs at a regional level;

- Efficiently integrate programs and assets among sites, regions and national program;
- Coordinate activities with other agencies at a regional and/or ecosystem level;
- Facilitate the process to identify, select and designate potential new sites;
- Pursue opportunities to develop partnerships at a regional level; and
- Increase the program's outreach efforts to regional stakeholders.

*In summary, a regional structure will provide a geographical basis for integrating various jurisdictions and authorities not located within the boundary of an existing sanctuary.*

The transition of the NMSP from a flat organizational structure to a more hierarchical structure presents a challenge. The crux of this challenge is to understand the different priorities between the sites, regions and national program and find the optimal blending that maximizes ONMS efficiency over time.

### **3.0 How Will the Program be Organized?**

Implementation of the new regional structure requires a change in the organizational and reporting structure of the NMSP. As mentioned, the primary change will be from a flat to a more hierarchical structure that includes regional offices.

#### **3.1 A Modified Organizational Structure**

Figure 3.1 depicts all functional components of the proposed Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Sanctuary Managers will be designated as Sanctuary Superintendents after regionalization is implemented; however, there are no substantive changes to the structure of individual sanctuaries and only minor changes to national programs. The most significant organizational change is the addition of regions.

#### **3.2 Regional Offices**

The regional structure establishes four regions: 1) Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes, which extends south to Cape Hatteras, NC; 2) Southeast, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean; 3) West Coast (including Alaska for the purposes of integration); and 4) Pacific Islands (Figure 3.1). The limits of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone in marine waters and the international boundary in Great Lakes waters comprise the regional boundaries.

Upon full implementation, each region will be staffed by four FTE positions: a Regional Superintendent, two Regional Coordinators and an Administrative Assistant (Figure 3.2). A general description of their duties is outlined in Table 3.1. Depending upon the availability of FTE positions, a Regional Superintendent may hire contractors to fill the regional positions until FTE positions become available. Likewise, the Regional Superintendent may hire contracted staff to implement specific regional priorities. Each region will be allocated resources and authorities to allow it to successfully address priority issues and integrate programs within and between regions.

Regional Superintendents will report to the Deputy Director for Programs of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. They will be the first-line supervisors for all regional staff and Sanctuary Superintendents in that region. Regional Superintendents will develop regional Annual Operating Plans (with input from the Sanctuary Superintendents), review and submit site AOPs to the Director for approval, coordinate among regional partners and agencies, and obtain or disperse assets and resources to or from other regions and national programs. Once fully implemented, regional resources will include staff, budgets (used to fund priority regional needs or contractors as necessary) and access to other national program resources.

Figure 3.1 ONMS Reporting Structure Following Office Elevation and Regionalization

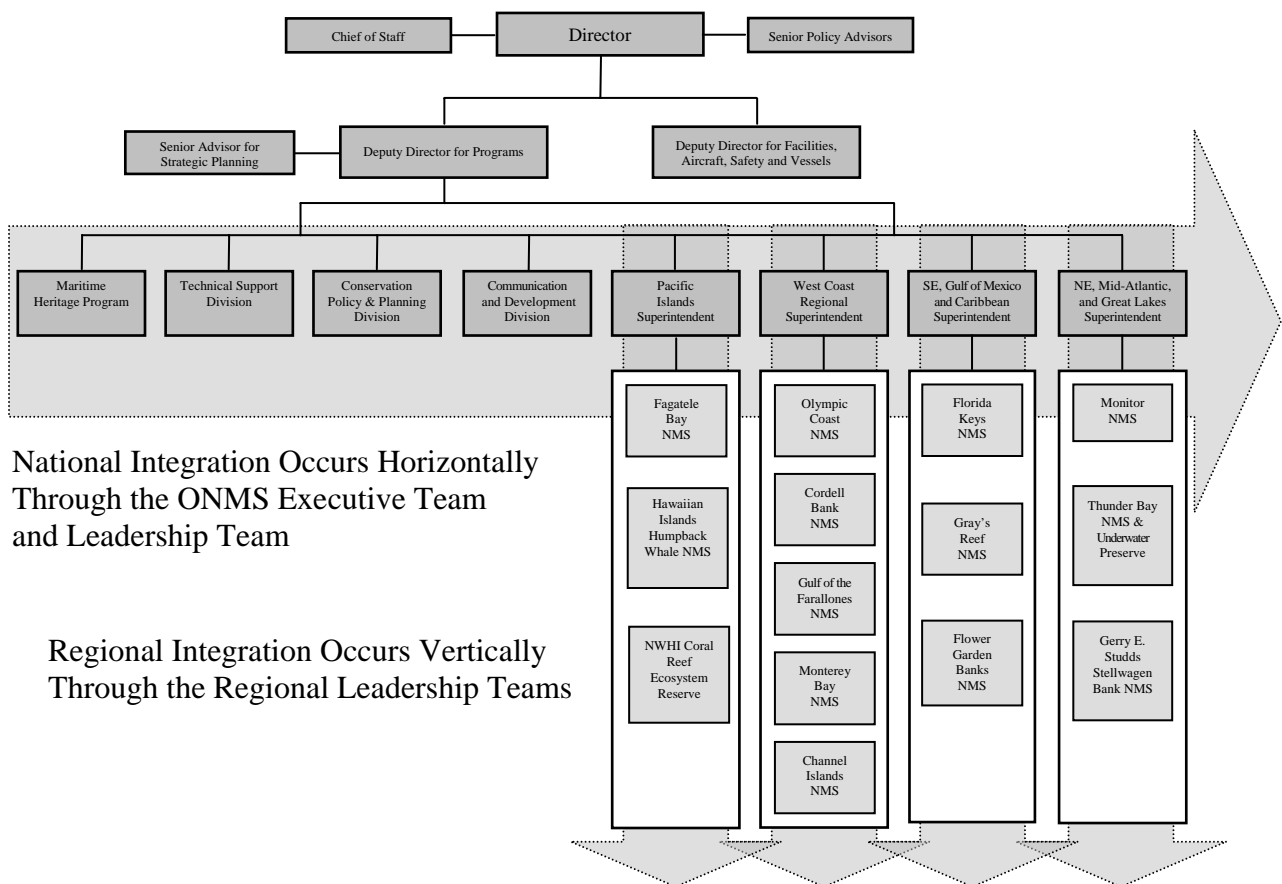


Figure 3.2 Structure of a Fully Implemented ONMS Region

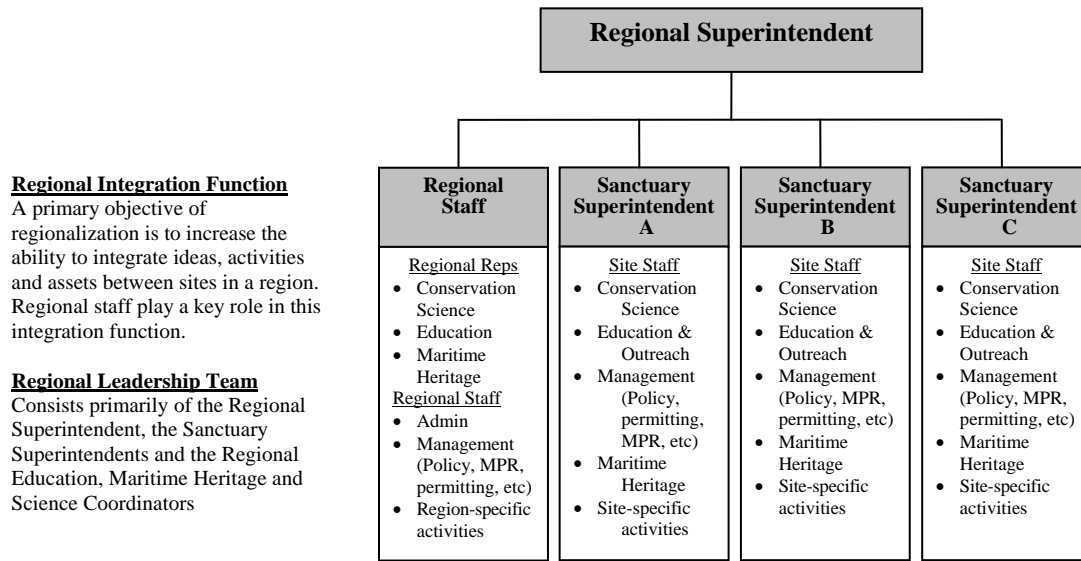


Table 3.1 Summary of Core Responsibilities for Regional Staff

| Title                       | Grade    | Core Responsibilities  |
|-----------------------------|----------|--|
| Regional Superintendent     | GS-15    | Serves as senior ONMS official in region and is responsible for coordinating with other regional entities and regional Congressional representatives. Facilitates new site designation in region. Integrates planning and budget activities among the site, regions and national programs. Develops regional AOP, reviews and submits site AOPs to the Deputy Director for Programs for approval, and reviews national program AOPs. |
| Senior Regional Coordinator | GS-13/14 | The Regional Superintendent will determine the scope of work for this position, in consultation with the site superintendents. The regional coordinators will assist the Regional Superintendent with the implementation of regional strategies and activities.  |
| Regional Coordinator        | GS-12/14 | Same description as senior regional coordinator.   |
| Administrative Assistant    | ~GS-6/7  | Handles broad array of administrative functions, such as tracking regional budget, supporting development of regional budget and AOP, processing travel orders and vouchers, and serving as time-keeper.   |
| Regional Contractors        | Contract | Regions may hire contractors to implement regional priorities.   |

This streamlined staffing structure will ensure that regional offices do not duplicate site or national programs activities, but increase overall program coordination and integration, evolve an ecosystem-based management direction to the ONMS and streamline decision-

making. Two points of clarification merit mention. First, depending on the region, the exact title and/or responsibilities of Regional Coordinators may vary. Second, each region will determine how to best use their fiscal resources, including whether or not to hire specific contract staff to support regional priorities.

