

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary

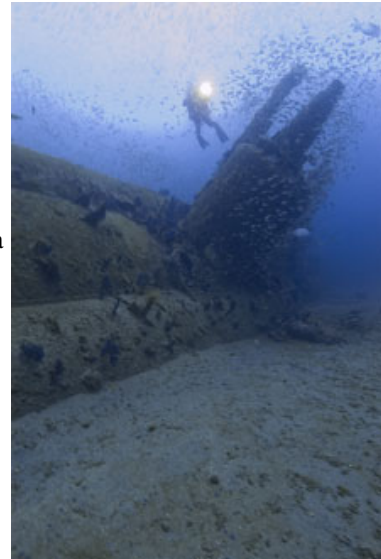
Public Engagement, Communication, & Outreach

Management Issue

Public interest and input is crucial to the sanctuary and its management. Established relationships must be maintained while new ones are made in order to gain stakeholder support, especially as the idea of sanctuary expansion is entertained. Therefore, audiences should be identified so that communication and outreach towards community members, decision-makers, partners, and the public are presented in a way that best facilitates understanding and engagement.

Description

The Monitor National Marine Sanctuary (MNMS or Sanctuary) partners represent a multitude of historical, cultural, educational, biological, recreational, governmental organizations. While the MNMS offices are located in Newport News, VA, the sanctuary itself is located off the coast of the Outer Banks, North Carolina. This results in potential public engagement distributed over a wide geographic area. Therefore, there is a constant need to include a large number of stakeholders in the decision-making process as partners and stakeholders need to be educated and informed when considering management actions. The challenge lies not only in collecting reliable, scientific data to support management actions, but also in effectively communicating those results to the public. This is especially important as the idea to expand the sanctuary is entertained. Education and outreach are mediation tools able to communicate information to stakeholders who have a vested interest in ongoing endeavors or associated changes. These tools are able to increase public interest and input and establish long-standing relationships between stakeholders and managers.



SCUBA Diving on various cultural resources is a popular activity around the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Photo Credit: MNMS

Questions and Information Needs

- 1) Who are the current stakeholders?
- 2) Are there other stakeholders that need to be identified when considering expansion?
- 3) How can discussion between managers and stakeholders be facilitated?
- 4) How can research and data be communicated to and easily interpreted by the public?
- 5) How can current relationships be made stronger?
- 6) How can more stakeholders be recognized and included in management decisions?
- 7) What are the best modes of communication to reach specific audiences?
- 8) What specific communication and outreach materials should be developed to most efficiently communicate with stakeholders and community members?

Scientific Approach and Actions

- Surveys implemented in order to define the community's relationship with the resources
- Implement other methods of communication, such as community forums
- Create education and outreach tools to increase public education
- Establishment of interagency relationships for outreach purposes

Updated: 6/18/2014

For More Information -- <http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/assessment>

Key Partners and Information Sources

NOAA's Coastal Services Center, NOAA's National Center for Coastal Ocean Science, East Carolina University, University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute

Sanctuary Resources Available

- Personnel
- Knowledge of area and community make-up
- Strong connections to community members and organizations
- A multitude of information, research, and data to support communication and outreach products

Resource Needs

- Financial support
- Partnerships for identification of stakeholders, knowledge gaps, development of communication and outreach materials (NOAA, academic institutions)

Management Support Products

- Scientific papers and reports
- Social indicators to be used in the future
- List of stakeholders
- Education and outreach tools to facilitate communication and interpretation

Planned Use of Products and Actions

- Social indicators can be used as a precursor to future management actions
- Appropriate management of environmental, cultural, and social interests

Program References

MNMS Management Plan.

- Education and Outreach Action Plan, Expansion Action Plan

ONMS Performance Measures

- 3.6: Measuring Education Performance
- 3.8: Measuring Public Awareness Performance
- 3.20: Measuring Outreach Efficiency

Other Documents

- Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions of Management Strategies and Regulations of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary by Commercial Fishers, Dive Operators, and Environmental Group Members: A Baseline Characterization and 10-year Comparison. ONMS socioeconomics science page: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/socioeconomic/research.html>

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