### **3.3 National Divisions and Programs**

There will be minor changes to the organizational structure of national programs in the proposed Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (Figure 3.1). The existing branches will become divisions and the branch chiefs will become division chiefs. The division chiefs will report to the Deputy Director for Programs of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. The Conservation, Policy and Planning Branch and the Communications and Development branch will retain their current titles, while the National Programs Branch will become the Technical Services Division. Additionally, the recently created Maritime Heritage Program will become a division-level entity. Most national program staff with duty stations outside of Silver Spring, MD will continue to function in their current capacities. However, the Regional Superintendents will become second line supervisors for many of these personnel (i.e., for individuals conducting tasks primarily within a region during a rating period). This will allow the Regional Superintendent to participate in the work-plan development and evaluation of regionally-based national program staff.

In addition to the changes mentioned above, the newly created Strategic Planning and Program Integration Team (Figure 3.3) serves as the facilitator of change for regional implementation and program integration. The Senior Advisor for Strategic Planning and Program Integration reports to the Deputy Director for Programs (Figure 3.1) and will lead a team comprised of representatives from each Division, Region and Cross-cutting Program, as well as from the various entities within the Director's Office. The representatives will dedicate a portion of their time (10 – 20%) to the Strategic Planning and Program Integration Team. Representatives will continue to report to their original supervisor. Selection of representatives is performed by the supervisors, the Senior Advisor for Strategic Planning and Program Integration, the Deputy Director for Programs and the Director.

### **3.4 Sanctuary Sites**

There will be little change to the organizational structure of the sites, except that Sanctuary Superintendents will report to a Regional Superintendent as their first line supervisor instead of the Director of the NMSP. Although each site will vary organizationally to some degree due to differences in size, resources and designation requirements, a model site structure is shown below (Figure 3.4). Where appropriate, all sites will move toward this organizational structure.



Figure 3.3 ONMS Strategic Planning and Program Integration Team Representatives

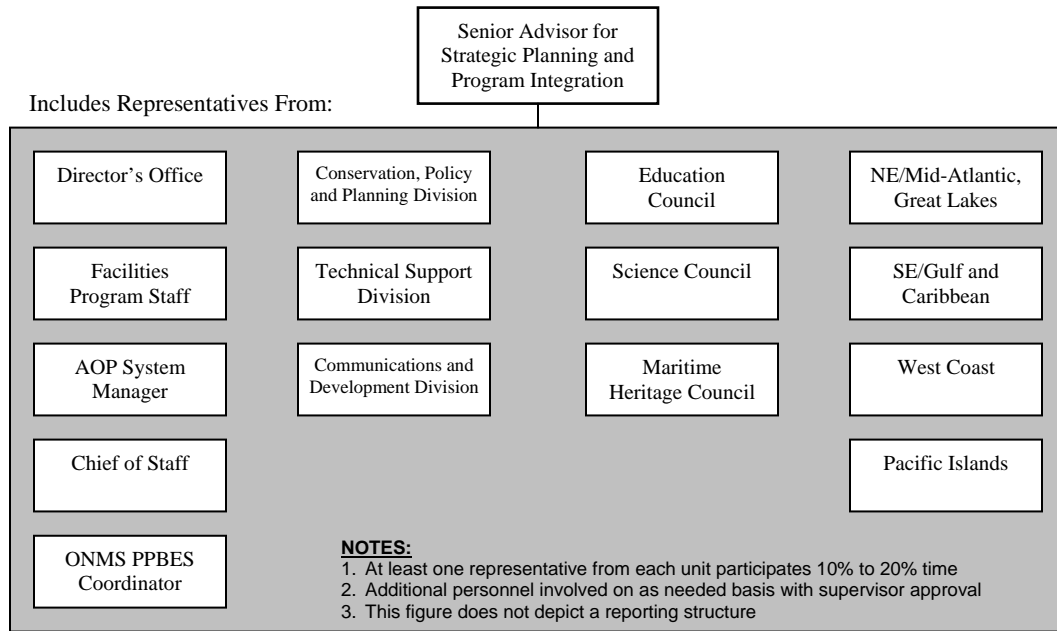
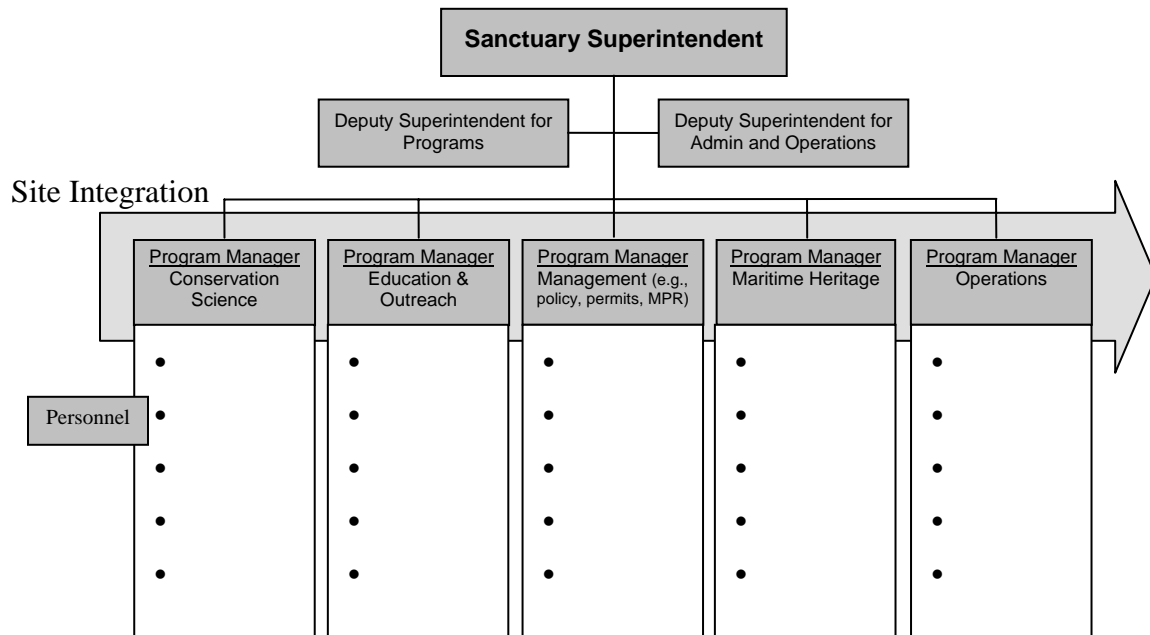


Figure 3.4 Model ONMS Site Structure



## **4.0 How Will the Program Function?**

This section provides a general description of how the ONMS will function and operate within the regional management structure. In particular, it describes the priorities of staff and the distribution of resources at sites, regions, and national programs. The “Areas of Responsibility” table in Appendix IV provides a detailed description of specific areas of responsibility between the program levels. It should be noted that much more detailed protocols are under development that will be organized into a Program Protocols Manual.

Though much thought has gone into planning how the new structure would ideally function, it is recognized that many details of how regionalization will actually work will evolve and be refined over time as site, regional, and national program staff begin to address issues within this new program structure.

### **4.1 Site Priorities and Resources**

The Sanctuary Superintendent and staff will continue to focus primarily on those management issues and activities that directly pertain to the conservation and protection of the sanctuary’s resources. While the scope of issues and solutions affecting the management of the site may extend beyond the site’s physical boundaries, the primary responsibility of the site will remain focused on achieving its specific goals and objectives. Largely, this will be accomplished through the development of partnerships to help implement the site’s management plan and Annual Operating Plan. The site staff will continue to oversee their Sanctuary Advisory Councils, implement resource protection, research and education programs, enhance stewardship and local awareness about the sanctuary, and serve as the liaison with local media and Congressional district offices. It is important that Sanctuary Superintendents and staff maintain “ownership” of site issues, challenges, opportunities, and successes while serving their constituents. Sanctuary Superintendents and staff will continue to be involved in other regional or national priority activities as appropriate.

Each Sanctuary Superintendent will continue to be responsible for his or her staff, budget, facilities and assets. Site resources will continue to be allocated through the Annual Operating Plan process, which will now require input and evaluation from the Regional Superintendent and staff. In addition to their site-specific resources, Sanctuary Superintendents will be able to request additional resources to address site needs from the region and/or through the region from national programs, in terms of staff, technical support, equipment or funding.

### **4.2 Regional Priorities and Resources**

Obviously, the most significant organizational change is the creation of the four regions, with dedicated staff to address regional priorities and issues. For the first time in the program’s history, regional superintendents and staff will have “ownership” over a different set of issues and on a different scale than either the sites or the national program divisions (see Appendix IV). The regional staff will be based in the region and will dedicate their efforts towards addressing priority regional issues and capitalizing on regional opportunities and

partnerships. They will help provide a coordinated and unified voice with constituents, agencies and partners as described above (Section 3.2).

The success of the regional structure depends on the regions having a common set of responsibilities, but also having the flexibility to address the most pressing issues in their region. The priorities of each region will therefore vary. For example, at any given time, one region may concentrate on partnership-building, while another region may focus on new site development, and another on interagency coordination.

#### **4.3 National Program Priorities and Resources**

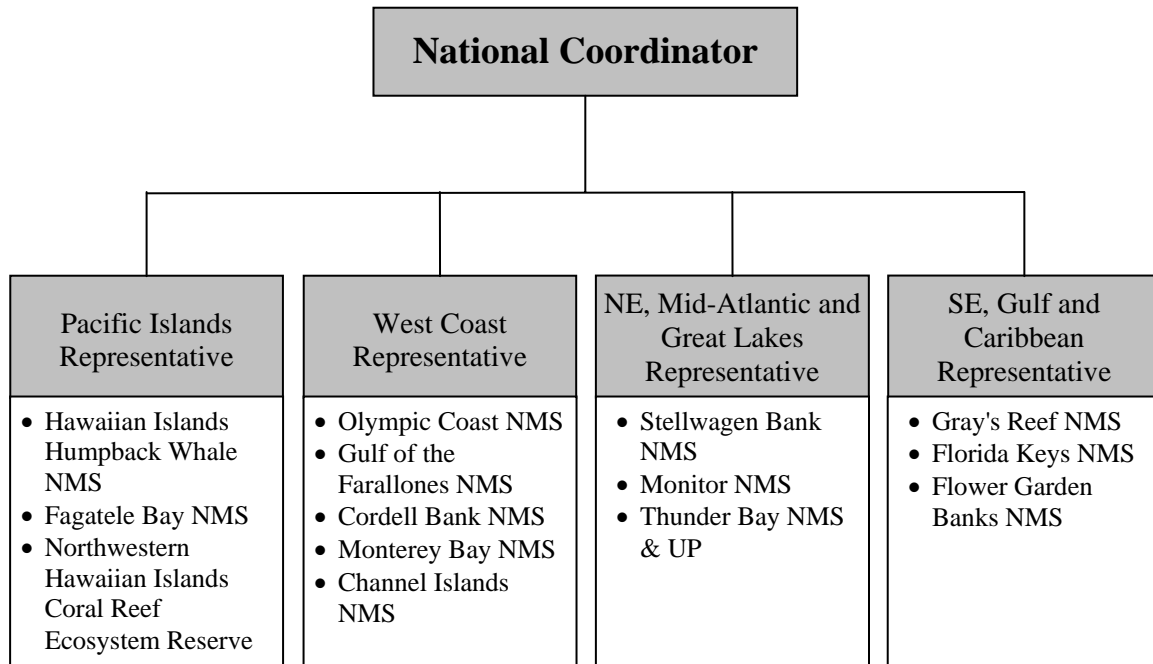
The functions and responsibilities of national program divisions will largely remain the same. National program staff will continue to focus on issues, constituents and partnerships at the national level and provide technical assistance, guidelines, protocols, and support to individual sites and regions as overall program priorities dictate. More specifically, the divisions fulfill these responsibilities through managing implementation of national program priorities, overseeing the ONMS budget, managing the overall AOP process, by leading cross-cutting programs such as research, education, maritime heritage and management plan review, and serving as the nexus to coordinate legislative and media outreach efforts. However, as the regional management structure evolves, periodic reviews of the balance of functions across sites, regions and national program divisions will be conducted to ensure that maximum overall efficiency and effectiveness is achieved.

#### **4.4 National Programs and Assets: A Mix of Shared Responsibilities**

Many functions and activities in the NMSP cannot be cleanly placed in the site, region, or national program “boxes.” For example, a sanctuary management issue may first arise as a site-specific concern, but has implications beyond the site. Similarly, the development of policies in response to site issues that have the potential to affect more than one site must involve the sites, regions and national program. Depending on the nature and context of the issue, the site, region or national program may be the most appropriate to lead in framing the issue, organizing meetings, and writing decision documents.

As mentioned above, the NMSP has cross-cutting programs for education, research and maritime heritage (Section 4.3). Each of these cross-cutting programs has national program staff to facilitate and coordinate efforts across the program and to integrate staff and activities between the sites and headquarters (e.g., annual meetings, conference calls, AOP review). This type of integration, which has been very successful in building cohesive programs, will be expanded upon and modified to include explicit regional participation. Cross-cutting advisory committees have been formed to include regional staff on a rotational basis (Figure 4.1). The participation of regional staff will enhance and integrate activities within and between cross-cutting programs.

Figure 4.1 ONMS “Cross-Cut” Advisory Committee Structure



**NOTES:**

1. Three Committees have been established: Education, Conservation Science and Maritime Heritage
2. A regional representative is a site coordinator/program manager from a region assigned a two (2) year term
3. The regional representative supports the regional superintendent

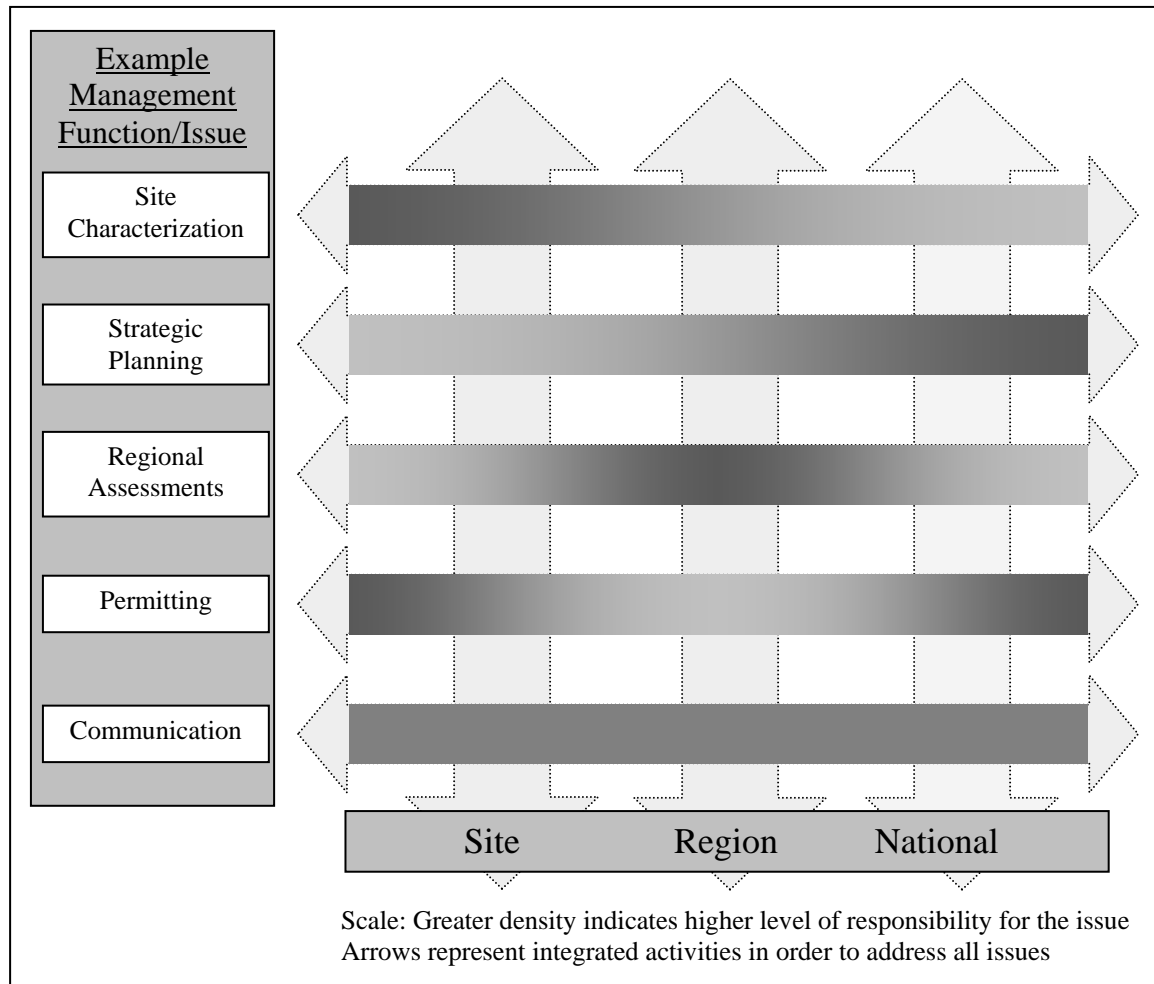
In addition to staff located at ONMS headquarters, some personnel reporting to national program divisions (FTE or contractors) are located in the field. National program personnel located in the field will remain under headquarters supervision, working on national programs and activities. As mentioned above, many of these individuals will have Regional Superintendents as their second-line supervisors, thereby ensuring an explicit integration of planning and performance review. The Regional Superintendent may request to utilize these national program staff on a project or task-specific basis to address regional concerns and/or augment high-priority site activities. The Regional Superintendents will be the points-of-contact for regions or sites to request access to field-based national program personnel through the AOP process.

#### 4.5 Focus of Responsibilities

Although the “Areas of Responsibilities” table (Appendix IV) defines the aspects of various activities that sites, regions and national programs will focus on, in reality there is considerable overlap. Figure 4.2 depicts the concept that for each management function or issue there is a range of involvement by different levels within the ONMS. For example, for activities involving site characterization, the site has the major responsibility and headquarters has the least. Conversely, headquarters has the lead role in strategic planning, with the sites and regions participating as appropriate. Within each operating unit across all

issues (e.g., sanctuary, region, division) and across each issue, the key to success is the maximized integration of ideas, resources and activities.

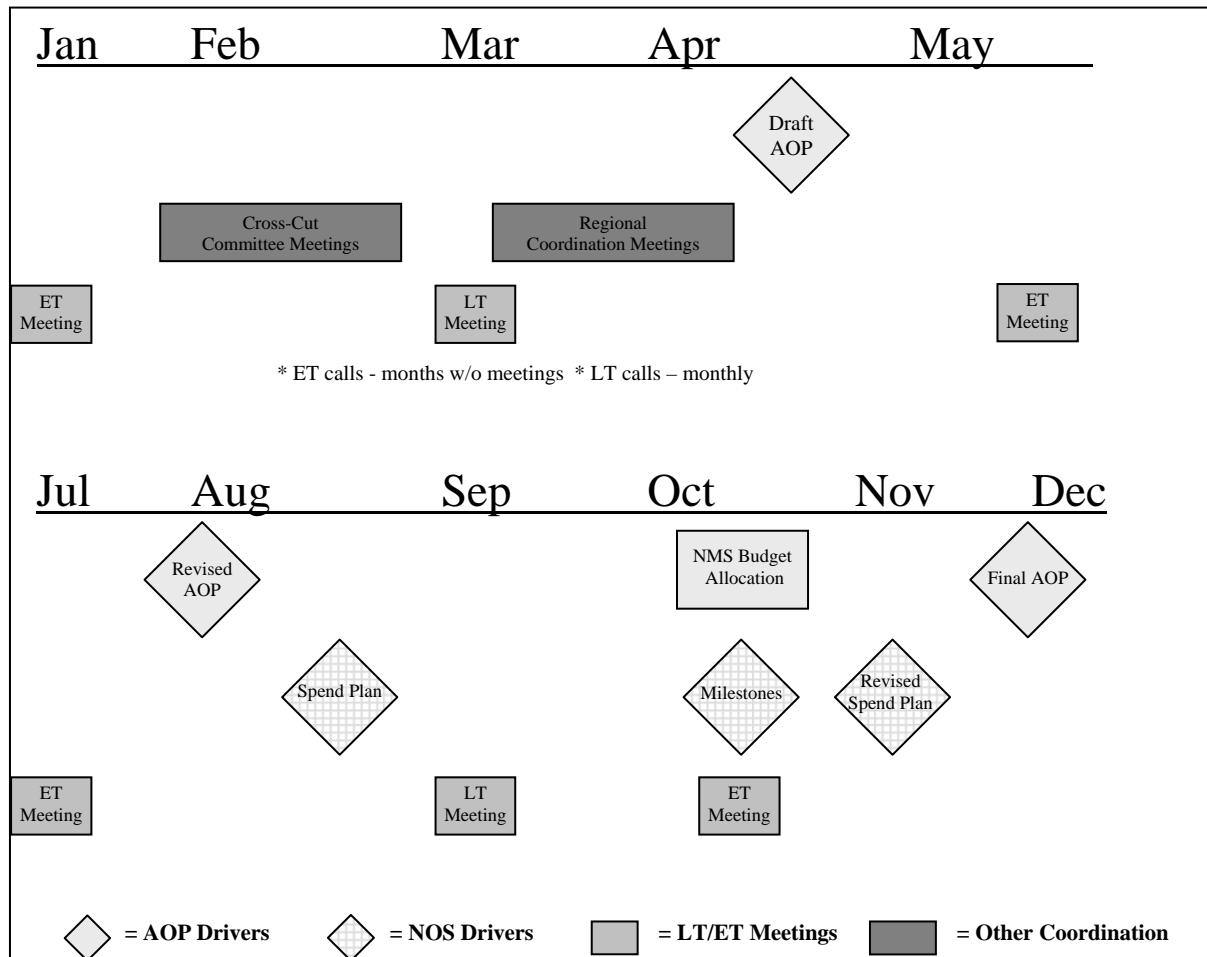
Figure 4.2 Relative level of responsibility for an issue



## Section 4.6 Expanding the Leadership Circle

The regional management structure adds an important dimension to the existing NMSP Leadership Team. The management and decision making processes of the program has been evolved to incorporate the Regional Superintendents into a new “Executive Team” to maximize leadership assets within the program. The **Executive Team (ET)** consists of the Director of the ONMS, Deputy Directors, Senior Policy Advisors, Chief of Staff, Regional Superintendents, Division Chiefs and Cross-cutting Program National Coordinators. The **Leadership Team (LT)** consists of the Executive Team and the Sanctuary Superintendents. Figure 4.3 presents a general calendar of program drivers and requirements and the proposed meeting schedule for how these teams operate throughout an annual cycle.

Figure 4.3 Calendar of Executive and Leadership Team Activities



## 5.0 Key Protocols for ONMS Operations

Operating in a regional management structure requires a shift away from the status quo. Quite simply, the program cannot continue to operate in the same way or this new approach to integration will not be effective or efficient. The protocols described below have been developed from existing processes, and provide guidance and procedures to move into the new management structure. These protocols will evolve over time and be supplemented with additional issue-specific guidance as it is developed. The first step toward implementation will be to fully examine these, and other, protocols with site, region, and national program staff and test them within each region. All ONMS staff at all levels, both FTEs and contractors, must exercise common sense in their approach to developing and implementing the protocols. Above all, effective communication between all ONMS staff is critical, especially during transition.

## **5.1 The Annual Operating Plan (AOP) Process**

The program-wide development of Annual Operating Plans (AOPs) is a cornerstone of success for the NMSP. This process has evolved to reflect the changing NOAA budget formulation requirements, and it serves as the basis for the NMSP's budgeting, resource allocation, and reporting decisions. While the AOP process has been a successful planning and operational tool for the NMSP, the regional structure provides an opportunity for sites, regions and national programs to better coordinate their activities during the planning process. There will be a clearer process for requesting staff resources and assets during the fiscal year. In short, the AOP process will become a more valuable tool for the ONMS to plan projects and allocate staff resources among the sites, regions, national program divisions and cross-cutting programs (see Appendix V for a flow chart of the AOP process).

The Executive Team (ET) will have a key integrating function in AOP development and implementation. The ET has the responsibility to ensure that sites, regions, national programs and cross-cutting programs coordinate their activities. For each AOP planning cycle, the Executive Team will develop the annual budget guidance for the coming fiscal year based on the results of the January ET meeting and recommendations from the regions and cross-cutting programs. Following the budget guidance (Winter/Spring), ET members will facilitate the exchange of information required to coordinate activities via conference calls and regional LT meetings. After the final annual budget is received from NOAA (Fall/Winter), the ET will meet to provide budget allocation recommendations to the Director.

As is the case now, sites will have considerable discretion in preparing and implementing their AOPs. The two major differences in the AOP process (see Table 6.1) are that: (1) sites and regions will meet before the AOP is drafted to identify emerging issues, prioritize projects and identify resource requirements, and (2) sites will submit their draft and final AOPs to the Regional Superintendent for review and recommendation to the Director. The most important role of the regional review is to identify resources to share, evaluate opportunities for partnerships, and ensure that complete and consistent AOPs are submitted to headquarters for approval. This will provide a level of interaction, priority setting and review not currently undertaken. It will also ensure that regional and national program priorities and milestones are addressed, to the extent possible, within site AOPs.

The Regional Superintendents will prepare AOPs that identify explicit regional priorities and activities to support them including resource requirements. These AOPs are developed in coordination with Sanctuary Superintendents and national programs and submitted to the Director for approval. The national programs division AOPs (including the cross-cutting programs) will describe national program activities and will include an allocation of staff time dedicated to site and regional activities.

## **5.2 Allocation of Program Assets**

Program assets, personnel, facilities and fiscal resources exist at sites, regions and headquarters. The AOP process is the mechanism used to allocate these assets according to

program priorities and requirements. Within the process, sites, regions and national program divisions can also make specific requests for additional resources or adjustments as the year proceeds. Not all program requirements can be accurately forecasted or anticipated; however, all these requests must be considered in terms of their impacts on AOPs.

### **5.3 Decision-making**

Currently, the Sanctuary Superintendents and/or staff make most sanctuary-specific resource management decisions at the site level (e.g., permit applications). As the program matures, however, certain decisions or policies may need to be elevated to the region or national program level to ensure consistent policies and decisions are made across regions. Regional Superintendents will help ensure the resolution of such issues in a more efficient and consistent manner. The criteria or threshold for elevation to headquarters will depend upon on the specific issue: its complexity, whether it may affect other sites and/or regions, and how much controversy it may generate. Further discussions are needed among the Leadership Team to develop specific criteria for elevating decisions from a site to a region and from a region to the national program level. However, in the interim, a “yes” to any of the following would provide a trigger for Sanctuary Superintendents to discuss the issue with the Regional Superintendent:

- Has implications for other sites;
- Modifies or alters the interpretation of an existing sanctuary policy;
- Results in the creation of a new sanctuary policy;
- Involves other parts of NOAA or other federal and state agencies; or
- Has the potential to spark controversy with the public, user groups, media, or congressional staff.

Similarly, Regional Superintendents will elevate issues and opportunities to the National Program utilizing similar criteria.

### **5.4 Developing and Refining Protocols**

Developing protocols for how the ONMS will operate is a critical next step for the program. The protocols will provide a road map for successful operation of the regional management structure and ensure clear lines of responsibility between national, regional and site operations. Sections 5.1 to 5.3 serve as examples of protocols that have already been developed, but may need to be refined. Additional protocols are currently under development for review by the sites, regions, and national programs.



## 6.0 Implementation of the Regional Structure

While the office elevation package is still in the final stages of the approval process, the NMSP will continue to move toward a regional structure. Nevertheless, when the final elevation decision is made, it will take time to fully implement the new management structure. Full implementation is contingent on several considerations:

- **Formal authorization of office-level elevation.** Although many regional activities have begun (see Section 6.1), the official reporting structure of the NMSP will remain as it is until office elevation is formally authorized (see Appendix I). Only after office-level elevation has been authorized will the new Office of National Marine Sanctuaries be capable of fully implementing its regional plan.
- **Available funding.** Regional implementation is dependent on available funding. Currently, the regions have modest budgets and National Program Priority funds may be used to further the implementation process, if necessary. It is important to note that, assuming level funding, neither sites nor national program divisions will endure a budget decrease to implement regionalization. However, since regional implementation is a high priority, future increases in program funding will be prioritized accordingly.
- **Availability of FTEs.** In order to fully staff the regions as described, the ONMS will need to obtain additional FTEs. Some relief in this area is expected following office-level elevation. Four new FTEs will be used to create the Regional Superintendent positions. Six to ten FTEs will be used to fill one Regional Coordinator position per region and other FTE needs of highest priority in the program. Overall priorities will be decided based on the ongoing program-wide labor analysis. Until FTEs are available for the regional coordinator positions, Regional Superintendents will have the flexibility to fill those positions with contract labor.

### 6.1 A Phased Approach

Implementation of the regional management structure must be a phased process (see Table 6.1). Until January 17, 2005, the NMSP was in Phase I of regional implementation. This phase included regional activities such as intra- and inter-regional integration efforts, the early phases of large-scale assessment projects and the establishment of regional priorities. Phase II began at the conclusion of the January 2005 Leadership Team meeting. At that time, the new Executive Team and Leadership Team activities began (see Table 4.1) and the expanded AOP planning and review process were initiated. Phase III began on October 15, 2005. At that time, acting regional superintendents began working full-time on regional development and, where applicable, site superintendent positions were filled by acting site superintendents.

Many of the changes described in this document regarding personnel, supervision, and formal AOP approval and reporting will begin with formal authorization of office-level elevation of the NMSP to the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (see Appendix I).

Consequently, the timing of office elevation, funding (see Table 6.2) and the availability of FTEs will determine the pace of regional implementation.

Table 6.2 provides **approximate estimates** of the costs to implement a regional management structure based upon a four FTE staff model. In reality, each region will have different costs and implementation will occur at different rates depending upon specific regional issues and program priorities. The table does, however, provide a reasonable approximation of the resource requirements for phased implementation.

Table 6.1 Phases of Implementation

| Phase      | Trigger  | Regional Personnel   |
|------------|--|--|
| <b>I</b>   | Prior to Jan 17, 2005  | Acting Regional Superintendents are dual-hatted as sanctuary managers. Regions may or may not have staff.  |
| <b>II</b>  | Jan 17 – Oct 14, 2005  | ET and LT activities schedule begins (see Table 4.1)   |
| <b>III</b> | Began October 15, 2005   | Acting Regional Superintendents work full-time in regional role. Sanctuary Superintendent duties are filled by Acting Superintendents. At least one regional staff is present. |
| <b>IV</b>  | FTEs available for Regional Superintendent positions                     | Regional Superintendent FTEs are competed and hired. Core regional positions are fully staffed by FTEs (as available) or contract labor during this phase.                     |
| <b>V</b>   | Regions have all necessary FTEs and funds to conduct regional activities | All core regional FTE positions are competed and hired. Contract labor to conduct activities deemed regional priorities are hired.   |

Table 6.2 Estimated Costs of Regional Implementation Needs by Phases

| Needs   | Phase I                        |     | Phase II                                 |     | Phase III                                 |     | Phase IV                         |       | Phase V                                   |       |
|---|--------------------------------|-----|--|-----|---|-----|----------------------------------|-------|---|-------|
|   | Assets                         | \$K | Assets                                   | \$K | Assets                                    | \$K | Assets                           | \$K   | Assets                                    | \$K   |
| <b>Personnel</b>  | 1                              | 150 | 1  | 150 | 2   | 300 | 3                                | 450   | 4   | 600   |
| <b>Admin &amp; Operations (travel, vehicles, utilities, rent, etc.)</b> | Not every region has an office | 15  | Increased travel costs for ET activities | 45  | Full-time activities begin in all regions | 75  | Regional activities “ramping up” | 100   | All regions established and fully staffed | 120   |
| <b>Contract Staff</b>   | 0                              | 0   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 100 | 1.5                              | 150   | 2   | 200   |
| <b>Project Funds</b>  | Support cross-cut site efforts | 155 | Support cross-cut site efforts           | 155 | Support site and regional needs           | 250 | Implement regional projects      | 450   | Implement regional projects               | 700   |
| <b>Regional Subtotal</b>  |                                | 320 |  | 350 |   | 725 |                                  | 1,150 |   | 1,620 |
| <b>Total for 4 regions</b>  | <b>\$1,280K</b>                |     | <b>\$1,400K</b>                          |     | <b>\$2,900K</b>                           |     | <b>\$4,600K</b>                  |       | <b>\$6,480K</b>                           |       |

## **6.2 Evaluation of the Regional Structure**

Although the NMSP has been evolving into a regional structure, a period of growth and adaptation will be required. As stated previously sites, regions, and national programs will be involved in drafting new procedures and protocols detailing how the restructured ONMS will operate. Periodic and systematic review of the regional structure by the ONMS as a whole will be essential to take advantage of opportunities to improve overall program integration, and maximize program effectiveness in ecosystem-based partnership structure.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

As the use of marine protected areas in natural resources conservation and management continues to increase, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries will become more prominent as the national leader in the application and management of this emerging management tool. In that context, the implementation of a regional structure for the ONMS takes on even greater need and importance. As mentioned above, implementation of a regional management structure enables the ONMS to:

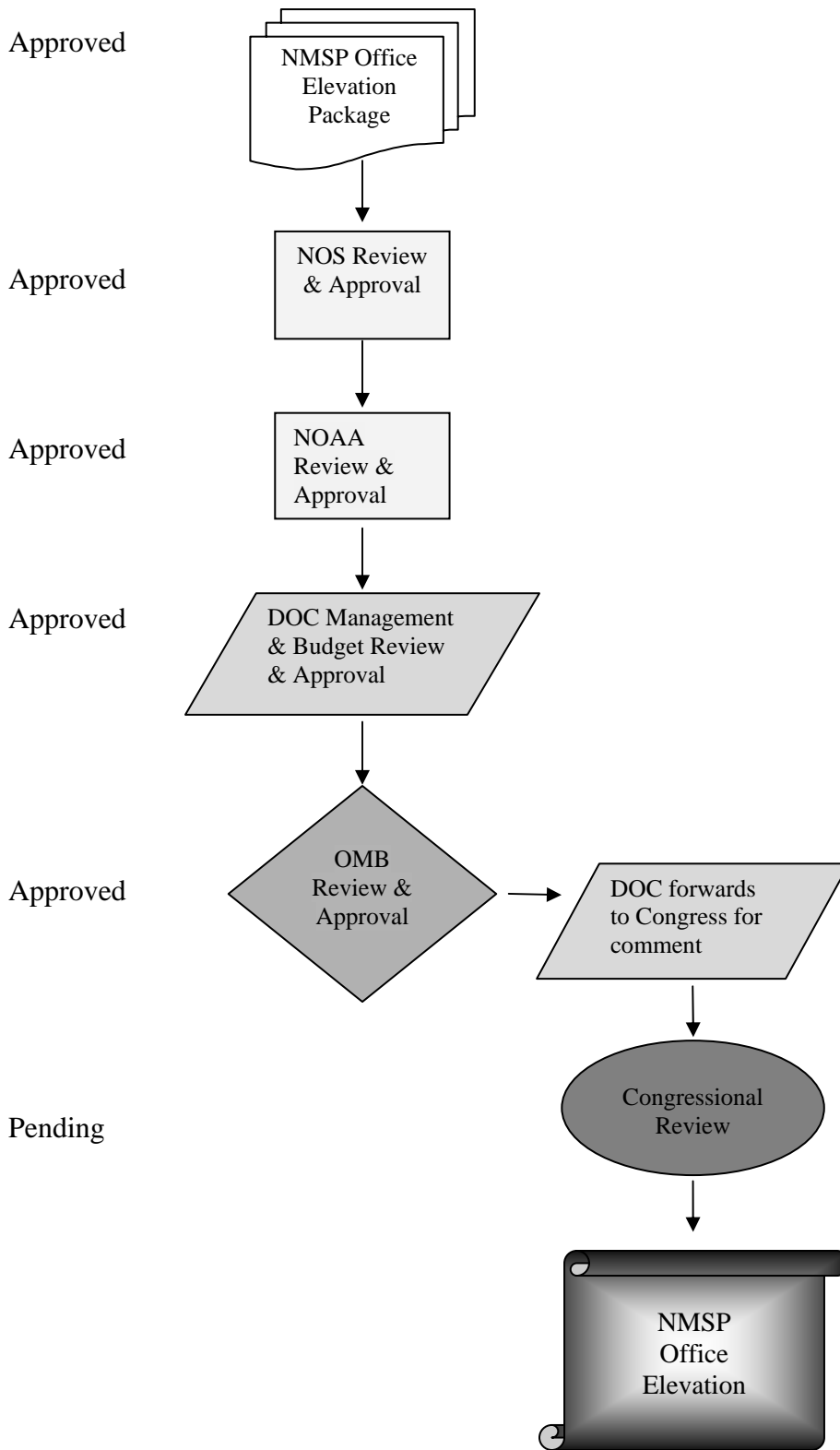
- Maximize the program's intellectual and resource capital;
- Provide an improved basis for program integration with NOAA's evolving ecosystem-based management approach;
- Delegate authority to coordinate and integrate programs at a regional level;
- Efficiently integrate programs and assets among sites, regions and national programs;
- Coordinate activities with other agencies at a regional and/or ecosystem level;
- Facilitate the process to identify, select and designate potential new sites;
- Pursue opportunities to develop partnerships at a regional level; and
- Increase the program's outreach efforts to regional stakeholders.

Finally, implementation of this regional management structure enables the ONMS to help meet the challenges for the future of marine science, conservation and management presented by the U.S. Oceans Commission, Pew Oceans Commission, and the President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan.

## **APPENDICES**

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## Appendix I. NMSP Office Elevation Approval Process



## Appendix II. Regional Comparison of the ONMS to other Federal Entities

| FEDERAL ENTITIES REGIONAL JURISDICTIONS |           |                    |                 |                                 |                              |               |                                  |              |             |
|---|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| ONMS Regions                            | NMS Sites | MMS Regions        | NMFS Regions    | FMC Regions                     | EPA Regions                  | NPS Regions   | FWS Regions                      | USGS Regions | NWS Regions |
| Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes | TBNMS&UP  | N/A                | Northeast       | N/A                             | Region 5                     | Mid-West      | Region 3: Great Lakes-Big Rivers | Eastern      | Central     |
|   | SBNMS     | Atlantic OCS       |                 | New England                     | Region 1: Northeast          | Northeast     | Region 5: Northeast              |              | Eastern     |
|   | MNMS      |                    |                 | Mid-Atlantic                    | Region 4: Southeast          | Southeast     | Region 4: Southeast              |              |             |
| Southeast, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean | GRNMS     | Atlantic OCS       | Southeast       | South Atlantic                  | Region 4: Southeast          | Southeast     | Region 4: Southeast              | Eastern      | Southern    |
|   | FKNMS     | Gulf of Mexico OCS |                 | South Atlantic & Gulf of Mexico |                              |               |                                  |              |             |
|   | FGBNMS    |                    |                 | Gulf of Mexico                  | Region 6: South Central      | Intermountain | Region 3: Southwest              | Central      |             |
| West Coast                              | CINMS     | Pacific OCS        | Southwest       | Pacific                         | Region 9: Pacific Southwest  | Pacific West  | Region 1: Pacific                | Pacific      | Western     |
|   | MBNMS     |                    |                 |                                 |                              |               |                                  |              |             |
|   | GFNMS     |                    |                 |                                 |                              |               |                                  |              |             |
|   | CBNMS     |                    |                 |                                 |                              |               |                                  |              |             |
|   | OCNMS     |                    | Northwest       |                                 | Region 10: Pacific Northwest |               |                                  |              |             |
| Pacific Islands                         | FBNMS     | Pacific OCS        | Pacific Islands | Western Pacific                 | Region 9: Pacific Southwest  | Pacific West  | Region 1: Pacific                | Pacific      | Pacific     |
|   | HIHWNMS   |                    |                 |                                 |                              |               |                                  |              |             |
|   | NWHICRER  |                    |                 |                                 |                              |               |                                  |              |             |

### Abbreviations

National Marine Sanctuary System: TBNMS&UP, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve; SBNMS, Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary; MNMS, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary; GRNMS, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary; FKNMS, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; FGBNMS, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary; CINMS, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary; MBNMS, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; GFNMS, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary; CBNMS, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary; OCNMS, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary; FBNMS, Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary; HIHWNMS, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary; NWHICRER, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

### Federal Entities:

MMS, Minerals Management Service; NMFS, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service; FMC, Fisheries Management Councils; EPA, US Environmental Protection Agency; FWS, United States Fish and Wildlife Service; USGS, United States Geological Survey; NWS, NOAA National Weather Service

### **Appendix III. Selected Language from Commissioned Reports and Strategic Plans.**

The following appendix contains specific excerpts from various Presidential Executive Orders, Commission Reports, and strategic plans, which all provide a clear connection to the need for more integrated regional ecosystem-based management. The ONMS regional management structure was developed, in part, to be responsive to these policies, plans and recommendations.

#### **U.S. Ocean Action Plan. The Bush Administration's Response to the U.S. Ocean Commission on Policy. 12/17/04**

##### **Establish a New Cabinet Level Committee on Ocean Policy**

The Committee on Ocean Policy will advise the President and, as appropriate, agency heads on the establishment or implementation of policies concerning certain ocean-related matters.

##### **Support a Regional Partnership in the Gulf of Mexico.**

The five Gulf of Mexico States have taken the lead in identifying key priorities for the Gulf of Mexico region. Among these priorities is a particular emphasis on public health, specifically on water quality for shellfish beds and beaches in the Gulf of Mexico and the use of a regional ocean observing system to provide a real-time alert system for beach and shellfish bed closings.

##### **Support Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Interagency Collaboration.**

The Task Force, led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, brings together ten Agency and Cabinet-level departments to provide strategic direction on Federal Great Lakes policies, priorities, and programs.

##### **Coordinate and Better Integrate the Existing Network of Marine Managed Areas.**

The Administration proposes to further integrate the management of existing parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine reserves in marine and coastal areas. These actions, where appropriate, will complement actions under Executive Order 13158, regarding Marine Protected Areas. Taking steps to integrate the existing marine managed areas network represents a new way to promote coordination of research, public education and management activities at neighboring parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine reserves.

**Advance Regional Fisheries Management.** In the fall of 2004, twelve southeastern States, the U.S. Department of the Interior, NOAA, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding formalizing the creation of the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP). The SARP is developing regional efforts that move beyond traditional agency boundaries and stress joint resource responsibilities, rather than individual Federal and State

responsibilities. The joint resource responsibilities that the SARP focuses on include public use, fishery mitigation, imperiled fish and aquatic species recovery, inter-jurisdictional fisheries, aquatic habitat conservation and aquatic nuisance species.

**Presidential Executive Order: Committee on Ocean Policy  
December 17, 2004**

Section 1. Policy. It shall be the policy of the United States to:

- (a) coordinate the activities of executive departments and agencies regarding ocean-related matters in an integrated and effective manner to advance the environmental, economic, and security interests of present and future generations of Americans; and
- (b) facilitate, as appropriate, coordination and consultation regarding ocean-related matters among Federal, State, tribal, local governments, the private sector, foreign governments, and international organizations.

**United States Oceans Commission: Recommendations contained with the report "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century," delivered to the President and Congress on September 20, 2004**

**Chapter 5: Advancing a Regional Approach**

**Recommendation 5–1.** The National Ocean Council should work with Congress, the President’s Council of Advisors on Ocean Policy, and state, territorial, tribal, and local leaders, including representatives from the private sector, nongovernmental organizations and academia, to develop a flexible and voluntary process for the creation of regional ocean councils. States, working with relevant stakeholders, should use this process to establish regional ocean councils, with support from the National Ocean Council.

**Recommendation 5–2.** The President, through an executive order, should direct all federal agencies with ocean- and coastal-related functions to immediately improve their regional coordination and increase their outreach efforts to regional stakeholders.

**Recommendation 5–3.** The President should form a task force of federal resource management agencies to develop a proposal for adoption and implementation of common federal regional boundaries. The task force should solicit input from state, territorial, tribal, and local representatives.

**Recommendation 5–5.** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), working with other appropriate federal and regional entities, should coordinate the development of



regional ecosystem assessments, to be updated periodically.

## **Chapter 6: Coordinating Management in Federal Waters**

**Recommendation 6–2.** Congress, working with the National Ocean Council (NOC) and regional ocean councils, should establish a balanced, ecosystem-based offshore management regime that sets forth guiding principles for the coordination of offshore activities, including a policy that requires a reasonable portion of the resource rent derived from such activities to be returned to the public.

**Recommendation 6–4.** To create effective and enforceable marine protected areas, regional ocean councils and appropriate federal, regional, state, and local entities, should work together on marine protected area design, implementation, and evaluation. Planners should follow the process developed by the National Ocean Council, actively soliciting stakeholder input and participation.

### **Pew Oceans Commission: Recommendations from “America’s Living Oceans” Final Report, June 4, 2003**

**Priority objectives: Encourage comprehensive and coordinated governance of ocean resources and uses at scales appropriate to the problems to be solved.**

- The regional scale of large marine ecosystems is most appropriate for fisheries management and for governance generally.

#### **Governance for Sustainable Seas**

- Establish regional ocean ecosystem councils to develop and implement enforceable regional ocean governance plans.

#### **Restoring America’s Fisheries**

- Implement ecosystem-based planning and marine zoning.  
Restructure fishery management institutions and reorient fisheries policy to protect and sustain the ecosystems on which our fisheries depend.

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA’s) Strategic Plan FY2005 - FY2010**

#### **Goal 1: Protect, Restore, and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources through an Ecosystem Approach to Management**

##### Ecosystem Strategies

- Engage and collaborate with our partners to achieve regional objectives by delineating regional ecosystems, forming regional ecosystem councils, and implementing cooperative strategies to improve regional ecosystem health.
- Manage uses of ecosystems by applying scientifically sound observations, assessments, and research findings to ensure the sustainable use of resources and to balance competing uses of coastal and marine ecosystems.

- Improve resource management by advancing our understanding of ecosystems through better simulation and predictive models. Build and advance the capabilities of an ecological component of the NOAA global environmental observing system to monitor, assess, and predict national and regional ecosystem health, as well as to gather information consistent with established social and economic indicators.
- Develop coordinated regional and national outreach and education efforts to improve public understanding and involvement in stewardship of coastal and marine ecosystems.

### **NOAA's Ocean Service Strategic Plan, FY2005 – FY2010**

**Goal 1: Protect, restore and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through ecosystem-based management.**

**Objective A: Protect, Restore and Manage the Use of Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lake Resources**

NOS will continue to provide healthy coastal ecosystems by managing human uses of natural resources so that economic development is conducted in ways that maintain ecosystem diversity and long-term productivity. NOS will accomplish this objective through focused research, monitoring of coastal ecosystems, assessment and restoration of injured habitats, development and delivery of spatial information and other tools and technologies for decision makers, training and technology transfer to build improved state and local management capacity, and information to increase public understanding and stewardship of marine and coastal resources.

### **NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program Strategic Plan, FY2005 – FY2015, February 2005**

**Goal 1:** Identify, designate, and manage sanctuaries to maintain the natural biological communities in sanctuaries and protect, and where appropriate, restore and enhance natural habitats, populations and ecological processes, through innovative, coordinated and community-based measures and techniques.

- **Objective 1:** Prepare sanctuary-specific management plans and regional and national programs and policies that utilize all program capacities to protect and manage resources.
- **Objective 4:** Review and evaluate the NMSP's effectiveness at site, regional, and national levels, through both internal and external mechanisms.

**Goal 2:** Build and strengthen the nation-wide system of marine sanctuaries, maintain and enhance the role of the NMSP's system in larger MPA networks, and help provide both national and international leadership for MPA management and marine resource stewardship.

- **Objective 1:** Develop an ecosystem-based context in which sanctuaries exist to facilitate identification of potential new sites, in coordination, to the most practical extent, with community, regional, national, and international efforts.
- **Objective 2:** Initiate, coordinate and participate in ecosystem-based and network initiatives and projects at the regional, national, and international levels.
- **Objective 3:** Develop and maintain interagency partnerships and collaborations, particularly with other national and international protected area and resource managers.

**Goal 7:** Build, maintain, and enhance an operational capability and infrastructure that efficiently and effectively support the attainment of the NMSP's mission and goals.

- **Objective 2:** Implement a regional management structure to integrate marine sanctuaries into region-based ecosystem frameworks for the NMSP.

#### NOAA's National Marine Protected Area Center Strategic Plan November, 2004



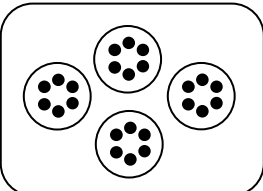
Goal 3: Facilitate International, National and Regional Coordination of MPA Activities.

Objective 1: Coordinate among federal, state, tribal, and local agencies to support MPA national system and stewardship goals.

Objective 2: Foster regional coordination of agencies and stakeholders to support the National System of MPAs and stewardship goals.

## Appendix IV. ONMS Activities - Areas of Responsibility Across the Organization

The following table is intended to clarify the different “spheres of ownership” or areas of responsibility between the ONMS site, region and national level. While there may be specific issues or activities that a site, region or the national program may take the lead on, in reality there is overlap and each level may play a role in addressing the issue or activity.

| Issue/Activity        | Site  | Region  | National  |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Geography</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined by Sanctuary boundary.</li> <li>• May include adjacent ecosystems and watersheds that influence the site.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined by larger-scale biogeographic and/or geopolitical areas.</li> <li>• Contains multiple sanctuaries.</li> <li>• Includes adjacent ecosystems and watersheds that influence the region.</li> <li>• May encompass areas suitable for future sanctuary consideration.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined by all the various marine and coastal regions and Great Lakes in the US Exclusive Economic Zone.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Priority Focus</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues and programs affecting an individual sanctuary.</li> <li>• Ensure that site-specific, regional, and national policies and priorities are implemented at a site.</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues and programs common to or affecting all sanctuaries in the region.</li> <li>• Ensure that national and regional policies and priorities are implemented at the sites within a region.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues and programs affecting all HQ divisions, regions and sanctuaries.</li> <li>• Ensure that national policies and priorities are implemented throughout the program.</li> </ul>                      |
| <b>Assets</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site staff.</li> <li>• Site resources.</li> <li>• Site partnerships.</li> <li>• Access to regional and national staff and resources.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional staff.</li> <li>• Regional resources.</li> <li>• Regional partnerships.</li> <li>• Access to site staff and national staff and resources.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National staff.</li> <li>• National resources.</li> <li>• National partnerships.</li> <li>• Access to site and regional staff.</li> </ul>  |

| <b>Issue/Activity</b>                                 | <b>Site</b>  | <b>Region</b>  | <b>National</b>  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Asset Allocation</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop site AOP that may include use of site, regional and national assets.</li> <li>• Sites work with region to coordinate and request regional and national assets.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop regional AOP that may include use of site, regional and national assets.</li> <li>• Regions coordinate individual site and regional requests for regional and national assets.</li> <li>• Regions coordinate and request national assets to be used in region or site.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop national program (division) AOPs that may include use of site, regional and national assets.</li> <li>• Respond to regional requests for use of national assets.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Annual Operating Plans (AOPs – see Appendix V)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint AOP pre-planning for site and regional AOPs.</li> <li>• Develop site AOPs, submit to regions for review.</li> <li>• Identify regional and national assets for site needs.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint AOP pre-planning.</li> <li>• Develop regional AOP.</li> <li>• Evaluate and review site AOPs and submit to headquarters.</li> <li>• Identify national assets for regional needs.</li> <li>• Evaluate site AOP milestones.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop annual AOP guidance for entire program.</li> <li>• Develop division AOPs.</li> <li>• Consolidate site, regional, and division AOPs.</li> <li>• Look across regions from national perspective to identify assets, issues, etc.</li> <li>• Director evaluates and approves site, division and regional AOPs.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Partnerships</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships to help implement a sanctuary management plan or AOP (to protect local sanctuary resources).</li> <li>• Local NGOs, research, education, &amp; local/state /federal resource mgmt. agencies (e.g., Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association, Hawaii DLNR).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships that focus on regional resource protection issues and that ultimately benefit multiple sites.</li> <li>• State and federal resource mgmt. agencies, regional NGO and stakeholder groups (e.g., regional fishery mgmt. councils, CA Resources Agency, EPA Region).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships that support the entire national program.</li> <li>• Federal and Intl. resource management agencies, national corporations, national NGOs and industry associations (e.g., National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, National Geographic, DOI/Natl. Park Service).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Sponsorships</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support individual programs and activities at a sanctuary (e.g., Gulf of Mexico Foundation).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support regional resource management efforts or programs that can be implemented at multiple sites (e.g., Packard Foundation's support of SIMoN which will evolve into a regional network).</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the mission of national program and those projects or activities that can be exported throughout the system. Targeted to larger national donors and corporations (e.g., Discovery, Univision, Mead Corporation).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement between an individual sanctuary and other entities (e.g., MNMS and The Mariners Museum).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement between the region (on behalf of sites) and other regional entities (e.g., West Coast Region and the Pacific Fishery Management. Council).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement between the ONMS and other national entities (e.g., ONMS and USGS or ONMS and AZA).</li> </ul>  |

| <b>Issue/Activity</b>           | <b>Site</b>  | <b>Region</b>  | <b>National</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Interagency Coordination</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with appropriate local, state or federal agencies to address site-specific resource management issues (e.g., FBNMS and American Samoa CZM program).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with appropriate state or federal agencies to address regional resource management issues (e.g., FKNMS &amp; FGBNMS with other Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean coral reef initiatives).</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with appropriate federal agencies to address national or program-wide resource management issues (e.g., ONMS and DoD).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Permits</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process permit applications for activities within the site.</li> <li>• Prepare all necessary documentation for each permit processed.</li> <li>• Maintain site staff training and proficiency in permitting process.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate review of permit applications for activities within two or more sites within region.</li> <li>• Negotiate with other regional entities that request permits (e.g., NMFS Science Centers).</li> <li>• Facilitate the fulfillment of consultation requirements with appropriate regional, Federal or State entities (e.g., essential fish habitat).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop tools to ensure consistent application of permitting at all sites (e.g., national guidance and database).</li> <li>• Assist site staff in review and processing of class “A” and “B” permits.</li> <li>• Conduct training of site staff.</li> <li>• Monitor achievement of permitting performance targets.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Policy</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify local issues through MPR or emerging issues.</li> <li>• Facilitate resolution of site-specific policy issues with local staff and experts (e.g., harbor dredge disposal).</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify site specific issues that may apply to other sites in region or to other regions.</li> <li>• Facilitate resolution of regional policy issues with site or regional staff and experts.</li> <li>• Request national assets to help resolve local or regional policy issues (e.g., krill fishing).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily responsible for the development of national policies.</li> <li>• Facilitate resolution of national policies using site, regional or national staff and experts (e.g., oil spill dispersants).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Management Plan Review</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate the on-site public MPR process (e.g., public meetings, working groups, SAC involvement, development of action plans and supporting environmental documents).</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help resolve regional policy issues and ensure consistency between sites.</li> <li>• Determine regional schedule for MPR.</li> <li>• May provide supplemental resources.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide overall guidance on MPR planning process.</li> <li>• Provide resources to regions and sites.</li> <li>• Help resolve national policy issues.</li> <li>• Assist sites on regulatory and NEPA issues.</li> <li>• Facilitate clearance process through ONMS, NOS, NOAA &amp; DOC.</li> </ul>                             |

| <b>Issue/Activity</b>              | <b>Site</b>  | <b>Region</b>  | <b>National</b>  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Sanctuary Advisory Councils</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each site has an Advisory Council and is solely responsible for its operation.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No regional SACs.</li> <li>• Facilitate regional linkages between SACs.</li> <li>• Work with site superintendents to present and get SAC input on regional or national issues.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide overall guidance on SAC Policy.</li> <li>• Support and Coordinate annual SAC Chair and Coordinator meetings.</li> <li>• Possible development &amp; oversight of National Advisory Council.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Biogeographic Assessments</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct smaller scale studies that relate directly to site-specific management questions.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the planning and implementation of regional assessments to benefit all sites.</li> <li>• Conduct biogeographic assessments to support new site identification and ecosystem-wide activities.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting role to help regions plan and implement assessments.</li> <li>• Provide ONMS assets and help coordinate with other NOAA or agency assets.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>New Site Identification</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest ideas for new sites.</li> <li>• Share knowledge on site program development and local agency contacts.</li> <li>• Sites are not expected to provide staff.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate process to identify new sites in region.</li> <li>• Lead new site assessment and development process.</li> <li>• Supervise regional site assessment and development staff.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide HQ guidance on a consistent regional process to identify and assess new sites.</li> <li>• Facilitate and coordinate resources from ONMS and NOAA.</li> <li>• Process actions for clearance through NOAA.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Congressional Affairs</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with local district offices of Congressional members representing sites.</li> <li>• Meet with members during DC meeting in March.</li> <li>• Maintain relationships with local and State elected officials.</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with regional district offices of Congressional members representing sites.</li> <li>• Liaison with members within the region, but outside states with sanctuaries.</li> <li>• Maintain relationships with local and State elected officials outside of existing sites – particularly in areas where new sites are being considered.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with members in Washington, DC.</li> <li>• Oversee ONMS Congressional affairs and liaison with NOAA Congressional Affairs.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Media Affairs</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-site media affairs staff maintain local media contacts, generate press releases, and respond to press inquiries.</li> <li>• National media assets may serve as a site media coordinator when they do not have one of their own.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National program staff based in region help coordinate regional media and work with site media staff on larger events or to fireproof controversial issues.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide media affairs guidance and training to sites.</li> <li>• Oversee national media assets in the regions.</li> <li>• Facilitate the clearance of all press releases through NOAA.</li> <li>• Provide assistance to sites as needed.</li> <li>• Compile daily clips.</li> </ul> |

| <b>Issue/Activity</b>           | <b>Site</b>  | <b>Region</b>  | <b>National</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>International Activities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan international delegation visits / staff exchanges at a site.</li> <li>• Participate in U.S. overseas delegations.</li> <li>• Identify site-specific needs and opportunities to work internationally (e.g., Olympic Coast).</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in international efforts to manage marine and coastal resources adjacent to sanctuary regions.</li> <li>• Coordinate international delegation visits to a region.</li> <li>• Liaison between sites and HQ to plan and oversee international visitors.</li> <li>• Participate in U.S. overseas delegations.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate all ONMS international activities.</li> <li>• Liaison with NOAA/NOS International Affairs to plan delegation itineraries.</li> <li>• Participate in U.S. overseas delegations.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Maritime Heritage</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage site's maritime heritage resources (MHR).</li> <li>• Implement site MHR research and education plans.</li> <li>• Participate in other sites' MHR expeditions when possible.</li> <li>• Contribute to national shipwreck database.</li> <li>• Participate in Maritime Heritage Program (MHP) activities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop regional partnerships (federal agencies, universities).</li> <li>• Coordinate regional facilities (collections) and resources.</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities for new MHR sites.</li> <li>• Lead certain regional MHR projects (e.g., Pearl Harbor, Midget sub).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead certain national initiatives (e.g., Alligator, Preserve America).</li> <li>• Administer NOAA's ARCH.</li> <li>• Provide support to sites and regions.</li> <li>• Administer MHP mini-grants.</li> <li>• Develop MHP strategic plan.</li> <li>• Administer national shipwreck database project.</li> <li>• Develop national exhibits (e.g., Nauticus).</li> <li>• Develop policy guidance.</li> </ul> |



## Appendix V. The Annual Operating Plan Process

